

HELPS BY THE WAY:

A FORTNIGHTLY MAGAZINE.

DESIGNED FOR THE MINISTRY OF A FULL AND PRECIOUS
CHRIST, TO THOSE FOR WHOM HE DIED.

"Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you; for Him hath God the Father sealed."—JOHN VI. 27.

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HELPS BY THE WAY

Vol. II.

SICKNESS IN THE FAMILY OF GOD.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Your questions can hardly be properly answered without a glance at the whole subject of sickness as Scripture speaks of it. We must first of all enquire what it is, and its Divine significance, before we can speak, with any intelligence, of treatment. Nay, we must learn to distinguish scripturally between one sickness and another, or as physicians call it, to *diagnose* the disease,—before we can properly enquire as to remedy.

Sickness is of course the fruit of sin. It is the stamp of death upon a fallen creation, the preliminary 'shaking' of what is to be removed, as having ceased to please the God who made it. It is thus His solemn witness as to what sin is with Him, a witness to be pondered and to profit by. Evidently from this point of view the first question (which is apt too often even to be the only one) is not how to get rid of it; and to make it such may be a real and effectual hindrance even as to getting rid of it. For God speaks in it that we may listen; if it have a voice, it must be *His* voice, and the answer can be only found in humble and obedient waiting upon Him. Otherwise it is but the effort to silence what is unwelcome,—vain, or worse, as striving against Him; and none the less that, because the voice may not even be recognized as His, and the striving be more or less unconscious.

Of course I do not mean that, in any individual case, a special sickness must be the fruit of some special sin. *Discipline*, I suppose it always is, although one of the varied forms of that which in some shape we are never without. Paul's thorn in the flesh was a need begotten, not by departure from God, but by

the abundance of the revelations given to him, coupled with the liability (in him at least less than most men) of being puffed up by them.

We must remember too the Lord's words as to the man blind from His birth,—words which are so full of the tender under-tones of the infinite grace ever seeking expression: "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God may be made manifest in him."

On the other hand, that sickness is oftentimes the direct chastisement of sin needs scarcely any scriptural proof to be brought forward, there are so many. Elihu's words in Job (xxxiii. 19-30) are not only the statement of how "God worketh oftentimes with man," but also enforce the necessity of hearkening. Nothing but truthful confession can here deliver a soul from 'going down into the pit.' Of this kind were the Corinthian visitations: "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep; for if we would judge ourselves we should not be judged" (1 Cor. xi. 30-31). It is not want of charity to assume that now as in Elihu's day many a sickness has this character. And must we not fear that many a one is not rightly treated, because not rightly understood?

Now as to the treatment of disease, to which your question relates: we need not wonder that Scripture makes that to be much more a matter of Divine interference than of human 'treatment.' Nature does not in Scripture resent Divine interference, as in man's thoughts just now it is prone to do. The laws of nature cannot be laws to forbid His working who is the Author of Nature. They are laws to Nature, to which it,—not He, is subject. And this is how Scripture invariably treats the matter. He may work by means, but He is not tied to means; and since, alas, man is prone to see in these the instruments of his own wisdom, rather than the power of

God's hand, it is no wonder if He should need oftentimes to put aside that which to men's shallow unbelief is the hiding of His power, and to work apart from it, just that this power may be manifest.

It is very certain that both in the Old Testament and the New we have very little about physicians or about medicine. Not that either are reprobated. A fig poultice was used to heal Hezekiah, and the Apostle's recommendation of a little wine to Timothy was certainly as medicinal help for his "often infirmities." The use of a surgeon is implied in the law that he that had smitten another, should "cause him to be thoroughly healed" (Exod. xxi. 19); and Luke is spoken of by the Apostle as "the beloved physician," in terms which convey no disapprobation of his calling (Col. iv. 14).

On the other hand Asa sought not to the Lord but to the physicians, and he died; the woman that had an issue of blood twelve years had spent her all upon physicians, and was nothing bettered but rather grew worse; and while we may not appeal to any miraculous 'gifts of healing' in these latter days, we can scarcely class with that what James prescribes, where after all not the anointing, nor the elders, but "the *prayer of faith* shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise Him up" (Jas. v. 15).

What results as the practical lesson from such statements as these? In the first place assuredly for the Christian, the duty of discerning the Lord's hand in sickness, and of remembering the solemn warning as to Asa. We are responsible to distinguish between the constitutional infirmities, for which a little wine could be prescribed by an Apostle, and the chastening of the Divine hand for which *self judgment* is the one imperative necessity in order to removal. In sickness such as at Corinth, how vain would be the appeal to a physician! How simple and sure the declaration of Elihu: "He looketh upon

men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not, He will deliver his soul from going down into the pit, and his life shall see the light." Here too apply the words of James : " Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another that ye may be healed : the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much " (v. 16). Confession and prayer are in such cases the Divine prescription, which cannot with safety be disregarded.

But what further as to James' injunction, if any is sick among Christians? In the present ruin of the Church, how far can this be carried out? One or two remarks I may venture as to this, and you will have to judge what force there is in them. First: 'elders' among the assemblies formed at first in Judea seem to have been scarcely officially appointed, but it is doubtful how far this would apply to the time and to the people whom James addresses : nor is the fact itself absolutely proved as such. This doubt would seem to interfere with the literal carrying out now of what is enjoined : for where is the Church practically, and where is the power of official appointment?

Still the Lord is the resource, if the Church and all else fail, as failed it has. Most assuredly He would have His people own Him as distinctly as ever ; and faith can no more now than in the first days of Christianity be put to shame. The anointing of the elders and their solemn appeal to God in behalf of the sick, was in its essence, just the owning Him openly as the One to whom alone faith looked : a recognition which, if it were more common in the present day, would find (who can doubt?) its corresponding blessing. Means, on the other hand, in an essentially materialistic day, are idolized ; and the humiliating spectacle is seen of Christians running round to even the most questionable things, as if no help were

in God at all. Thus Satan gets advantage, and by making his emissaries medical missionaries, procures for them easy admittance into circles, from which in any other shape they would be jealously excluded.

This bears upon the question you have asked, as to how far the character of the physician should affect our employment of him. It may be said that this is a matter of business, and that we pay for skill just as for the various articles of trade, where we should not be hindered buying by the religion or irreligion of the tradesman. This is true within certain limits. It surely does not apply to those in whom we can recognize Satan's effort to destroy the work of Christ. He would be very indifferent who would knowingly employ a spiritist, for instance. And in proportion as the living God and His power become more to us than mere means of any kind, in that proportion shall we seek for, and be satisfied with nothing which is not according to His thoughts. And if a child of God were to say, "I can trust my Father best, and have perfect confidence in Him: I desire to leave all this in His hand alone,"—who can show that the passage in James does not justify him, in the spirit if not in the letter? who could prove from Scripture that to such an one, the physician was a necessity at all? If the prayer of faith *once* could save the sick, is it fanaticism to believe that it still could do so? Is it not rather evident that if Christians practiced more the Scriptural method of appeal to God, and dependence upon Him in this case, they would have fresh impressions of His power and goodness who delights to reveal Himself, for all the necessities of the wilderness, a living God?

You will understand me that this is no slight upon the physician, who in a world like this will ever have an ample sphere, and in which he may find, if he be Christ's, not only sanction but abundant blessing. Nor am I making rules for Christians themselves. I

see none in Scripture; but I see what faith may plead as its privilege if it will.

Let me say, in closing, I do not allow that clairvoyance is a legitimate mode of healing in any wise. There are, I know, those who claim to be Christians practising it; but that proves nothing, even if they should be able to establish their claim. All the affinities of clairvoyance are with spiritism, to which creed the mass of its practitioners belong. Its knowledge is no acquirement of observation and memory, as are other branches of human science, but a pretended *intuition*, which is nevertheless not available to him who has it in his waking condition when it ought to be most so; and which extends to matters where no intuition could act, as with regard to names and properties of things not present to the senses. Those who believe in the power of Satan and are not blind to the efforts he is putting forth in these closing days of Christendom, will have no difficulty in tracing to its source any real power that may be exhibited in this way, and which (as connected with the abominations of spiritism) cannot be accepted by the Christian as the *power of God*.

I am conscious of having very lamely replied to your questions. You will not however imagine that Scripture does not contain a better answer, or that faith and the blessed Spirit will refuse to give it to the practical inquirer.

Ever, my dear brother,

YOURS IN CHRIST.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

“ For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread : and when he had given thanks, he brake (it), and said, This is my body, which (is) for you : this do for a remembrance of me. After the same manner he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood : this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.” (1 Cor. xi. 23-26).

We have here the special marked and distinct revelation given to the apostle Paul, of this blessed feast ; and like all revelations to him, we find it differing from those given to the other apostles, in this grand feature, namely, that Christ *in glory*, a Man in the glory of God, Head of His body the Church, is He who communicates it to him.

We also read in 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. “ The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ ? For we, being many, are one bread, and one body : for we are all partakers of that one bread.” Here it receives a fresh character, unknown before Paul's doctrine unfolded it, in that the Lord's Supper—partaken of according to the divine thought—is the symbol of the unity of Christ's mystical body, the Church ; and the great outward centre of the gathering together of the Church of God on earth. It expresses its unity as formed by the Holy Ghost : it is there in a special way that the Lord Himself and His presence in the Assembly are realized. It is that moral centre, in view of which each member of Christ judges himself, that he may eat thereof “worthily”—in a manner suited to the holiness and truth of Him to

whom he is united by the Holy Ghost given him. It is that great moral centre with respect to which the partaking thereof, or otherwise, shows that the person is outwardly confessing and professing the reality of his portion in Christ. It is with respect to it that, in failing to judge himself, and partake worthily thereof, the assembled saints must deal with the failing one, and put him out from among themselves, as a "wicked person." It is in view of it that, when the individual has failed to judge himself, and it has fallen to the responsibility of the assembled saints to do so; or when the assembled saints have failed (as at Corinth) to deal with what was unsuited to Christ, and the table of the Lord, the Lord Himself had, as over His own house, acted, removing some by death, and laid His chastening hand on others by sickness and weakness of body: for amongst them "many were weak and sickly and many slept."

It is in fact the great moral symbol and centre outwardly and expressedly of the existence of the Church of God here below.

It is too, yet more blessedly, when partaken of in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, the most touching of all the "services of faith" of the people of the Lord: where the Lord is most sweetly realized as in the moment which God and saints never will forget, when He gave Himself up for His glory and for our eternal salvation. The ministry of the gospel, from God's heart to the world may be sweet to the soul. Souls are blessed, and the Spirit's power is felt, and God is made known in a world that knows Him not. The ministry of Christ too for His saints, feeding them, and building them up, and producing worship in their hearts for all His unspeakable goodness, is touching to the soul, searching to the conscience, and the freshness of His love is shed abroad in the heart. All these and many more, are good and blessed; but at the Supper the soul and God meet as never otherwise: the heart

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of the saint and the sufferings of Christ Himself are together; His love is tasted; His perfections fed upon; in short, the Lord Himself is there in a way, that next to Heaven itself there is nothing like it here below. Man is not before us at such an hour. All this is put aside in the presence of a greater. It is indeed the "gate of heaven."

How we should therefore seek to get at God's own mind about this feast. How we should seek to divest it from every thought and practice that mar the simple blessedness of what *He*—the Lord— has meant it to be to us. We shall sit down by and by at the marriage supper of the Lamb. We have no description of this scene. The Holy Ghost uses but one word to describe it, "Blessed!" "Blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And He adds, "These are the true sayings of God." But here at the "Lordly Supper," (*kuriakon deipnon*) one sits down with others like himself, still in bodies of humiliation, though saved by grace, and made meet for glory, to feed afresh upon Christ in His death. The night when all the world was against Him, and God forsook Him as well as His own who loved Him truly. When Satan's power and glamour was over men's souls, and our perfect, blessed Saviour passed through that night—His last with His disciples; and eat that paschal supper of which He speaks in those touching words, "With desire ("earnest yearning, longing," as the word means) have I desired to eat this Pass-over with you before I suffer." (Luke xxii.) From that paschal feast, and the institution of His own Supper, He passes to His agony in the garden, where He receives from His Father's hands His cup of sorrow. Bearing it (as it were) in His hands, and before He leaves the scene of His agony, He is *betrayed* by His "friend": he who had eaten bread with Him, had lifted up his heel against Him. He

passes onwards, and next He is *denied* with oaths by one who thought no power could make *his* love for his Master to fail. Then, after His "good confession," He is *mocked* and arrayed in the scarlet robe and crown of thorns. From thence He passes into other hands and is *scourged* and *condemned*. At last came the *cross* of a malefactor where He was numbered with the transgressors, and the things concerning Him had their end. Forsaken now of God, He enters the darkness of that scene, into which no ray of light penetrated to relieve His soul; He cries to God at the hour of prayer—the "ninth hour," and is "not heard." What soul-depths were expressed in that unheard cry! But He who in view of all this, when instituting the feast, could twice "give thanks," knew the light that was beyond it all, and the depths of that heart of God the Father, whose love He shared from past eternity.

These are some of the features which come before us as we remember Him. We could not "remember" one we knew not: we remember One we know. We know Him but in poor small measure: but it is the Lord who loves us we know, and we remember Him in the hour of His death and shame.

Now, although simplicity as to the line in which the Spirit of God would lead the gathered saints, in this "service of faith," is what should characterize them; that is, in the remembrance of the Lord at that night of His betrayal, there is no special line of remembrance to be looked for prominently from the saints; still we must remember that "in the midst of the assembly (says the Lord) I will sing praise unto thee." We should therefore look for His presence most specially at such a time. When Christ leads the praises of His own, we would not find many thoughts about *our* former state, or *our* deliverance therefrom through His work. It is *Himself* we are to remember, and all that this remembrance would em-

brace. I would dread much therefore to see souls thinking of their *own* blessing—their *own* side of things too much. It would seem to me that they have not come together with a true thought in their souls.

We know happily, that the “babes know the Father:” it is the spirit of adoption which characterizes them, and they rejoice more in their own blessing, than in Him, the Blessor. The fathers in Christ know Him. I am sure too, that in the Lord's Supper we have every chord touched that every heart, blessed through Christ, can ever feel and rejoice in. No chord has ever been strung in any heart which does not find its echo there, and while every soul who comes together to eat the Lord's Supper is doubtless in a different spiritual state, the chords in each are divinely strung, and when Christ is before the soul they must yield harmony.

Just as the varied aspects of Christ in His perfect life, His death and sin-bearing, and all, are presented in the offerings (see Lev. i.—vii.); many offerings taken to make one blessed Christ. So in the Supper there is found that which meets the song of every heart, even though the note struck may sound more of its own blessing.

Still I think true worship always has Him as its food and its object: “they worshipped Him.” He reveals and displays the Father, and where the Father is worshipped in the Son, the Son reveals Him: and the Father seeketh such to worship Him. When God is seen in Christ, the Son of the Father in Him, and the Spirit in us is free to unfold His things to us, there worship has its true and proper level, and *He* dwells in the praises of His assembly, as before Jehovah dwelt in the praises of Israel. (Ps. xxii.)

So, as of old, we find that that which prefigured the communion of the church of God, (the Peace offering) came *third* in the order of the five offerings in

Leviticus, to show us that the worship of the saints is grounded upon what Christ was *to God* as a burnt-offering and his meat offering, which accompanied it, both of them being offerings of sweet savour. They pointed to all that Christ was to God in His devotedness to death for God's glory; bringing glory to His nature as to sin, in the place where sin was; and yielding Himself wholly up to God; this the burnt-offering typified. And this was accompanied by a meat offering, called "his meat offering." ("The burnt offering and his meat offering"). This was Christ's person in its purity and grace, and was bloodless and not atoning, though it accompanied that which was. Even when the ashes of both were on the altar of burnt-offering, *there*, on those ashes, was the peace offering (or its memorial) burnt, (see Lev. iii. 5). The fourth and fifth offerings, *i.e.*, Sin offering, and Trespass offering, were what Christ was *made* for us—not what He *was* in Himself personally; and they come after the Peace or Communion offering (ch. iii.)

Has this no voice for us? Can we not see here that he who best can enter upon what Christ was to God as burnt offering and meat offering, in His sweet savour, can best sustain and lead the worship of the assembled saints—for he is on the true ground of the soul's power of worship to the Father.

It is a cause of deep joy surely, and never to be forgotten, to know that Christ bore our sins, and brought us into this place of blessing; but it is not the prominent thought in praise. Was the prodigal thinking much of the far country and his rags and misery, and the change that had come, when he ate the fatted calf with the father? His father's heart and house and joy silenced him. It would have no kindred note in his father's merriment, to have reminded him of the rags and the debt he owed his father: he must joy in his father's joy, be that what it may. These and such like praises are those which

Christ can sing, and lead in the midst of His assembled saints. Could a soul uncertain of its salvation have a place at such a feast? Nay. In conscience and in faith we stand alone. But when seated with the Spirit, He leads our souls into communion with the Father and the Son. But all converted souls are not there. Surely not. Many souls are quickened but not at peace. The very life they have makes them feel their sins; feel their misery; but when they have believed, God seals them, having done so with the Holy Spirit of promise. Until then they are not members of Christ, nor in union with Him, Head of His body in heavenly places. How needful then that it should be seen to, that the person has received the Holy Ghost since he believed (Acts xix.).

The Supper therefore is only for such: members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

It is celebrated according to Scripture by such, as the expression of the unity of the whole body of Christ on earth. It must be spread, and the Lord's Table be gathered, to express this. Tables of varied sects and parties in the professing church could not be owned as the "Table of the Lord." They are not so. A sect or system in it has its own dogmas and rules, and creeds, and ministry—generally framed for the unconverted as well as the saved. Perhaps a human ministry is there; or some one person, who absorbs all the functions of the members of Christ's body, professedly, in himself. The free action of the Spirit of God is shut out in the members. These and such like preclude the godly from its communion.

But when the Lord's Table is spread according to God it must be,

1st. The expression of the whole body of Christ on earth.

2d. There must be nothing there, amongst those who are together, which would hinder in a doctrinal

or a moral way, one single member of Christ on earth being there. To have it so would make it cease to be the Table of the Lord; and become the Table of a sect or party in Christendom. It is not that each there is compelled to see and understand all and every truth and doctrine that others do: not in any wise. This would be but to make the intelligence of the members of Christ and their unanimity in doctrine a term of fellowship, instead of it really being this, that they are members of that one body, and sound in faith and morals. Nay: the great foundation truths of God's holy Word must be held aright. These would be such as the pure and holy person of Christ the Son of God; His incarnation; His atoning work; His resurrection and ascension; His eternal Sonship; His coming in flesh. The doctrines too of eternal punishment; of the Holy Ghost's presence in the Church; of the trinity of the persons of the Godhead, all such must be clearly defined in the soul. The babes in Christ know all these things. When the Holy Spirit dwells in a saint He has received the anointing that teaches all things. He is sensitive as to these things: touch Christ in any way and you touch the apple of his eye. Let him be true in the faith of Christ's person, and you may depend that he is right in all these. Let him be false in his thoughts of Jesus, and his whole soul will more or less be filled with error. I trust no soul who has not God's Christ there. He is the true test; the touchstone of true faith. All this assumes that he is at peace with God, and possesses His Spirit dwelling in him.

3d. The first day of the week is the day of its celebration; as of all the great gatherings of the members of the church's risen Head. When she was first formed at Pentecost, His members continued daily with one accord in the Temple, and "broke bread" at home, "praising God," &c. But when the

Assembly was broken up at Jerusalem, and was no more to be found connected with the Jewish centre of things, the Spirit of God led them together habitually on the first day of the week for this distinct purpose. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread," (Acts xx. 7). And this was endorsed by the Apostle abiding there to be with them at this feast.

How sensitive is the spiritually minded saint at this wondrous centre of the church's gathering. How spiritual one needs to be, to venture in the Lord's blessed presence to aid in the worship of God. The more he thinks of the presence of his Lord and Master the more careful he is lest one word, one note he strikes, should not be in keeping with the Lord's own heart; in communion with which the present Spirit leads His people's songs. How the heart feels a discordant note at such a moment, when the ear of the soul is watching for the note to strike truly in the hearts of saints with the Lord's. A hymn ill-chosen; the music unsuited to the words of the spiritual song: the haste of one: the tardiness of another: the lengthiness of some. What exercise of soul do not these things produce, and how they mar the meeting which should refresh and feed the soul. How frequently too the judgment of self is neglected till the moment when the Lord's presence is felt; and then for the first time the soul feels that it is not in spiritual power, and it must think of self instead of Christ!

O that my brethren might ponder these things, and that, poor and feeble though we are, we may grow in the sense of what it is to gather around our Lord; to realize his presence: to forget ourselves: to wait on Him: to renew our strength: to carry clean though empty vessels, into His presence: to find them filled to overflowing by Him whose fulness is inexhaustible; so full that the overflowing cup re-

turns to Him, as living waters refresh the soul and find again their own level in His presence, and the presence of the Father.

I feel sure too that at times there are many whose hearts would refresh their Lord and their brethren with "five words" of praise, who hold back and "quench the Spirit"—obliging some other to speak out of the true order of the Spirit of God (because forced upon him), and lose much for their own souls, as well as for the souls of their brethren.

The heart yearns to see the assemblies of God's saints filled with the Spirit, and such freshness of power and worship which sets man aside, and gives only place to Christ, or what is of the Spirit of our God.

What comfort to know that every "first day of the week" brings us nearer to that glorious day, in view of which we show forth the Lord's death till He come! When that day arrives, and when we see Him, He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied; and every spiritual desire and longing will in us, as well as in Him, find its answer; and we shall enter that scene of which it is said: "They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

And it is His glory which touches the heart even in that scene, and leads those who surround His throne to forget their own blessing, and their own glory, to leave the one, and divest themselves of the other, in the sweeter occupation of enjoying His glory, and to say, "Thou art worthy, O Lord." "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they shall be praising Thee to the ages of ages." Amen. (LXX. of Ps. lxxxiv. 4.)

F. G. P.

DIVINE RIGHTEOUSNESS IN ITS ACTINGS TOWARDS MEN.

The righteousness of God is the constant plea of the Old Testament, and naturally so. Especially the Psalms are full of it, a righteousness displayed in governmental dealings with men, His creatures. In the conflict everywhere and at all times going on between good and evil, "the righteous Lord" who "loveth righteousness," and whose "countenance beholds the upright," must needs manifest Himself in behalf of what He loves. Divine righteousness is here plainly, and ever, a part of the Divine character, an attribute of God Himself; not a gift bestowed upon man in any wise, although connected with the salvation of His people, for whom, after a long and needed discipline of suffering, He will at last appear.

But that does not solve all questions as to it, and it could only appear to do so to one whose knowledge of himself and of God was exceedingly superficial. If sin be a real thing, and of infinite concern with God, the pardon of it *righteously* (and no other pardon could God give) must be no light matter. And if the righteous had still to ask, in a way that implied the hopelessness of the question, "But how shall man be just with God?" then God's righteousness could not be exhibited even in behalf of the comparatively righteous, without incurring suspicion of partiality or defect.

It remained to be the glory of the gospel to clear away this suspicion, and to display "the righteousness of God," not now merely in the salvation of the righteous, but of sinners; yea, of the chief of sinners. "I am not ashamed," says the apostle, "of the gospel of

Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." What constitutes it thus God's power to save, irrespective of the character of those who believe? This: "for therein"—in the *gospel*, in the glad good news to be proclaimed to every one—"the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IS REVEALED, from faith (or, on the principle of faith*) to faith" (Rom. i. 16, 17).

Is this 'righteousness of God,' which the gospel reveals and puts upon the side of the believer, other than that which the law left unrevealed, in view of that very matter, the salvation of men? Is it anything else than that attribute of His, (part of His glory which He cannot divorce from Himself, or act in contradiction to) reconciled with, or rather manifested in, the very love which is in His nature? Let us see if it be this or any other thought, which the New Testament would convey to us by this expression.

There is first a class of texts which evidently do not speak of any revelation of it by the gospel, and which we need to keep distinct in our minds from those which have to do with this. They are five in number, and of no special difficulty to understand; but should not be confounded with the Gospel revelation.

The first text occurs in the Lord's sermon on the mount: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt. vi. 33).

Here the Lord's words mean plainly, in the connection in which they stand, "Care *you* for what belongs to God, and suits Him, and *He* will care for *you*!" and 'His righteousness' means all that suits His character, as revealed. Important as the lesson is, it is evidently not what we need to dwell upon in connection with the present enquiry.

The next is in Rom. iii. 5: "But if our unrighteous-

* *Ek pisteos*, the same expression as afterwards; "the just shall live by faith," "justified by faith," &c.

ness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?" Here again, the sense is evident, and we need not pause to consider it minutely.

Once more in Rom. x. 3, we have: "But they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

Here many, from the connection with what precedes and follows, suppose the Gospel revelation of righteousness to be referred to; but it is not so, and the connection is different from what they suppose. No doubt this ignorance of God's righteousness is in intimate connection with the rejection of Christ; but that does not show that Christ is identified in this passage with the Divine righteousness to which they have not submitted. The law itself should have so taught them what God's character was in this respect as to have made them conscious of how far short their own righteousness must come short of His requirement. They had taken that law to work out righteousness by it, instead of as the 'ministration of condemnation,' as indeed it was: a 'law of righteousness,' which for that very reason could not accommodate itself to the unrighteousness of man. Had they humbled themselves under the solemn sentence of the law, Christ would not have been a stumbling stone: repentance would have led them beyond the law, for salvation through faith in another.

The fourth passage is similar to the first. It is in Jas. i. 20: "for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

The fifth and last requires a little more notice. It is in 2 Pet. i. 1: "to those that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ." This is the marginal reading, and the true one. It is strange that any should confound 'faith through righteousness' with

‘righteousness through faith’; but so it is. Evangelical orthodoxy has discovered to the satisfaction of many that the two are one, but it only shows how prepossession with other thoughts will obscure very plain Scripture. The apostle is speaking really of the precious faith of Christianity replacing the Judaism which had now come to an end, through His righteousness, who had come in to make good His prophetic Word, and sustain the hearts of the true Israel with His abundant loving mercy. It is plainly Divine righteousness still exhibited, not conferred, and exhibited in not allowing those really His in Judaism to lose by its being set aside.

And now the way is open to consider the righteousness of God as the Gospel reveals it. The texts are few in number, and for their importance need to be all, and well considered. The due order will be that in which their mutual connection is best illustrated and maintained.

(1) The passages in the 3rd of Romans naturally present themselves here first.

The Epistle to the Romans is that in which pre-eminently the subject of righteousness is treated of, as a glance at the Concordance will at once suffice to show. The Apostle in the first place is occupied in proving that, whether Jew or Gentile, man has none. The sins of the Gentiles (the heathen) are manifest. Their heathenism itself the fruit, not of seeking light when denied it, but of refusing it when God had given it them. “When they *knew* God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened: professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and to four-footed beasts, and creeping things.” And from this their notorious immorality proceeded: “wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness,” &c.

But if this was the case with the heathen, what about the people to whom God had restored the light: when they (as the rest) had lost it? Was Israel better? So far from that, the "name of God," committed to their trust to sanctify, had been "blasphemed among the Gentiles through" them. The very law in which they trusted was their righteous accuser, and had pronounced already as to them: "there is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." And "we know," says the Apostle, "that 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 may become guilty before God."

There was no difference then between Jew and Gentile: righteousness, measured by the Divine standard, was to be found nowhere among men. There the law left man, helpless and hopeless; with the knowledge of sin, but without escape from it: by the deeds of the law no flesh being justified in the sight of God.

And now the way is opened for the Gospel. The shutting of man's mouth opens God's. The exhaustion of man's resources throws the full burthen of his salvation upon the arm of God. Human righteousness there is none: the Gospel cannot open again that question; it is ended for ever. "But now the righteousness of *God* without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.

But the righteousness of God! the dreadful sound! What hope can be for guilty man in that? What Gospel in the display of Divine righteousness? It is what aggravates all his fears, when perhaps the thought of God's mercy has given hope. Yet unrighteous mercy clearly there cannot be. Mercy, above all with God, can only be exercised within the limits which His righteousness imposes. There cannot then be hope for man in a righteous God, except

it come in a way of righteousness. It is the glory of the Gospel, not merely to *reconcile* righteousness with salvation, but more, to *manifest* it in that very way: to take this object of man's natural dread, and show it him as his friend and advocate, not accuser. In the Gospel it is God who justifies man,—“justifies the ungodly,”—and He does this, not simply *although* righteous, but *as* righteous. His righteousness is the safe shelter of the sinner. Not merely His mercy is “upon” all them that believe, but His righteousness is: the exact force of which statement we must presently enquire.

But where is there Divine righteousness in this way exhibited? It is in Him “whom God hath set forth to be a propitiatory through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness with regard to the passing over of sins before committed, through the forbearance of God; to declare His righteousness in the present season, in order to His being just, and justifying him who is of the faith of Jesus” (iii. 25, 26).

I have altered some words, to try and bring out the sense more clearly. The word ‘propitiatory’ is the one used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament for ‘mercy-seat’; and that is doubtless its force here. “The sins that are past” of our authorized translation, are not, as it might be thought from the way it is there put, the sins of a man's past life, up to the moment of his justification, but the sins committed in the ages before Christ, while God forbore, but the ground of His forbearance was not yet made manifest. Now, “in the present season” of Gospel grace, God does not forbear merely, or “pass over”: He positively *justifies* or pronounces righteous. The cross, the blood of atonement, now declares His righteousness both as to the past and in the present. The precious blood has made God's throne a ‘throne of grace’—a ‘mercy-seat.’ Grace reigns *through*

righteousness. Righteousness and peace toward man are one—"they have kissed each other."

And where indeed, as in the blood of atonement, has God's righteousness been displayed? Where has it been seen, as here, that God's judgment of sin is no arbitrary thing but the fixed necessity of His holy nature? The penalty had to be met, when God Himself had to meet it, and at His own personal cost (and who can estimate at what cost?) to "provide Himself a lamb for the burnt-offering."

Yet this declaration of Divine righteousness, was it *against* sinners, or rather was it not specially for them,—for sinners as such,—for sinners only? Who else could claim the blood of atonement as shed for them, but such as needed it? Such as deserved the awful place to which the Son of God stooped to set them free? Hence we can fully understand how "if we confess our sins, He is *faithful and just* to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." To confess our sins is just to put in our claim as sinners to that to which sinners alone have title, and to which they have (if they will claim it) undoubted title. God is 'faithful' to make over to them the provision made for them, as soon as they put in their claim.

God's righteousness is pledged thus in behalf of all who by faith take shelter under it. Declared as regards sin by the cross, it is by this put upon the side of sinners, instead of against them. Hence it is "the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ unto all." It is, as declared in the blood of Christ, a city of refuge with a door ever open—shut upon none that come. And therefore it is "upon (or better, '*over*', which is the exact force:—it is over) all them that believe" (ch. iii. 22). It is not a dress clothing, but a roof sheltering from every storm, or a shield protecting from every shaft of the enemy.

No wonder then that the Apostle should say of a

gospel which reveals this, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ;" or that it should be "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (i. 16). He who can appeal to the very righteousness of God against every challenge of the accuser, may indeed boast of a 'salvation' complete, free, and eternal, which the Gospel, and the Gospel only, can bestow on man.

(2) There is a passage next which we must look at, although it be only to show that it does *not* bear, as it might seem to do, upon the present question. It is that in which the Apostle speaks of "*having* the righteousness which is of God:" "and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, *the righteousness which is of God through faith*" (Phil. iii. 9.)

Here, it is naturally asked, have we not the doctrine announced of our actual possession of the righteousness of God, and must we not understand the expression somewhat differently from that in the former cases? Does not this show that Divine righteousness is in some way the righteousness which is ours by faith?

A glance at the original will however clear up the difficulty. The "*of* God" is really "*from* God," as it is in 1 Cor. i. 30: "who *of* God is made unto us righteousness." In each case it means simply that from God our righteousness comes, but does not further reveal its nature. The expression is really a different one, and must not be confounded with that in the former passages.

(3) But we have now however to trace further the development of the Scripture doctrine. We have seen the righteousness of God declared in the death of the Lord Jesus, and therefore available as the safe shelter of him who takes refuge under it. We have now to see it declared further (but as the necessary

result of this) in the Lord's resurrection, where God first was able fully to shew Himself on the side of the One, who had now glorified Him as to sin, and suffered to redeem those whose condition it was. - He "was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father" (Romans vi. 4). His resurrection was now an absolute necessity to the display of that glory. Could He leave it as an unsettled question between Him and the world that crucified Him, on which side He was? Could He leave His cry for deliverance out of death unheeded? or suffer His holy One to see corruption? Manifestly He could not do it. God must act in righteousness and in power, and that both towards Christ Himself, and the people whose cause He had taken up.

As between Himself and the world, the Lord's appeal had been: "O *righteous* Father, the world has not known Thee, but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me" (Jno. xvii. 25). There He had linked His believing people with Himself in that appeal to righteousness in His own behalf. And prophetically already had He seen and announced the answer. The Comforter, the Holy Ghost, shortly to come as the witness of His ascension and of His glory, would therefore, by His very presence in it, "reprove (or convict) the world of sin, and of *righteousness*, and of judgment." "Of sin," says the Lord, "because they believe not on Me; of *righteousness*, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more" (Jno. xvi. 8-10). The Father would take back out of the world that beloved Son whom He had trusted in the world, and whom the world had so unanimously, so scornfully, so murderously rejected. They should lose the inestimable blessing which they had no heart to value. It was a righteous thing that they should lose it; how necessary a part of Divine righteousness to take Him who had vindicated it with a zeal which consumed Himself as the sacrifice

to its Majesty, out of the sepulchre in which man had with impotent hatred sealed Him up, no longer to leave Him in the world the man of sorrow He had been, but to exalt Him in the manhood once for all assumed as His, to the right hand of power!

(4) And this will lead us to the last text, where the result of His work is seen, and where those who are its fruit are linked together with Him, as needed for the display of Divine righteousness: the full answer to His appeal to the "righteous Father." "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21).

In our behalf He was made to be what He was not: for had it not been for others He was suffering, this would have been no display of Divine righteousness at all. It would have been the very reverse of righteousness. But therefore, in order to its display, those for whom He suffered must be identified with Him in the results of His suffering. He must not be alone in that place which as man, for man, He acquired,—which for Himself He had no need to acquire. The manifestation of Divine righteousness in the cross required, that as the fruit of it, His people should have the place which He had toiled to bring them into. They as in Him, blessed and exalted, are made *God's* righteousness; not merely righteous, but *His* righteousness,—its embodiment, as it were, and its display.

How complete, then, the triumph over sin, when Divine righteousness, not allows merely, but requires the presence of those once, and but now sinners, in the glory into which He has entered! How marvellous to be linked thus with the display of Divine attributes for ever! The glory put upon us is thus in every ray of it, the glorifying of Himself before His creatures, so that in us His character may be made known, in us the depth of His heart exhibited, to an adoring uni-

verse;—to creatures blessed unutterably by this knowledge. Not righteousness only shall be thus displayed, but treasures of “manifold wisdom” also, as well as (surely most of all shall *we* acknowledge it) “the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.”

“If the Scripture be the Word of God,—if even the consciences of men not the worst in life have given a true verdict,—man is a fallen being; and his estimates of sin and its desert are alike faulty. Viewed in this way by the light of reason only, we might well predict that the divine estimate of either would far transcend our own. Consequently that that judgment of it which *divine* transcend our own, and *was opposed therefore* (in the way Mr. Constable and others speak) to the moral sense, *would be precisely the judgment most rational to receive as God's*. Here reason and sense are in apparent opposition, an opposition which the Word of God accounts for, if it does not remove. How false then must be the assertion that the gospel has won its way by winning men's admiration of God in the character of a Judge! Do the judgments which now come on the world from the Governor of it, always approve themselves to men similarly as free from undue severity? No, the gospel has won its own way *by being GOSPEL*: by exhibiting God as a Saviour, not a Judge; by proffering a way of escape, not a mild sentence; and by the ransom given proclaiming the value put upon men's souls by Him who made them, and which gives real satisfaction to the awakened conscience by putting the righteousness of God, in the matter of salvation, upon the same side with His love.” *From “Facts and Theories as to a Future State.”*

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

(8) What is the camp? and has the exhortation to go forth without the camp any present application, Judaism having passed away?

Ans. The Apostle, after his manner, all through Hebrews, is looking back to the circumstances of the wilderness. The camp was that of Israel, the dwelling-place of the people as a whole. Among these a people under legal conditions of obedience (from Exod. xix.) God's tabernacle was. When they failed, and the golden calf was made, the tabernacle was 'pitched without the camp,' and they that sought the Lord went out to the tabernacle (ch. xxxiii.) The people being taken up again, still upon legal conditions though mingled with forbearing mercy, the tabernacle resumed its place amongst the people; and this went on in principle up to the cross, for, although long before this, the glory had left its place, and Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed the temple, and the people had then ceased to be owned as the people of God (Hos. i.), still the remnant brought back from Babylon had been permitted to rebuild the temple under Divine encouragement and assurance of God's Spirit being with them. At the cross was the complete revelation of man's condition, which no law could remedy; and Christ's death there, meeting that condition, abolished the camp (the *status* of an Israelite under law) for ever. Judaism is thus indeed done away: God is finally 'outside the camp.' The exhortation in Hebrews had to do with this: but if man sets it up again, the principle applies with only added force. It is a real, however ignorant, denial of what the cross has done,—of man's need and the Divine provision for it; and is more than ever, if possible, to be gone out from. That much that is around us is essential Judaism, none that know what Judaism is can doubt. If so, can God tolerate under colour of Christianity what is its direct opposite, and what he has removed to make way for Christianity?

GOD'S LOVE TO ME.

I. JOHN iv. 16.

I.

Oh God ! it is enough for me,
That thou hast brought me close to Thee ;
It is enough in every trial
Sufficient in the world's denial ;
This fills and satisfies the heart,
Though every word's a poisoned dart ;
That I am Thine !
That Thou art mine !

II.

It comes anew, with full relief,
In days of saddest, sorest grief ;
Simply Thy love, Thine own, o'erflowing,
Known deeply, yet beyond all knowing ;
That I am taken as Thy son,
Taken to be with Christ as one !
That thus I'm Thine !
Forever Thine !

III.

Father ! the gladness of Thy love,
Thy heart, and thus Thyself to prove,
Beyond all benefits, all blessing,
All gifts conferred, Thyself possessing—
This must consume affections, will,
And give the strength to meet each ill ;
Ah, to know Thee,
Is ecstasy !

IV.

The radiance of Thy face, while here
In struggle, maketh all things clear ;
When by the depths of sin confounded,
I know above it grace abounded ;
I know Thou lovest Christ too much
And me, to let me fall by such ;
I prove, in Thee,
Love's constancy .

V.

All possibilities are there
 Within Thy love, to meet all care ;
 To turn the thoughts that might be sadness,
 To songs of purest joy and gladness ;
 Not what I am, but what Thou art,
 Gives proof that we shall never part :
 I'll be with Thee,
 Eternally !

VI.

And though all service be so poor,
 All occupation little more,
 A failure to perceive Thy meaning,
 But little sowing, and less gleaning ;
 Though most that I have done be burned
 Though all,—this has my heart well learned
 Thou still hast me !
 I still have thee !

VII.

I know and I believe Thy love,
 And nought can ever this remove ;
 Thou'st told me, and I but receive it,
 I reason not, simply believe it,
 Taking Thy Son whom Thou hast sent,
 For Thine eternal argument ;
 Enough for Thee !
 Enough for me !

VIII.

If this be not Thy meaning, why
 Didst Thou set Him before mine eye
 The only, all-sufficient Saviour
 Meeting myself, my worst behavior,
 Then strike down every other hope
 Jealous for Him Thou hast raised up ?
 Why this from Thee,
 If not for me ?

IX.

Though some may tell me of their works
 To gain this peace, I know there lurks
 Within their words, a real denying,
 That Christ has finished all by dying ;
 From Satan I know this to be.
 Pure hatred to Thy Christ and Thee ;
 He's all to Thee !
 And all to me !

GOD'S LOVE TO ME.

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X.

How shall I tell this everywhere !
 Here, and e'en when with Thee up there !
 Dying, I'll risk my all upon it,
 Living, I stand in Him who's done it,
 Waiting for Him, it is with peace
 Settled and righteous, His release
 Wrought there for me,
 Upon the tree ?

XI.

Eternity has lost its gloom,
 Become my soul's attractive home,
 Because Thou'rt there, and every longing,
 And all the hopes within me thronging.
 Wait fruitage there with certainty ;
 Oh ! 'twill be heaven to dwell with Thee !
 And soon I'll be,
 At home with Thee !

XII.

I can conceive no bliss apart
 From Thee, revealed just as Thou art ;
 I find, to me, the very essence
 Of all that's true, is Thine own presence ;
 A soundless love that was so bold
 Must ever deeper depths unfold ;
 It came to me !
 It brought to Thee !

THE COMING AND THE APPEARING.

When we look at the coming of the Lord, as it is revealed in Scripture, we shall soon find that there are two very distinct classes of passages relating to it. The glory, as when it led Israel through the sea, of old, has a dark and a bright side to it. It is one thing to its friends, another to its enemies. Judgment and deliverance are both found in it. But more than this. As we look further, we shall find too that, *for the Christian*, in which aspect especially we are going to consider it now, these two thoughts are connected in fact with two different *stages*, and not phases merely, of the same great event. We are led to distinguish between the Lord's descent into the air, when the dead and living saints, raised and changed, are caught up to meet Him, and His appearing to earth, when we are manifested with Him in glory. We must try and apprehend these things a little exactly, in order to realize some distinctions, which are of very great value for our souls.

God has two spheres which He is going to fill with blessing. Heaven and earth, *both* reconciled by the blood of Christ (Col. i. 20), are to be witnesses of His grace in the presence of a redeemed people. While our place, as Christians, is to be with Christ where He is, there is also to be a "new *earth*, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Peter iii. 13). Heavenly and earthly, among the redeemed, are not to be merely temporary, but eternal distinctions. This not being understood on the one side or the other, has caused the greatest confusion in the interpretation of Scripture. The pendulum of opinion has swung from one side to the other, while the centre of rest was not

on either. The Christian's blessings are in heavenly places, Israel's in earthly. The "promises" of the latter are the Old Testament promises (Rom. ix. 3); of the former, those of the New. The "Morning Star" is the symbol of the one, as the "Sun of Righteousness" is of the other. (Rev. xxii. 16; Mal. iv. 2.)

The gathering out of the heavenly people is closed by the Lord's coming for His own. To it belong the saints of the present and the past, with some martyrs of a class specified in Rev. xx. 4-6, as also to find their place in the first resurrection. But the gathering for earthly blessing only begins then, when, what is properly called Christianity being over, the long-delayed promises of Israel's restoration and blessing are accomplished, and, in and through these, the blessing of the earth at large.

The Lord, then, having gathered to Himself His heavenly people, there is yet a pause before He appears with them in glory—an interval which, if short, is full of meaning and solemnity.

He pauses that the object and necessity of judgment may be fully manifested. Till the harvest is ripe He will not put in the sickle. Christendom, which yet bears His name, is to be seen in its true character; and, having refused His truth, it is given over to believe a lie. *The* antichrist, who denies both the Father and the Son, crowns also the Jews' inveterate unbelief by the denial that Jesus is the Christ; and in him the Comtist worship of humanity finds its true expression. A man sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God, the abomination of desolation in the holy place, "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." (2 Thess. ii.)

34 THE COMING AND THE APPEARING.

It is the apotheosis of human progress, dead and deified, when under Satan the germs with which everywhere the soil teems already are fostered rapidly into fruit. And God wills that thus their character, which man would not learn from Him, may now by experience be fully known.

But there is more than this; for yet in judgment does God remember mercy. Thunderings and lightnings issue from a throne which, after all, a rainbow (sure token of the blessing to be from the storm) surrounds. (Rev. iv. 3.) The very outbreak of human passion, stirred and stimulated by Satanic malice, will only bring a time of trouble, which God will use for the discipline of a people who, in the furnace of affliction, will be taught to look to Him. A remnant of Israel, called out by prophetic testimony, will be prepared to welcome Him who cometh in the name of Jehovah; and to recognize, in the Stone which the builders rejected, the One who is made the Head of the corner. From these too will go out to the Gentiles the gospel of the coming kingdom—the “everlasting gospel”—which, in one form or another, has been echoing through all the ages since the fall (Rev. xiv.); and thus those will be found among the nations, who will be put as sheep upon the right hand of the King, when He comes to set up His kingdom over earth. (Matt. xxv. 31, 32.)

His appearing will be thus the deliverance and blessing of an earthly people, while it will be the manifestation in glory of the heavenly: “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.” (Col. iii. 4.)

The two stages are distinguished in the second parable of Matthew xiii., where the interpretation goes beyond the parable itself. Here, first, the tares are bound in bundles for the burning, and the wheat is gathered into the barn; then, in the interpretation, the tares are gathered and burned actually; that is,

as the Lord explains it, "they shall gather out of His kingdom all the stumbling-blocks and doers of iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire," while, at the same time, "the righteous shall *shine forth as the sun* in the kingdom of their Father." The Sun of righteousness is risen, and they are partakers of His glory.

This clears the wheat-field of Christendom; but there is another account of the gathering out of the wicked in the last parable of the chapter, in which we find "just" persons still on earth from whom the wicked are separated. (v. 49.) These two gatherings must not be confounded; first, of the just from among the wicked; and secondly, of the wicked from among the just. They are evidently connected with the Lord's descent into the air, and with His appearing, or manifestation. And the distinction must be remembered when Matthew xxiv. is read. Throughout, it is the appearing we have to do with there. The figure of the lightning is not only a sign of what is manifest to all, but also of wrath and judgment. The gathering of the eagles to the carcass is another assurance of this: corruption is to be removed from the earth. The gathering *together* of His elect, not out of the earth, is that of Israel from their long dispersion. The comparison with the flood, further on ("the flood came, and took them all away"), shows that of the two in the field, or at the mill, the one taken is taken away by the judgment; the one left is left for blessing on the earth.

I only add here as to this, that in the division of the book of Revelation, the first three chapters give us the present or church times, in which the word of Christ is given by the Spirit to the churches. Rev. iv., v., with its vision of saints in heaven, shows that the Lord there (according to His promise to Philadelphia) has removed them to Himself. And from thence ch. vi.-viii. give us events on earth, in which the

periods of Daniel again and again come up to show that the last week of his seventy, broken off from the rest and long delayed by their rejection of Messiah, is now accomplishing, what in Matthew is called not "the end of the *world*" properly, but "the end of the [Jewish] *age*" (ch. xiii. 39, 40, 49; xxiv. 3; xxviii. 20). After this (ch. xix., xx.), the Lord appears with His saints, and the earth is purified and blessed.

So much to put things in their place for those who need it.* Our present theme is the Christian's relation to these two great events. It is easy to indicate what are the principles connected with them in the word of God. At the first of these we obtain the fruit of Christ's work for us, at the second, of our own. The one introduces us into the Father's house; the other gives us our places in the kingdom. The one is for us the terminus of Divine grace; the other, of Divine government.

And it is as beautiful as it is simple, that Divine grace has its way first. Before there is a question raised as to what *we* have done, eternal love welcomes us to the enjoyment of the fruit of what *Christ* has done. The triumph of grace is attained when, without question or challenge, the once lost sinners of earth are ushered into the bliss and joy of heaven. No accusation, no breath of suspicion, can whisper against those the blood of the Lamb has cleansed. The voice of the Lord 'with a shout' has called them up—the out-burst of His heart, the time of whose patience is now over. *He* must have the fruit of the travail of His soul, *we* the wonder of a love never realized in its fulness until then. Is it not meet that this should be first fulfilled, sacredly kept apart from all that would even *seem* to cast a suspicion, whether

*For those who desire further and fuller details as to these things it may be found abundantly in such volumes as Trotter's "Plain Papers on Prophetic Subjects"; Kelly's "Lectures on the Second Coming"; Baines' "The Lord's Coming, the Kingdom and the Church." &c.

upon the value of His work for His own, or upon that endearment of mutual knowledge between Himself and them, which is the solace and strength of our present life?

The judgment-seat is thus not connected with that promise: "I will come again and receive you unto Myself;" nor has "In my Father's house are many mansions" anything to do with differences based upon the fulfilment of our responsibility. It is a common thought, which the very words rebuke. For the Father's house is the home of all the children, and the Lord was not comforting His disciples, in view of His departure from them, by reminding them of *differences* that were to obtain amongst them, but by the fact that that house had room enough for all, and the places were *abiding*-places, as the word 'mansions' means. Thus He adds, "if it were not so, I would have told you"—He would not without forewarning have encouraged an intimacy which was to be so soon broken, not to be restored. They—and we, thank God,—were to be with Him, where He is: not some more, some less, but all alike 'with Him.'

The Father's home is not there where titles are used or dignities displayed. It is the home of the affections, where eternal love holds all alike in its embrace. God's children are to Him all 'children': as the children of a king, outside the house they may have their separate and not equal titles, but in His presence they are all in equal nearness, all His sons. So in the kingdom there will be difference, in outside governmental glory, it may be, much; and that founded upon the fulfilment of our responsibility: but it is not this that admits us into the Father's presence. He who has spoken to us of *His* Father as *our* Father, has given us equal interest in Himself; and thus our *common* blessings are our *choicest* blessings; the things that unite us are infinitely more than those which separate, or, to say better, distinguish us from one another.

And this is our joy to know; although indeed we are not slow to put value upon what our own hands have wrought, yet after all, what value compared with that work which stands alone in unapproachable perfection, and which has brought us all, and all equally, to God?

These common (which at the same time are our choicest) blessings are what are connected for us with the Lord's coming as distinct from His appearing. It is (as I have said) the terminus of *grace*, as the latter is of government and responsibility; and these are in most suited order and connection with one another. The Father's house and the presence of the Lord are the two things distinctive of the first of these; the judgment-seat of Christ and displayed glory are as characteristic of the second. But we do not reach the Father's house by the way of the judgment-seat, as the common theology most untruly teaches, but the latter by way of the former. That judgment has no question to raise at all as to our acceptance with God, or our place in Christ; but it has its own most important place, which we must carefully consider further on. For the present I must be content with drawing attention to what the reading of Scripture will confirm and illustrate abundantly for those to whom its consultation is a necessity and its teaching final.

It is not "The church, the church are we," but it is "Am I a Christian through knowing Christ as my Life-giver, as the propitiation for my sins, and as my living Saviour on high?" And, if so, I have to build on Him. It is this Christ, and this Christ only, that will do for me, a poor sinner.

KOHATH, GERSHON & MERARI.

I. KOHATH.

The book of Numbers is the history of the wilderness, the type of our journey through the world to the rest that remaineth for the people of God. It is preceded necessarily by Leviticus, in which first we learn what suits God in the sanctuary before we come out to practise it in the world. Leviticus is therefore the priests' book, as Numbers is that of the Levites : both types of Christians, who as priests have access to God where now His glory is for us displayed, and as Levites have to carry through the world the precious testimonies of that glory to us displayed.

And Christ it is in whom Divine glory shines for us. It is the glory of the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, but a glory which now shines out for us from the face of a man passed into the heavens. In Him we are brought near to God. In Him we know God. He has descended into the darkness which hid from us the face of God ; He has dispelled it forever. He has revealed the holiness and the tenderness of Divine love. We know God, and are known of Him. We are His, and He is ours.

This knowledge it is that we carry with us through the world ; and it is our competency for testimony in the world. It is in no wise a testimony to ourselves, but to Him. We are "the epistle of Christ read and known of all men." And this is not responsibility only, but competency ; for the epistle is not written with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God ; not on tables of stone, but on fleshly tables of the heart. The gladdening light which has shone in, shines out again. And, no matter what it shines upon, it is easy

enough to tell where the light is shining. The moon, our type, is but herself a ruin, but bathed in the sun's brilliance, she can reflect it to us.

It is a good and happy thing to know that this is Levite service. As Levites, they had (in one way) as much to do with the holy things of the tabernacle as had the priests themselves. Their service was in these. And ours no less is to carry with us through the world One of whom it is always safe and happy to speak, and occupation with whom is itself a real and precious testimony. What more real than when men see that He has attraction for us? what more precious than to feel, as our eyes fasten upon Him, that here is sunshine for a whole world, and healing, if they will have it, for every sin-sick, sorrow-sick heart, the wide world over?

"Ye are the epistle of Christ," says the apostle; not 'epistles.' It is not after all that you or I could be individually an epistle of Christ. No single heart of man is a table broad enough to write such an epistle upon. It takes the whole Church to make what could be called the 'epistle of Christ;' and then, as little as the world could contain all the sun-rays, or the moon reflect the full brightness of the sun, so little could even this fitly represent Him. Ah, we belittle Him, with all we can do. Yet a warm and bright spot can be made nevertheless with but a few of His beams.

The apostle, in Heb. xi., reminds us of a 'great cloud of witnesses' who had exhibited in their day the necessity and power of faith. But when he comes to the Lord, he does not mix Him up with these, but speaks of Him alone as the "Beginner and Finisher of faith."* They had shown it out piece-meal: one the energy, and another the patience, another the strength, another the humility, another the clear-

* Not 'of our faith': *our* is merely inserted by the translators, as the italic letters show.

sightedness of faith, and so on. But in His life there had been exhibited the full dimensions and the full content of faith, and there alone.

The work of the sons of Levi shows us this. Kohath, Gershon and Merari have each their division of labour in the things of the Lord, a division which I desire a little to interpret and to emphasize now. Only by the united work of all could that which needed, be accomplished. Still we must guard a little against a thought that might arise, as if it was meant that, for us individually as Christians, there was only a responsibility to present Christ in a certain character; as if we were to discern for ourselves whether we belonged to Kohath, or to Gershon, or Merari, and, if Kohathites, were not to intrude on Gershon's office, or if Gershonites, then not on Kohath's or Merari's. It is not so at all. We are indeed privileged and responsible to perform the whole Levite service, however much in fact our service may be of one kind rather than another. Just as, however much our lives may show perhaps the patience of faith rather than its energy, or the reverse of this, we are none the less responsible to manifest energy as well as endurance, or endurance as well as energy.

Now let us try to gather the meaning of this various service. If we look back to the consecration of the priests in Lev. viii., we shall find the blood of the ram of consecration, by which they were set apart to God, anointing the ear, the thumb and the great toe. This signified the devotion to Him of the whole man. The ear was anointed to listen to His word; the hand to do His work; the foot to walk in His ways of pleasantness and peace. Hearing—the receptive life; walking—the subjective; doing—the practical, outward life. Hearing—the Godward side; walking—the selfward; doing—the manward. The whole life was purchased and redeemed to God.

Now Levite service was, and is (as we have seen),

based upon the priestly. The Levites were given to the priests, to wait on them, as ministry or testimony in the world must wait upon communion. Thus it will not be strange to see these three parts of priestly consecration connecting themselves with the three families of Levi and their service in this chapter. Kohath, in fact, we shall find connected with the consecrated ear; Gershon with the anointed foot; Merari with the blood-sprinkled hand. To speak generally, the Kohathites represent the objective side of Christianity; the Gershonites, the subjective; the Merarites the practical manward side. If I fail to make myself at once clear, my meaning will come out, I trust, as we go on, and some important truth along with it.

Let us first, then, consider Kohath. The things entrusted to his care are the ark, the table of shew-bread, the lampstand (or candlestick), the golden and brazen altars, with the respective coverings of these.

The ark was God's throne in Israel, by the blood put upon the mercy-seat, at least typically, a "throne of grace." In the double material of which it was constructed (the shittim wood and gold) it symbolized the Lord, through whom alone God dwells amongst His people. This was further shown by its being wrapped in the covering veil, the humanity or 'flesh' of Christ. This was further covered with the badger-(or seal-)skin covering, which seems fitly to typify the impenetrable holiness which resists all outside influences, while over all the cloth of blue displayed the heavenly colour.

This is, then, Christ in glory (the gold outside the shittim-wood), maintaining the government of God in grace towards His people, and withal in unswerving holiness. By carrying this first, the sons of Kohath proclaim their Master: the Saviour-God, come down so low, gone up after His work accomplished, having not only put away our sins, but the enmity of our hearts also, and brought us back to holy and loving obedience.

Next comes the table of shew-bread, of the same materials as the ark, and covered with a cloth of blue, upon which the continual bread is placed, twelve loaves representing the twelve tribes of Israel, significantly covered with a *crimson* cloth, and that again with a seal-skin covering. Here is Christ again, maintaining His people before God, the fruit, in resurrection, of His death, the display of the value of the blood of the cross, where as "a worm and no man" He proclaimed the holiness of God in the very place of sin.* That holiness thus confessed then (in the seal-skin,) is seen enwrapping and applying itself to all.

Thus, in the ark and in the table of shew-bread, Christ is seen for God and for His people. The third object that comes before us is still Christ, and still as in the sanctuary of the heavens, the Light-bearer for his own; He who has the fulness of the Spirit, from whose face shines the light of the unclouded glory in which alone we see light.

The two altars follow, and still both are Christ. The first is the golden altar, from which the fragrant incense rises up to God:—a *double* type of Him who is altar and incense both. By Him, as worshippers, we draw near to God. In the fragrance of what He is, our prayers and praises find acceptance.

The *brazen* altar is the only object here for which we travel outside the heavenly sanctuary. Every Christian heart will understand why it is linked with what is heavenly. The brass, which here replaces the gold of the holy places, is the type of enduring strength, easily apprehended as the result of His

*The loaves are primarily for God, though the priest afterwards partakes of them. They are, as it were, the fruit of that "corn of wheat," which would have abode alone if it had not fallen into the ground and died, but, dying, has brought forth much fruit.

The "scarlet" or "crimson" is literally the name of an insect (a kind of cochineal) from which a dye was and is still produced. It is the same word as that in the text quoted above from Ps. xxii., where the suffering of the cross is seen.

I must be pardoned for passing briefly over what is of such infinite beauty and such importance also. My reader will do well to ponder it.

being what He was, Son of God as well as Son of man, as the brass in the altar overlaid the shittim wood. Although not suffering now, it is the holy Sufferer.

The ashes are taken from the altar, and a purple cloth now covers it: the royal colour, for the Lamb slain reigns as such; and once more over all is the unfailing seal-skin covering.

Thus, in Kohath's charge we have Christ in glory before us continually:

Giving God His throne of grace, as in the ark.

Giving man his place before God, as in the table of shew-bread.

The Lamp of the Sanctuary, in whose light alone we see light.

The One by whom our prayers and praises rise up to God.

Yet still, though reigning, the Holy Sufferer of the Cross.

Thus Kohath (so to speak) has his gaze upon the heavens, and Him who is seated there. His is objective truth essentially. He is receptive; and thus I have likened him to the priest's anointed ear. I do not mean that he is not practical, for this is all of the very first necessity for practice:—

God, known in grace, is now really *his* God:—he is reconciled—subject.

In Christ is His place, and he is a new creature.

The true light shines which manifests the character of all things.

He is a worshipper and the Father hears him.

And the Crowned One is the Crucified: the way to the glory is the cross.

What would we do without all this for practice? Yet, I may say again, they are essentially objective truths: they point the eye elsewhere than upon self; and than this very thing nothing can be more practical. Our first Pentateuch of lessons here, is Christ,

Christ, Christ, Christ, Christ; and Christ, too, risen and glorified, although still in His heart of hearts just what He was on earth.

Here, then, let us find our Levite lessons first. The first form in this school is the highest. We enter the heavens to be qualified for earth; we do not begin on earth, to reach the heavens. Our simplest earthly duties require us to be conversant with the "things above."

Ah! it is a very good thing to be brought down very low, not only by "Just as I was," a poor lost sinner, but by "Just as I am," a poor tottering Christian, as unlike Christ as possible. But still, He is leading me on, and God is conforming and fashioning me to His image.

It is a strange thing, the only-begotten Son of God coming into the world as a babe. All in heaven would be saying, "Why what place can be good enough for Him?" And man saying, "Turn a crib in which the oxen have been feeding upside down, and that will be good enough for Him."

If God dwells in me I am a new man—and a new man knows how to peel off the things that are contrary to the Spirit.

What a thought that God has found me, a poor sinner, and given me that *eternal life* which is in *His Son!*

We may be often not in right circumstances, but Christ ever knows how to speak to us in them.

LOT.

Gen. xiii.

“Lot merely follows Abram, as before he had followed Terah. Abram walks with God; Lot only with *Abram*. How easy even for a believer to walk, where another's bolder faith leads and makes the way practicable, without exercise of conscience or reality of faith as to the way itself. How many such there are, practically but the camp followers of the Lord's host, adherents of a cause for which they have no thought of being martyrs, nearly balanced between what they know as truth, and a world which has never been seen by them in the light of it! For such, as with Lot, a time of sifting comes, and like dead leaves they drop off from the stem that holds them.

“Egypt had acted thus for Lot. The attraction it had for him comes out plainly there, where the coveted plain of Jordan seems in his eyes ‘like the land of Egypt.’ But beside this, it is easy to understand how Abram's failure there had loosened the moral hold he had hitherto retained upon his nephew. . . . Abram manifests his own restoration of soul by the magnanimity of his offer. And Lot, not imitating the unselfishness by which he profits, lifts up his eyes, and beholds the fertility of the plains of Jordan, and chooses *there*.

The names unmistakably reveal what is before us here. Jordan (the ‘descending’) is the river of death, flowing in rapid course ever down to the sea of judgment from which there is no outlet—no escape. There, in a plain soon to be visited with fire and brimstone from the Lord, he settles down, at first still in a tent, though among the cities there, but soon to exchange it for a more fixed abode in Sodom, towards which from the first he gravitates.

Lot-like, even this he covers with a veil of piety. The plain of Jordan is "like the garden of the Lord"—like Paradise: why should he not enjoy God's gifts? He forgets the fall, and that Paradise is barred from man; argues religiously enough on the outside, while under it all the real secret is found in this, it is "like the land of Egypt." How much of man's reasoning comes from his heart and not his head; and a heart how far away from God!"

From a MS.

If you are not walking in practical holiness, you will be made to find it out in chastening. He cannot separate between the Head and the members; but He looks at our ways. The Lord is sanctifying us, body, soul, and spirit. What! is this corruptible body to be put apart for God? Yes! whether I eat or drink, or whatever I do, all is to be for the glory of Christ. Are all the affections of my heart, all the thoughts of my mind, to be put apart? Yes! as a member of Christ I have to walk in childlike faith; most watchful not to commit Christ to anything unlike Himself, because of being in *vital union* with Him. I may be but a hair of the head, the tiniest member, but God has blessed me with all spiritual blessings in Him, and being so blest, ought I not to walk accordingly—holy and without blame before Him in love?

I may see a saint shining in every way, and say, "I will go and imitate him;" but that will not do; you cannot carry any of the energy of nature into what is heavenly. If any one can truly say, "I am more like Christ than I was," I am sure that result can never flow from the energy of human nature.

G. V. W.

THE FUTURE OF INFIDELITY.

The infidelity of the present day is a sign of the times, as it is a striking attestation of the truth of Scripture. Everywhere the New Testament affirms the final apostasy of Christendom from the faith, and this as preceding the appearing of the Saviour. His own will be previously taken up to meet their Lord; the rest will openly apostatize, and throw off the inconvenient dress which has long impeded free action. It may be useful to adduce proof of this from Scripture, because Christians are obstinately shutting their eyes to it, and proclaiming that the triumph of Christianity is approaching, and that the whole world is to come under its sway. It is to come under Christ no doubt, and for this it is easy to quote texts; but under a dispensation which differs much from Christianity.

Upon this last point I do not enter here. My concern is solely with the growth of infidelity, so undeniable and so alarming as it is at present. It is at least a comfort to know how certainly it has been foreseen by the prescient eyes of Him from whom nothing is hidden, and whose love is infinite as is His knowledge. Infidelity itself is forced to be His witness, to any heart that amid the growing darkness may yet be seeking light from the source of light, and surely there are yet many such.

Our Lord's own prophecy (Matt. xiii.) shows clearly the gradual corruption of Christianity itself. The first parable, of the sower and his seed, declares His kingdom as yet to be no universal one. Three parts of the seed are destroyed by the devil, the flesh, and the world, as to fruitfulness, and only a fourth part really comes to fruit. The next parable shows the devil further at work, sowing *his* seed

(which of course is not the Word of Truth) among the wheat, and the crop becomes a mingled one until the day of harvest. These two parables give us yet only result as to individuals; the next two the character of the whole changed and perverted. It is not a good sign, the growing of a seed so small into a tree (vs. 31-32). How has He whom the world crucified become popular in it? Alas! the tree itself shows Christendom become a Babylonish power (comp. Dan. iv. 20-22.), and the 'birds of the air' reveal its character. Those who find lodgment in its branches now are the very birds that destroy the good seed in the first parable, and which the Lord interprets of 'the wicked one' or Satan (ver. 19). The last parable, with significant brevity, completes the picture: the 'woman'—constantly the figure of the professing church—hides in the meal (the fine flour of the meat offering, Lev. ii. 11) the forbidden 'leaven,' always the type of evil: false doctrine thus everywhere pervading the truth of Christ (comp. Matt. xvi. 6, 11, 12; Mark viii. 15; 1 Cor. v. 6-8).

This interpretation of these parables, so simple in itself, so amply as it has been fulfilled in the history of Christendom, is abundantly confirmed by single prophecies elsewhere. The professing church nourishes in her own bosom the seeds of the final revolt which will destroy her; and in no other way could she be destroyed. Her divisions, her heresies,—whatever it be that we regard as truth,—are alas, too evident: and a house divided against itself falleth. Is it not a solemn thing, that whatever we individually hold for truth, we must have the majority against us? And from the days of the apostles this was working, and its end foretold.

Thus the apostle Paul forewarns us:

"But shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness, and their word will eat as does a canker. . . . for the time will

read in the golden head the absoluteness of a power fresh as from God, before it had been tarnished by the hands that grasped it. In Persia, the next successive power, the unchangeable law was even above the king: "The law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not." In Greece, the third, republican forms begin to appear; which in Rome become still more and more prominent. The limited monarchies, into which the empire finally broke up, have been ever growing as a rule more popular. Its final revived form (for the same Word which foretold its temporary non-existence has foretold its revival) will partake, perhaps more decidedly, of this character; and the empire as a whole will be elective: ten kings will give their power to the beast.

In the seventh chapter of Daniel, the degeneracy is naturally of another kind. As beasts, they become ever more bestial: the lion, the bear, the leopard, and then a nameless beast exceedingly strong and terrible, stamping upon what it does not devour. The fourth beast it is that comes out openly against the Most High, of whom none (as beasts) had any proper knowledge: for the character of a beast is that it has no link with God; but the last uses (as men are using now) the human attribute of speech but to deny Him.

In the chapters between, this godlessness of the bestial character becomes still more and more apparent. In the 4th, Nebuchadnezzar owns the power of religion in man, and sets up a god, though of course a false one; in the fifth, pride degrades him to a beast; not owning Him, God gives him up to be what he has made himself; next, the king takes the place of an enemy to the true God, while himself still subject to the false; while, in the last form, Darius exalts himself above all that is called God,—allowing no petition to be made but to himself.

Thus, more and more, throughout these times of the

Gentiles, is man's wild will casting itself loose from Divine control, at last uttering itself in open defiance of Him; until God's judgment closes terribly the scene. If we take such scriptures to interpret what is all about us at the present time, how significant do they make them! How near may be the judgment they reveal!

But we must look yet at the 'woman,' whom we find in connection with the beast in Rev. xvii. As the city reigning over the kings of the earth and sitting on the seven hills, she is clearly Rome; but to say that is not to say all. She is the WOMAN,* professedly in subjection to Christ, and His, but a harlot, and the mother of harlots. Rome pagan was not and could not be this, nor did the pagan city commit fornication with the kings of the earth: this was *her* sin, who belonged, professedly, to the King of heaven. 'Mystery' too is her name: the very word, which Romanists themselves interpret 'sacrament', and a word which marks her character and her pretensions. 'Babylon the Great' marks her as the 'city of confusion' in opposition to Jerusalem, the 'possession of peace': a centre of outward unity, for name and power, which God has to come in judgment to destroy. She is 'drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.'

Now, what is the relation of this sinful woman to the beast? The one is evidently a civil power, as the other is ecclesiastical; and, when first seen, the woman sits upon the beast, the church is supported by, and more or less controls, the empire. She is secure too, prophesying to herself a continuance of power and ease. "I sit a queen," she says, "and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." Her rule is in a world in which Christ as yet does not reign: it does not distress her that He is absent; her heart is not in widowhood by that.

*The woman [spiritually] is the one made for the man; and the man is Christ, if it be not Antichrist: he is the man, but "the man of sin."

Suddenly, as "in one day;" her judgment comes. "And the ten horns which thou sawest, *and* the *beast, these shall hate the whore, and make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire; for God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." What we have already seen as to the character of the beast and of the ten horns will enable us to understand the real character of the opposition here displayed. It is no uprising of truth and righteousness against hypocrisy and iniquity long triumphant. It is the infidel rejection of whatever yet professes [however false the profession] the name of Christ. And this is marked still more distinctly by what is elsewhere said of these final kings of the Latin earth: "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for He is Lord of lords, and King of Kings; and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful." This carries us on to the scene depicted in Rev. xix., which needs no further comment here.

The history of Christendom in the old empire of the West closes in open and infidel revolt of her kings and people against Christ and all that bears His name.

This is the meaning of the hollow murmurs that are beginning now already to be heard on every side. A very recent writer who has written, not the least ably, on the present prospect, after quoting a paragraph from Dr. Newman, adds:—

"In the last sentence is indicated the vast and universal question, which the mind of Christianity is gathering itself together to ask—will the faith that we are so fast losing ever again revive for us? . . . Need the answer we are speaking of be definite and universal? or can we look forward to its remaining undecided till the end of time? . . . A state of things like this can hardly be looked forward to as conceivably of any long continuance.

*So the editors read it for "*upon* the beast."

Religion would come back, or conscience would go. Nor do I think that the future which Dr. Newman seems to anticipate can be regarded as probable either. He seems to anticipate a continuance side by side of faith and positivism, each with their own adherents, and fighting a ceaseless battle in which neither gains the victory. I venture to submit that the new forms now at work in the world are not forms that will do their work by halves. When once the age shall have mastered them, they will be either one thing or the other—they will be either impotent or omnipotent. Their public exponents at present boast that they will be omnipotent; and more and more the world about us is beginning to believe the boast. But the world feels uneasily that the import of it will be very different from what we are assured it is. One English writer, indeed, on the positive side, has already seen clearly what the movement really means, whose continuance and whose consummation he declares to be a necessity. ‘Never,’ he says, ‘in the history of man, has so terrific a calamity befallen the race, as that which all who look may now behold, advancing as a deluge, black with destruction, resistless in might, uprooting our most cherished hopes, engulfing our most precious creed, and burying our highest life in mindless desolation.’”

“The floods have lifted up, O Lord; the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.” “The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever.”

Yet how the view of all this intensifies the meaning of the Lord’s pregnant question, “Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?”

Israel is indeed to be gathered, saved with an everlasting salvation, “blossom and bud, and fill the face of the earth with fruit.” “The law shall go forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” But all this, the moment we give up the unmeaning and false spiritualising so prevalent, how it tells of Christendom’s unfaithful witness being set

aside! And when the light comes for Israel, will it be just a transportation of light from other quarters in which it still exists? The answer, clear and distinct, from the prophetic word is, "No, emphatically no!"

"Arise, shine! for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee! For behold, *darkness* shall cover the earth, and GROSS DARKNESS the peoples; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee." (Isa. lx. 1, 2.)

Could this consist with the existence of Gentile Christianity in the world at all? Surely not. The light will have gone out in complete darkness.

But His own? Will He have forgotten the least of His own? Oh, no! To these the word applies: "I will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. *I come quickly.*"

There will be a people safely carried through the flood, to find their blessing in a new scene beyond it; but our happier part shall be as his who "walked with God, and was not, for God took him," *before ever the flood came.*

Let us be more walking with Him now.

In the wilderness it was the Lord trying the heart, to see if He Himself was enough, and whether they were a people who, as "strangers and pilgrims with God," had their hearts so *packed up* that when they found no water they could say, "But we have God with us and Canaan before us." Whether they found such a measure of joy in the wilderness as to shew that their hearts *were packed up* to go forward.

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A REVIEW OF THE LAST THREE CHAPTERS OF W. H. MALLOCK'S WORK, "IS LIFE WORTH LIVING?"

PROTESTANTISM.

Mr. Mallock's book consists of thirteen chapters, ten of which are occupied with the question which gives it its title, a question considered in view of the scientific 'positivism,' or infidelity of the day, which alone makes it a serious one. In this respect these chapters are of interest and importance. He shows conclusively that if religion and all that is founded upon it are taken from life, little indeed remains that makes it worth the living. Especially, that morality and all social virtues cannot survive the loss,—the very names would cease to have real meaning.

The picture is well drawn, and not at all too dark in colouring. It may, by God's blessing, rouse some to enquire in what direction the advance of thought, so often talked about, is tending, and whether it be indeed advance or no. But the last three chapters are of another kind, and give us themselves an example of another tendency of the age which is very manifest, and which from a Scriptural point of view is only less grave than that Mr. Mallock is opposing. He believes, in short, that the sole remedy for Infidelity is *Popery*, that "the causes of this decay [of faith] have been maturing for three hundred years," that is, from the time of the Reformation, and that we must, of course, go back beyond this in order to find the faith in which no element of decay was yet existing.

I must not presume that Mr. Mallock is unacquainted with the times to which he would refer us, but it is a melancholy commentary upon his doctrine

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of the dependence of morality upon religion, to find this indefectible faith characterizing the times of John XXIII or of the Borgias. I can only suppose that the sanctity of the Romish church is a part of its creed, and that he applies here the motto of a previous chapter, "*Credo quia impossibile est*,"—"I believe, because it is impossible."

Obviously, in that case, we must give up history. I shall not therefore take up this with Mr. Mallock; I shall, instead of this, try and accompany him in his journey from infidelity to faith, and see if perhaps he may not have misinterpreted somewhat the sign-posts upon the road; all the more likely because in fact, as we shall find, he rejects the sure and perfect guide-book, which would have led him safely and surely to the haven he desires to reach. Fleeing from the positivist city of Destruction, he has got into the slough of Romanism, very much as Bunyan's pilgrim got into another. "But why did you not look for the steps?" asks his helper; to which he replies: "Fear followed me so hard, that I fled the next way, and fell in." There is this difference, that Mr. Mallock does not even perceive that he is in the slough. But let us follow him without more ado, only looking the closer to our own footing.

He begins his eleventh chapter by discussing the need of a supernatural religion; and here he observes wisely and well:—

"A purely natural theism, with no organs of human speech, and with no machinery for making its spirit articulate, never has ruled men, and, so far as we can see, never possibly can rule them. . . . Indeed this practical insufficiency of natural theism is borne witness to by the very existence of all alleged revelation. For, if none of these be really the special word of God, a belief in them is all the more a sign of a general need in man. If none of these represent the actual attainment of help, they all of them embody the passionate and persistent cry for it."

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Quite true and evident, and available against positivism itself as against natural theism, if any theism, purely natural, there were. Neither of these however, are we discussing now, and we may proceed with Mr. Mallock further. In the next step also, we shall find ourselves in absolute agreement with him.

“We shall understand this more clearly if we consider clearly one of the first characteristics that a revelation necessarily claims, and the results that are at this moment in a certain prominent case, attending on a denial of it. The characteristic I speak of is an absolute infallibility. Any supernatural religion that renounces its claim to this, it is clear can profess to be a semi-revelation only. It is a hybrid thing, partly natural and partly supernatural, and it thus practically has all the qualities of a religion that is wholly natural. In so far as it professes to be revealed, it of course professes to be infallible, but if the revealed part be, in the first place, hard to distinguish, and in the second place, hard to understand—if it may mean many things, and many of these things contradictory—it might just as well have never been made at all. To make it in any sense an infallible revelation, or in other words a revelation at all, *to us*, we need a power to interpret the testament that shall have equal authority with the testament itself.”

It is quite true, and God has in his goodness abundantly met the need. In the first place, the testament is absolute truth, as its Author is absolutely infallible. Scripture is not this ‘hybrid,’ but wholly supernatural. It may indeed (in a certain sense) “mean many things,” but these are never contradictory to one another; and, where “hard to understand,” this is the fault of the one *to* whom, not of the One *by* whom the revelation is made. And it is on *this* account, and not on account of failure in the revelation, that God *has* provided “a power to interpret the testament that shall have equal authority with the testament itself.”

My assertions as to this, of course, are valueless, but Scripture asserts it for itself with a plainness

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which to an honest and upright mind leaves nothing to be desired. In the first place no one can doubt that the Old Testament canon was complete before the New was written. To it the latter appeals as absolutely authoritative, convincing, Divine. To it undoubtedly the apostle's words (appealing to what from a child Timothy had known) refer, when he says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. iii. 16-17). To it the Lord refers as undoubtedly when He affirms in view of a mere expression in the Psalms, "The Scripture cannot be broken" (Jno. x. 35). To its power for conviction He bears equal witness, when He puts into the mouth of Abraham in the parable the saying, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke xvi. 31).

This rests, of course, upon the authority of the New Testament. As to the New itself the claim made is just as distinct. The apostle Paul, speaking expressly of the revelation of Divine things, outside of mere human knowledge, declares: "which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." The clearest possible claim of the fullest verbal inspiration (1 Cor. ii. 13). Peter, again, puts Paul's epistles among the Scriptures, and while admitting that there are things in them 'hard to be understood,' speaks only of their being *wrested* to men's destruction (2 Pet. iii. 16.)

The general character of the teaching is shown by its being hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed to babes (Mt. xi. 25). To the poor the Gospel is preached (v. 5.) Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble, are called, but God

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hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise (1 Cor. i. 26-27). Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings He perfects praise (Mt. xxi. 16).

I do not quote all this to vindicate it in any wise. I am not upon the question of proof or authenticity. I am merely giving what Scripture states for itself as to its absolute truth and thorough plain-speaking: statements which, if the Bible is to be believed at all, must be received as final and conclusive. A revelation which had to be picked out from what was not that, would not suit 'babes.' The foolish things of the world could not be supposed to reconcile contradictory sayings, or find the middle line of truth between them. On the other hand God's familiar language, when speaking to these, may easily be a stumbling-block to the world's wise men. Thus at any rate is Scripture written.

But to man as a fallen being, morally degraded, and therefore intellectually also, God has not denied, to those who look for it to Him, supernatural help. There is, not only truth, but the '*Spirit of truth.*' He it is who is the "power to interpret the Testament," equal in authority to the Testament itself, which Mr. Mallock requires; *not, however, to correct this*, but to correct in man the hindrances to his apprehension of it. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" (Luke xi. 13.) But this implies a confession of folly and of impotence that the 'wise and prudent' are in general the last to make. But let us go on with Mr. Mallock:

"Simple as the truth seems, mankind have been a long time learning it. Indeed, it is only in the present day that its practical meaning has come generally to be recognized. But now at this moment upon all sides of us, history is teaching it to us by an example, so clearly that we can no longer mistake it. That example is Pro-

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testant Christianity, and the condition to which, after three centuries, it is now visibly bringing itself. It is at last beginning to exhibit to us the true result of the denial of infallibility to a religion that professes to be supernatural. We are at last beginning to see in it neither the purifier of a corrupt revelation, nor the corrupter of a pure revelation, but the practical denier of all revelation whatsoever. It is fast evaporating into a mere natural theism, and is thus showing us what, as a governing power, natural theism is. Let us look at England, Europe, and America, and consider the condition of the entire Protestant world. Religion, it is true, we shall still find in it; but it is religion from which not only the supernatural element is disappearing, but in which the natural element is fast becoming nebulous."

He cites Mr. Leslie Stephen upon Canon Farrar, and the discussions on Eternal Punishment, and goes on:

"The critic, in the foregoing passage, draws his conclusion from but one Protestant doctrine. But he might draw the same conclusion from all; for the condition of all of them is the same. The Divinity of Christ, the nature of His atonement, the constitution of the Trinity, the efficacy of the sacraments, the inspiration of the Bible—there is not one of these points on which the doctrines, once so fiercely fought for, are not now, among the Protestants, getting as vague and varying, as weak and as compliant to the caprice of each individual thinker, as the doctrine of eternal punishment."

The sorrowful fact as to the condition of things in the present day is only to be owned without reserve. The reason for it we have not yet come to. I have been showing elsewhere that Scripture clearly predicts the apostasy from Christianity which is even now imminent, and which a number of causes are combining to produce. It is here that Mr. Mallock is scanty and superficial, although one disastrous principle he does very briefly indicate, but even then it is spoiled by the connection. The present state of things is not the result of merely one cause, but of many concurrent causes.

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Mr. Mallock sees as the whole thing Protestantism and its 'right of private judgment,' but then he confounds with this a perfectly distinct principle,—the sufficiency and infallibility of Scripture as the Word of God. Upon each of these we shall have somewhat to say, principally by way of distinguishing things that differ essentially, and which will necessarily hinder all just estimate of the present position if not kept distinct.

First, *Protestantism*. It is a name serviceable enough, no doubt, for certain purposes, and actually and largely used for all ranks of the secession from Rome. It is plainly, however, too loose and large a term to work with, in such an investigation as Mr. Mallock is instituting in his book. 'Protestantism,' in the wide sense he gives it,—wide enough to include for instance, Francis Newman, as one of its "highest minded and most logical"—has no common principle by which it can be judged. "Dissent from Rome" would include the extremest 'positivists,' and would not allow it to be even natural theism at all. Historical reference to the first Protestants would show them further removed from Francis Newman than from Rome itself. As to the right of private judgment, Mr. Mallock himself is exercising it, and it is leading him away from Protestantism instead of into it. While the sufficiency and infallibility of Scripture neither he nor Francis Newman recognize at all.

Thus Protestantism is not an available term in an examination like the present. It is a mere negative, useful for the one who, identifying Rome with certain evils, attaches virtue to the mere dissent from this, and equally useful for the Romanist who finds evil enough among those who glory in it, which by its means he may fix as a stain upon them all. It is a —*n*, of which we can know absolutely nothing until the value of *n* itself is known; and Mr. Mallock has not yet shown what its value is. He speaks of it in-

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deed as "a natural religion which denies the supernatural," but this only as being seen "by what it is growing into, not by what it is growing out of," so that he admits in it a change of character; the question is whether the growth he speaks of is parasitic or original, an evolution or a revolution. He tells us indeed that it always implicitly denied the supernatural, but he does not show this, all his examples being taken from modern developments, and those of the extremest kind. It would be (as we shall see, I trust) as proper to speak of Protestantism itself as a development of Romanism, because historically it sprang out of this, as to speak of the denial of the Bible-inspiration, as found in Francis Newman, springing out of the doctrine maintained by Chillingworth, that "the Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants."

As I have said, Mr. Mallock confounds with this the maxim of the "right of private judgment." But this is a very great and a very grave mistake. Protestantism as pure matter of history, began not with any claim of this kind, but with a claim for God's Word to be listened to, in view of terrible departure from it. I grant that not alone in Mr. Mallock's mind, but in many others also, that means the setting up of individual judgment against the Church at large; but only because it is assumed that God's Word cannot speak for itself, and must have an interpreter of some kind. In this case, no doubt, Protestantism was the revolt of individual minds against the mind of the Church; but if once it be allowed that God can utter His voice distinctly so as to make it certain both that He has, and *how* He has spoken, then the question becomes a serious one in any given case what is obedience to the Divine Word, and what mere revolt and disobedience. And between the Church and the individual if we admit a question, how can it be decided but by that Word, of which either professes to have the true understanding?

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The Church indeed stands in the way, and professing the Scripture to be unintelligible to you, requires you to take her own account as proof in itself. But it does not encourage belief in her to find that she does not want you even to see the book which she professes to interpret. She is afraid you will be a heretic, if you listen to it: that is the 'private judgment' which she reprobates, and you are on the verge of error the moment you assume to judge. Does it not look as if the Book she thus shuts up spoke but too plainly, and she felt it was against her? Why should she not show you how obscure it is, if it *is* obscure? And why should God write or speak more obscurely than the Church? She does not think you will get harm by reading *her* writings; she will allow you to ponder *her* doctrines and her dogmas; here she is not afraid: she can permit you to become intimate thus with St. Bernard or St. Gregory, why should it be more hurtful to become so with St. John, St. Paul, or even St. Peter, Pope-Apostle?

I pursue this no further now, because Mr. Mallock will bye-and-bye tell us what he thinks of Rome. I say but this much, in order to make it clear that the question cannot be assumed to be merely between individuals and the Church, so-called. Here one would be disposed to admit the superior credibility of the Church, and it is very important for her to have it stated in this way; the witness she is afraid of is respectfully bowed out of court, and it is hardly possible to decide against her.

If we will open Scripture, we shall find at once how potent is the witness she would set aside. Can you call it a question whether Paul wrote directly to the saints at Rome, at Corinth, or at Ephesus, St. James and St. Peter to Jewish believers similarly, St. John even to the 'little children,' the babes in Christ? Is that a matter of 'private judgment'? Can the

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Church's testimony that these writings are not intended for all Christians outweigh the testimony of our own eyes that to such they are actually addressed?

The commendation of the Bereans for doing just what 'the Church' bids us not to do, may be trite to mention; but is it in fact less powerful as a persuasive that our eyes cannot be trusted, or 'the Church' cannot? Is this again a matter of private judgment? Was it private judgment on the part of the Bereans? If it was, does not Scripture commend it? If it was not, can it be on our part, when we too "search the Scriptures daily, whether these things are so"? (Acts xvii. 11.)

And when the Lord speaks of God revealing unto babes what he hides from wise and prudent, and the apostle Paul speaks of the poor and the foolish being called, and St. John writes to babes,—is it mere private judgment that Scripture is not obscure, but that it speaks plainly, and so as to be understood? At least, that it professes to be so?

Now, if my ears deceive me about this, how shall I trust my ears when "the Church" speaks, and not the Bible? If it be mere private judgment that words mean what they say when Scripture is in question, why should it be less so when it is the Council of Trent or the Pope? Surely the "dream-land" into which it seems, according to Mr. Leslie Stephen, the Protestant doctrines are receding, is ready to receive Rome's firmer creed as well. The open jaws of Agnosticism will as readily engulf the one as the other.

Call it then private judgment, or call it what you will, Scripture must be responsible for the view that it will not mislead the true and earnest searcher of it. It invites confidence, as in itself absolutely true and trustworthy, and its voice, when it does so, has no tremor in it. It receives not testimony from man; it

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asks not his sanction, but his homage and obedience. Mr. Mallock is not prepared to give it this, as we shall hereafter see. But he believes in Rome, and Rome professes to believe in the book which says all this. Criticism has for Mr. Mallock destroyed the evidences of the credibility of Scripture. Is Rome less accessible then to criticism, judged by the book she professes to be for her? Is she purer, holier, truer, judge in whatever way you will?

But no, you *must* not "judge"—her!

I too refuse "private judgment," and Church judgment too, of Scripture; but I accept, with all my heart, the *responsibility of obedience* to what comes not without witness to man that God has sent it, a witness re-echoed from the inmost depths of earth to the topmost heights of heaven—from an eternity past to an eternity to come, and from the innermost heart of man to his lightest step on the soil he treads, so soon to be trodden over him.

But our present subject is Protestantism. Is it not a fact, that infidelity is eating the heart out of the so-called Protestant churches? If I could deny it I would; but I cannot deny it. Scripture, however, approves itself here, as elsewhere, as the Word of the Living and Omniscient God, who sees the end from the beginning. It has foretold the end. It has foretold, too, the several steps which lead to the end. It has given us the plan of what, to human eyes, is but an intricate maze, and we trace the connection of one thing with another, while there shines ever upon us the light of the luminous throne of God, under which the sowing travels onwards to the reaping, and the harvest declares what the seed is we have sown. Let us look and see. It is, no "dream-land," such as Mr. Stephen speaks of. It is but what is "noted in the Scriptures of truth."

Protestantism is breaking up, before Romanism. It is true; and why? Because the principle always

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applies that "judgment must first begin at the house of God." That which is nearest to Him, that which is most privileged, that which has had the responsibility of bearing His name, has ever and necessarily been on that very account the recipient of His judgment first. "You only have I known," says the Lord to Israel, "of all the families of the earth; therefore will I punish you for your iniquities." And their present state, scattered among the nations, and oppressed as they have been, is witness to the maintenance of this principle. Yet their reproach, as the prophet bears witness, though for their own iniquities, would be in the mouth of the heathen the reproach of the Lord Himself.

And so with Protestantism. If the Germany of Luther has become the Germany of Strauss and Buchner and Vogt, if the city of Calvin has become rather the city of Servetus, if England is fast becoming (alas) the hold of the unclean follies of materialistic infidelity, all is working according to the sure steps of Divine government, while Rome too at last will receive her death-blow from the same hands. And then what? All resource gone but in God, it will be time for God to arise and demonstrate His presence and His power to those whom nothing but the ocular proof will satisfy.

Protestantism is breaking up; and why? Not because her basis is the Word of God alone; but because her basis is *so little* the Word of God alone. What she has built upon the rock of Divine truth will stand, and what she has built upon lower levels the uprising floods will be too much for. It is not hard to point out with some exactness why things are as they are with her, and trace the development as one purely natural and to be expected. Natural development is comparatively easy to follow out in this way; the spiritual and supernatural is another matter. No perfecting of the telescope will bring God into the

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field of view. Faith alone can do this; and "all men have not faith."

The birth of Protestantism was at a time when the nations of Europe deemed themselves already Christian. As far as sacraments and a general faith in the Church could effect this, such they were. Rome had triumphed over all opposition. Lollardism seemed almost dead in England; the Hussite heresy broken and feeble in Bohemia; the council assembled for the reformation of the Church at Constance had burnt the only practical reformer; Florence, more lately, had burnt hers; these bale-fires were supposed to purify a plague-stricken district: Rome was at ease and merry: she sat as a queen, and was no widow, and prophesied that she should see no sorrow. Then the Reformation came.

There were two elements* in it: a purely human element and a Divine. God was first with the Word of His truth, delivering souls from a thralldom, which was less of Rome than of sin and of Satan. Men were led to conviction, made to know the grace of God, and, when they awoke to the full consciousness of their new condition, the yoke of ecclesiasticism was gone. But there was another yoke also that Rome had imposed—a political one; and the nations had felt it. Conscience and self-interest found they had common cause together, but conscience lost by the co-partnership. The churches of the Reformation became national, that is, political, churches; reformed creeds, matters of statesmanship and badges of civil independence. Truth was sacrificed to expedience; was enforced by civil edicts, not by spiritual power; was prostituted and carnalized by men who valued it as a means to attain not Divine blessings but selfish

*I have dwelt upon this already elsewhere; but it has a special interest in this connection, which leads me briefly to go over the main principles again.

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ends, and who, when the time should come to realize that those ends could be better served by its abandonment, would give it up as readily as they had embraced it at first.

More than this : though they might be temporarily and partially united, the truth and men's worldly interests were essentially opposed. The maxim of the world is, "self preservation is the first law of nature." The maxim of Christianity : "Forasmuch as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind." Rome had accommodated herself after her fashion to both. She had provided the monk's gown and cell for the devotee ; the light penance or the indulgence for the excesses of a freer life. The truth could not accommodate itself. The yoke, to its unsanctified professor, had nothing as such to recommend it. It might have been foreseen that the temporary tie would be in the end broken. The inconvenient cloak would be cast off. Is it a wonder that the sow that had been washed should return to her wallowing in the mire ? The washing must be deeper than the skin that would prevent this.

More particularly to state the case : the two main elements to be considered are nationalism and an authoritative creed ; and the latter is necessary to the former.

Nationalism, which has given its character to other systems which are not that, means, as a matter of course, a membership largely unregenerate, (save as baptism may be thought to avail for this, which certainly does not affect its practical character) ; a government more or less political ; and as a necessary consequence of these two things, a ministry more or less unconverted also. These things may with Mr. Mallock be of less consequence than the protest against Rome ; but he whose views are formed by Scripture will not judge so. They are the means by which whatever measure of truth may be in the

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creed, or even the wonderful blessing of an open Bible, may be rendered as powerless and ineffectual as can be: a soil in which the practical infidelity everywhere present is ready to ripen into formal infidelity, whenever circumstances otherwise favour this.

Under the head of 'creed' I may include the established church order, whatever it may be. And here whatever may have been the measure of truth known, or of error held by its authors, is imposed upon the conscience as the measure and test of orthodoxy. Those who dissent are forced into dissimulation and disobedience to what they recognize as truth upon the one hand, or into open separation on the other. The question cannot be argued with the Bible and the conscience, but with the 'standards' in the law-courts; while heresy condemned plainly by Scripture but unprovided against by the creed, flourishes safe from the assault of Scripture, protected by the creed which was to keep out heresy.

Schisms arise. Truths become party badges and weapons of controversy. Differences are magnified, and the common Christianity diminished in proportion. A babel of discordant sounds distracts the inquirer after truth. 'Conversion' comes to mean 'proselytism.' Under all this (if Scripture be believed) the enmity of man's heart against God and what is of God, works on unchanged. Considering all this, what but the wonderful pity of the Almighty could have kept things from long ago breaking up? What we see now is not the wonder. The wonder is that we have not seen it long ago.

But the cause of it all is not in 'Protestantism', as such; still less is it in taking the Bible as the basis of religion. It is in *not* taking it rather. It is in the creed being substituted for the Bible, political power for the power of the Spirit, the nation (or the followers of a set of doctrines) instead of the Church. It is in bricks being still used for stones, and slime for

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mortar: man's manufacture for Divine; the compacting of human motives instead of Divine cementing; all lessons out of Rome's book, alas, and learned too faithfully.

But Rome has more coherence *because* less truth. Error will readily unite with error. The house is not divided against itself at least. Bring in the truth here: you have divided the house, and it falls.

But now we must listen to Mr. Mallock's advocacy of the claims of Rome.

I have indeed now to walk as He walked, I have to glorify Him: *not* to make something of myself religiously, or find satisfaction in myself. And for this purpose not self-occupation, but occupation with Christ is what I want: "We all with open face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit." (II Cor. iii. 18.)

I see my reflection in His blessed eye. No one ever looked on Him without seeing all the Father's glory in Him. The infinite fulness of the Godhead is in Him bodily, Oh, how little we know of that fulness in Him! What will it be to see that Christ Himself, with faculties given by God to enable us to take in the glories of His person!

I know Christ, and you do also, but did you ever get a full taste of Him and say, "I know nothing, O Lord, help thou mine unbelief?" I have. Such a sense of fulness in Him, and of an eternity of blessedness *with Him*.

I believe the time is coming, if not come, when it will no longer be the question of professing to be Christ's, but of whether we are living the life of Christ.

G. V. W.

KOHATH, GERSHON AND MERARI.

2. GERSHON.

The family of Gershon have a charge essentially different from that of Kohath. Theirs is "the curtains of the tabernacle, and the tabernacle of the congregation, his covering, and the covering of the badgers' skins that is above upon it, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the hangings for the court, and the hanging for the door of the gate of the court, which is by the tabernacle and by the altar round about, and their cords, and all the instruments of their service, and all that is made for them."

These curtains are, as to material, of goats' hair, or of fine twined linen; the coverings, of rams' skins and of badgers' skins. The 'fine linen,' we are clear, from Rev. xix. 8, is 'righteousness'—practical righteousness (*dikaionata*). The curtains which compose the tabernacle itself, represent this in Christ, in whose flesh the Divine Word 'tabernacled,' as the expression is in Jno. i. 14. The hangings for the court represent the righteousness of saints, exhibited outside the sanctuary in the world. The hangings for the 'door' and 'gate' again represent Christ, as the only way of access. The skins, whether of goats or rams or seals (badgers), give also traits of personal character. That is, it is *walk* (the manifestation of personal character) that we find expressed in all with which Gershon has to do: the anointed *foot* is what characterizes his occupation here.

Let us look at these things however, more particularly.

The curtains which formed the tabernacle itself are described fully in the book of Exodus. They

were of "fine twined linen and blue and purple and scarlet with cherubim of cunning work." The first was pure white, with which the blue, purple and scarlet were interwoven in patterns of cherubim. We may remember the Lord's own garment, seamless, woven from the top throughout; and also Joseph's 'coat of many colours.' The white is of course absolute purity, the complete reflection of the perfect ray of light. Blue is the heavenly colour; purple, the royal; scarlet (or crimson) the sacrificial.* These characters in the Lord combined to form the cherubic patterns which show Him as the One maintaining the majesty of the throne of God, for the cherubim belong ever to the throne. The Lord then is here before us in the diverse glories that His life down here exhibited. King of God's kingdom; heavenly, come down to earth; highest, and lowliest; absolute purity, self-sacrificing for the guilty. Never shall we get beyond this wonderful display of grace and goodness in which Deity has made itself familiar to us; that path in which extremest suffering only pressed the grapes into that precious "wine, that cheereth God and man." Such then is Gershon's occupation: and because that wonderful life is taken up from earth, and exists but as a remembrance, therefore is He indeed 'Gershon'—his life an 'exile', though but temporary, from his true home, where Christ is.

But the curtains of the tabernacle, though its beauty, do not give us all. Above these, as a tent upon the tabernacle, were the curtains of goats' hair, in which it puts on (so to speak) its prophetic garb—"the rough garment," assumed so often "to deceive" (Zech. xiii. 4), but here the garment of the absolute truth itself.

* I in no wise refuse another meaning in Numbers xix., and some other places, and see a profound significance in the fact of 'earthly glory' being thus represented by that which represents also the suffering of the cross; but the former meaning seems to me only applicable in a bad sense; to the Lord here it could not apply.

This is the John Baptist covering of separation from the world, which the Lord did not wear externally, or as outward separation, refusing meats and drinks and social intercourse with those after whom as a physician, or a shepherd, He had come to save them. Still if He could touch the moral leper and be undefiled, that only showed how much deeper in, as nature and life, the separation lay. It was an essential *unlikeness* that made Him able to approach so near, as oil and water can be mixed and never mingle: contagion requires that the being to whom the disease is carried, should have affinity with the one from whom it is brought.

Yet was He true man, truest that ever was, the pattern and perfection and archetype of man; the "corn of wheat" which, till it fell into the ground and died, abode alone, and yet was to be that from which all human harvest was to grow for God. Strange to those to whom He was nearest, essentially unknown where most accessible, His words to Philip apply to more than to him: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?"

And it was the goats' hair; for the goats' hair speaks of sin, and of its due from God, and of the needed offering for it; and the whole condition of the world, and all God's dealings with it, connect themselves with this. He hated sin with a hatred none but God could have, yet longed over men with a longing none but a Divine heart could know without breaking. And these two things, this hatred and this longing, the prophet's garb implies; for the prophet is God's mouthpiece to men before judgment, and in view of judgment, yet God speaking, that He may not judge. And such, though more than such, He was.

Over these curtains was another covering of rams' skins, dyed red, the beautiful symbol of devotedness even to death. For the ram is not simply the sheep,

the meek surrenderer of life, but, as the *male* sheep, imports the bringing into this surrender a firmer and stronger will, an energy of character which makes it purpose, *determinate* surrender. Hence the ram was "the ram of consecration," and the typical trespass, or restitution, offering. The reddened ram skin shows the purpose actually carried out, and to its extreme result.

Over all this was, again, the seal-skin covering.

For my purpose here I need not enter into further details. All this is Christ, however it may be in measure reproduced in His people. This part of the tabernacle was indeed Christ exclusively; for if "we" too "are God's house," it is in the boards and bars we find our representatives; that over which these coverings fell, and wrapped them in their beauty. Yet outside the sanctuary, as I have said, we do find, in what was Gershon's case, that which typifies the "righteousness of the saints," their practical character as manifested in the world, were indeed manifested. The hangings of the court exhibit this.

They were of fine twined linen five cubits high, two hundred and eighty cubits in their compass round the court; hanging by silver hooks from pillars of brass, resting upon brazen sockets in the sand of the wilderness. The fine twined linen we have already looked at. The numbers also speak, if we have skill to read them. *Five* is the stamp of what is human—the divine measure for us is still the 'measure of a man,' yet beyond what we esteem man's measure, as we shall find if we reckon it here.* The compass round, 280 cubits, seems to yield the numbers 7 x 4 x 10. Ten, the number which tells of responsibility, as the ten commandments are the measure of man's duty under the law. Four, the testing as to this, which the world-

* Taking the cubit at Parkhurst's estimate or thereabouts, 17½ inches, it would be over 7 feet high.

journey implies: these two together give us *forty*, the well-known stamp of perfect probation. Finally, seven is the sign of perfection, but not merely of human, but of Divine work. Thus we have not only the fulfilment of responsibility, as measured by God and tested in the world, but also in all this 'God working in' us what we 'work out.' The brazen pillars again are Divine strength upholding human testimony, while the *silver* hooks show how all hangs upon the redemption-work of Christ. This perfects the picture.

We are now in a position, then, to see how peculiar is Gershon's charge. He is occupied whether in Christ or in His people with what we may properly call subjective. It is not Christ in His offices or in His work that He has to do with, but Christ in His personal character, as manifested by His blessed walk. And thus naturally we find associated with this the same thing as to the believer: not his position, nor his worship, or what he is in the holiest, but what he is to be as a man upon earth.

And this comes in its rightful and proper order, as dependent upon Kohath and his objective side of things. The 'foot' must wait upon the 'ear.' The only way to practice is by faith; and a faith which puts Christ in a place which He has taken for us, and puts us in corresponding relation to Him as in that place. The objective must be before the subjective, as the Levite himself waits upon the priest, and as the book of Leviticus precedes the book of Numbers.

But then it has its place, and a most important place it is. *Could* we be really in the glory of the holy place, and not come out, as Moses from the Mount with something of that glory reflected in our faces? We are not simply citizens of the heavenlies; we are also and on that account, strangers in the world. The practical way in which we show ourselves the latter is the real measure of how far we have entered into the other. Gershon surely follows Kohath: not

precedes indeed, but inseparably follows. We must learn Ephesian truth really, properly to understand Hebrews; but Hebrews is then as necessary as Ephesians.

In our place in the heavenlies we have no failures and no weakness. "In Christ" we have, blessed be God, unchanging perfection and abiding rest. In the wilderness there is frailty, and too often failure. Yet God has united the two together for us now, as in the holy places of the tabernacle, the feet still pressed the desert sands. And we must remember that if the wilderness had its pains and difficulties, it had its own peculiar privileges also. The manna fell nowhere but in the wilderness. It was there the power of the living God was made known for and to His people. It was there that living guidance was needed and obtained. It was there that in God's holy discipline the lurking evil in His people got its rebuke. Precious and wonderful lessons, which we may find hereafter it was worth while even to have stayed awhile on earth to learn. His power and His grace are not alone found in the sanctuary, but suit themselves to the desert also. The very things of the sanctuary can put on their travelling dress and accompany us by the way. We do not lose them. The world is the sphere rather in which we need to carry them with us, and tell out their preciousness.

One day many in and of the world will say to God, "Ah, I have sung the gospel a thousand times set to fine music." That is how hearts become so hardened—singing the gospel without a sense of the soul's need of it. But what can one think of the children of believers singing the gospel and its having no effect? It makes one tremble, and one can only look to Christ for them, as the One who is the Life-giver.

THE PHILISTINE CAPTIVITY.

JUDGES xii-xvi.

The book of Judges, when we look at it in its typical significance, is one of the most solemn books of Scripture. It gives then, not merely the failure of the earthly people of God, when set in the land which the good hand of their God had bestowed upon them, but the failure of a heavenly people upon their heavenly ground. It follows the victories of the book of Joshua as the shadow after the sunshine; or as if the sun of the protracted day of Gibeon had set in a night still more protracted. And the book is so sorrowful, because it *ends* in sorrow as it began. The history, spite of Samson's mighty deeds, leaves them still in the meshes of the last captivity, the forty years under the Philistines.

I do not propose to take up the book, but only to point out briefly the lesson, as far as I may be enabled, of this last captivity. We may understand its application at once in measure, when we remember that the last days of Christendom, the Lord having removed indeed His own, are exhibited in Babylon the Great, who receives her judgment only from the hands of powers apostate from Christianity altogether.

The significance of many of these nations at whose hands Israel suffer, requires yet the voice of the interpreter; but the Philistines are a people whose typical application seems exceptionally easy to make. I barely point it out here for the consideration of any men of Issachar (1 Chron. xii. 32) among us, a class of people sorely wanted in times like the present.

The Philistines are children of Mizraim, that is, Egypt. They are Egyptians in the land of Canaan, natural men in heavenly things. The 'way of the

Philistines' was the short cut from Egypt, which the Lord refused for His people, in which there was no 'sea' to meet; they had come up through a path devoid of obstacles into a land which in the purpose of God was not their own. In this land they were but 'Philistines,' 'wanderers,' as the name imports, in opposition to 'Hebrews' who are 'passengers,' those with a fixed point before them, and a purpose to reach it.

In Genesis we find them already thus under their king Abimelech, an hereditary name as it would seem, and meaning "my father [was] king." It plainly points to authority derived from succession, a thing of easy application in Christendom to-day. To this the men who derive not authority from God, as Paul, are prone to turn, and thus Rome claims her 'apostolicity.'

Abimelech's chief captain is 'Phicol,' a word which is luminous in this connection: it means, 'the mouth of all,' and reminds us at once of the famous rule of Vincentius, which the advocates of ecclesiasticism repeat to us, "what everywhere, and at all times, and by all" has been maintained. The 'voice of the Church' is of course, though only professedly in this case, 'the voice of all': and Phicol is still the chief captain of the forces of the Abimelechs to this day. So in Genesis the two re-appear in Isaac's day, and are accompanied by one who has the significant title of the "king's friend"—Ahuzzath, 'possession.'

Both Abraham and Isaac come in conflict with the Philistines about the wells of water, which the former have dug, and the latter contend for, although they seem unable to maintain or profit by them; for Isaac has to dig again "the wells which they had digged in the days of Abraham, his father, for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham," "and filled them with earth." This too is easy to interpret by those who know the value of a

“well of springing (living, Gen. xxvi. 19, marg.) water,” and how the Lord has been graciously supplying us in these days from wells re-dug, and what contention there has been, and is, as to our right to them. More than one well, alas, did Isaac yield up; and if it was his shame, it is our warning.

In Judges, the great Philistine captivity was not the first one. Shamgar, the son of Anath, had delivered them with an ox-goad some time before. And you will find in the New Testament already the commencement of, or at least the threatening of bondage, which took place afterwards. Did Paul use the ox-goad, when he resisted the circumcision of Titus, “and that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage?” There were men then who could do exploits. The wells too were not stopped till ‘after the death of Abraham’; then how shortly!

The last captivity lasts forty years, and out-lasts the book of Judges. I do not know if any Abimelech had to do with it, or Phicol were the captain of the kings’ forces. We must remember that Abimelech was only king of Gerar, and that the Philistines were a people who stretched far beyond, along the low levels of the Great Sea coast. “Natural men in spiritual things” reach far beyond Rome, or even Ritualism, and I do not know just the people who had Israel in bondage now. Let us take the lesson and apply it wherever it may apply. The intrusion of un-sanctified knowledge into heavenly things, this is Philistinism, and there is danger here.

God’s remedy, (and if it were not more effectual, the fault lay with man)—God’s remedy, as ever through this book, was a judge. When a judge judged the people there was deliverance; for the captivities were the result of sin. Here the truth is especially insis-

ted on, for the deliverer is of the tribe of Dan, whose name means 'judgment' His father is Manoah, 'rest,' a name which carries us back in memory to him who found it of old, brought through the flood in his ark of gopher wood, to where in a new scene God could find himself in the sacrifice a savour of rest, and bless the rescued ones. All power for deliverance, does it not indeed spring from this? Here, a new Abraham, Manoah has a son born from the barren woman, 'of promise,' as was Isaac. He is the deliverer, Samson ('the sunny') *a Nazarite to God from the womb.*

I do not go into his history. How little he was what he might have been we need not think of now. It is the lesson of strength for deliverance from Philistinism we want to learn: it lies in the long woman's hair of the Nazarite, the sign of subjection and dependence upon God, which God answers with the shining of what He is, for us, in us, and from us. Children of 'rest,' brought through from the other side of the flood to enjoy in peace and blessing the new creation, ours is the land, and we are entitled to enjoy it as our own, not captives but free men; *only* the freedom can only be found in dependence, and in devotedness to God. Christ's easy yoke and His light burden are the *means* of finding rest unto the soul,—not, of course, from guilt and condemnation, but from our own way and will, the essence of all unrest. This alone can free us from the power of the enemy, and God may use us to free others too.

If you got into heaven, and found there only a sceptre and crown, you would not be happy, but if you found there *Him* who is the centre of all God's perfections, and could say, "*He* is my peace," you would be perfectly so.

G. V. W.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

(9) What is meant by being "gathered together in My name" Matt. xviii. 20. ?

Ans. I cannot reply much better or more briefly than in words already used elsewhere :—

"The *name* of Jesus and His person are distinguished in the Lord's words. Where people are gathered to His name He will be personally present. We must not *assume* we have Himself to gather to. For sight He is not here. And faith must have His word to justify it. The condition of His personal presence in our assemblies is that we are gathered to His name.

His name is the expression of what He Himself is. He was called Jesus, because He should save His people from their sins. Philip preached "concerning the *name* of Jesus Christ," that is, "preached Christ," or the truth of what He is; and the Samaritans, believing, were, "baptized unto the name of the Lord Jesus," identifying themselves with that truth He had declared.

It is "gathered *unto** My name," and not *in* it. The difference is obvious. To be gathered *in* His name means necessarily no more than by His authority. To be gathered *to* His name, means that His name constitutes the centre of union. *What* unites us is the truth of what He is; and where He finds a people for whom this bond suffices, there He promises the blessing of His personal presence in the midst.

This presence must be distinguished from the presence of the Holy Ghost in the saints or in the church as the house of God at large. The Holy Ghost is always in the saints and in the church at large, unconditionally as to any principle of gathering whatever; and His presence, therefore, *does not sanction the gathering as such.* This should be as plain as it is important; for it shows how God can work in His grace amid all the confusion of Christendom, without sanctioning the discordant and sectarian principles which prevail, in the least. *Christ's* presence in the midst, on the other hand, *is* sanction; † "whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven," is connected with it.

* So the Greek; and also in Acts viii. 16, wherever baptism is spoken of.

† Not, of course of the *state* of the gathering otherwise.

If it is asked, how can He who is corporeally in heaven, be (other than by His spirit) now on earth? that is answered by another question, how could He who was corporeally upon earth, speak of Himself then as "the Son of man which is in heaven?" A spiritual, not corporeal, presence in the midst it surely is, not the less real on that account; and Himself really, not representatively, by another.

If then, we are gathered to His name, nothing less is implied than the absence of all sectarian terms of fellowship; what unites is the true confession of a true Christ, and this involves the exercise of effective discipline, for that would be no *true* confession of His name which allowed His dishonour. With this proviso, such a principle necessitates a door being open for all that are really Christ's; and if only two or three be on it, it is yet the common ground for all, the *ground* of the Church of God, though the immense proportion of the Church be elsewhere. And the two or three there, however few, have the assurance of the Lord's presence with them, and of His sanction of the place they are taking. For binding or loosing, the exercise of discipline, or as one near in living power for all they call upon Him for, they have Christ with them, and that is the force of this precious Scripture as to the simple prayer-meeting of two or three."

MUST IT BE EITHER INFIDELITY OR ROME ?

POPERY.

Mr. Mallock begins by telling us what is surely true, that "it will be felt even more forcibly than it can be reasoned, that if there be indeed a God who loves and cares for men, he must surely, or almost surely, have spoken in some audible and certain way to them"; and that "if we expect to find a revelation at all, it is morally certain that it must be a revelation already in existence." With equal truth he adds that, "our enquiries being thus confined to religions that are already in existence, what we are practically concerned with is the truth of Christianity only. "No man denies that Christ was born of a virgin in order to make the same claim for Buddha; or denies the Christian Trinity in order to affirm the Brahminic."

But having spoken of Protestantism in the way he has, he supposes it will seem to many he has dismissed the question. He begs us to remember that "the oldest, the most legitimate, and the most coherent" form of Christianity is the Church of Rome. He complains that the true conception of her is something quite strange to us:

"Protestants basing their religion on the Bible solely, have conceived that Catholics profess to do so likewise; and have covered them with invective for being traitors to their supposed profession. But the Church's primary doctrine is her own perpetual infallibility. She is inspired, she declares, by the same Spirit that inspired the Bible; and her voice is, equally with the Bible, the voice of God. This theory, however, upon which really her whole fabric rests, popular Protestantism either ignores altogether, or treats it as if it were a modern superstition, which, so far from being essential to the

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Church's system, is, on the contrary, inconsistent with it. Looked at in this way, Rome to the Protestant's mind has seemed naturally to be a mass of superstition and dishonesties, and it is this view of her that, strangely enough, our modern advanced thinkers have accepted without question."

Does Mr. Mallock think, then, that it is really strange that the Church of Rome should be judged by a book which she professes to receive as at least inspired by the same Spirit by whom she professes to be inspired? Does he suppose that what is inspired of the Holy Ghost may perchance be in contradiction to what is inspired by the Holy Ghost? He has assured us of the necessity of infallibility in the revelation: is not Scripture then a revelation? Or are we only to refuse the testimony of our eyes and ears, when Scripture invites our attention to it as that by which even apostles should be rightly tested, or what claimed to be the voice of the Spirit itself (1 John iv. 1-6), and open them when Rome tells us the Church alone is the infallible interpreter of Scripture?

Protestants rightly judge her dishonest when she opens the book a little way, appealing to our eyes and ears, as to whether it does not bid us "hear the Church," and shuts it in our faces, when we would ask what this Church is we are to hear, and how far, and in what sense we are to hear it.

They rightly deem her dishonest when she appeals for her credentials to that whose witness *against* herself she refuses or ignores; when she denounces as 'private judgment' our listening to the latter, and accepts as true obedience our listening to the former.

And they rightly judge her as lapsed, and her theory as a modern superstition, when they find her untrue, not to Protestantism, but to the records of at least the first five centuries of her own history, and in the latest form of her 'theory', to fifteen.

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Mr. Mallock proceeds to consider Romanism in its relation to the simple natural theism with which he starts.

“Approached in this way, the religious world will appear to us as a body of natural theists, all agreeing that they must do God’s will, but differing widely among themselves as to what His will and His nature are. Their moral and religious views will be equally vague and dream-like . . . Their theories as to the future will be but ‘shadowy hopes and fears.’ Their practice in the present will vary from asceticism to the wildest possible license. And yet, in spite of all this confusion and difference, there will be a vague tendency to unanimity. Each man will be dreaming his own spiritual dream, and the dreams of all will be different. All their dreams, it will be plain, cannot represent reality; and yet the belief will be common to all that some common reality is represented by them. Men will therefore begin to compare their dreams together, and try to draw out of them the common element, so that the dream may come slowly to be the same for all; that, if it grow, it may grow by some recognizable laws; that it may, in other words, lose its character of a dream, and assume that of a reality. We suppose, therefore that our natural theists form themselves into a kind of parliament in which they may compare, adjust, and give shape to the ideas that were before so wavering, and which shall contain some machinery for formulating such agreements as shall be come to. The common religious sense of the world is thus recognized, and its conclusions registered. We have no longer the wavering *dreams* of man; we have instead of them the constant *vision* of man. Now in such a universal parliament we see what the Church of Rome essentially is, viewed from her natural side.”

The least grave of the objections that may be urged against this will be, I fear, for Mr. Mallock, its contravention of Scripture. It is very good inductive philosophy applied to religion, the complete opposite of revelation, and wholly inapplicable to the case in hand.

It may be, Mr. Mallock is not a believer in the unity of the human species, and that he has given up

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certain old tradition as to Paradise and the fall. By the help of pre-Adamites and a non-universal deluge he may find scope for a set of people who knew not God, apart from fault or folly on their own part, and who had anticipated Bacon sufficiently to compare notes and formulate their discoveries in the modern fashion. If Mr. Mallock has found the records of this people, and can prove the Church of Rome to be their lineal descendants or their heirs, it will doubtless put matters in a new light for her. Yet even then, it will be more than ever felt that she has no right to the Adamite Bible, and to quote it in her own behalf; and it will not be wondered at that it tells against her.

For the Scripture account of the matter is that men being the descendants of the one man in Eden had necessarily originally the knowledge of God, and fell away from it; that "when they *knew* God they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened." Thus came polytheism and idolatry, in short the heathen world. And this world in its course corresponds with its beginning, so that a revelation from God became a necessity for it: "the world by wisdom knew not God," and "it pleased God by the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe."

This spoils the inductive philosophy plan, and turns the would-be savants into criminals instead. It makes God a little better, and man a little worse than the new theory. It makes God, not man, the seeker and the finder: the Son of man come to seek and to save that which was lost. What place Mr. Mallock has for this in his thoughts does not appear. He does not in fact speak of it. He makes the Lord's life indeed a sort of moral clock to set other clocks by; but he does not seem to apprehend any inability of the others to keep time with it, or at least any guilt on

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man's part as connected with the inability. It does not seem that an inductive philosopher can rightly own sin; for if he gave that a place in his system, it might hinder the practical working out of the system. One might ask whether sin had not affected the perceptive faculties sadly, to allow men to entertain the idea of a God who set His creatures to work out the puzzle of His existence, and left them to face death and a possible futurity with only the light they might get from boiling 'dreams' down into a residuum of reality and common sense! The confession of sin might indeed spoil all this. Might it not, if Scripture perhaps be true, which (thank God) Mr. Mallock does not deem quite hopeless yet,—might it not yet introduce into a new world of its own, where God might not be so far off but be nigh at hand, and a gospel of salvation be the only intelligible revelation and the sure one to the soul?

History ignores Mr. Mallock's theory as Scripture does. The traditions of a golden age and of a fall are everywhere, even to minute details, though distorted, as such traditions will be. The childhood of the world is notoriously mocked at by sceptical philosophy as the age of a Divine presence recognized and felt, in which He spake with men and evidenced Himself by mighty deeds and miracles. As time wore on the Voice was broken up into polytheistic echoes and lost amid increasing corruptions, until scepticism followed faith and the old traditions became utter fables. Development was growth of error not of truth, save in one nation only, where Divine knowledge maintained itself by a constant reinforcement of prophetic voices in spite of the people, not by their means.

That was before Christianity and the Church of Rome; and this began with fresh revelations,—the interposition not merely of a Divine voice, but of a Divine Person, in whom the scattered revelations of

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the past found their unity and their completion, the conscience peace, the heart satisfaction, God Himself in His innermost reality was declared. The partial and local system of Judaism gave place to what was now perfect and universal. The Gospel was for every creature. The words "heard from the beginning," the words of apostles and prophets, divinely inspired, were to be the test and guarantee of truth (1 John ii. 24; iv. 6; Acts xx. 32). The perfect truth thus given necessarily admitted of no addition.

Yet as put into human hands it was foreseen and warned of that there would be again departure. Even in the apostles' times the mystery of iniquity was already at work, and there were many Antichrists; evil men and seducers would wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived; the last days would be perilous times, on account of false profession until a wide-spread apostacy would set in, finally to carry away all who having the truth, "received not the love of the truth that they might be saved." (2 Thess. ii; 2 Tim.; 1 John ii.)

This is development, but development of a contrary character to that for which Mr. Mallock and the Roman Church contend. It is the only development which history and tradition unitedly maintain. All else is Divine interposition, not the result of human 'dreams' combined or analyzed.

Philosophers have made too little as yet out of 'dreams' to make them a very encouraging figure for Mr. Mallock, however suggestive it may be. Dreams are used by Mr. Stephen as the synonym for utter uncertainty, and so we habitually employ the word. They are ordinarily but the reflection in a very broken way of the past, and have no natural aptitude to image the future. They are men's thoughts, and *God's* thoughts are *not* as our thoughts. However let us go on with the question.

"Now in such a universal parliament we see what

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the Church of Rome essentially is, viewed from her natural side. She is ideally, if not actually, the parliament of the believing world. Her doctrines, as she one by one unfolds them, emerge upon us like petals from a half-closed bud. They are not added arbitrarily from without, they are developed from within. They are the flowers contained from the first in the bud of our moral consciousness. When she formulates in these days something she has not formulated before, she is no more enunciating a new truth than was Newton when he enunciated the theory of gravitation. . . . Thus far then the Church of Rome is the spiritual sense of humanity, speaking to men through its proper and only possible organ. . . . But the picture of the Church thus far is only half drawn. She is not only the parliament of spiritual man, but she is such a parliament guided by the Spirit of God. The work of that Spirit may be secret and to the natural eye untraceable, as the work of the human will is in the human brain. But none the less it is there . . . The human brain is an arrangement of material particles which can become connected with consciousness only in virtue of such a special arrangement. The Church is theoretically an arrangement of individuals which can become connected with the Spirit of God only through an arrangement equally special."

Mr. Mallock owns that when we come to look at the 'actual facts,' difficulties "at once confront us with a strength that seems altogether disheartening." We shall compare the theory with the facts so far as yet remains to be done, and take up Mr. Mallock's somewhat tender and cautious review of them as we proceed.

And first, what is the 'believing world' of which Rome is the parliament?

There it is certain that Mr. Mallock's theory differs widely from Rome's. He embraces under this term, if he is self-consistent, all natural theists, a great part of whom (as found among the nations of Christendom) she would refuse altogether as believers. The "true Catholic faith, out of which none can be saved" is the Creed of Pope Pius the fourth, and therefore

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belief in the Pope is as necessary to salvation as belief in Christ, in transubstantiation as in the cross. The Catholic Church is the *Roman* and none else, and he who has not the Church for his mother has not God for his father.

But accepting Mr. Mallock's view of it, it may well 'dishearten' him to find that as tested by the fact it will not stand. "The Church, as it has been said already, is ideally the parliament of the whole believing world; but we find as a matter of fact, that she is the parliament of a small part only." The idea and the fact do not then harmonize. What more is necessary to demonstrate the untenableness of the idea? It is not simply incapable of verification; it is absolutely disproved in the fullest possible way. What then can Mr. Mallock say? Really nothing. He raises a totally different question, and treats it as if the same.

"Now what shall we say to this? If God would have all men to do His will, why should He place the knowledge of it within reach of such a small minority of them? And to this question we can give no answer."

From the stand-point of inductive philosophy,—true. But the same difficulty would arise upon any theory of a "parliament of the believing world," if it were justified by the fact instead of being disproved. It would only become a difficulty connected with chronology instead of geography—a measure of length instead of breadth. For if part of God's will for us to know was that the Pope is infallible, that the Pope's word is the only test of truth, why should it be left to be formulated late in the 60th century of the world's history? These inductive processes are terribly slow for men so short-lived. How many generations have died off without this immensely important knowledge! Could not God have given it to us in some other way than in guiding men's tardy wits to a conclusion?

Leave out induction and the 'parliament,' and

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accept revelation, which is their total opposite, and you will find you have left out the difficulty too. Men instead of seeking after God have been seeking to forget Him. The darkness of the world is the result, not of the innocent defect, but the refusal of light. The devil stays in Gadara, because they have bowed Christ out. The special revelation is God's witness for Himself, maintained by Divine grace in spite of man, and which man has done his best to hinder, limit and obscure. This history and Scripture combine to teach, and so to put the difficulty on the right side. Not, why has God withheld, but why does man reject? is the question. Man is worse and God better than the 'parliament' view allows. Would not Mr. Mallock be glad to find it so?

We might be excused from following out this question then with him, if it were not for the new light in which he seeks to place "Catholicism." And new it will be to a great many to learn how wrongly they have estimated it.

"To many who can accept the difficulty of the partial presence of good, the difficulty seems wantonly aggravated by the claims of a special revelation."

Revelation Mr. Mallock's theory is not, but its opposite. Revelation is what is made objectively to man, not his own deductions, even if divinely guided.

"These claims seem to them to do two things. In the first place, they are thought to make the presence of good even more partial than otherwise it would be; and secondly—which is a still greater stumbling-block—to oblige us to condemn as evil much that would seem good of the purest kind. There are many men, as we must know, without the Church, who are doing their best to fight their way to God; and orthodoxy is supposed to pass a cruel condemnation upon these, because they have not assented to some obscure theory, their rejection or ignorance of which has plainly stained neither their lives nor hearts. And of orthodoxy under certain forms this is no doubt true; *but it is not true of*

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the orthodoxy of Catholicism. There is no point, probably, connected with this question, about which the general world is so misinformed and ignorant, as the sober but boundless charity of what it calls the anathematizing Church." . . .

One of the opinions maintained in times past was that the Pope was only infallible when he anathematized all who rejected his teaching.

"Never was there a religious body, except the Roman, that laid the intense stress that she does on all her dogmatic teachings, and had yet the justice that comes of sympathy for those that cannot receive them. She condemns no goodness, she condemns no earnest worship even, though it be outside her pale. On the contrary she declares explicitly that a knowledge of 'the one true God, our Creator and Lord,' may be attained by the 'natural light of human reason', meaning by 'reason' faith unenlightened by revelation; and she declares those to be anathema who deny this. The holy and humble men of heart who do not know her, or who in good faith reject her, she commits with confidence to God's uncovenanted mercies; and these she knows are infinite; but, except as revealed to her, she can of necessity say nothing distinct about them. It is admitted by the world at large, that of her supposed bigotry she has no bitterer or more extreme exponents than the Jesuits; and this is what a Jesuit theologian says upon this matter: 'A heretic, so long as he believes his sect to be more or equally deserving of belief, has no obligation to believe the Church . . . [and] when men who have been brought up in heresy, are persuaded from boyhood that we impugn and attack the word of God, that we are idolators, pestilent deceivers, and are therefore to be shunned as pestilence they cannot, while this persuasion lasts, with a safe conscience hear us.' Thus for those without her the Church has one condemnation only. Her anathemas are on none but those who reject her with their eyes open, by tampering with a conviction that she really is the truth. These are condemned, not for not seeing that the teacher is true, but because having really seen this, they continue to close their eyes to it. They will not obey when they know they ought to obey."

Mr. Mallock certainly puts things well, and if we

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could only take the Church's history from her own lips, as he elsewhere advises us, it would be very effective. He might have here enlarged, (had he been the pessimist that he is not,) upon the depravity of men who could force even the tender and considerate Church to the measures she has had to take to subdue the impracticable wills of heretics. No doubt it was really mercy to threaten them with the fire, if they persevered in rejection of the truth so apparent. Who could have supposed they would have persevered? and that it would have been necessary to carry out the well-meant threat? or that at least the next set of heretics would not have taken warning? It is allowable to suppose, while we are in ignorance of the true version of it, that it required a long, long time to make the Church aware that heresy was fire-proof, and that is why she went on torturing and burning wholesale, as I suppose we must allow she did. The more dreadful the torment the more kindly meant it was, for of course the Church's tender heart was more pained than the bodies of men she racked so mercifully.

Listen to a story which will illustrate that "boundless charity," of what the world, "misinformed and ignorant," calls the anathematizing Church, as well as the obstinacy of the heretics, which compelled her to such measures. Being from a Roman Catholic historian, it may claim to be almost the Church's own account, while as relating to the extermination of the Vaudois from Calabria, it may claim to be the history of a massacre for which the Church and pope may assume the entire credit.

"Some of them," says Tommaso Costo, "had their throats cut; others were sawn through the middle, and others thrown from the top of a high cliff—all were cruelly, but deservedly put to death. It was strange to hear of their obstinacy; for while the father saw the son put to death, and the son his father, they not only gave no symptoms of grief, but said joyfully, that they would

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be angels of God: so much had the devil, to whom they had given themselves up as a prey, deceived them."

Another Roman Catholic, one of the suite of Cardinal Alexandrini, and an eye-witness, says:—

"Before my lord's arrival, eighty-six relapsed heretics had been flayed alive, and then cut into two parts, and the pieces placed upon stakes all along the road for a space of thirty-six miles. This mightily strengthened Catholicism, and considerably shook the cause of heresy. There are already 1400 of these Ultramontanes in the prisons; some still wander amongst the mountains, but ten crowns are promised for every head that is brought in. Soldiers have been sent in pursuit of them, and every day some prisoners are secured. Their number has at last become so considerable, that my lord, along with the Commissary and the Grand Vicar of Cosenza have resolved to subject the greater part of them only to penance, excepting the most obstinate, who will be put to death. As for the preaching ministers and leaders of this sect, they will be burned alive. Five of them have already been sent to Cosenza, in order to undergo that punishment, anointed with rosin and sulphur, so that, being gradually consumed, they may suffer the more for the correction of their impiety. Many women remain prisoners, all of whom will be burned alive. Five of them are to be burned to-morrow."

Hard measure, it may be said; but it has the logic of success. Heresy was stamped out of Calabria. Similarly it was destroyed in Spain; and wherever it was not, Rome could scarcely be held accountable. In the Netherlands she certainly tried her best; France had her St. Bartholomew and her Dragonnades; England her queen Mary. Where her arms could not reach, the Church showed her natural tenderness of heart, and burned no heretics. Here it was she talked about "uncovenanted mercies," and had her Jesuits to teach theology. Even here she has been misunderstood, and "Jesuitism" has become a name of infamy. Mr. Mallock must excuse me. History has been badly written for us; and even as I write, I cannot help a thrill of the old Protestant in-

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dignation against " Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, drunken with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."

It is quite true that where her arms cannot reach, Rome can be most tolerant. She does not proclaim the majesty of truth, but the virtue of obedience. She has none of the characteristics of a true witness : she seeks her own glory, and not His who (she professes) sent her. She has formulated no theory of inspiration, Mr. Mallock says, and it is possible that she may allow you some latitude in this respect ; but believe in herself you must. God's word is of less importance than the Pope's. And to illustrate this I can do no better than produce a witness after Mr. Mallock's own fashion, from among the Jesuits.

The Jesuits were, as people know, condemned by Pope Clement XIV., and the Society abolished, among many other reasons for their " use and explanation of certain maxims, which the Holy See has with reason prescribed as scandalous, and manifestly contrary to good morals." * They were restored by Pope Pius VII., in 1814, after the revolutionary times of the first Napoleon, as " vigorous and experienced rowers, who volunteer their services in order to break the waves of a sea which threaten every moment shipwreck and death " to the bark of Peter. † It is fair enough to enquire how they would row the boat, as practically they have rowed it ever since. I shall quote but some sentences from Jesuit casuists, which will throw light, I doubt not, upon Mr. Mallock's

* From the Brief. When signing it the Pope observed, "*We sign our death.*" Two 'prophetesses' had already predicted the approaching vacancy of the papal chair, and the Jesuits were known to be in communication with them. Eight months after the suppression the Pope was taken suddenly ill at table, and died seven months after with evident marks of having been poisoned.

† Brief of Pope Pius VII.

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quotation. *Ranke cites the very man* brought forward by him* for a similar statement to the first of these, as to WHEN SIN IS SIN.

“Although he who through inveterate habit inadvertently swears a falsehood may seem bound to confess the propensity, yet he is commonly excused. The reason is, that no one commonly reflects upon the obligation by which he is bound to extirpate the habit; . . . and therefore, since he is excused from the sin, he will also be excused from confession. Some maintain that the same may be said of blasphemy, heresy, and of the aforesaid oath; . . . and consequently that such things, committed inadvertently, are neither sins in themselves nor the cause of sins, and therefore need not necessarily be confessed.” (Thos. Tambourin, *Method. Exped. Confess.*, L. ii., ch. iii., § 3, No. 24.)

“If a man commit adultery or suicide, reflecting indeed, but still very imperfectly and superficially, upon the wickedness and great sinfulness of those crimes, however heinous may be the matter, he still sins but slightly. The reason is, that as a knowledge of the wickedness is necessary to constitute the sin, so is a full, clear knowledge and reflection necessary to constitute a heinous sin.” (Geo. D. Rhodes, *Disputat. Theolog. Scholast.*, tom. i., Dis. i. 9, iii., sec. 2 and 3.)

A lie, to row the bark of Peter into port; would that be really a lie, however? And how tolerant and mild Rome's yoke may thus become, we may find in a quotation still more closely bearing upon Mr. Mallock's own:

“An unbeliever who is persuaded that his sect is probable, although the opposite sect may be more probable, would certainly be obliged, at the point of death, to embrace the true faith; . . . but except under such circumstances he would not. . . . Add to this, that the mysteries of faith are so sublime, and the Christian morals so repugnant to the laws of flesh and blood, that no greater probability whatever may be accounted sufficient to enforce the obligation of believing. (Thos. Sanchez, *Opus Mor.*, L. ii., c. i., N. 6.)

* Busenbaum, Ranke, vol. ii. p. 394.

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“Indeed, while I perceive so many different opinions maintained upon points connected with morality, I think that the Divine Providence is apparent; for in diversity of opinions *the yoke of Christ is easily borne.*” (Ant. Escobar, *Univ. Theol.*, tom. i., L. ii., sec. i., c. 2, N. 18.)

How skilfully such rowers will guide St. Peter’s bark is now apparent. They will be the last to row against the stream, when it will do them no good. But is Rome really changed, and become tolerant? *She always was of breaches of Divine law.* She has had Popes who have broken every law, Divine and human, and were none the less proper and Divine oracles. But as to the punishment of heretics, she has never changed nor given up her right to it. Will Mr. Mallock venture to affirm it, with the *Syllabus* and its teachings not yet quite forgotten?

The slain Lamb is on the throne of God: The blood not outside only, but inside on the mercy-seat; and it is the question, whether the blood or my sins will have ascendancy—one or the other must have it.

Oh, what a wealth of glory in this acting of God in connection with Christ, whether as coming to take us to the Father’s house, or as being put into the place of being made sin for us! What wealth of glory!

“He is our peace.” It is not only the sweet savour of Christ’s work and the preciousness of the blood, but Christ Himself. The Lamb on the throne of the Almighty God, is my peace.

Those who shared in His rejection are to form the very brightest display of His glory.

G. V. W.

“DESPISE NOT PROPHESYINGS.”

I COR. xiv.

THE 14th Chapter of 1st Corinthians is remarkable as being the only Scripture in which the order of the church when “come together into one place,” is declared. This should give it surely some importance in the eyes of those who believe that He who “loved the Church, and gave Himself for it” has not ceased to love and care; and moreover that the Head of it has not given up His headship.

For those who think the mere matter of the conduct of the meetings of the saints a thing of no or of small importance, it is well to note how solemnly the chapter closes with the assurance that the thing the apostle wrote, were “commandments of the Lord.”

Have they ceased then to apply, or been recalled—these commandments? Or was all this care taken for the church at the beginning, and is it now no more?

“Surely not the care,” people reply; “but the gifts regulated in the chapter have ceased, and therefore the regulation of them also.”

But then it is not true that the chapter as a whole occupies itself with merely the regulation of gift. It rather gives, as I said, the regulation of the assembly as “come together.” “Let your women keep silence in the assemblies” did not stir the question of whether they had gift or not. Some in fact did prophesy, the chief thing regulated in this chapter; but the thing here is, they might not do it in the “assemblies;” outside that, what they or others might do is not in question at all.

Then again, “Every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine (a) teaching.” The latter surely has not ceased; no, nor the former, for there is no ground for

supposing it was any inspired or even freshly prompted utterance. What was to guide in the bringing forth of all this in the assembly, was the principle, “let all things be done unto edifying.”

Thus the whole chapter treats of the assembly, and the case is supposed of an unbeliever coming in, while such and such things were going on in the assembly, and what the effect would be upon him who came in. Now suppose certain gifts had ceased—as plainly “tongues” and “interpretations” have—this would not destroy the general principles which were to govern in this “coming together.” Points of detail might cease to apply, while yet the principles remained untouched. Even in those days the gift of tongues might be wanting in some assemblies; but that would not affect the general application of the chapter to them. If they had but a “psalm” or a “teaching” it would apply. Indeed these were, and are, a sort of type or sample of what occupied the assembly when come together—the psalm addressing itself to God in praise or prayer with the melody of hearts conscious of His “favor better than life,” while the teaching addressed itself as from God to men. The one was worship; the other ministry. Certainly, if these two abide, we are not altogether destitute of what may furnish forth our assembly; and had we nought else, the principles of the chapter would apply to us.

It is indeed plain, that the apostle has especially upon his mind two things as connected with the assembly, but which affected his mind very differently. These were prophecy and the gift of tongues. He saw them priding themselves upon the latter, and falling into utter folly in their pride, so that they were actually exposing themselves to shame even before unbelievers through it; speaking with tongues that no one understood, and where no one could enter into or be edified by it. Comparatively speaking, pro-

phesying was made of little account in the presence of this more showy gift. That which was “a sign to those that believed not” was usurping the place of that which spake unto believers “to edification and exhortation and comfort.” If in the assembly then the rule was that all things should be done to edifying, the prophesying which was expressly intended for that, was really the greater and the better thing.

Thus he bids them “*covet* to prophesy,” but on the other hand “*forbid* not to speak with tongues.” They hold in the apostle’s estimation a widely different place. I am in a measure prepared to hear of the disappearance of that which men were so much abusing. On the other hand, the more I think of the place which prophesying holds with him, as that which was for “edification and exhortation and comfort,” so that he exhorts them to covet it as what edified the church, the less I can suppose it possible to pass away until that church is perfected and removed to heaven.

On the other hand I can understand it still being a thing slighted and overlooked by men to any conceivable extent. I find, both here in 1 Cor. xiv., and again in 1 Thess. v. 20, (which latter passage couples together the two warnings, “Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings”), the assurance that they were already doing so. There was that in the nature of this precious gift which exposed it peculiarly to the slighting and dis-esteem of man. What had then begun may well have advanced in our day to the utter denying of the gift altogether.

If we enquire, then, as to the nature of this “prophesying”—a “prophet” was, according to the strict meaning of the word, “one who spoke for another;” and the name was given among the heathen to those who spoke for a god and made known his will to men. It was by no means necessarily in the utterance of prediction properly so called; for this another word

was used which the Scriptures do not employ. Even a “poet” was a prophet, as one who spoke for the Muses, thus speaking, as was supposed, under a sort of inspiration, not merely from his own mind. So even Paul speaks of a “prophet” of the Cretans.

The New Testament knows nothing of a mere seer of the future. The prophet was one who spoke *for God*. Thus “a man of God” is so often the beautiful and significant designation of a prophet. In days of darkness and apostacy they stood forth on His part whom men had forgotten, and brought His word and will to them. Their predictions were but a part of these utterances, which dealt with the moral condition of those addressed, calling them to repentance; encouraging, warning, comforting, exhorting, instructing in righteousness. Of such the most distinctive feature was that they were “God’s men.” Very significantly the apostle Paul speaks as if “all Scripture” were written for such. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the *man of God* may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17). Here was the necessary condition of prophesying, that truth and devotedness to the living God which enabled them as living near Him to know His mind. This underlay that saying of Amos, “Surely the Lord God will do nothing but He revealeth it to His servants the prophets.” Like that again in Revelation, “to shew unto *His servants* things which must shortly come to pass.”

It might be thus made known in different ways—by positive fresh revelation, which for us since the completion of the word of God has ceased to be; or by the Spirit in living freshness, using that Word according to what Paul says to Timothy. The man of God it is who in either case has the mind of God as to the scene through which he passes. To such an one “the knowledge of the Holy is understanding.”

Now, if this be the basis of prophesying, it is no wonder that the apostle so highly values it. If prophesying be just speaking for God, God's own utterance in the midst of His people, it is easily to be seen how people should be exhorted to “covet” it, and that earnestly. “Love,” seeking not her own, would yet seek that which was so profitable “to edification and exhortation and comfort.” Distinct enough from “teaching,” it did not necessarily infer any gift for the latter, nor indeed any for public speaking at all. “Five words,” and those not the speaker's own, might suffice: the Word of God simply read might carry its own simple and intelligible meaning to the hearts of all present. Not eloquence in anywise, nor the power of presenting the truth in orderly arrangement, was needed. The Divine utterance might come in broken words and sentences, and be still the fulfilment of the injunction, “If any man speak, let him speak as oracles of God,” so that even the simplest there, or the unbeliever coming in there, should come under the power of that word, be convinced of all, be judged of all, and the secrets of his heart being made manifest, should fall on his face, and worship God, and report that God was of a truth there. The apostle coveted this for them, and would have them covet it also for themselves; this direct dealing of God with heart and conscience. from which man might indeed shrink, but which was fraught with blessing for him none the less.

I need scarcely say, that the meeting of the church in this 14th chapter of 1 Corinthians was even on this account an “open” meeting, in this sense and for this purpose, that God might speak in His own sovereign way by whom He would. It was thus, in the fullest way open; so much so that man might and did abuse it there at Corinth. “Every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation.” He states the fact, does not pro-

nounce as to whether right or wrong, but only adds, “let all things be done unto edifying.” That it might be so, those that had gift of tongues might speak, two or three, not more, and only when there was an interpreter. The prophets similarly two or three. Only the women were absolutely to keep silence in the assembly. There was no other line of prohibition whatever, as to who should be the speakers.

This open door, so widely open, was a special need. It might be abused. It was. That did not alter at all the actual necessity. It would not better it to shut God out, even by pre-arrangement that those who were most gifted should be the speakers. Who had title to arrange this? None among men; not one. Scripture recognizes no power of this sort in the church, short of the Church’s Head. As to the use, it may shut out, no doubt, some species of disorder, but only at the expense of the very worst disorder.

Gift is not spirituality. The church at Corinth came behind in no gift; yet the apostle could not speak unto them as unto spiritual but as unto carnal, even as to babes in Christ. It is no disparagement of gift to say that thus, without the accompaniment of spirituality, the possessor of the most precious gift might be quite incompetent to edify. And, alas, men change and men decline. The highly gifted sometimes even by this means lead those who follow them the most astray. Hence when the church is gathered together, God will have no voice raised to exclude His. In perfect wisdom He may put aside the most gifted at His will, to bring His word in by some poor, plain man, who has been upon his face before Him, and has learnt His mind where man learns best, in the lowest school. He, whom perhaps they would all have excluded from teaching them, who is indeed, as to measure of gift, below any there, may be the very one brought forward to teach them all.

And so the apostle puts this power of prophesying

before them, and exhorts to covet it. Such a gift as love alone that had Christ as motive and men's blessing the desire of the heart could covet. It would lead in no easy path. The very word, “despise not prophesyings,” may shew to what it leads. And what has been the history of prophets ever? “God's men” must, of all men, be men of faith, content to wait on God, and walk with God, and perhaps walk solitary else. “Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?” Do you think that in assemblies of Christians that could not be? Well for us, if it were. But sure am I of this, that no man in his senses would take up the vocation that I speak of, to win praise from even saints.

But where are the “men of God?” Amiable, kindly men, I can find many. Just, honest and upright, not a few. Saved men who know it, and thank God for it, are much fewer, but still many. But where are the men, to whom “to live is Christ?” Where are His bondsmen, absolutely His? Is it not what we all are, as bought with His precious blood? Is it what we are in practical reality?

There are few things more to be coveted for the assemblies of the saints, than this “prophesying.” Men may teach truth, and teach it well; but that is quite another thing. The prominent place given to prophesying in this chapter which regulates the assembly's coming together, ought to assure us of its special importance in this place.* That importance is, that the voice of the living God should be heard by His people, distinctly addressing itself to their need, their whole condition at the moment. How different a thing from people speaking to fill up the time; or the cleverest speaker, to supply the absence of a teacher; or once again, the teacher himself because he is a

* A teachers' meeting is quite distinct from this assembly coming together. He is responsible to teach surely; and the saints no less to hear; but it is another matter.

teacher, or has something in his mind which has interested or impressed himself! “The word of the Lord by the prophets” was none of these: it was a direct address from the heart of God to the hearts and consciences of His people. And still, “if any man speak,” he is to speak “as oracles of God,” as God’s mere mouth-piece.

But it is one thing to affirm that that *ought* to be, another thing to say, it is. It is one thing to say, “I should do this,” and another thing to say, “I have done it.” Lowliness there will surely be the truest wisdom. We need claim nothing: “He that judgeth is the Lord.”

Have you counted on God as an opened fountain in which your empty bucket can be let down to be filled? In the midst of the wreck and ruin of the creature, can you say, notwithstanding it all, “I have found a spring in Thee, O God! and can count on Thee to give me all blessing in Christ; not to fill me once, and then all gone, but filling again and again?” I would have you judge yourselves about the sort of faith you have. Is it a *living faith*? It is the *living* God upon whom His people hang, drawing daily supplies from the fulness of the living springs in Him. Ah! if you have found that God, no depths can be too deep for the heart of that living God, who meets us according to the circumstances in which we are.

Christ does not love people according to the flesh. Those who only do the will of the Father are the blessed beloved people, of whom He says, “Such are my mother and sisters and brothers; these are my nearest, dearest relations, they are the Father’s children, they are those who receive my word, and they are the fruit bearers dear to my heart.”

G.V.W.

A FEAST FOR THE LORD.

(LUKE v. 29. JOHN xii. 2, 3.)

I find but two cases in which a feast was said to have been made expressly for the Lord; and these two seem to be in designed and beautiful contrast with one another. In the first case we find Him in company with sinners; in the last with saints. In the first case He is come down upon the ground natural to us, where alone He could meet us all; in the second, He has taken us through all that appals nature, and set us down in triumph the other side of it. But in each case His people are feasting *Him*.

If the hymn we sometimes sing has meaning for us, and "His joys" indeed "our deepest joys afford," this feature in these two cases will attract us surely. It is something to find in a world so unlike Him a table now and then really spread for Him. It is blessed to know that we have, if we will, materials wherewith to furnish such a table. Let us look briefly then at these two, this way:

Levi's feast we naturally begin with, as simple as it is beautiful in its meaning. A publican had just learned in his own soul a fact of mightiest import beginning to be disclosed, that God was seeking sinners,—*not* the spiritually whole, but 'maimed and sick and halt and blind,'—and seeking them *to save them*. It was not the blessing merely he had got, but a disclosure of the heart of God in its innermost depths. The music and the song of the Father's house he had learnt as the echoes of the Father's love making all glad with its own gladness, and here, down here in the world and at his door, was One in whom this love was told out as nowhere else, and, as nowhere, else embodied.

It was little to let into heart and house that which was its joy and sunshine; but Levi knew that where it was let in it must and would be true still to its own character. He who could not enjoy the glories of heaven alone, could not be content in Levi's house alone. That house, by the fact of Christ being in it, must become a little picture of the Father's house to which He belonged, and receive its prodigals too with open arms and joyous welcome.

So Levi made Him a feast; and He as understood and welcomed took and maintained there His place of Welcomer; was fed in feeding; rested, in giving rest; and the Spirit His witness testifies His satisfaction in the fare He got. For of all who received Him, not all understood Him so; of all who welcomed, not all feasted Him.

And is this our joy in the Gospel still, that the Lord should have His feast with us, which cannot be that, unless the door is open and the invitation out, and publicans and sinners are made free to enter? Or is any desolate heart now needing to be made aware of such a Christ so seeking sinners, that where'er He feasts He must have open doors for them? Down in a world of sinners still, still such is He, though absent), in His Gospel and His Spirit evermore the same!

Here He must begin with us upon our ground, but not to leave us here. The feast at Bethany tells another story. No publicans sat at the table there, and yet do not imagine them excluded, save only as Levi in fact, no doubt, sat there, publican no longer. But a company of people were gathered there, full of wonderful experiences and partakers in a mighty triumph. They had found death no difficulty to Him, with whom Levi's guests had found sin no difficulty. He had made Himself a *real* crown (not such as human malice was soon to invent for Him) out of the thorns He had taken out of their path of sorrow. And now

having seen His victory over the 'last enemy,' and sharers of the triumph He had achieved in their behalf, they make Him a feast—a supper—once more; and He can feast.

It is all a picture, a type for us: a type of triumph still more assured, still more complete, still more wonderful; announced already in words which however at the time misunderstood, would interpret themselves yet to the hearts of His own, and so interpret *Him*. "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; *and he that liveth and believeth in Me SHALL NEVER DIE.*"

Lazarus, dead and risen, was our type and was not: for our death has been Christ's alone, and His life is ours for ever. And in the knowledge of it, its warm flush in our veins, communion, service, worship, have indeed a distinct character, He Himself a central, vital connection with them, and Himself (who can doubt?) *His feast?*

If He could feast thus with His delivered ones, with the shadowed cross even then full in view, if Mary's ointment then—(her constant memorial)—could anoint Him for His burial,—*already* for His burial,—shall we not feast Him yet, and serve, and worship, when we are with Him in the eternity to us so near?

And now? how many of us now are qualified and prepared to make, and more, are actually making Him this supper now?

Not to discourage do I say it, for it is ours to make at least, and wherever we are—aye, in Laodicea,—as soon as ever the heart turns truly to Him, He can come in and sup *with us*, as well as we with Him. And when we let Him do for us what He would do, be to us what He would be, then we shall give Him a supper; and the joy of it will be the foretaste of eternity.

BROKEN GLIMPSES.

“And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him, and He vanished out of their sight.” (Luke xxiv. 31).

How aptly does this describe what must have been the spiritual experience of most of us or all, at some time. The momentary glimpse caught, so sweet, so brief as to be almost a sorrow in memory, won as it would seem by effort, but which no effort could retain. What is the meaning of this, and what is its remedy? Is it normal for us, the necessity of a life of faith, or the failure of faith, and to be judged as such?

In the case of the two at Emmaus; what held their eyes? Was it divine power for their discipline, or human weakness, or what else?

It is plain they had failed in faith. The Lord's words were a rebuke; His difficulty in yielding to their desire a greater rebuke. These are things which those who know their Lord should have no difficulty in interpreting. The latter we may find again, or what resembles it in a case which should be familiar to us in the earliest book of the Old Testament. Lot in the gate of Sodom found his angelic visitors slow to yield to an invitation which at Abraham's hands a greater than they had accepted without the smallest hesitation. Here the Lord Himself had stayed behind with Abraham. Sodom could not receive Him save in judgment. Lot's dwelling there kept God out of his dwelling. Was it arbitrary dealing that we read in his case no such words as meet us in the case of the “friend of God”—no appearance of Jehovah to Him, no “I am the God of Lot”? As little was it arbitrary dealing when the messengers of judgment had to say, “Nay, but we will abide in the street all night.”

And when his importunity had prevailed, and he

had put such fare as he had before his guests, and they had sat down,—was he accountable or not for the clamour of the men of Sodom at his doors which interrupted them? Did he not abhor the wickedness? Did he not grieve for the interruption? Both, most undoubtedly. Yet Abraham had no men of Sodom to interrupt. Was that to his credit, certainly as it was his gain? Clearly it was the result of being where the men of Sodom had no place. Lot had chosen Sodom, and he must have the conditions attaching to his choice.

What does this tell in our ears? does it tell nothing? The thoughts that throng in upon us as unbidden, if not as unclean, guests, when we would so gladly have them away—at the Lord's Table, at the prayer-meeting,—hindering communion. Have we any similar responsibility as to these? The effort necessary to obtain what we cannot hold, while other things throng in uncalled, when we do not want them: why are these things so? There is no accident, be assured, There is nothing arbitrary. How often would the Lord be absent from us when He might be present? No: we have lost authority to keep out, what (so licensed) must keep Him out. We have given the key of the house to those who now hold it in defiance of us; we have resigned our authority and lost it. They control us, when we should be controlling them. We have shut Him, out, who could control them by the necessity of His holiness.

With Lot there was not even a glimpse of the Lord possible, but it was the fruit of a place where association not only defiled, but where much rather the choice of such association was in itself defilement. How many thus by these associations, shut out the sunshine from their hearts effectually? It is not only a lesser degree of a similar cause when but a ray now and then struggles with the clouds that again banish it?

THE CALL OF THE CHERUBIM.

REV. vi. 1-9.

(Jottings of a Lecture.)

The verses I have read to you to-night I want to connect with some others that may be familiar to us, but which will, I think, help to bring out in very solemn significance the moral lesson of the passage before us.

One critical remark before I begin. You will have remarked that in the call of the living creatures, I read simply "Come," instead of "Come and see." There is the best authority * for the omission, and it alters the sense materially. The call becomes, instead of an invitation to the apostle, a call to the horses and their riders to come forth; and the context agrees with this; for why, if the former, should it be "as the noise of thunder"? whereas a call to the executors of Divine judgment might suitably be as that. And I think you will find, before we have done, that in every way this reading is justified by the sense.

The living creatures then, each in the order named in the fourth chapter, call forth the judgments indicated in the four seals before us. There must be a reason for this, not only why they are called forth by these at all, but why also the first † living creature is connected with the first seal, the second, with the second, and so on. God's Word, to its least tittle, is significant; and we shall surely find it so in this case as elsewhere.

* Alford, Lachmann, Tischendorf and Tregelles so read it, while Griesbach and others give a variation from the common text.

† In the first verse it is only "*one of* the living creatures," but the second, third and fourth are distinctly named.

The living creatures (not 'beasts,' as in our version) are described in the fourth chapter, and by their description we can identify them with the cherubim of Ezekiel, and, as elsewhere, they are seen in connection with the throne—that is, with the government of God. In the tabernacle of old the cherubim are one with the mercy-seat, which with the ark constitutes the throne of God in Israel, and He was said to 'sit' or 'dwell between the cherubim.' Elsewhere, as at the gate of Eden, and in the Psalms, they are connected with judicial acts, with divine interference in judgment, and this gives a singular beauty to their place and attitude in connection with the mercy-seat: for thus God's righteousness, nay His wrath against sin, is seen to be of *one piece with His mercy*. God's attributes conflict not with each other. Light and love are but two different sides of His one nature. With our partial knowledge we must look at them as distinct; but it is defect in us, for God is one. On the mercy-seat the faces of the cherubim are towards the blood, which, renewed there from year to year, enabled God to remain among a sinful people. Justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne; and justice and judgment, in the blood of atonement, unite to maintain there at least a typical 'throne of grace.'

To come back now to Revelation, we shall find the same characters in the living creatures here. They appear in the midst of the throne and around it, and are "full of eyes before and behind,"—of perceptive power and intelligence. Nothing escapes the searching eye of God, and His it is, although the ministers of His justice may be creatures of His merely. Angels may be, and have been, connected with cherubic manifestations, while the redeemed from among men certainly will be; and we seem to have an intimation of this in the fourth and fifth chapters here respectively. For in the fourth, if you look

closely, you will find simply God the Creator ; in the fifth, where the Lamb comes forward and is worshipped, God the Redeemer. A noticeable difference seems to result from this as to the living creatures. In the fourth chapter, the twenty-four elders, who represent the saints crowned and enthroned as priests and kings to God, are distinguished from the living creatures in their praise. And when these cry, as they cease not day and night to cry, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come,"—*then* the four and twenty elders fall down and worship Him that sits upon the throne, saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power ; for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are, and were created."

Here no angels' voices are heard at all, *except*, what the common idea as to cherubic beings would suggest perhaps to most, the angels are practically, as it were, themselves the living creatures. And this the Scripture statements as to the angels seem fully to sustain. In this case they would not be seen as a separate group ; and they are not.

But when the Lamb has come forward to take the book, and the praise of the Creator has become a redemption-song, and when the elders are giving thanks to Him who has redeemed them, for royalty and priesthood also, as those who are to reign over the earth,—*then* the angels are found with their own praise, apart in a separate and outer group, and the living creatures are identified in their praise with the song of the elders. And this is completely in accordance with the testimony of Scripture in connection with the future so near us now : "For unto the angels hath He *not* put in subjection the world,"—the habitable [earth]—"to come, of which 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 honour, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands." (Heb. iii. 5, 6).

This of course applies to Christ, but Christ takes it not alone. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne." (Rev. iii. 21).

This will show why in the fifth chapter the angels are a separate group, and the living creatures are connected with the throned elders. It will show us another thing also, that in Christ we may expect to find, and pre-eminently, these cherubic characters. Cherubim, we may remember, were upon the tabernacle-veil, which distinctly gives us the humanity of Christ—"His flesh" (Heb. x. 20). And in Him who is the Antitype of Ark and Mercy-seat alike, the cherubim too, of one piece with the mercy-seat, must be found. But before we go on to this, let us look more closely at the character of God's governmental ways which the living creatures manifest.

As we look at these we shall find not only that in each of them some peculiar attribute of God's government is shown us, but that also in each succeeding form we have that which will correct mistakes that it would be natural to make as to the preceding. There is nothing about which we may make greater mistakes than about Divine government. God's judgments are a great deep. His ways are in the seas, and His paths are in the deep waters, and His footsteps are not known. All the deepest and darkest problems with which man in vain perplexes himself have to do with His governmental dealings. How needful then the caution that these cherubic forms convey.

"The first living creature was like a lion." "The lion is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any." In this we have pictured what is the essen-

tial then, for any government that is to be government at all—*resistless might*. We find it in the emblems of the Lord Himself, when He takes up the cause of His ancient people; and in this character He is presented in the fifth chapter here. “Behold,” says one of the elders, “the lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed to open the book.” The one to open the book of God’s purposes is the One to execute them; and He opens them only fully *by* executing them. For this He must before all things have the power requisite.

Well, then, the first fundamental axiom is, “all power is of God.” And it is the first simple truth which man’s mind readily admits; but often in such a way as to make it even error. Unbalanced truth becomes in this way injurious. To say God is omnipotent is to speak the truth, and necessary truth; but man often takes this as if it meant that God was all power. On the contrary, power must be at the service of wisdom and of love absolutely, when we think of Him. It is limited in its putting forth by the requirements of His perfection. “God can do everything” may lead to the crudest arguments, even to question of His goodness, and of His love itself. Why, we are tempted to ask, the evil and the sorrow everywhere present, if all power is God’s? The lion’s strength we think of as to be exhibited in the lion’s way, in acts of swift and terrible severity, putting down wrong and evil as in a moment. And in fact this will be one day seen. But it will not be until the long ages of slow and patient dealing, which frets our spirits so, have come to an end. As a lion, He will yet arise to shake terribly the earth; and then patience will no longer be mistaken for weakness; He will be seen always to have had the power which He will finally put forth.

Meanwhile we have not only to recognize the power of His throne as displayed in the first cherub,

but in the second also. "The second living creature was like a calf," or young ox; not necessarily a calf, but a young, fresh beast. Such beasts were the fitting types of what was of God, or for God; for old age and weariness, or even the mechanical plodding which we fall into before middle age, must not be connected with the thought of Divine energy. The Ancient of Days works on as freshly now as from the beginning—as Scripture says of One in whom it is manifest, "travelling in the greatness of His strength."

Yet the manner of that strength being put forth is now quite different. We have the type of the Worker, not of the destroyer; nay, of the Servant, rather than the Sovereign. And both these things unite in God. He who is over all is under all. If He puts down He raises up. His everlasting arms are the only and firm support of the creature in its nothingness. His power in this way is to us, alas, less noticeable, and the working of it we may cavil at as slow, and even as unworthy of Him whom all things serve. Yet this is only our own perversion of things. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." He whose wealth alone is infinite, can be alone the unfailing Giver. He whose heart is revealed to us in His beloved Son serves in the blest necessity of love.

But a third form is necessary to be seen before we can properly realize this; and "the third living creature has a face as a man." The face of a man is that in which intelligence shines out—in which the man himself is manifested—by which we get to be familiar with him. And it cannot but recall to us (what indeed is never absent from our hearts) how God has drawn near to us, not merely speaking with the tongue of man, but in form and fashion as a man as well. God is seeking intimacy with us, seeking to be known; and thus it is He displays Himself in slow and patient steps of government, as if to let our slow steps keep up with His—to let us be with Him,

reading by faith His handwriting all through our history, the tokens of a near and present God.

And not for us only, we may say, He does this. Principalities and powers watch His actings on the theatre of this world, and with delight see Him manifesting Himself in characters of light, only the brighter because of the darkness of the scene. Not to us alone does the love of God minister, but to all His creatures who with responsive love welcome His drawing near; yet *in* us, 'in the face of a man,' is His blessed face most fully seen. Where "the glory of God doth lighten," the "Lamb is the lamp" for its display.

"The fourth living creature was like a flying eagle." One of the things "too wonderful for me," in the book of Proverbs, is "the way of an eagle in the air;" and such a mystery after all is in God's governmental ways; only not the mystery of a fog or of darkness which shuts out vision, but the mystery of an infinite depth—of a transparent atmosphere through which the stars look down with a steadfast beam, and the vision is not repulsed, but lost in the immensity. The 'face of a man' is seen none the less, and we are at home. The measureless recesses do not chill or daunt, but invite us. There is no barrier, because there is no limit; and because there is no limit we cannot explore the limits. Such a God is revealed to us. Such a God His ways, when really learned, discover.

And now, if this be what these cherubic forms declare, it will be easily seen how in Christ they are all found. We have but been travelling in regular order through the gospels. The lion of Judah we find in Matthew's gospel as the Son of David. The servant-form, the young bullock, is found in Mark. The 'face of a man' in Luke's gospel of dear and familiar manhood. The 'flying eagle' in John's revelation of incarnate Godhead. With these aspects

of the gospels, we are most of us happily familiar, and I have not time to dwell further on them now. It is enough for my purpose to vindicate their real applicability to Him. We must now proceed to what all this is to help us to read in its true significance, the call of the cherubim in the first four seals.

Christ has been seen then in heaven in a double character; the lion of the tribe of Judah is the Lamb that was slain. All through the book of Revelation He is the Lamb. It is the title by which He takes everything, for it is that which shows Him as the One who has bought everything by His self-surrender unto death. He is the man of His own parable who, having found in a field hidden treasure, went and sold all that he had and bought the field. "The field is the world."

But the Lord's death had, as we well know, another side to it. It was man's emphatic rejection of God in His dearest gift to him,—in His sweetest and most wonderful grace. While every gospel has a different tale to tell of what Christ is, a new glory to unveil in Him, every gospel has, 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, as the 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 remain unhelped and unsaved. He has cast out the Son of God. Why? Because he was essentially His opposite,—His contrast. "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: "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."

And thus man's sin foreshadows his judgment.

This is no arbitrary thing. The natural and the moral law are the same: "What a man soweth that he shall also reap." In a true sense here, man is the maker of his own destiny.

And this will prepare us to realize the cherubim's call for judgment. If the living creatures 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 here come forth at the cherubim's call. A rejected Saviour calls forth a destroyer. The voice of the lion calls forth the white-horsed conqueror.

It is not Christ then that comes forth, as many have supposed; still less is it the going forth of the blessed gospel. The gospel-dispensation is over now, and the sheaves of its golden harvest are gathered into the barn. It is not peace now, but war. Peace they would not have at His hands: its opposite they have no choice as to receiving. Christ received, would have been only an enemy 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. Man himself has cleared the field in the face of his enemy; and the power of God rejected calls up and sustains the enemy it would have utterly defeated.

The second living creature is the patient ox. True figure of God's laborer, strength only used in lowly toil for man, it has spoken to us of Him who on God's part laboured to bring man back to Him, and dig again the channels back to the forsaken source, so that the perennial streams might bring again 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. He has initiated a disorder which he cannot stop when 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,—it may be a literal famine of bread, no doubt, and yet even so may be the image of another and a worse : “not a famine of bread, nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.” Such a famine as Amos predicts assuredly suits well the context here : for ‘the face of a man’ has reminded us of how God has met us in His love and revealed Himself to us, inviting our confidence, speaking to us in our familiar mother-tongue, studying to be understood and appreciated by us ; and assuredly this dear and familiar intercourse with Him, with all else that it implies, is what we want for true satisfaction. “Lord, shew 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.”

There then man’s need is fully met ; the hunger of his soul is satisfied. “The bread from heaven” is what the Son of man gives, “meat that endureth unto everlasting life.” And this rejected,—the true manna loathed and turned from,—what remains but a wilderness indeed, a barren soil without a harvest ?

That the third living creature calls for famine then, is indeed but too easy to be understood, while it shows us how the greater the blessing lost, the deeper the curse retained ; manna unfed upon may breed but worms ; the enduring bread the worm that dieth not.

Finally, the fourth living creature is like a flying eagle: the plague it summons is Death and Hell. The higher height, still the deeper depth; the mystery of God and good is answered by the mystery of evil; infinite blessedness by infinite woe. John's is the gospel to which this 'flying eagle' corresponds: the gospel of love and of life and of light, each fathomless, each a mystery, each divine. Blot this out, reject, refuse it,—what remains? What but the awful and eternal opposite?

Thus these initial judgments are seen to give us the characteristics of Divine judgments at all times,—the principles of Divine government, necessary and unchanging. And while in their full reality no Christian can know them, the government he is under, though the Father's, is the very same. He is in the kingdom of light, a child of light, delivered from the authority of darkness. Around him are poured the blessed beams of the gladdening and enfranchizing day. But that renders the darkness that he may be in practically the more solemn. It is not a mere negative, not the mere absence of light, but light rejected. Darkness is itself a kingdom, rebellious indeed, but subject to the god of this world. If we shut out the light we shut in the darkness, and have thus far joined the revolt against God and good.

And the necessary judgment follows: a Father's discipline, that we may learn what evil is in our self-chosen way, but still 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 bring gladness? There is no mere negative. In that in which we are not for Christ, we are against Him. To shut Him out is wrong and an insult to Him. And these quick-eyed cherubim, care-

ful for the "holy, holy, holy God" they celebrate,— will they not, must they not, call forth the judgment answering to the sin? God keep us from indecision and half-heartedness!

People are fond of speaking of themselves, but when occupied with Christ there will be very little space for self. I used to try to get the measure of my sins, but I never found the immeasurableness of the fact that God had to hide His face from the Son of His love, never found it till seeing Him forsaken on the cross, I said to myself, "Do you know the volume of that scene? Two thieves, and Jesus the eternal Son of God hanging on the cross between them? The whole of the wrath due to my sins was met there. He who hung there knew the holiness of God, and he settled the whole question by bearing the whole penalty."

Is it impossible for a believer *not* to know that his sins are forgiven? Could the passover be in a house and guilt be attached to it? Could a saint say, "O God, put my guilt away," when the blood of His Son has put it all away? I know my sins are forgiven, and yet before an hour is passed I may get my robes defiled and have to say, Ah, how I fail even when doing all I can to meet His mind, but the measure of my guilt was laid on the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and God has no reckoning against me because He reckoned it all to His Son; but if I, a forgiven person, go wrong, He will directly call me to account for it.

What I have is just the life of that one Person in whom is all God's delight.

G. V. W.

MUST IT EITHER BE INFIDELITY OR ROME?

POPERY, CONTINUED.

There is not very much more in Mr. Mallock's defence of Rome that need detain us. A few remarks will be all that is needful upon subjects worn thread-bare by discussion.

In proving to us that "the religion of the Catholic Church, putting out the question of its theology, is a far simpler thing than the world supposes; nor is here a doctrine in it without a direct moral meaning for us, and not tending to have a direct effect on the character"—a statement which as to the last part of it is profoundly true, but in a different way from the one he intends—he instances the practice of the invocation of saints, and pleads the common excuse:

"This seems to many to complicate the whole relation of the soul to God, to be introducing a number of new and unnecessary go-betweens, and to make us, as it were, communicate with God through a dragoman. But the case really is very different. Of course it may be contended that intercessory prayer, or that prayer of any kind is an absurdity; but for those who do not think this, there can be nothing to object to in the invocation of saints. It is admitted by such men that we are not wrong in asking the living to pray for us. Surely therefore it is not wrong to make a like request of the dead."

If Mr. Mallock really knows what the practice is, he must know that it is not at all so simple a matter. He must know that it is associated with a belief in the merits of the saints availing for us, and in their worship and almost deification. He must know that only those who have a sufficient amount of merit to be effectual intercessors are separated from the rest

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by canonization, that the "faithful" may address their prayers aright. He must know that they are in fact such necessary go-betweens, that few venture to go to God without invoking their powerful aid. Thus the efficacy of Christ's blessed work is disparaged, and the love that brought Him nigh to us is slighted and contemned. These are nearer, more accessible, more compliant. Mary is a woman, she will listen; she is a mother, and to her, her Son will listen: rank and insulting unbelief, for which the prescient Word has long before provided the antidote; for never does Mary address the Lord in prayer but to get reproof in some way. Let Mr. Mallock ask himself if such words as these are not prophetic:

"How is it that ye sought Me? Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"

"Who is my mother and my brethren? For he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is my mother, and sister, and brother."

"Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come."

"Blessed are the breasts that bare Thee, and the paps that Thou hast sucked. Yea, *rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it.*"

But neither Rome nor Mr. Mallock know this blessedness: she has fulfilled it only in its converse, according to the inspired saying, "Add not to His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Prov. xxx. 6). She has been thus in her blindness adding, and has been reprov'd. Alas, she will fulfil yet another prophetic word: "He that, being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (xxix 1.)

Mr. Mallock next instances the belief in purgatory:

"In the same way, to those who believe in purgatory, to pray for the dead is as natural and as rational as to pray for the living. Next, as to the doctrine of purgatory itself—which has so long been a stumbling-

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block to the whole Protestant world—time goes on, and the view men take of it is changing. It is becoming fast recognized on all sides that it is the only doctrine which can bring a belief in future rewards and punishments into anything like accordance with our notions as to what is just or reasonable. So far from its being a superfluous superstition, it is seen to be just what is demanded at once by reason and morality; and a belief in it not to be an intellectual assent only, but a partial harmonizing of the whole moral ideal. And the whole Catholic *religion*, if we only distinguish and apprehend it rightly, will present itself to us in the same light.”

Mr. Mallock forgets to tell us who they are that are praising purgatory. They are the very people who are helping to make Protestant doctrines dream-like, and evaporating Christianity into a “natural theism” nebulous enough. Deniers of eternal punishment, such as Canon Farrar, or Eclectic Christians such as Mr. Greg, have spoken of it with qualified approval, while themselves however not adopting it. In either case disbelief it is, or ignorance of the Gospel, which has made them look so far favorably upon purgatory; naturally, for it is itself the product of such unbelief. In the Catechism of the Council of Trent it is defined as “the fire of purgatory, in which the souls of just men are purified by a temporary punishment, to qualify them to be admitted into their eternal country, ‘into which nothing defiled entereth;’” and where faith in a Saviour’s blood is wanting, it is a natural thought, no doubt. While it is not in Scripture, but the very contrary, they have rightly quoted for it, heathens and Mahomet; neither of which things will be, according to Mr. Mallock, to the dispraise of the Church.

I do not discuss it here. Those who know what Christ’s work is will not need it. Those who know but their own need, will scarcely expect to find in it what meets that need. Peace with God, Rome does not proclaim or allow to her followers, and the effect of Christ’s work (along with the merits of the saints

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which eke out its deficiencies) is only to give efficacy to a countless number of masses, absolutions and indulgences by which the Church is glorified and her treasury replenished; "but the end is that the poor soul under this teaching needs, and feels it needs purging in order to be with God,—does its best, is not purged; gets the sacrament, is not purged; and then goes to purgatory, and God knows when it will get out. For see what a poor case it is. A man is absolved, has the viaticum, the benefit of Christ's sacrifice; and then is anointed, which is declared to wipe away the remains of sin, and then after all goes to purgatory. What is that for? Not to purge him,—for the remains of sin are wiped away (I use the terms of the Council of Trent) by extreme unction, what does it go to purgatory for after that? The natural conscience feels it must be to purge the soul, not merely to satisfy a vindictive God,—but, if it be, then the sacraments have not done it. And though they have had masses before which have not kept them out of this prison, and they get masses said to get them out when they are in, yet we never know when they will get out after all. They are helped, but we are not told (that is carefully avoided) whether the satisfaction is judicially received for the satisfaction of another: the offended Judge is not bound to receive. It is probable it is,—but they are only suffrages, not satisfaction necessarily applied. . . . Bellarmine says, the souls in purgatory are sure of their salvation, that death has wholly taken away the principle of sin in them, nor is the purgatorial fire to correct evil habits that have been acquired. It is purely completing so much punishment imposed on them, satisfying a penalty. And for that they are in horrible torments, perhaps till the resurrection.*"

* Conversations on Romanism: No. 2. The forgiveness of sins. Purgatory.

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This may appear all very right and consistent to Mr. Mallock. It is, no doubt, a very good instance of what Romanism is, and may well be allowed to stand as representative of the system, a system in which God has as little honor, as man has peace with Him; where blessings are shadowy, and curses only real; and where the primary doctrine is (as Mr. Mallock truly represents it) not the infallibility of Scripture but the infallibility of the Church herself.

After this, we need not discuss the difference between points of faith and rules of discipline or 'pious opinions'; we need not enquire as to the value of the celibacy of the clergy, or the dirt of mediæval saints. We may pass on now with Mr. Mallock to

—"the last objections left us, of those which modern thought has arrayed against the Christian revelation; and these to many minds are the most conclusive and overwhelming of all—the objections raised against it by a critical study of history."

The "Christian revelation," as found in Scripture, we shall hope to consider separately. It is only so far as Rome is concerned, that we shall touch Mr. Mallock's arguments just now; and certainly it does not require even a critical study of history to raise very dangerous questions as to the character of her exorbitant claims. Some pages of that history we have already glanced at, but they are, somehow, such as have not attracted his notice, or as he does not at least think fit to bring to ours. He owns as to her claims and character, that

"These are closely bound up with a long earthly history, which the Church herself has written in one way, binding herself to stand or fall by the truth of it; and this all the secular wisdom of the world seems to be re-writing in quite another;"

but when he comes to define what he means, we find he leaves out the history of the *Romish* Church altogether. He tells us that—

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“History, as cited in witness against the Christian revelation, divides itself into two main branches. The one is a critical examination of Christianity, taken by itself, the authorship and the authenticity of its sacred books, and the origin and growth of its doctrines. The other is a critical examination of Christianity as compared with other religions.”

But neither of these is just what we call ecclesiastical history, and it is this that is so damaging to the Church of Rome. I agree that the question of what Christianity is—of her books and doctrines—is of the very greatest importance in itself. I do not desire to shun these questions, but shall, God willing, give them due consideration before I have done. But this is not the history of the Church of Rome, and that is precisely what Rome dares not face. *She cannot write even an account of it herself by which she will be willing to be judged*, except indeed she can exact from us, first of all, a promise that we will keep our eyes and ears for herself alone, and admit no doubt of whatever she may say; and thus Mr. Mallock himself very naively puts it:

“But the Catholic Church comes to us in an exactly opposite way [from the Protestant]. She too brings with her the very same testimonials; but she knows the uncertainty that obscures all remote evidences, and so at first she does not lay much stress upon them. First, she asks us to make some acquaintance with herself, to look into her living eyes, to hear the words of her mouth, to watch her ways and works, and to feel her inner spirit; and then she says to us, ‘Can you trust me? *If you can, you must trust me all in all*; for the first thing I declare to you is, I have never lied. *Can you trust me thus far?* Then listen, and I will tell you my history. You have heard it told one way, I know; and that way often goes against me. My career, I admit it myself, has many suspicious circumstances. But none of them positively condemns me: all are capable of a guiltless interpretation. And when you know me as I am, you will give me the benefit of every doubt.”

Mr. Mallock has scarcely learned the language he

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would interpret to us; yet his failure to interpret it only brings out more distinctly the immense difficulty of making the Church of Rome speak in the phrase of inductive science which she repudiates. Fancy the infallible Church, after having first stipulated for unquestioning confidence, pleading to have the "benefit of every doubt"! Mr. Mallock, who teaches us through a Jesuit, will not be above learning from the father of the Jesuits, St. Ignatius himself, that, in order "that we may in all things attain the truth, that we may not err in anything, we ought ever to hold it as a fixed principle, that *what I see white, I believe to be black*, if the Hierarchical Church so define it."

And nothing short of this would allow her to tell us her history at all. Allow herself to be judged by her history she dares not, even when given by her own historians. No, nor by the voice of the Popes whom she declares infallible. Nor by the consent of Councils, which have deposed and made Popes. Nor, above all, by Scripture, which she declares the Word of God.

It is not such difficulties as these, however, that Mr. Mallock touches upon. As to these he is tender and reticent; or rather, he wisely ignores them. It is Scripture that has to bear the brunt of criticism, and he confesses to us his belief that it cannot bear it. But the Church, herself intangible by criticism, comes forward to rescue it. "Believe the Bible for my sake," she says, 'not me for the Bible's;' and the book, as thus offered us, changes its whole character." Besides, he tells us, the Church will perhaps allow you in part to *dis*believe it:

"There is this point to remember. Catholic and Protestant alike declare the Bible to be inspired. But the Catholics can attach to *inspiration* a far wider and less assailable meaning; for their Church claims for herself a perpetual living power, which can always concentrate

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the inspired element, be it never so diffused; whereas for the Protestants, unless that element be closely bound up with the letter, it at once becomes intangible, and eludes them altogether. And thus, whilst the latter have committed themselves to definite statements, now proved untenable, as to what inspiration is, the Catholic Church, strangely enough, has never done anything of the kind. She has declared nothing on the subject that is to be held of faith. The whole question is still, within limits, an open one."

And Mr. Mallock goes on to tell us that it is possible that the Church, before defining inspiration, may wait till lay criticism has done all it can do. "She may then consider what views of the Bible are historically tenable and what not; and may faithfully shape her teaching by the learning of this world, though it may have been gathered together for the express purpose of overthrowing her."

But we need not follow these ramblings further, save only to see what they end in:—

"But granting all this, what does this do for her? Does it do more than present her to us as the toughest and most fortunate religion, out of many co-ordinate and competing ones? Does it tend in any way to set her upon a different platform from the others? And the answer to this is, that, so far as exact proof goes, we have nothing to expect or deal with in the matter, either one way or the other. The evidences at our disposal will impart a general tendency to our opinions, but no more than that. The general tendency here, however, is the very reverse of what it is vulgarly supposed to be."

So the bubble bursts. The inspired parliament was to have fixed men's 'dreams', comparing, adjusting, and registering conclusions until instead of 'wavering *dreams*,' we should have by a happy exchange 'the constant *vision* of man.' Now it turns out that this was a delusion; the parliament has failed; the dreams refuse to be anything but dreams still: nothing is proved, there is no 'constant vision'; the evidences will impart a general tendency to our

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opinions, but no more than that; Rome's creed is in fact in the very jaws of Agnosticism, and Mr. Mallock must leave it there.

It would indeed be well for Rome if this were all. Agnosticism for her would be her best escape. In fact it is not so, and her champion has himself expressly shown that it is not so. The foundation which she is declared to have chosen for herself,—her own infallibility, not to be questioned, judged of, or criticised at all,—is but her involuntary confession of how little she can bear such questioning. She professes Scripture, fathers, councils, history, to be all in her favor. *She dares not allow herself to be judged by any one of them, nor by all together.* No, nor by the voice of her own popes, whom she has just pronounced infallible. Her pretensions are founded upon forgeries, allowed to be such. Her history is a record of deceit, licentiousness and cruelty unequalled upon earth. Her way of meeting criticism has been by torture and murder of all who dared lift up their voice against her; and the power to do this she asserts still. No: if this were Christianity, it were impossible to defend it.

Thank God, it is not; and we must now look at Scripture to see if there is really no alternative between infidelity and Rome.

THE WELL IS DEEP.

I.

“The well is deep,”
But deeper far the love
That brought the Saviour
From His home above,
Into this world of sin.

II.

No path of ease
He came on earth to tread,
But weary, without place
To lay His head,
An outcast He became.

III.

Our wants and woes,
In Him their answer found.
Where sin had harm'd He heal'd
The deadly wound ;
The grief His spirit bore.

IV.

Man's selfish heart
His gifts of love could claim ;
The Giver slight, reproach,
Abuse, defame,—
And hatred give for love.

V.

But grace triumphant
O'er the sins of men,
More brightly shone, the more
Abused by them.
Its fulness dwelt in Him.

THE WELL IS DEEP.

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VI.

And deeper still
The well was proved to be,
When Jesus on the cross
Of infamy,
“Father forgive them,” cried.

VII.

The Spirit's presence
When He'd gone above,
Was but the witness to
That deathless love,
Which found its source in God.

VIII.

Tho' deep the well,
By man unfathom'd still,
Unintermitting spring it flows,
“Whoever will
May drink;” and endless live.

IX.

In coming ages
God will further show
Exceeding riches of that grace
That here to know
His Son and Spirit teach.

X.

Then principalities,
And powers, in heaven shall learn.
What “taught of God,” we now
By faith discern,
How deep is still the well.

R. T. G.

A FRAGMENT AS TO DISCIPLINE.

In the matter of evil and of our dealing with it there are two things to be considered: the sin itself on the one hand of course, but on the other hand the state of the person who has committed it. It is so commonly the case that the evil itself becomes practically the whole matter, or at least it seems supposed that if the one is dealt with and set right, the other may well be left to take care of itself. Than this scarcely anything can be a greater hindrance (to speak of nothing else) to the real putting away of the evil which we seek to remedy.

So faithful is God that He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation make a way of escape that we may be able to bear it. A sin then, when we fall into it, is a sign of the state of soul, very likely unsuspected, but none the less a real sign of a condition,—the fruit in fact of our not being with God. In dealing with this, if the sin itself be practically the only thing before one—an act and not a state—we shall become incapable of effective dealing with it; except that effective dealing be considered the putting away of evil and the evil doer together.

But the Lord hates putting away. It is the last and the sad resource when all else fails, and when the person who has sinned has simply to be left to God as confessedly beyond our reach altogether. Now there are of course sins of such a character as makes it manifest from the first that nothing else can be done. I am not now speaking of these. In other and ordinary cases we shall only do mischief by identifying in this way the offence and the offender,—by forgetting that there is a soul to be restored as well as a sin to be put away.

In this case grace and truth have both to act; *but*

grace foremost. Grace alone restores, alone gives dominion over sin. The water and the towel have to be in the hands of one who can stoop low enough to use them aright. Meekness and lowliness alone can meet the case in hand. But more: if our action here is to be an imitation of Christ's own, we must first of all realize what Christ's is; and I fear a mistake here in many minds. A thing, true in itself, is often put into a false place,—that “if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,” and therefore it has been conceived as if our part must first be the judgment of the evil before we could count upon Him to be with us for blessing.

But away from Him self-judgment in its true meaning becomes impossible, and we find practically that this is no *remedy* for us. We are as unable to meet conditions imposed on us here as anywhere else. How indeed can we set ourselves right for Him to wash us? what would be the meaning of His washing, if our feet could not be put into His hands defiled, not clean? Peter, who shrinks from this, has to be taught; that except *He* washes, we have no part with Him.

A first welcome to Christ then, is to be maintained in order to cleansing by Him, a restoration to His presence in order to cleansing. And for that the open arms of love ever waiting,—the Lord Himself only rebuking our absence from Him whatever our condition.

Now if this be Christ's way, our own must follow it. The first thing is not to get a matter right, but to get a soul right so that he may be able to see and to judge with God. For this he must be with Him. Force upon him your judgment of his sin before this, you are not at his feet, you cannot wash. Your well-meaning work may drive him but further away from you and from God. He *is* away, and must be brought near. Then wash, and He will not resist you.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

(10). Will you explain John xiv. 12: "Greater works than these shall he do," &c.: how was this fulfilled?

Ans. The words which follow show the reason of this: "Greater works than these shall he do, *because I go to My Father.*" The result would be the descent of the Holy Ghost in testimony to the accomplishment of His work. All hindrances being removed by the Cross, and the Holy Ghost being come to proclaim its value, and the glory of Him who had wrought it, the blessing growing from this is seen in three thousand converted in one day. Pentecostal blessing has become a proverb.

(11). John xiv. 27: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you"—is this peace of conscience and peace of heart?

Ans. The first is the general condition into which He introduces them, of which peace of conscience through His blood is a main and necessary part. The second is the peace in which He Himself walked while here, the result of unbroken fellowship with God and confidence in Him.

(12). Rom. v. 1, speaks of justification by faith; ver. 9, of justification by His blood; Tit. iii. 7, "by His grace"; Jas. iii. 24, "by works and not by faith only." Is it then correct to say there are four justifications?

Ans. The first three are different sides of the same thing; the last is quite different. There are however some other texts to be considered. Speaking generally, justification is before God or before man. Before God it is by the blood of Christ, the just having suffered for the unjust. It is also said to be by His resurrection (Rom. iv. 25); He was raised for our

justification: that is, He having died on account of our sins, God's taking Him out of the grave declared the work accepted, and sin gone for all that should believe. Faith brings us under the shelter of the blood: we are justified when we have it, not before—in that sense, *by* it. Again it is by grace, because we have done nothing to deserve it, but the opposite: it is God's free favour. But all these are but different views of the same thing, not different things. James on the other hand speaks of what is quite different. True faith, he argues, saving faith, will have works as its fruit, and these works will justify its possessor before men. Those who cannot see the faith, will see the works proceeding from it. "*Show Me thy faith without thy works*"—you cannot; on the other hand, "I will show thee my faith *by* my works." So Abraham: God pronounced him righteous by faith, before Isaac was born; before men he was justified when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar. To them then, that former Scripture was 'fulfilled.'

(13). 1 Cor. xv. 52: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump:" Why is it called here "the *last* trump"? Is it not the same as 1 Thess. iv. 16, called there "the trump of God"?

Ans. It is the same word,—the only one in the New Testament for 'trumpet'—in both places. The 'last trumpet' was the note of departure for the host, and this will be ours. It does not follow but that other trumpets sound afterwards, as indeed all the seven trumpets of Revelation do, but for different purposes and with reference to other people.

(14). Please explain how it was that Cain's offering was rejected. Was it because of the spirit which he manifested, or the offering he brought? If blood was needed, where was he told that he must bring blood?

Ans. We are told in Heb. xi. 4, that "by faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying *of his gifts.*" This shews that the sacrifice itself had to do with Abel's acceptance, and Cain's *not* being a sacrifice, with his rejec-

tion. But then the value of the sacrifice was in the faith it shewed; and this tells us that sacrifice must have been appointed, or it would have been will-worship, and not faith. Abel took the place of a sinner needing atonement; Cain came with his gifts, not owning that from hands defiled with sin God could accept nothing. Abel's offering was the acknowledgment of a needed Saviour; Cain's the work of his own hands in mere self-righteousness. As for the Divine institution of sacrifice, we have indeed no account of it, but the silence as to it is no proof against it, while the passage in Hebrews certainly implies it.

(15). Does the expression, 'Father of saints' (Heb. xii.) imply that *all* men are children of God, and if so, how does this agree with such words as those of the Lord to the Jews: "Ye are of your father the Devil"?

Ans. God is called on the one hand "the God of the spirits of all flesh," and on the other, "the Father of spirits"; and the apostle quotes with approbation from the heathen poet his assertion, "for we are also His offspring," and argues on it: "forasmuch as we are the offspring of God," &c. These passages seem to me to be really decisive, and we have no alternative but to take them literally. The assertion is carefully made to exclude beasts, who have 'souls' but not 'spirits', and to take in angels who are expressly called the 'sons of God.' In this sense He is the God and Father of all intelligent creation, who alone can know or love or worship Him (see "Facts and Theories," p. 1, c. 8.)

But this creation place can be lost, and in fact practically has been, by the fall, and God only can restore it to us (and indeed in a higher and better way) by *new* creation. Hence the Lord's words to the Jews, which no more deny the natural place man has, than what He equally says with regard to their being *Abraham's* children: "if ye were Abraham's children ye would do the works of Abraham."

GOD'S THOUGHT ABOUT RESTITUTION.

“ UNTIL THE TIMES OF THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS ”

I believe that a serious hindrance in the minds of many to the reception of much important truth, lies in misconception of the Scripture doctrine of “restitution.” Thus the expression which I have put at the head of this paper, and which is, as we know, a simple quotation from Acts iii. 21, conveys to many at the present day the idea of a restoration to a kind of Adamic state. This is argued to have been evidently God's original thought, which He would not let the entrance of sin set aside. Or else, it is contended, Satan would really have got a victory in compelling Him to change His plan about Eden. This thought has been carried so far in the minds of many, that the “new earth” has been supposed to be indeed a “Paradise regained,” in which generations of men would, in the ordinary way of nature, but without death, replace each other to all eternity.

I mention this, not to reply to it, save as the general line of truth of which I desire to speak, furnishes reply; but to show how rooted it is in the minds of many, that Adam in Paradise was really God's first thought, instead of being merely a first step towards the accomplishment of what was really His first thought. Thus “restitution” becomes necessarily a getting back to a supposed Adamic state. And in this way both the state of Adam in Paradise is unscripturally exalted, and the work of Christ and its consequences really, though unintentionally, degraded.

Now, if the reader will turn with me for a moment to one of the Old Testament types, he will see at once that God's idea of restitution is not merely what we

should call so. I refer to the trespass-offering, Lev. v. 14, vi. 7. The grand significance of this, which is of course, as all others, a type of Christ's work, has, I am persuaded, been too much passed over, even where understood. The grand thought in it is not merely of sacrifice for sin, nor should it be confounded with the sin-offering. It is that of compensation for wrongdoing, and that expressly in the double character of wrong done to God (chap. v. 14, &c.) and of wrong done to man (chap. vi. 1-7.) "He shall *make amends for the harm that he has done,*" is that which really distinguishes this offering from every other. It is not here simply "the sin committed must be atoned for"—its guilt must be met—but "the *injury* done must be compensated." This is indeed, if you take it in another way, what is absolutely necessary to true atonement in the sight of God. He must have restitution—reparation. And notice how far His thought of restitution goes: not only must there be the "estimation" of the injury, and the value brought in "shekels of the sanctuary"—pure money and full weight—but also "*he shall add the fifth part thereto.*" Thus the one wronged should be gainer by the wrong done him. Mere making up would not do for God. And it is blessed to see that. For thus I judge the poverty of the thought that God would not suffer Satan to prevail to set aside His plan. True, as that of course is, Scripture teaches us to go beyond it, and to say, "He would not suffer sin at all if He could not have got glory by it." He would not suffer Satan to come in and mar His "old creation," merely that He might show His skill in restoring it, but that He might, IN THE RUINS OF IT, get the material of a "new." In the language of the Old Testament, "He maketh the wrath of man"—not to be of no effect, but—"to *praise* Him, the remainder of wrath shall He"—not make of no effect, but—"restrain." Even so would He have restrained

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Satan's working, could He not have brought out of it a harvest of blessing and of glory; and instead of being content with the patching up of what Satan had marred, the word of Him who sitteth upon the throne is, "Behold, I make all things *new*." (Rev. xxi: 5.)

Now, Christ is He who restoreth: "I restored that which I took not away," is what is prophetically said of Him. He is the offerer of this trespass-offering. He is the One who has overpaid God (if I may say so) for all the wrong that sin has done Him. He is the One also who has to man (to as many as receive Him) more than restored all that sin had taken away.

But let us inquire a little how He has done it, and what the restitution is. And here we shall find the consequences of the work of Christ to be really *contrasted* with what would have been the consequences of Adam's continuance and of the old creation with him.

In men's minds the fruits of Christ's work have been mixed up with what would have been the fruit of Adam's continuance, and serious mischief ensues. The original creation is taken as the perfection of what was in the mind of Him who created it. Thus (without a word of Scripture for it) Adam is considered to have been a creature made for heaven, to whom it was secured by covenant that he should gain it by well-doing; and the Ten Commandments are carried back two thousand five hundred years before they were given to be the measure of what he was required to fulfil. Thus, too, when he failed, Christ is supposed to have taken up the broken contract, and to have gained for us, by His fulfilment of it, what Adam lost.

It may startle some to be told that this is all theory, not only apart from Scripture, but in opposition to it. Yet so it is. And its plain tendency is to rob Christ of His glory, by reducing His work to

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almost the level of what simply a perfect man could be expected to perform. For manifestly, if the law be the measure of what Adam ought to have done, and what Christ did do, no more was asked of one than of the other. And yet this is what is being more and more insisted on in (so-styled) "Evangelical" writings.

To answer this, let the pregnant figure of the trespass-offering speak. Plainly, had man in that case fulfilled the law as regards God and his fellow, there need have been, and would have been, no offering at all. If Christ had merely taken up Adam's broken contract to fulfil it, death would have had no place in that work, because death was the penalty of the breach of it. If He could have fulfilled the work for Adam, and given to God the obedience in which Adam failed, and in Adam's behalf, the punishment of the breach of it could not have been required from him. What was wrong would have been set right without shedding of blood. "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

But furthermore, in this matter of the trespass-offering, after the injury inflicted had been duly estimated and made up, still restitution, in God's thought of it, was not complete, until there had been added to it a fifth part more. Thus the person who offered the trespass-offering did more than could have been required had the trespass not been committed, and the injured person was now a gainer to that extent. But here, as ever, the antitype goes far beyond the type. God and man are both gainers by Christ's work; but not only so—the work of Christ, and any work that could be required of Adam, differ essentially from each other, as, for example, the righteousness of God manifested, differs from human obedience performed.

People's attention is so fixed upon what *they get* by the work of Christ that its real value, which can only

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be at all properly seen from the Divine side of it, escapes them, along with much of the truth of what they do get. Let us try and look a little at the Divine side of Christ's work, and see how a moment's glance there upsets poor human thoughts.

What *did* God gain, to speak humanly, by Christ's work?

What *would* He have gained by Adam's?

Is it not plain that the first need, in order to answer these questions in any measure, depends on our estimate of the worker in each case?

Just as the altar sanctifies the gift, so does the glory of the Person of the Son of God set His work apart from all mere human work, and give it another value.

What was the "first man, Adam?"

Not, if I am to take Scripture, a being framed for heaven, but, in express contrast with heaven (1 Cor. xv. 47), "of earth, earthy." If I open Genesis, I find no promise of heaven held out to him, no idea of being raised above the estate in which he was created. I find no works enjoined, for which he was to be rewarded; one prohibition only of a thing, which would have had no moral character attaching to it, if it had not been forbidden.

Created "very good," he was to keep his first estate, not seek a new one. Nor, until sin had made our estate evil, and only with fallen man, do we find one thought of a creature quitting its estate, except as sin. Thus "the angels which kept not their first estate," of whom Jude speaks. Not made to toil at working out a righteousness, but to enjoy the bounteous goodness which had provided richly for him, one test of obedience alone was given. If he ate of the tree he died.

What did God gain by such obedience?

Save as one of the countless creatures He had made whose happiness bore witness of creating goodness

and wisdom—nothing. Had he obeyed, what marvel? Had he obtained witness that he was righteous, it would have been creature righteousness, not Divine. With Eliphaz we might have asked, "Is it gain to God, that thou makest thy ways perfect?"

And had he been obedient, as angels were, would the fitting reward for it have been a place in the glory, and at the right hand of God? Would he have inherited all things? Would he have been where Christ as man is, and have shared what the saint shares now as joint-heir with Him?

Simple questions, yet needful. For if the work done were to be the same, and Christ fulfils the broken contract and obtains the forfeited reward, some such conclusions follow as these questions suggest.

But Adam fell. That wrong was done to God of which the trespass-offering speaks. Sin had spoilt the old creation, and (again to speak humanly, as we must) raised the question of God's character. What would He do? Cut off the offenders in righteousness? Spare them in love how could He, and be holy? Slowly and patiently was the question answered. Christ was that answer. Not simply the taker up of man's cause. Not the worker out of human righteousness. But the brightness of the Father's glory. The wisdom and the power of God. The fulfiller of Divine *righteousness*, and the revealer of Divine *love*.

Hence, the glory of the gospel of Christ is, not that it saves man merely, but that it reveals God. No longer shut up in the thick darkness, as in Israel it was declared at the very time of their magnificent temple being dedicated, "He is in the light." (1 Jno. i. 7.) The glory of God is in the face of Jesus Christ. There we see it. If the entrance of sin into the world had in any wise raised a question about God, not only are such questions for ever at rest, but the way in which it had been dealt with in the Cross of the Son

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of God becomes the very way in which His attributes shine out. Christ is not merely "the Lord *our* righteousness," He is "the righteousness of God." Could Adam have been that, or wrought it? We are in another sphere altogether, plainly. And there, amid the sin which might have seemed to compromise His glory, there is wrought a work in which He is glorified as never beside. Inseparably connected with man's worst wickedness is the display of God's righteousness, and not in wrath, but through which He justifies the ungodly.

I ask again, if God had merely meant to restore (in our mode of speaking), would not the question rise, then, why suffer the fall? But if the fall were to be the background upon which He could display Himself in such a character as should reveal Him in His glory to the adoring gaze of His creatures for eternity, what then? Ah, might not the angels well repeat that "glory to God in the highest," when they could link it through the Christ born in Bethlehem, with "on earth peace, good pleasure in men!" Did not the arms of love which were stretched out around men, encompass angels also? As it is written, "that in the ages to come, He might shew forth the exceeding riches of His grace" (how?) "in His kindness *towards us* through Christ Jesus."

Thus Christ's work is different in its character and results, God-ward, from anything that could be of Adam, asked or had. It was one such as the "Only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father" alone could accomplish. Peerless in His person and work, the place which He has taken as the result of it with God is one suited not to the first man, "of the earth, earthy," but to "the second man, the Lord from heaven." Taking His seat at the right hand of God, He is become Head of a "*new creation*," not Restorer of the "*old*." He is not the first Adam set up again, but a second Adam, and He is "the *beginning*

of the creation of God." All things are restored, but not to the primitive condition before the fall. They are "*made new*." The old condition of things is done away.

Let us see how this affects us as Christians; how to us also the fifth part is added; how Christ has restored to us, not the primitive condition of unfallen Adam, but all things in a higher way.

1. As to *position*, we are "in Christ" a "*new creation*, old things passed away, and *all* things become new." As to what we were as men in the flesh, "dead with Christ," "our old man crucified with Him," so that we are "not in the flesh," not "living (alive) in the world," not "of" it, carnal if we "walk as *men*." To give us boldness in the day of judgment, we are told that "as Christ is, so are we," even "in this world." Hence, "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," for we are "accepted in the Beloved," and already "seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

Thus the position of men in the world is completely passed away, and we are in a new place before God, as and what Christ is; "made the righteousness of God in Him."

2. As to *nature*, we are "born again," "born of God," "partakers of the Divine nature," "have eternal life abiding in us," that eternal life that was in the Son of God through the *back* eternity, therefore truly "eternal," not mere existence or Adamic life. And though we carry the old nature, the flesh, still about with us, it is only as an enemy, and to be destroyed.

3. As to *inheritance*, "we are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ," begotten to "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us," where Christ is, in the "mansions of a Father's house," that we may be "ever with the Lord."

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But I must close. Even for the earth comes surely, as promised, the restitution of all things, but, beyond the fires in which the elements shall be dissolved, such a scene as never Adam knew. My purpose, however, is but to give the thought, not work out the details. In eternity alone shall we "fully know" what our "fifth part" beyond Adam blessing is. Meanwhile we know enough to bow our hearts in adoration, and to make us echo the song:

"Unto Him that loved us, and has washed us from our sins in His own Blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and His Father:

"To Him be glory and honour for ever. Amen."

Where is Christ now? Gone up to heaven and seated there out of the world—by "the world" I do not mean the earth, but the system set up by Satan all around us now. How much did Christ honour that? The only thing He looked at in it was people that were to be born of God and brought out of it linked to Himself. Are you out of it with Him? Have you a range of life outside things down here, in it but not of it, even as He was not?

It is a blessed thing to feel, as those to whom Christ has given the light of eternal life, that not only all our springs are in Him, but that the path of each one, however humble, may be marked by the spark of eternal life shining out the whole way.

You will find it the very strength of your soul to go before God with a text and say, "This is written in thy word, and because thou canst not lie, I know that I have got that thing."

G. V. W.

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SCRIPTURE IN ITS OWN BEHALF.

“Believe the Bible for my sake,” says the Church of Rome; “not me for the Bible’s.” “And the book as thus offered us,” says Mr. Mallock, “changes its whole character.”

It is true, it does: it ceases to be practically the Word of God at all. It becomes the word of man, and nothing more. If the Church must guarantee it to me (this Church with her strangely suspicious and not to be criticised history), its credibility will be no more than equal to the credibility of the Church itself, and Mr. Mallock has told us what even he deems that to be; “The evidences at our disposal will impart a general tendency to our opinions, but no more than that.” No wonder that he has to summon the *will* in to the rescue, and believe in fact by a *determination* to believe!

“But that first decision—how shall we make it? Who or what shall help us or give us counsel? There is no evidence that can do so in the sensible world around us. The universe, as positive thought approaches it, is blind and dumb about it. Science and history are sullen and blind and dumb. They await our decision before they will utter a single word to us, and that decision, if we have a will at all, *it lies with our own will—with our will alone, to make.*”

This is a first step, but it carries us but a little way; for—

“The world into which the moral will has borne itself—not a material world but a spiritual . . . is torn and divided against itself, and is resonant with unend-

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ing contradictions. Its first aspect is that of a place of torture, a hell of the intellect in which reason is to be racked forever by a tribe of sphinx-like monsters, themselves despairing. Good and evil inhabit there, confronting each other, forever unreconciled: *there* is omnipotent power baffled, and omnipotent mercy unexercised. Is the will strong enough to hold on through this baffling and monstrous world, and not to shrink back, and bid the vision vanish? Can we still resolve to say, "I believe, although it is impossible?"

Mr. Mallock, it is true, does not leave us here. There must be a contact with what is divine to give life to what begins as a "figure of human dreams," and in a very eloquent passage he describes this; but after all he cannot, and as it appears, he does not, much wonder that "thinkers like Mr. Leslie Stephen" should "say that such beliefs belong to dream-land." He has no answer, save that such dreams give all its value to the world of reality itself. But this is not convincing, for every one will judge of that matter differently, and most perhaps will think that a faith founded upon reasonings confessedly inconclusive, and to which so very strong a will to believe is necessary, may only illustrate the power of the human mind for self-deception.

The criticism of the positive school is a crucible it seems which will melt down and destroy all evidences. The Church only escapes by its positive refusal to try the crucible at all. Scripture the folly of Protestantism has exposed to the universal solvent, and she is waiting to see how much of it will come out, before she frames her theory of inspiration. This, moreover she can afford to do, because she is only a parliament guided by the Spirit of God in the analysis and reconstruction of human dreams, and to find Scripture but human dreams would scarcely daunt her.

Scripture itself however refuses such a place as the infallible Church would give it. It has committed

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itself very distinctly to positive assertions of its own truth and trustworthiness, by which it must stand or fall absolutely. It will not accept the position of being truth in the guise of falsehood, or truth to be picked out of the midst of falsehood, or anything but truth pure, simple and demonstrative. Nor does it withdraw itself from any test man can put it to, but claims to abide all tests, and to be that which tests all other things. It does not present itself as what approves itself to the heart and not to the intellect, but to heart, conscience, intellect, all and altogether. It will not allow men to escape under the plea of inability to discern its truth either, nor appeal to the will to make a leap in the dark to reach the light. It professes to *bring* light which man has to resist—to shut his eyes to—if he does not see. It thus requires no outside evidences to confirm its truth,—no authority of man or church to guarantee it; but claims to be the Word of God, which He cannot utter doubtfully, leaving man sinlessly in unbelief who refuses it. The world is pronounced guilty, for not believing in Jesus: he that believeth not the Gospel shall be *damned*.

And yet it is not the book of a hierarchy, it is not the voice of a priesthood, seeking to make gain in any way by man's convictions or his fears. Its pardon is as free as its condemnation is decisive. It is content to leave it to eternity to enforce its penalties. Man must laugh, if he will, meanwhile: it can wait, quiet and calm and immoveable, with no deprecation and no clamour, and no apology: only with a tender, compassionate, solemn pleading for man himself and with himself, as if judgment waited only upon mercy, and mercy needs must at last acquiesce in judgment. Certainly Scripture betrays no inclination to escape from human criticism. It does not provide against its own dishonour. It has come down to the 19th century of Christianity, not unassailed, but throughout

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victorious. Must it fail now? Mr. Mallock thinks it has already done so. Let him produce his proofs, and the thing is settled. In the meanwhile there are those with their eyes and ears not unopen to all that is going on in science and in criticism, whose faith, built solely on Scripture, rests with a peace ineffable upon it, and who dare to claim heaven and earth, with every fact of science and every truth that may be ascertained by all possible research, to be, in fullest harmony and praise, servants and witnesses to the throne on which He sits who was Bethlehem's manged babe and Calvary's crucified, and who will yet be judge of quick and dead alike.

We must take up Mr. Mallock's statement of what criticism has accomplished as to the Bible, but while we do so it is well to bear in mind, that the Christian faith, thank God, is reached in a shorter way than by going round the circle of modern sciences. The simple and ignorant man who in the consciousness of sin and weariness has heard the voice of Christ say, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," and who has come at His invitation, has a surer proof of the truth of Scripture in his own breast than the guarantee of all the learned societies of Europe to it. "He that believeth on the Son of God *hath the witness in himself*;" and the really wise will be the first to own, that if God has given a revelation at all, it must be that He would give it in such a way as that the poorest and most ignorant would be able to know it His, and not have to wait till the ages should run out to get the confirmation needed from physics or metaphysics.

Intellectual power and attainments are but the portion of a few, and have nothing essentially to do with goodness, or with truth, or even wisdom. How often are they united to the very reverse of these! And by what right do their possessors then claim to

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be the necessary arbiters of questions which have to do with these far more than intellect. Have they decided that heart and conscience have no ways of knowledge proper to themselves, paths which the vulture eye of criticism has never explored, and never can explore?

Grant them what they ask, and it would be impossible to justify God's ways at all, or to find a clue to the labyrinth of a world so constructed that the few, distinguished by no moral superiority, but by a chance possession of certain class-advantages, should determine the faith, as to all that gives life value, of the mass of their blind and helpless fellow-men!

No, the Scriptural method is assuredly the only right one, wherein the truth is heard by the true; the sick listen to the physician; the heart and conscience of men (their common property) are the two-fold sufficient witness to what is the concern of all alike. And these have everywhere borne witness to the truth of Scripture. The wear and discipline of life, the test of persecution unto death in every form, all manner of circumstances that could be, have only made manifest its power to meet all. It has changed sorrow to joy, despair to peace, cowardice to courage, vice to virtue. Results that it would be as hard for even the positivist to question, as they would be impossible for positivism to produce.

And what criticism has ever given Scripture the searching which those have, to whom it has constituted the whole sum of valued knowledge; and who have gone on year after year, with deepening wonder and delight, comparing verse with verse and book with book, ever with new vistas opening to their sight, new harmonies sounding in their ears, and never a discord? There are many such who will tell you that even as to knowledge, whether it be of nature, history or whatever else, it is the key to all. Is this extravagance, enthusiasm, or what? If it be,

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there must yet be a strange fascination in what can thus lay hold of many of the plainest, soberest people in the world, and unite men of all ranks, all temperaments, all phases of learning and of mind, prince, peasant, and philosopher, in a common testimony.

Mr. Mallock gives us so little in the way of definite statement that it is hard to deal as one would desire with his crude generalizations. He tells us, for instance, that "the Biblical account of creation it [modern criticism] has shewn us to be an impossible fable"; but he does not tell us how it has shewn us this at all. We are to take it on his own authority apparently, for assuredly there are tens of thousands, who, if he classed them amongst this 'us' would enter a most solemn and earnest protest. I will venture to assert upon the opposite side, that there are already a sufficient number of coincidences between the discoveries of geology and the statements of revelation to 'show' conclusively to any willing to see, that revelation indeed it is. No human mind could have conceived these independently. Nor will I imitate Mr. Mallock's vagueness: I will specify as examples:—

1. The water having originally covered the whole surface of the earth.
2. The general progress of life from the lowest to the highest forms.
3. The waters first producing.
4. Yet dry land before the appearance of the first life.
5. Beasts before man, and man the last creature formed.

It would be easy to specify more than this, but it would require a detail which I cannot enter upon now; and this alone should be amply sufficient to give irreverence pause. Moses said all this before geology was so much as dreamed of, and geology has had to discover the truth of it. It may discover the truth of all the rest before its tale is told.

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A still more important point even Mr. Mallock dismisses with the light assertion, that "to passages thought mystical and prophetic it has assigned the homeliest, and often retrospective meanings;" but he gives no example, and can give none that will stand ten minutes' examination. Did Mr. Mallock ever see a Jew? There is not one but is a living witness of the truth of prophecy. Out of the book that he has carried with him from the time of the dispersion, and which must be older than the dispersion itself, he may learn their essential history ever since. The sin for which they are given up; their scattering yet preservation; the desolation of the land till their return; their strange and long continuance without the true God and without a false: all this as casting light upon that significant action of theirs, itself prophetic, when they bought a *burial ground for strangers* with the 'price of blood.'

'Retrospective'! in prophecies that in one connected scheme knit the present with the future and the past alike; that map out Christendom as it exists before our eyes to-day; that foretell this very uprising of infidelity and its end alike! 'Homeliest meanings'! in Immanuel, 'God with us,' born of a virgin; in the sword which awakes against the man, Jehovah's fellow; in the judge of Israel, born at Bethlehem, but whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting, smitten with a rod upon the cheek! (Isa vii., ix.; Zech. xiii.; Mic. v.)

If Mr. Mallock will but attempt to show us what criticism can do as to these prophecies and such as these, he may perhaps reason himself into faith.

Meanwhile, that he may not think I shirk his statements, I will compel myself to transcribe the sad, and self-dishonoring words in which he shows us how well a faith in Rome and a disbelief in Scripture can go together. Vagueness itself, he brings forward no example, and no argument. 'Criticism' has pro-

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nounced, and he is too frightened of the scare-crow to look and see if there be any body or life under its rags.

“Everywhere at its touch what seemed supernatural has been humanized, and the divinity that hedged the records has rapidly abandoned them. And now looked at in the common day-light their whole aspect changes for us; and stories that we once accepted with a solemn reverence seem childish, grotesque, and not unfrequently barbarous. Or, if we are hardly prepared to admit so much as this, this much at least has been established firmly—that the Bible, if it does not give the lie itself to the astonishing claims that have been made for it, contains nothing in itself, at any rate, that can of itself be sufficient to support them. This applies to the New Testament just as much as to the Old; and the consequences here are even more momentous.”

They are unspeakably momentous indeed. This is Scripture for Mr. Mallock. Will he bow down before it, when it is canonized by the fiat of the Pope, nevertheless? He may, but it will not save him. Eternal love has come down so low that men may, if they will, (alas) insult its lowliness. Still they stumble at the stumbling-stone. The poor man whom they can mock and spit upon, and do as they list with, and from whom comes no fire to devour, and who, when bidden, does no miracle at Herod's word, is *He* indeed the Lord, the Son of the Blessed? But see Him in the little upper chamber at Jerusalem, how changed! His very wounds have glory. The stoutest unbeliever there says, “My Lord and my God!”

Mr. Mallock has been too much in company with the Lord's enemies; no wonder if he has only seen the poor, lone man, without strength. There is another side. It may not be critical: for who would dare to criticize God in His presence? It is none the less convincing. I have read plenty of ‘criticism,’ in which men sought to explain the mystery of life by dissection of the dead; and I did not wonder that they could not find it, and it did not make the least

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difference as to my faith at all. 'Spirit and life' are not objects for the microscope.

It may be useless enough therefore to declare to Mr. Mallock how the matter stands with some of us still, and how the oldest of Old Testament stories have a Divine voice in them which tells out the secrets of the heart of God, a living God, holy, gracious and true, and who sees the end from the beginning. As to the New Testament, who can speak worthily of it? And who can commend Christ, where He is still as of old 'foolishness,' as Mr. Mallock declares:—

"Weighed as mere human testimony, the value of the Gospels becomes doubtful or insignificant. For the miracles of Christ, and for His superhuman nature, they contain little evidence that even tends to be satisfactory; and even His daily words and actions it seems probable may have been inaccurately reported, in some cases perhaps invented, and in others perhaps supplied by a deceiving memory."

The evidence has approved itself to multitudes in every age, who can speak with absolute assurance of how the words of Christ have been to them creative words which have called them into all that they could henceforth call life at all. Does Mr. Mallock not remember the case of William Hone, who, for thirty years an atheist, published the Apocryphal Gospels for the express purpose of discrediting the true, yet was converted by these when he came to examine them? His own account is: "When I found what an outcry there was against me on account of the Apocryphal Gospels, I set to work to read the canonical gospels, and oh, what a flood of light burst upon me! And thus I became a convert to Christianity from conviction."*

* I need make no apology for presenting to my readers afresh the lines he wrote upon the fly-leaf of his Bible:

"The proudest heart that ever beat
Hath been subdued in me ;

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To Wm. Hone, and how many myriads more! "the value of the Gospels" was not "doubtful or insignificant;" and they have found in them evidences of Christ's "superhuman nature," as satisfactory as heart could desire. The idea of their being partly forgery and partly "supplied by a deceiving memory," is but the fiction of those to whom the superhumanity is the one critical objection. The earliest gospel was written but a short time after the occurrences it details, and published among the very people among whom they had taken place; while as to the one miracle, which believed makes all the rest credible and consistent, Paul could appeal (about twenty-five years after the event) to the 'greater part' of 'above five hundred' witnesses, yet living, to the resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. xv.)

But having these thoughts as to the Gospels, no wonder that as to the Epistles, for Mr. Mallock:

"A kindred sight presents itself. We discern in them the witness of men not inspired from above, but, with many disagreements amongst themselves, struggling upwards from below, influenced by a variety of existing views, and doubtful which of them to assimilate. We discern in them as we do in other writers, the products of their age and of their circumstances. The materials out of which they formed their doctrines we can find in the lay world around them. And as we follow the Church's history farther, and examine the appearance and the growth of her great subsequent dogmas, we can trace all of them to a natural and non-Christian origin. We can see, for instance, how, in part at least, men conceived the idea of the Trinity from the teachings of Greek mysticism; and how the theory of the atonement

The wildest will that ever rose
To scorn Thy Word, or aid Thy foes,
Is quelled, my God, by Thee.

Thy will, and not my will be done;
My heart be ever Thine!
Confessing Thee, the mighty 'Word,'
I hail Thee, Christ, my God, my Lord,
And make Thy name my sign."

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was shaped by the ideas of Roman jurisprudence. Everywhere, in fact, in the holy building supposed to have come down from God, we detect fragments of older structures, confessedly of earthly workmanship."

"*Not* inspired from above, *but* struggling upwards from below:" yet this last is the very character of his own spiritual parliament, which *is* inspired. And apostles are not inspired, but the Pope is! Such seems Mr. Mallock's argument. But that there is any disagreement in the doctrine of the Epistles, or of Scripture from first to last, is entirely untrue. Let it be produced, this disagreement. Paul had to rebuke Peter to his face at Antioch, but it was for inconsistency with his own doctrine, not merely Paul's; and he never wrote an epistle to defend his practice, but wrote one commending the wisdom of his "beloved brother Paul." As to the doctrine of the Trinity being subsequent to the Epistles, or derived from Greek mysticism, it is found in the Old Testament before Greek mysticism, or Greek philosophy at all, had any being. So too the doctrine of atonement was in Scripture before Rome had any jurisprudence to give shape to it. All this is merely the argument of ignorance, the blind following of a rationalism often enough exposed.

One last quotation, and I have done. My readers may think that it is time; but they can scarcely be more weary than I am. Mr. Mallock has already said very truly, that "no man denies that Christ was born of a virgin, in order to make the same claim for Buddha;" but now he is going to show us that Christianity is but a patchwork from this and other religions, ingeniously put together so that the seams are wonderfully well hidden.

"They too have had their sacred books, and their incarnate gods for prophets; they have had their priest-hoods, their traditions, and their growing bodies of doctrine: there is nothing in Christianity that cannot find its counter-part even to the most marked details, in

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the life of its founder. Two centuries, for instance, before the birth of Christ, Buddha is said to have been born without human father. Angels sang in heaven to announce his advent; an aged hermit blessed him in his mother's arms; a monarch was advised, though he refused, to destroy the child, who, it was predicted should be a universal ruler. It is told how he was once lost, and was found again in a temple; and how his young wisdom astonished all the doctors. A woman in a crowd was rebuked by him for exclaiming, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee." His prophetic career began when he was about thirty years old; and one of the most solemn events of it is his temptation in solitude by the evil one. Everywhere, indeed, in other religions we are discovering things that we once thought were peculiar to the Christian. And thus the fatal inference is being drawn on all sides, that they have all sprung from a common and an earthly root, and that one has no more certainty than another."

It is strange that Mr. Mallock does not see that such an argument is at any rate as fatal to Rome as to Protestantism. Could the pope's sanction make a Buddhist fable truth when imported into Christianity? Or will Rome give up, in submission to criticism, the virgin-mother and the God-incarnate Saviour? Which horn of the dilemma will her defender choose? But in truth, nothing is better illustrated by these assertions than the poverty of the cause that would make use of them.

Criticism has scarcely begun its work upon these Buddhist stories, and a vague "it is said" is not likely to do much against a Christian's faith. How much is really settled as to the chronology? how much as to the genuineness of the accounts in question? I believe that Mr. Mallock cannot *prove* them to be anterior to Christianity at all,* nor any more than adaptations of the Christian, which were early spread over a large part of Asia. Some, however,

* The known and accessible authorities as to the life of Gautama are these: in Sanscrit, the *Lalita Vistara*, the standard work of the Northern Buddhists, is of unknown date. The Tibetan version is said to have

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may be mere coincidences, and nothing more; while, on the other hand, as accounting for the general prevalence of priesthood, sacrifice, and even the idea of incarnations of a Divine Deliverer, we must remember that all the streams of human tradition have come down from one primitive source, however far they may have afterwards wandered from one another. The golden age, the garden, the tree of knowledge, the serpent, the curse through the woman, and the flood, meet us again and again as we listen to the story told by nations the most distant from one another. Scripture unites these in what is felt at once to be the only consistent, sober rendering,—the only credible explanation of man's actual condition, and which meets this with Divine promises and prophecies of deliverance and a Deliverer to come, amid whose broken echoes (as in this case) men are losing the original voice which has produced them.

From Scandinavia to Egypt, from India to Mexico, the tradition of the seed of the woman which should bruise the serpent's head is found unmistakably; and this, within a certain radius from Palestine, is reinforced and added to by rumours of later revelations, whereby the expectation of a Saviour was confirmed and enlarged. Seven hundred years before Christ, and two at least before the birth of the founder of Buddhism, the ten tribes of Israel were transported *en masse* almost to the borders of India. About 150

existed in the sixth century A.D. The Chinese translation of "the Book of the Great Renunciation" was also made in the sixth century, the date of the Sanscrit original is unknown. The Burmese work translated by Bishop Bigandet cannot be earlier than the fifth century. The Pali text of the "Commentary on the Jatakas," probably about the middle of the fifth century. The account in Pali of the death of Gautama is much earlier, and cannot be dated later than the end of the fourth century B.C., but is not in question here. The Siamese account is again of uncertain date. (See "Buddhism," by T. W. Rhys Davids, published by the Society for Prom. Christian Knowledge.)

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years later the Babylonish captivity dispersed the rest of the nation probably still more widely, a dispersion from which they never more than partially returned. The prophecy of a child to be born, son of a virgin, and yet the mighty God, might thus have been carried far and wide through India before Buddhism had in fact a history at all.

The darkness and uncertainty here however allow the wildest license to speculation, and such coverts become the chosen haunts of the enemies of revelation. To call assertion 'criticism' is an abuse of words, and yet the mass of what is called so is assertion merely. How many are able to test the truth and value of these tales, which told with confidence enough may frighten the timid in the dark, but brought face to face with Scripture in the honest daylight, the spectres turn into mere masks and sheer effrontery.

Meanwhile it is well to remind ourselves that we have hardly to wait for the answer to all possible objections, before we are entitled to hold the truth of Scripture for an absolutely settled thing. No truth of science waits till such time for its acceptance; or science there could be none. If Scripture be indeed a revelation from God, He cannot withhold the means of ascertaining this from any honest seeker after it. It is not a clear head and subtle intellect that are needed, but "he that will do His will shall know of the doctrine." God's word cannot be studied as a mere lesson in geography, but as a practical guide-book for actual travellers. "The *wayfaring* man, though a fool, shall not err therein."

"Come unto Me," the same voice that once spake on earth, now speaks from heaven. People may speculate in vain apart from this. The water is free to all, and he that drinks knows it is no illusion. But it needs to stoop to make it ours. We may try to get to God as critics and philosophers, but in His presence

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there are none such to be found. But the key of all wisdom is in the hands of him who enters the kingdom of heaven as a little child.

A very dear one said, "I don't feel worthy to take His name on my lips." My answer was, "that is your measure of sin: the perfect One took the measure of it, and when bearing it, had not a ray of light, God's face was hidden; *that* was its measure. *It is infinite* and God alone knows it." I do not try to measure my sin except through the worthiness of Him who bore it: and I find Him saying, "If any poor sinner comes to heaven he will get from the Father the very welcome I have."

God tells you that He counts the hairs of your head; suppose I go to a sick-bed and find the mind of a saint anxious and troubled. What, I say, is your Father in heaven, the God of the sparrow, and not one can fall without Him? Put it home to your heart—is that the Father you trust? If one points to a dead sparrow in the street and says, "without your Father that sparrow did not fall to the ground—and He counts the hairs of your head."

One should bear it most distinctly before the soul that in anything we are doing we are just going through it *with Christ*, and the waters will flow freely; no frost ever congeals them, no heat ever dries them up. You may have sorrow, temptation, and everything to try you, but nothing can touch those living waters, and why? Because we are loved with an everlasting love, and it is Christ the fountain of living water who leads us.

G. V. W.

GUIDANCE.

I believe many are in a great mistake in supposing that spiritual guidance is a thing ordinarily in another line from the exercise of spiritual judgment. The idea of its being *ordinarily* (for I do not limit the Lord's sovereignty in His way of working) a matter of unintelligent impression works disastrously in many. How often do you find people boldly assuming that the Lord led them to such and such a thing, when it is plain to every one else, that it was their own impulse merely. And many even imagine, as it would seem, that the more opposed the step to what a sober judgment would suggest the *more* manifestly it is of God.

Now if I take Scripture I surely find that it is by the understanding, informed by the Word of God, that the Spirit ordinarily leads. "The spiritual man discerneth all things." If it be not discernment, what is to hinder my mistaking my own fancy, or even the suggestion of Satan, for the guidance of God? "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God," is a principle which applies here.

The guidance which many look for would set aside spirituality as a necessity for discernment, and leave a soul without that healthful exercise as to good and evil, which is the ordained method for perfecting in the apprehension of it. "I will guide thee with mine eye" is the very opposite of blind, unintelligent guidance, which would come nearer to the habitual state of horse and mule, which we are not to be like unto, and which needs to be restrained by bit and

bridle ; a form of guidance which the most ignorant and unspiritual are readiest to profess, while to the spiritual, hampered with the idea of it, it is the occasion of needless and distressing perplexity.

“God is the “Unknowable.” But if He is, how then can we know that? Does not that imply some knowledge at least? Can reason rest assured that that is an ultimate fact? Is it impossible He could communicate some knowledge of Himself? some certainty as to a future state even? Has science decreed that He shall be dumb, or helpless, or indifferent, or what? Is the science perchance not too dear, that makes all science valueless? It would seem as if men must think so; as if these scientific altitudes would be too cold and barren for human dwelling-places. Certainly if reason *can* be satisfied with that which takes all meaning out of human life and history; if the moral sense can satisfy itself with what levels a man with the beasts that perish; no thoughtful man can value either’s guidance, no *sincere* man can feel such life as other than a lie. And what about sin? Is there such a thing? Is it true that “out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies”? What says the moral sense again? Are these things inconveniences merely, or do they “defile the man”? Are they results of wrong diet, political blunders, accident, or are they innate in every child of man? If the latter, and if evil, is man as God made him, or is the Christian doctrine of the fall perchance a verity? One or other must be: if truth, if purity, if virtue be any more than a mere name, what is the world, and what are we? If we ourselves are exceptions, *what at least are our neighbors?* If God made such a world, He were not God. Either there is no God or we are fallen creatures.”—*Facts and Theories*, p. 454.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

(16) Will you explain Rom. vi. 10, Christ dying *unto* sin, and living *unto* God—the word “unto;” and also Heb. ix. 28: His appearing *without sin* unto salvation?

Ans.—The two texts are related to one another. The sin which the Lord bore upon the cross He left behind by His death—had no more to do with it. His present, risen life is to God simply: He has not to occupy Himself with sin in that way any more. On that account, having settled the whole question of sin for us at His first coming, He has not to take it up at His second.

(17) “The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them, that they may be one, as we are.” Is this a present thing, ‘I *have* given,’— or to be manifested when the saints shall appear in glory with the Lord?

Ans.—It is the latter. Only when He appears, and we with Him, will the world *know* that we are loved as Christ is. ‘I *have* given,’ shows it is indeed already our own, but not yet in possession.

(18) Do John xiv. 18 and 26 mean the same thing? Is the Lord Jesus never present except by the Holy Spirit? Is not Matt. xviii. 20 literally true?

Ans.—As to the latter, surely; and I have already spoken of it elsewhere. But the connection seems to imply otherwise in the first passage named. It is at least in connection with the coming of the Holy Ghost, and seems identified with it as the effect of His presence, not an additional thing. The very word ‘come’ seems to imply this. I doubt if the

Lord's presence as with us now in the assembly would be called His 'coming.'

(19) Is water-baptism referred to in the words of Ananias (Acts xxii. 16): "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins"?

Ans.—It is surely nothing else. Jew or Gentile brought into the kingdom of heaven by baptism, out of the outside world of sinners, had his sins publicly remitted in that way, according to John xx. 23. Such remission would not take a man to heaven, for there alone the Lord admits, and His blood alone cleanses so that we can go in there. But the kingdom *on earth* is entrusted to disciples' care, and is another matter altogether. The subject is too large for a few lines of explanation; and the failure of the Church has perplexed what otherwise would be clear enough.

(20). When were the spirits of just men made perfect"? Heb. xii. 23.

Ans. They are not yet; they will be in resurrection: for God did not make man a mere spirit, and an unclothed spirit is still imperfect. The reference is to the Old Testament saints, who are waiting unclothed to get their perfect state with us, according to ch. xi. 40. They are distinguished from the 'church of the first-born' [ones], the saints of the present dispensation; and are there spoken of as perfect, because it is the future blessing with which we are already brought, as it were, face to face. Nothing to our knowledge intervenes between us and it.

“WHERE DO YOU GET THE BIBLE FROM.”

(To the Editor of The Toronto Globe).

SIR,—Your remarks upon the article under the above heading induce me to believe that a brief reply would be acceptable to you. The writer shows such ignorance of the blessed Book he comments on that it speaks ill for the system of interpretation he recommends. On some points a Sunday School child could set him right.

His system is indeed a well-known and fashionable one—the Church the living guide to and authenticator of Scripture. Is this Scriptural? Is it satisfactory?

As to New Testament Scripture, it is well known that, with the exception of three Gospels, it was all written either to Churches, that is, whole companies of professing Christians, or to individuals, in one case to “all that call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor., i.), and never to interpreters to interpret for them. The Gospel of John, still wider in character, is “written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name” (chap. xx. 31). To say that this was not for the people directly, but for the Church to interpret for them, is an insult to common sense.

Paul commends Timothy, because that from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures, “which,” he says, “are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus.” These were the Old Testament Scriptures, no doubt; but it shows there was a “book revelation” before the Church had existence, which did effectually save those who lis-

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tened to it. When did the Church receive authority to take this means of salvation out of people's hands? and when did Scripture, intelligible to the child Timothy without the Church, begin to require such an interpreter?

This settles another question. The Church was not before the Bible, that is clear. If you speak of the Jewish Church, so far from being a fit "guide," it rejected Christ when He came. The Christian Church had already half their Bible when apostles preached, and the Bereans were commended for testing by this even an apostle's preaching.

But there is more in this epistle to Timothy. Doubtless he had got other books that he called "Scripture" now. Whatsoever they were, Paul says as to them, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works." (2 Tim. iii. 15-17.) If your correspondent does not believe the apostle, let him say so; with outspoken infidelity we must of course deal differently. But there, whatever the Scriptures he speaks of, he does assert that they are able not only to save, but thoroughly to furnish to all good works, apart from the Church's interpretation or authentication altogether.

For himself, too, he maintains, as well as for others, complete verbal inspiration:—"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." He claims that the things he writes are the commandments of the Lord (1 Cor. ii. 13; xiv., 37). Is all this tradition or "book revelation"?

Peter says we are "born again * * * by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever," and that "this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you" (1 Peter, i. 23-25). Does your

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correspondent deny that this Gospel, which is the “ Word of God,” is in Scripture ? Are the words of the Holy Ghost God’s Word or not ? When “ holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost ” (2 Peter, i. 21) was it not God’s Word they uttered ? James, too, in accord with Peter, tells us, “ of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth ” (ch. i. 18). Is that the word of bishops, priests, and deacons, or what else ?

Peter formally puts the epistles of Paul among “ the other Scriptures,” and warns of the danger of wresting them to one’s own destruction; but it was not the hard things that caused them to be thus dangerous, for they ‘ wrested ’ them to this, and so they did the other Scriptures (2 Peter iii. 16), but he never hints at the Church being the interpreter. The Word of Life, just because it is that, must needs be destruction if perverted or despised. Is the Church security for this ? Then the Anglican is hopelessly wrong and must go back to Rome.

John bids me beware of those who slight the apostles—as the writer I am reviewing does. “ He that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.” (1 Jchn iv. 6). He tells me in the Book of Revelation that he bears record of the Word of God and of the testimony of Jesus Christ (i. 2). He threatens God’s plagues on those who add to the word of that prophecy, and that he who takes away from it shall have his part taken away out of the Book of Life (xxii. 18-19). Did the Apostles write these things, or write them without warrant ? If your correspondent will say that, we shall know what we are dealing with.

But Luke: “ What authority does Luke claim for writing ? ” He claims to give a person already “ instructed ” in the things most surely believed among Christians, the certain knowledge of the things he

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wrote about. That is claim enough, I suppose. Let any one disprove his claim who can. But for one who professes to receive the gospel, and calls the writer of it "St. Luke," that ought to suffice.

Still, "how do you learn what is the canon of Scripture?" and where is the "list of books?" Well, if I had it, it could have no higher authority than the Bible, of which it would form part. I might ask again, Who certifies the list? and then again, Who certifies the certifier? and if it were the Church, Who certifies the Church? It is not so easy to believe in an infallible Church as it is in an infallible book; and if I take the book the infallibility of the Church is gone for ever.

Who certifies then? I answer, without hesitation, God Himself to the soul that humbly and honestly seeks Him. It is of a living God that Scripture speaks, and "he that shall do His will shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God" (John vii. 17). A living Saviour invites men to Himself, and assures every one that comes that He will give him rest (Mt. xi. 28). The credentials of Scripture are within itself to those who are "of the truth." The light shines. The world, myself, God, are revealed in it. No "mighty maze and all without a plan;" the past links itself with the present and the future. But more, the guilt I feel is met; the need I have is supplied; heart and conscience are satisfied; at peace with God through His own unspeakable gift, the peace of God keeps my heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

Sir, the Book that has done this for me deserves my confidence. If you tell me it is a bad translation, I say, improve it if you can; but you must leave me my light, not darken it. And as for the canon, who settled it that the light should shine? Where the Bible comes from I know well; it comes from Heaven. "God who commanded the light to shine out

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of darkness has shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” To propose to certify that Divine in-shining by the word of the Romish or Anglican hierarchy, is but the purblind folly of man’s unbelief.

I am, Sir,

Yours very truly,

F. W. GRANT.

May, 1879.

[The above is reprinted by request from the pages of a daily paper, in which it first appeared.]

Travel outside the regions where an open Bible is found,—is there not darkness? darkness in *proportion* to the degree in which it is allowed to shine or not? is it not even more plainly so in the individual, in whose heart or not it shines! Professors of course there may be in multitudes uninfluenced by it, but its legitimate influence who can really doubt? Purify it does; give peace, it does; satisfy it does. The blessed words, “Come to Me, . . . and I will give you rest,” have been fulfilled to too many weary hearts to admit a reasonable question whether they are truth or not. And those same words appeal still to peasant or philosopher alike, with no smooth and flattering voice, but yet in tones of infinite tenderness and pity! If it be deceit, who is to gain by the deceit?

Is it a fact that Christ is my life? not merely that something in Him is given me and certain blessings are mine; but something that keeps my heart occupied with Him as the object of worship and adoration, and that something is *His life in me* here as a real thing. He, the Rock, the Fountain—the soul never can forget that all its springs are in Him.

TO AN ANXIOUS ONE.

MY DEAR——,

You will forgive my long delay in answering your interesting letter. It has not been from any lack of desire for your welfare But I turn now to the subject of your letter.

It is nothing unusual, dear——, to find trouble before we find peace. When God would deliver Israel from Egypt, and Moses sent of God, spoke to Pharaoh about them, instead of ease from their toil, they got increased burdens, so that they had to make bricks without straw and were beaten because they did not fulfil their tasks. They were ready, so great was their anguish, to ask Moses to let them alone.

But God had a purpose in it all to magnify His grace in their deliverance. He let them feel the reality of the bondage. He knew the end His loving hand was bringing them to, and could, though "afflicted in their afflictions," wait the time, when they had learned the lessons of that place, to bring them deliverance. You know too how that deliverance came. He did not *first* take them out of Egypt, but sheltered them from His own judgment by the blood of the Passover, making atonement for their sin—for that which hindered Him from interfering for their deliverance from the enemy's hand. Now it is just this trouble you are passing through, and I fear I shall seem to be unfeeling if I say, I heartily thank the Lord for it, whilst fully sympathizing with you in it, as He does too in a divinely perfect way. But "faithful are the wounds of a friend," and the Lord

is that friend who makes us to enter into the reality of what *sin* is, which has separated us from God, that we may learn too our own helplessness in that condition, and our dependence upon Him for everything.

But we often make a mistake here, and it is the very one that troubles you, dear——, and much that we have been brought up in religiously fosters it. I mean that you are looking within for a changed state, something better in the disposition of your heart and mind, or a feeling of peace, as an evidence that all is right between you and God. You find only experiences of evil, and because your conscience has been made sensitive by His hand in grace, there is little but unrest and fear and disquietude. And what else should there be, if we look within? If we could find that, to contemplate with satisfaction there, we should be very good Pharisees without intending it. If God works however, conscience is too much awake for any such thing to be, and it is a mercy that it is so.

Where do we find the answer to all this that is within? Surely in the death of Christ and God's revelation concerning the efficacy of that which the Spirit testifies to. You know how an Israelite came to God, with an innocent animal to be presented in his stead. He appeared before the Lord owning thus his personal unfitness for God's presence. His hand laid upon the head of the offering testified of his identification with it, and then he slew it before the Lord. What does that mean but faith's owning, in view of one's own unfitness for God, that we can come alone in His appointed way, with our hands upon His blessed head, as it were, and own that our sins brought Him to death? The Priest then flays the offering (see Lev. i.) and parts it in its pieces, the outward and inward perfections are all exposed to view, its blood is sprinkled on and round the altar, and the body burned upon the fire: all goes up as a sweet savour (or savour of rest) to God. This is surely a

lesson for us, teaching us to turn away the eye from self to Christ—the victim provided by God—who once “offered Himself through the eternal Spirit without spot to God, that He might purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” It is no longer a question of what we are, but of what He is and has done by dying for us in love, according to the will of God. How blessed to know if I think of my sins, which doubtless humble me, to remember that God is *more* than *satisfied* with the death of Christ about them. God has been *glorified* in that which put them all away. He has smelled a sweet savour—a savour of rest—and why should not we *rest* too in that which gives Him rest about sin, and who as to us, believing, if even with the weakest faith, in our hearts, says “their sins and iniquities *will I remember no more.*”

All that God looks for from us, is the confession of our sins. What we often desire to find and bring is the consciousness of righteousness. But this can never be in that way, and whilst thus it is sought, peace cannot be known. He says “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Has He seen you owning the justice of His judgment of your sins? Has He found you confessing sin; not saying Lord make me this, or make me that, but passing sentence upon self and all its ways as judged of before Him who “is *light*, and in whom is no darkness at all.” Then, dear——, can you doubt that you are forgiven and cleansed? Think of *who* speaks—the mighty God, made known to us in the person of “the only begotten of the Father,” who tabernacled amongst us, full of what? Of judgment and of wrath? No, but “*full of grace and truth.*” What is it that He says? He is *faithful* and *just* to forgive us our sins and cleanse from all unrighteousness. See how He, in grace to us, pledges His own character,

that we may rest. Think how dishonoring are doubts in view of this. Is not one of our greatest sins the unbelief that can so distrust Him who has given us every title to repose in His love and faithfulness? I do not doubt from what your letter reveals that He has often found you taking this place, confessing your sins. Can you doubt then that He has been true to His word? May you not go with the assurance that you have the blessedness of one "whose iniquity is forgiven and whose sin is covered (atoned) and to whom the Lord *will not impute sin*" Ps. xxxii. This David found upon taking the place of confession (v. 5). God's character for righteousness is in question, and that is of infinitely more importance than our salvation. If you believe, simply as a sinner (our only title to the fruits of the work of Him who died for such, when without strength and ungodly), and God failed to forgive, and cleanse, and justify you, *He*, to speak with reverence, would be what He never can be, *untrue* to Himself as pledged in the word! disowning the efficacy of the blessed work of His Son upon the cross. Could that be? Surely not. No more can you, believing on the Lord Jesus, be without pardon and cleansing. Set to your seal then that God is true, and thank Him for what He has done to purge away your sins and make you an heir of glory. But if you look for the feeling of peace within, you are not looking in the right direction to find the very thing you seek. Peace with God is the opposite of enmity. I do not hate the one who gave His Son to die for me. Love in Him towards me a sinner, begets the same in me towards Himself, for "Herein is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins," and "we love Him because He *first* loved us." "Having made peace through the blood of His cross" the foundation is laid for full and perfect reconciliation, and when we believe, we are reconciled to God and

joy in Him through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have received the reconciliation.

As to the sealing of the Spirit, I believe it always follows faith in Christ, and "after" does not mean "long after" in Ephes. i., 13. Properly rendered the passage reads: "Having believed in whom, ye were sealed." The state of soul is another thing, regulated by the teaching we are under. But God does not withhold the privileges of grace because of defective intelligence. The man with a handful of fine flour for a *sin offering* found acceptance with God as much as the one who brought a bullock, though one as a type went far beyond the other. God's measure of acceptance for us is Christ, as He knows Him; our intelligence very various. One passage, without entering further into the question now is plain and simple, and faith takes its stand on what God says and not on reasoning about things. In 1 John iv. we read, "The Father sent the Son to be the *Saviour of the world*. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God." In other words, he has the Spirit and is sealed. But I must close my letter, trusting the Lord may give you to see how all you want is simplicity of faith, to "*believe God*" and take Him at His word, and thus honour that word which contains all that is true in this poor ruined evil world.

Yours affectionately,

R. T. G.

Nothing but personal affection for the Lord can ever give the heart boldness before Him, the soul *must* find that it has been laid hold of by the Lord in His love, and that such a light shines down upon it from His face, that in spite of failure and everything coming against it, there is love in the heart of the Lord towards it.

G. V. W.

WISDOM'S DELIGHTS.

NOTES OF LECTURE AT BRANTFORD MEETING.

(June, 1879.)

Pro. viii. 22-31; Matt. iii. 16, 17; iv. 1-11.

There is nothing that our hearts are so slow to enter into as the wonderful place we have in the love of the Father. Nor is it to be wondered at, that we should but slowly begin in any little measure to take up our place in the fulness of it; the love is so infinite in itself, and our hearts are so dull and insensible. It is all so unaccountable too if we look at ourselves. But then it is just as He said to Israel of old (they never had such a place as we have):—"The Lord did not set His love upon you nor choose you, because ye are more in number than any people, for ye were the fewest of all people, *but because the Lord loved you.*" (Deut. vii. 7, 8.) This was the only reason of it; the only account He could give of such love. If it was thus with His love for Israel, is it not infinitely more so, with the love He has for us, and that has given us such a place before Him?

The thought of this has led me to the passages before us, that we may seek in the Lord's mercy to us, to realize it, or rather to *believe* it. For all realization, beloved friends, is in believing and in nothing else. In nothing more nor less than the simple faith that takes God at His word, is found the enjoyment of these things, that have been revealed to us that we *may* enjoy them. And it may be that here, this evening, the Lord will lead our hearts a little more into the apprehension of this love. Oh! surely we need to dwell much upon it here: these poor hearts get away so easily from the sense of the little we do know; there can be nothing beyond it to dwell on for ever. He has given us the Holy Ghost that we may be able now to apprehend these wonderful thoughts of His heart as He unfolds them to us.

The passage from the book of Proverbs, is one of the only two that I know of in the Old Testament, that carries us into the eternal activities of the heart of God, and gives us an intimation, (if the time was not yet come for the full revelation,) of His counsels. The other that I refer to is in Psalm xl. The veil is drawn just for a moment, that, in wonderful privilege, we may be let into the intercourse of Wisdom with Jehovah, or, as we can say, of the Son with the Father. What a scene of Divine communion opens out before us! "When He appointed the foundations of the earth, then I was by Him as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight." Does that surprise us? No! We know it could not have been otherwise. But what grace that lets us hear it thus! "Rejoicing always before Him, rejoicing in the habitable parts of His earth"! These words indicate the *direction* of the activities of the heart of God, so to speak; where was His love going out? If the Son (as we may say) was always rejoicing before the Father, the Father was rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth. "From everlasting, or ever the earth was," before even the foundations of it were laid; not to speak of the later work that fitted it for human habitation, and man was at last created in the image of God; the heart of God was going out to the habitable parts of it. And in this communion of Divine love, the heart of the Son went where the heart of the Father went, to find His joy where the Father found His, "and *my delights* were with the sons of men."

How wonderful the thought! And that it should be revealed to us that we might know that we were objects of delight to the heart of the Father and the Son, in this Divine communion of Divine joy, before the foundation of the world. *Do you believe it?* Does any one say, how can this be? I know that He died to save me from the hell that I deserve, but how can I think it possible for a moment, that in *me*, a poor vile sinner, the heart of God could find delight? Let us then trace it a little through His Word, and see how it can be all so certainly for us. But before leaving this scripture I would call attention to what may be overlooked in it. It may have been thought by some that the heart of God found what answered to the eternal thoughts of His love in Eden, when the man and woman were yet there in the perfection in which they had been created.

Not so. The *first man* never entered into the counsels

of God as the object of these joys. For the simple reason that he never was nor could be of the "sons of men" of whom the passage speaks. If we bow to the Word of God we must pass over the first man. Not in his race surely, for it was fallen and corrupt; but not even in Adam in innocence in Eden, did the heart of God find the suited object of His delight. I mean as he stood there in his innocence; for I do not mean to deny that as a sinner he became the object of God's seeking. For this came out in those first three words that fell from the lips of God on the ear of His fallen creature: "Where art thou?"

Wonderful words they were! What light shone in them upon the condition of the sinner! Why has God come out into His own world, crying: "Where art thou"? The man so recently formed in His image is *lost*; lost by sin's first act. But the light that shines to make it so manifest, is the love that has brought out God as the seeker of the lost. What a revelation He gives us in those three words! Is there one who reads these words, who never has been brought to know himself and God in the light of them. The light that discovers you to yourself as a sinner, is the love of God that has made *you* its object, the love of Him who came to seek and to save that which is lost. What a condition it was that all at once came in by sin! The ruin is complete and final. In one instant, dear friends; in the entertaining of that first thought, and in that first act of sin, man had traversed the whole distance that sin could carry him from a holy God. Thus "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned."

But it is not all at once that we are willing to accept the truth of a ruin so complete. Hence the four thousand years of the testing of the first man. What a history of abounding iniquity it has been. And yet it is only the bringing out and development before our eyes, of what had become a fact as to man's condition before God, the moment he reached out his hand to partake of the forbidden fruit.

But at last the moment came when that history was to close. Test after test, in successive dispensations, had been applied to our condition, bringing out only more and more fully that we were lost. "But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying they will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son; they said

among themselves this is the heir, come let us kill him And they caught him and cast him out of the vineyard and slew him." (Matt. xxi. 37-39.) It was not God, as in the law, claiming anything of anybody; but come in Christ to make Himself known in all His love in a world of guilty and ruined sinners. It was the last, and most searching test of all, as to the condition in which we were. And what came out? These terrible hearts seized the opportunity of the grace that brought Him so low, so to speak, within our reach, to cast Him out of the earth as unfit for any place in it. The day for man's deliberate choice was come, and they chose "not this man but Barabbas," the robber and murderer—"away with this man—crucify Him, crucify Him." It was the last answer of man to the last test God had to apply to his condition: our sin was consummated in His cross, in sin's last worst act.

The solemn history has been rehearsed before us, that we may each one learn our own hearts. It is we who are guilty. It is these hearts that have crucified the Lord Jesus Christ. For it is no use to plead, what we would not have done, if we had been there. True; it will never be within our reach actually to cast the stones off the roads at Him, or to cry, "crucify Him, crucify Him." But it has been within the reach of us to express what we think of Him. Can we deny it? that while our hearts have been open to every folly, and vanity, and sin that Satan could present to us, they have been only absolutely closed to the Son whom the Father loves? We are proved guilty. We have been each one fully identified with the world's rejection of the Lord Jesus. The Holy Ghost is here to convince the world of sin—"because they believed not on me." Sooner or later we must be brought to own it. God speaks to us. "The entrance of thy word giveth light": and as surely as the tiniest ray of Divine light penetrates the soul, the effect is, that we find out not merely that we are guilty by all we have ever done, but that we are absolutely lost in Adam. Then it is, that we find that we are absolutely and for ever saved in Christ. For there, in the cross, He came and wrapped, as it were, my sins and all that I am around Himself and carried all into death. Thus He closed that dark history of ours for ever in the infinite depths of judgment, that Divine love led Him into, that we might know our place to be before God, according to all the perfection of His work, and of Him who wrought it.

This, beloved friends, is the gospel of our salvation. It sets us free to close our eyes on the moral morass of the first man and his history, and to open them upon Him who alone could meet the mind and heart of God. A multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, *good-will in men*," ushers in the dawn of the accomplishment of the thoughts of God revealed to us in Prov. viii. But where does the heart of God find the object of its pleasure? In a babe born in Bethlehem—the Son of man indeed, but none of the fallen race of the first man—Himself the second man, the son of God, now presented to us in all the perfection of His being, out here on earth. See Him at the moment of His manifestation to Israel, as we read in Matt. iii. Oh! how blessed it is when the opened eye of faith, turned away from all that is of the first man, rests upon the Lord Jesus. To Him the heavens were opened for the first time. And the Spirit in the form of a dove descends and alights upon Him, while a voice from heaven declares, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." The heart of God has found at last a man upon earth who is all His delight and pleasure. The Spirit in the form of a *dove* is significant. The heavenly dove that found no rest for the sole of its feet in the scene under God's judgment in Noah's day, has now found a spot where it can rest abidingly. "John bare record and said: I saw the Spirit descending in the form of a dove, and it abode upon Him."

Let us follow Him with adoring hearts in His lowly path. What scenes of varied testing must He pass through, but all only bringing out the sweet savour of His perfection. We have seen Him in the opening of His public path, the declared object of God's delight. It is still the same upon the Mount of Transfiguration: "for He received from God the Father honour and glory when there came to Him such a voice from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." There is a man upon earth that the excellent glory can claim as perfectly suited to it. Then what remains but that He should step into it? But what is this that we hear? In the intercourse of saints that appear in glory, they speak of His *decease* which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. If He had taken His place from the Mount of Transfiguration at the right hand of the Majesty on high, as He was proved perfectly entitled to do, it would have been to leave us

to perish everlastingly. He descends from the Mount, to begin from the foot of it His last journey up to Jerusalem, *to die*. The various stages of the journey may be traced in Luke.

But we must get the meaning of His path from His own words. What brought *Him* on the road to death?

(It is plain enough why we are there.) He interprets for us: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit" (John xii. 24) Mark the words: they call for our deepest attention.

We have been looking at the path of one perfect man, if there was but one, across the moral waste of this world: one in whom the heart of God could rest. And where can our hearts find rest save in God thus perfectly revealed? But we have seen that His presence here, was the proved absolute absence of anything in man's heart to answer to anything in God's. When we saw Him, there was no beauty that we should desire Him. That was our estimate of the perfect object of the Father's delight: "He was despised and rejected of men." As He has to say Himself in such solemn words: "They hated Me without a cause." Clearly then, there was no man that He could raise to His own level as man walking here. He might have taken His place in His perfection, as man in the glory of God, but He must have been *alone* in it for ever; and the counsels of God would have found but a partial fulfilment: for "His delights were with the *sons of men*"—not one but many. The precious corn of wheat must die, that it may not abide alone in its perfection, "but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit."

But there was more than this in that deepest point of His humiliation. Therefore it was that when Judas went out to consummate his dark treachery (John xiii. 30-32.) Jesus could say: "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." Let us pause and dwell upon what is here presented to us for a moment. There were two ways in which God had to be glorified. He had been glorified *in goodness* in the perfect revelation of it, in the gift of His Son. What an answer to the malignant lie of Satan!

Had he insinuated in Eden that God was not as good as He appeared to be? That while He seemed to lavish upon them all earthly good, He had in reality kept back the best tree of the garden? How full and complete the

answer when Jesus was there to say, "God so loved the world"—not of innocent men and women as in Eden, but of guilty rebels—"that he gave"—the best tree of the garden! Ah! that would never have sufficed to express what was in His heart—"His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God has been glorified as to His goodness by Him who was the only adequate expression of it, in a world of sinners. But something more was needed. What about sin? What of the outrage upon the Majesty of the throne in the heavens, that our very *existence* as rebel creatures had been? And God had seemed to overlook and pass over it. Now the whole question was to be entered into, and God was to be *glorified as to sin*. The cross was the scene of it. We find the Lord Jesus there entering into the whole question of sin as it concerned the glory of God. This was the first thought of the heavenly host in their praise, if it is too little thought of by our poor hearts. Yet the gospel inseparably links our blessing with His glory. In the cross of the Son of God, sin was turned into the occasion of bringing God His brightest glory. Creation had displayed His Godhead and power; but that tells me nothing of His nature. A man of power may be a very good man, or the reverse; power as such tells me nothing of character. But in the cross the whole character of God has been revealed. Every moral attribute of His being has shone out, and been infinitely glorified. What a triumph over the worst work of the enemy! There where men and the power of darkness were doing their worst in sin, the Son of God was making good the infinite glory of God as to every question of sin.

Where do our hearts turn to see all the *love* of God? The cross of Christ is the full display of it. The enmity of our hearts that followed Him even in death with the spear-thrust of the soldier, only drew out the answer of infinite love, in the blood that cleanseth from all sin. Eternity will have no new depth of divine love to disclose to us. Oh! that our hearts might enter a little more into it now. But where we see His love, there also we see infinite *holiness*. That is what makes the cross the blessed resting place of our souls forever. There only do we learn fully what God is against sin, if we learn there too what He is for the sinner. There too *righteousness* has been declared, and the majesty of God's throne perfectly vindicated. Now the proof of it was to

be in this: "if God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him." Has He not done so? Before even the devoted women that loved Him, could be at the sepulchre on the resurrection morning, the glory of the Father had made way to wrap itself around the One who had so infinitely glorified Him. And we behold Him glorified in God Himself—the proof before the universe, that God has been glorified in Him as to every question of sin. For the glory is the seal now, not merely of His own personal acceptance, but of the acceptance of the work He has accomplished about sin. And where God has found glory for Himself as to sin, there we may well find the perfect rest of our souls. In the work of the cross all our sins have been searched out—all I am as a sinner judged, condemned, and crucified with Him—my history as in Adam terminated in justly executed judgment. Do we not bless Him for it, and only long for hearts set free to bless Him for ever?

But if this be so, it becomes a solemn question for our souls; have we practically broken with the first man, and all that belongs to him, in the death of Christ—accepting our death in His death—so as now to be only occupied with the Second Man in the glory of God? The Spirit of God has come from that glory in which He is, to bear witness of Him to our hearts. Every ray of the glory of God is concentrated upon that face, once, more marred than that of any man's. Every ray of the glory on His face, is telling the satisfaction of God, with the work, that has cleared away our sins. It shines on the face of Him who loved me and gave Himself for me. I can gaze undazzled on the brightness of that glory. What a contrast with Moses—"Thou canst not see my face and live" was the answer to the request, that told the need of His heart—"Shew me now thy glory." Moses must be covered in the cleft of the rock while the glory passed by. The revelation of it would have been the destruction of all on the standing of the first man. Even the reflection of the partial display of it on the face of Moses as he came down from the mount was too much for the people. What is that that he holds in his hand? It is the law, that claimed of man in the flesh, that he should be all he ought to be for God. The glory on the face of Moses was then connected with the unsatisfied claim of a broken law. No wonder it was intolerable. Who could stand before it? Is there any claim connect-

ed with the glory on the face of Jesus? No! It is the witness that every claim of the broken law, and outraged holiness of God, has been perfectly met and settled. He has been glorified as the proof of it. God has been not merely satisfied but—glorified. There is no veil upon the face of Jesus. No hand needs to hide the glory of God that is shining on His face from us. We can bear, and bask in the sun-light of it—"We all beholding the glory of the Lord with unveiled face" (note well—it is His face that is unveiled; not ours) "are changed into the same image" (2 Cor. iii, 18). Where we have looked for immutably settled peace, there the gaze must be fixed for the whole practical power of Christianity.

But this is only part of the testimony connected with Christ in glory, though so blessed for us. If the glory of God shines before us in Him: we are *in Him* before the glory. And this last is what gives effect so far to the eternal counsels of God. The Spirit of God would fix our eye on *Him*, that we may see the perfection in which *we* are, before the eye and heart of God. We must turn back a little to see how this is accomplished. I would recall you to the scene of His death, when not a leaf of life stirred, so to speak, in the whole creation—man dead in sins, and the Lord of life and glory, dead for man, beneath the judgment of a holy God against sin. "Because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead" (2 Cor. v. 14). The light of His death is cast upon the condition of all men.

If God had to give up His own Son to death, that any might live, it was the plain proof of the close of all God's past ways, that had recognized man as alive in the flesh. The first man is given up as dead. What a scene of universal death it was, as the eye of faith looks out on it with God. One Man stands up out of that vast plain of death, victorious over sin, death, and Satan; raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. Mark, beloved friends, there is but that one Man now before God: there are not two. There *was* the first man. We have seen his history open, develop itself, and close in sin, under God's judgment executed in full, in the Cross of Christ for faith, in the lake of fire yet to be for unbelief. There can be no possible revival of Him or of his race. There is now before God, the victorious Man, the last Adam, who has made good His claim as such in Divine righteousness upon the glory of God. The answer to that claim is, "the working of His

mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places" (Eph. i. 19-20.)

It is in Christ that the believer has his place before God according to the eternal counsels of His heart. The Spirit of God unfolds all that He is, that we may know that we are that. He can bring it all out now, as He could not, while the history of the responsible Man was going on; needed as it was through the patience and long-suffering of God, to bring us to the full discovery of ourselves. But now that the first man has been disposed of for God and for faith, the moment was come when He could unfold to us "His purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Ti. 1. 9). This is what is fully brought before us in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. We are brought back to the stand-point of God's eternal counsels to find that we are seen in all the perfection of Christ before God. Now this perfection was manifested in Him, when He was upon earth. Hence I have read the verses in the third chapter of Matthew, because it helps us greatly to enter into the wonderful place we have, to see it thus set forth in Him, when He was here, before redemption was accomplished on the ground of which alone He could associate us with Himself in it. Let us look at the wonderful details of it.

"And, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him." In the fullest way they are opened now to us. "And, lo, a voice from heaven saying this is my beloved son." In Eph (i. 5) we find, that is the relationship we have been given—"having predestinated us unto sonship by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of his will." What blessed words,—“to Himself”! See, it is not God meeting our need; it is the heart of God satisfying itself. It was not to make us happy—He *has* made us happy—but it was for His own joy, to Himself, He counselled it. And faith just lets God have His own will and way in blessing, and takes up the place He gives us. We got the first intimation of such a glorious position, in the message He sent us from the mouth of the open sepulchre—"I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God." His redemption work accomplished, He has been able to associate us with Himself in all His own position, as man with God,—Son with the Father. Hence the Spirit of the Son has been sent into our hearts, whereby we cry Abba Father.

This name of intimate relationship had only been heard upon his lips before ; now it is heard upon ours. Such was the good pleasure of His will. And the voice from heaven said: "In thee I am well pleased." And is this for us too ? It is: "according as He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." Was not that just what He was: holy, without blame, in love, and before God ? Thus His eternal thoughts have had us before Him; rejoicing in the habitable parts of this earth, and His delights with the sons of men. "Before Him"—what an expression of His delight. Just as a mother puts her child out before her eyes, that she may gaze upon it, and be satisfied in her love. So has He had us before Him in Christ.

But this is not all. The voice declared, "This is my *beloved* son." And, "to the praise of the glory of His grace, He has made us accepted in the Beloved." Not one thing is reserved from us of all the blessedness of Christ's place. He might have said,—“In Christ.” It is the keynote of the Epistle, that we hear again and again throughout it. But here it is, "in the Beloved," that we might know, that in the depths of the Son's place in the Father's love, we have ours. This is especially what He counts on, to be to the *praise* of the glory of His grace. And so it will be for ever. The Lord Jesus will have the world know it in another day—"that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." We know it now. How wonderful it is! It surpasses all our thoughts! But this just stamps it to be Divine.

There is one more point brought out in the position of the Lord Jesus. It is, that the Spirit descended and abode upon Him. This too is made good to us. Only with Him the Spirit was the seal of His own personal acceptance. With us, He is the seal of the perfection we are brought into by His redemption work. "In whom also after that ye believed" (the glad tidings of a salvation that has taken us out of all we were in Adam, and put us into Christ) "ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." Thus we have received the Spirit; the seal for God marking us as His, earnest for us of all that is before us in the glory of the inheritance. Such were the counsels of eternal love; such the place we have been given by them, as God saw us in Christ, not the first man, but the second, before the world began.

We have seen the pattern of it in Jesus, when He was upon earth—then absolutely alone in it. Now He has won the glorious title by redemption, to have us associated with Him in all the blessedness of it. And we have been given the Holy Ghost, that we may know Him in the Father, and that we are in Him, and He in us. (John xiv. 20.) One thing must be borne in mind to guard the glory of the Lord Jesus as Scripture ever does. What He was declared to be in the words before us, was what *He was personally in Himself*, perfect object of the Father's delight. It is only as *in Him* in the eternal counsels of the Father, we are brought into it. Personally in ourselves—how immeasurable and infinite the contrast! Blessed be God, we are seen no more in the flesh in Adam, but in Christ.

Now if this be so, there is another side of the truth, that is inseparably connected with it by the Holy Ghost. And that is, that if we are in Christ; Christ is in us, as our life here in this world. Hence if He has given us in Himself, the pattern of the place He has set us in before God, we find also in Him, the pattern of the path that answers to it in the world. If the verses read in Matt. iii. give us one, those read in chap. x. gives us the other. The path flows from the place. It is a simple principle: yet how many are trying in vain to reach the place by the way they walk. But thus neither the place nor the path are ever known. It is the reversal of the whole order of God; the only possible one for His glory and our blessing. The place must be settled *first*, and the soul settled in it, in the sunlight of His favour. The only place He could give me is Christ's. Will the path flow from it? Will it be Christ's path, or something entirely different? It is impossible. He has associated us with Himself in His entire place before the Father and God. He cannot dissociate us from Himself in the path. Too often *we practically dissociate ourselves* from Him by our ways. But this is our failure and sin.

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit in the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." Conflict follows upon blessing. That is what we are immediately brought into. There was no conflict once. We drifted on to a lost eternity in peace. The current of present things did Satan's work effectually, till the entrance of the word brought in light and life. At once we were in conflict. It was the flesh first occupied us, till we learned to give up the struggle as hopeless, and to take our place accord-

ing to the deliverance Christ had wrought for us—in Him and no longer in the flesh. Now it is Satan setting himself to dispute every step of the path, in which the Lord has called us to follow Him. Perhaps we were hardly prepared for this, beloved friends: that, when the full light of His presence, and of the way we have been brought into it, shone upon our hearts, the path according to it had to be taken in the teeth of Satan's antagonism. But it was not one moment sooner. *First* the unclouded light in which we have been set: *then* conflict with Satan.

We have the example of it in Jesus. Heaven had opened to declare Him the beloved object of the Father's delight: the very next thing is—He is tempted of the devil. But He who was ever with God, has to be led of the Spirit to be with Satan. It is the exact opposite with us. "And when the tempter came unto Him, he said—If thou be the Son of God." Was it possible to cast a doubt upon the relationship, just so fully declared? Are we ignorant of his devices; can we expect to escape? How blessed to have the Word of God simply to take our stand on, and the Lord Jesus our pattern of how to do it. Let us look upon the wonderful scene, and note the character of the temptations; for we have in them the whole range of that with which Satan would lead us from the path of Christ. What circumstances they were in which He was tested: "He had fasted forty days and forty nights, and was afterward an hungered." Satan suggests that He should prove His power, and help Himself to bread. "Command that these stones be made bread." But if He had stooped to become a man, man's place was to obey, not to command. He seeks to turn Him from *obedience*. Mark the subtlety of the way he works; for it is often in this very way, we are taken off our guard, and Satan gets in. There was nothing positively evil in what he presents to the Lord. Too often we are drawn away by positive evil. But not always, or ordinarily. It is by presenting something of which it cannot be said that there is any harm in it. Let us be warned. Wherein could be the harm of turning stones into bread, if one needed it, and had the power? It was not possible that the Lord Jesus could entertain such a question. The moment we do, Satan has gained his point. It is to give up the ground of obedience. How does the Lord Jesus meet it? "It is written" (note! always

"*It is written*"—"by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer") "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*"

Was there any word out of the mouth of God for it? He will not act without it. He *lived* by it: it was given that *man* might. It is not by His divine power that He stands against Satan, or it would have been no example for us; but by keeping His place as man in perfect obedience. The Word was given not merely to guide and give its general outline to man's path. It was to originate and form every movement of his being. It did so with Him. And thus we have the pattern of the Christian's obedience. We have been sanctified to the obedience of Christ—neither to think or speak or act, save as the word of God is its spring. It is not the same thing as obedience to law. It is an entirely different principle of obedience. It lowers the whole character of *Christian obedience*, to make it that looked for by the law. Law supposes a will contrary to it,—“thou shalt not”—“thou shalt not.” You tell the child to do something it does not like; the child gives up its will and obeys: that is called an obedient child. That was not the obedience of Christ. He never had a will of His own in that sense to give up. Christian obedience is to have no will but His. We must never again then let into our hearts the question of harm. The only question for us is—Is it my Father's will— is it like Christ? Is it what I have learned of the meek and lowly One, who gave me His yoke that I might find rest in walking in His obedience, the only path of perfect blessed liberty.

Then Satan changes his ground. You know the circumstances.

He would have Him cast Himself down from a pinnacle of the temple, on the ground of a promise from God, to see if He would be as good as His word. Thus he would turn Him from dependence. “It is written, Thou shalt not *tempt* the Lord thy God.” What is tempting God? I will tell you what people commonly think it is: they say, it is relying only on God, and not doing the best you can for yourself. It is exactly the reverse of the truth. *We tempt God, when we do not trust Him absolutely.* Did Jesus need to test God, to see if He would be true to His word? He *knew His heart too well.* And has He not revealed the heart of God, that you and I may trust Him as He did? It ought to be easy for us to

trust Him. We have trusted Him for eternity. How do we trust Him for time? For the details of our daily need—our food, our business, etc.? It is often in some such thing Satan finds entrance, and leads us from the path of Christ, from absolute dependence upon the known heart of God.

Once more Satan changes his ground. "He taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; and saith unto Him, all these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Luke adds, "For that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will, I give it." Not in possession indeed, but as an object to attract the heart. The character of this last temptation is, *the world*. Let us be warned: as surely as anything in this world, is present to us as an object to be pondered, it is of Satan. God does not offer us anything in a world that has cast the Son of God absolutely out of it. We are heirs of it with Christ. By and bye He will put us into possession, when He takes possession Himself it will be time enough for us to have it then. He will never dissociate us from Himself. When He takes the inheritance of all things in heaven and earth we shall take it with Him. Now He calls me into the lowly path of His rejection: His obedience, and dependence, and absolute refusal of the world, to be my pattern in it.

The order of this last temptation is significant, as connected with the solemn words of the 1st epistle of John. He writes to the fathers, young men, and babes, of the family of God (ch. ii). To the fathers, he could only say, they had known Him, that is from the beginning. They knew Christ. There never can be any knowledge beyond that. There is no end to it. What could the world, if decked out in its brightest by Satan offer to such? There, is what shines brighter, eclipsing all the glory of it—"what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless and I count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung." But the young men have not made such progress in the knowledge of Christ. They were strong, and had overcome the wicked one; the secret of their strength, the word of God abideth in them. We have seen the perfect example of this in the Lord Jesus. They needed the warning, "Love not the *world*, neither the things that are in the world."

That was the danger for those who had overcome the devil when he came openly. Don't you think you will be tested by the world? I tell you, you will. Not one escapes it. Satan turned away at the front door, comes round to the back door in the disguise of some worldly object. But you may say, the world would be no attraction to me: for each has his own estimate of what "the world" means: it is always just the least thing above what the poor treacherous heart is aiming at for itself. So easily are we deceived. But John says, "neither the things that are in the world." Ah! that searches us. Is there one thing in the world that the heart is after? "All that is in the world . . . is not of the Father." We belong to another world: we have been brought to the Father. Heaven is the revealed scene of our home, relationships, interest, joys, and objects. We have been set to seek those things that are above—"set your mind on things above, and not on things on the earth." Christ is there and we belong there. There is not one thing in common between the world of the Father and this world. Not that Satan needs to present to you and me all the glory of it. But it is his sphere in which he has power. If a less bait won't take, he can enlarge the bait up to that measure. Yet there is nothing in it to satisfy even the natural man. Our only safety lies in the absolute refusal of the world, and all that is in it. Still we need what is positive, to be able to do this. The words of Jesus supply it, "It is written again, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

That is what is to make up the life of one who walks in His path. Nothing but God before the heart for worship and service. That is the path of the simple and blessed power. It is the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, that alone gives us an object that satisfies outside this world, and so makes us superior to it. The path of Jesus through it gives us the pattern of ours—"he that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk even as he walked." If it has to be taken in the presence of Satan; there is a vast difference between the way we meet him and the way the Lord Jesus had to meet him. He had to meet Satan in all his unbroken power, flushed with centuries of victory over the first man and his race. And He met him, and *totally vanquished him*. It is only a vanquished devil we have to do with—"he that is born of God keepeth

himself and that wicked one toucheth him not."
 "Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

The Lord gives us, beloved friends, in the simplicity of faith, to take up the place He has given us, with a little deeper apprehension of the wonderful blessedness of it. It is full association with Christ in all that He is before the eye and heart of God, and this the eternal thought of His heart about us. The path but flows from it. Would we like Him to dissociate us from Himself in any way? He could not bear it. He is our life. And that life is a dependent one, as it was in Him when He was here. May we live in the atmosphere of His presence, abiding in Him, drawing upon the resources, that are all there for us in Him, that we may answer a little more practically to Him here, till we see His face and shall answer perfectly to Him in glory, and be with Him for ever.

J. A. T.

Has not the Lord often found you where you never ought to have been? And yet has not His love even come out just there, and shewn you that He loved you above all your thoughts of His love; loved you according to God's thoughts about you, loved you above all your inconsistency, according to the place God had set you in; and yet you have had so little faith in that love that you have said, "Now the Lord is only going to upbraid me." Well, if He did, He never upbraids the worldling, but He does His own children.

How sad that true Christians are not more practically separated to God—that the world should look at them, and be able to say, "There is *this* and there is *that* in you which does not savour of Christ;" why this looking to earth, that fretting care, that troubled forecasting thought, if looking up to the glory and seeing Christ there, and if He has come and opened His heart to you as God?

G. V. W.

‘MILK OF THE WORD.’

“As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.” (1 Pet. ii. 2).

Is not this a passage often misconceived of? Does it mean that we are to be always as babes in Christ returning to the first elements for nourishment? I apprehend this is how many take it. But it is not its force, as a little consideration may suffice to show.

There is of course a stage in our life as Christians in which we are necessarily and rightly ‘babes.’ The apostle John addresses himself to these, (1 John ii.) But the Corinthians were rebuked for the continuance of such a state, and to him carnality was the true synonym for its protraction: “I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as babes in Christ” (1 Cor. iii. 1). And both here and in the epistle to the Hebrews he blames them for the necessity they had for ‘milk.’

Here in Peter the thought is different. The Word itself is milk, the whole of it, and we are to be not simply as babes, but as *new-born* babes in our desire for it. To a new-born babe what is milk? Its very life, we may say. And such is God’s word to us, and such is to be its place in our affections. The Word, the whole of it, is that which God has provided for us, and it would be but dishonouring it and Him who gave it, to extract certain elements from it, and dismiss the rest as not available for food. It is *all* food, if appropriated as such. The highest and most advanced truths, so-called, do but expand, illustrate, and confirm, the Gospel itself, than which no truth is more wonderful, deeper or ‘higher.’ We do not leave the Gospel behind as we go on with Scripture, nor even have to turn back to it to find the refreshment it supplies for our souls; but it is the Gospel itself that travels on with us, more and more learnt, more and more developing itself to us continually.

THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

The Gospel of Mark gives us the Lord in service. We must not think of it as a lower thing than that which Matthew speaks of, upon that account. The humbler the path the more wonderful it makes it, when we see who it is who is treading this path; and this at the outset is put before in a striking way, as a sort of title to the book: "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, *the Son of God.*" If we lost this, we should lose the real blessedness of it all. The depth of the descent must be measured by the height from which He descended. The love in it, to influence our hearts aright, must be known as Divine love.

This however being understood, once for all, He is seen henceforth taking and keeping the place of servant. The Father indeed owns Him Son at His baptism; the devils proclaim Him such; the voice of faith in the centurion at the cross. Once He challenges the Jews as to why David calls Him 'Lord;' and once He answers to the high priest's challenge as to whether He is "the Christ, the Son of the Blessed." Elsewhere but once He speaks of Himself as the 'Son' to contrast Himself with the Father, as we shall see. Save as accusation at the cross, He is never even looked at as King of the Jews. But although He is seen in patient earnest service, by those who are in immediate attendance upon Him, not even once called 'Lord,' while after the resurrection and ascension, as Lord then, He still goes forth as the worker with those sent forth by Him: "And they went forth and preached everywhere, *the Lord*

working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following."

Of this side of His wondrous life Mark is significantly made the historian,—Mark, whose own first service had ended in failure as we find in the Acts, but who, as the Epistles show us, was by grace restored, and by the mouth of him who had formerly rejected association with him, declared "profitable for the ministry." The grace here is very plain, while the contrast has its needful lesson, and brings out in great distinctness that characteristic word 'immediately,' which, in various forms in our version, is well known to recur remarkably in this Gospel, some forty times out of eighty in the whole New Testament. His was the prompt and unflagging service which never consulted (as had Barnabas' sister's son) with flesh and blood.

His service is detailed in all its minutiae, which just as such reveal a self-devoted love, which in its perfect consistency with itself is its own witness to the heart of man. With Divine workmanship we can use the microscope which, with man's, only manifests its imperfection. The singleness of His service is seen in this, that He knows nothing of His Master's business, save what is given Him to communicate: "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, *neither the Son*, but the Father." Those words 'neither the Son' are only in Mark, and fitly. They are here His glory, while in the other Gospels they would seem a detraction from it.

In Mark, too, we have the Transfiguration and the Ascension: the witnesses of what is the estimate on God's part of His servant-Son,—the answer in glory to the humiliation of His path of service.

The work itself the trespass-offering defines, the offering in which restitution has so marked a place; but restitution according to God's thought, where a

“fifth part more” overpays the injury and loss inflicted. Here the ram of consecration is the characteristic animal, the sheep, but the male sheep. The ‘sheep’ gives the meekness of self-surrender, “as a sheep before her shearers is dumb”; but the male sheep introduces greater energy into this surrender, answering to the words of the trespass-offering psalm,—the sixty-ninth,—“The zeal of thine house hath eaten Me up.” This truly represents the one who could say: “I restored that which I took not away.”

The trespass-offering has its two parts: man-ward, in Lev. v. 14-19; God-ward, in chap. vi. 1-7. And so in Mark, the blessed service of love wherein He brought to man all the resources of God’s grace, and all the riches of His treasure-house, is closed with the Cross, where the same cry of agony is found as in Matthew: “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” Only in the lowest depths, as there, could He restore to God what sin had robbed Him of. But there *He*, the Son of God, surrendered up to that, more than restored, more than vindicated, the holiness that was against sin, and the love that sin had permitted question of. God was not only vindicated: He was *glorified*.

Naturally, the dispensational character, so prominent in Matthew’s Gospel, is absent here. The kingdom is God’s, though mark, not of heaven, the Father, Christ, or the Son of man. The Father is mentioned as such but five times, and ‘your Father’ only in one place, (xi. 25, 26.) Not the child’s, but the servant’s place is here, although it is recognized that the servants are children. Governmental responsibilities and rewards are before us, as in Matthew, but these of disciples, individually subject; here of labourers for the accomplishment of Divine purposes,—of ministers, after the pattern of Him who, as the Son of man, “came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

JESUS IN COMPANY WITH HIS DISCIPLES.

We are aware by how many different ways our fellow-disciples try us, and grieve us; and, no doubt, we do them. We see, or fancy we see, some bad quality in them, and find it hard to bear it, or to go on in further company with them. It has occurred to me that we may observe, that just in those same ways the mind and heart of Jesus were tried and grieved by His disciples in the days of His flesh, and yet He went on with them, we know, as I need not add, "*not overcome of evil, but overcoming evil with good*"—the evil that was in *them*, with the good that was in *Himself*. I would mention some of these wrong things in them that must have grieved Him, and the influence of which, upon our own thoughts and feelings towards others, we well understand and continually experience.

Vanity in another tries us—an air of self-satisfaction, or the esteeming of ourselves and the putting of ourselves forth to admiration. The Lord was tried by this spirit in His disciples. The mother betrayed it, and His kinsfolk. (John ii., vii.) Peter was thus self-confident, when he said, "Though all should be offended, yet will not I." And all of them were guilty of this, when they contended who should be the greatest; and also when they *forbade* those who followed not with themselves.

Ill-temper is a very fretful thing; it so interferes with us. Martha tried the Lord with it, when she complained to Him of her sister; and so did the apostles when they urged Him to send away the multitude, just because their privacy and repose had been intruded upon. (Mark vi.) Any show of a *covetous*, grudging spirit is very hateful to us. Jesus must

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have discerned this (and therefore have had to bear with it) on such occasions as Matt. xiv. 17; xv. 33.

Unkindness, whether towards ourselves or to others is very irritating. Peter's enquiry in Matt. xviii. 21 covered, I believe, what the Lord must have seen to be the workings of an unkind and malevolent temper; as also we see it in Matt. xv. 23.

Indifference to others, and carefulness about one self, is very vexing to us also—it is so selfish and cold-hearted. Jesus was tried by enough of it in His disciples. He asked them to watch with Him, but He found them sleeping; He spake of His death, but they were thinking of their place and honors in the kingdom; He spake of leaving them, but none of them asked, “Whither goest thou?” and in the ship it was of their *own* safety they thought. These were instances of cold indifference.

Ignorance is apt to try us, and make us impatient. Whoever found more of it in those he was continually teaching than the Lord? Some of the plainest lessons they had not learned; and when He spake *spiritually* or mystically to them, they listened to Him as *in the letter*—they were asking explications of the simplest parables.

Unspirituality of mind in fellow-disciples is a trial to us. How much of this amongst His people was the Lord continually suffering! and He was always light in discovering it. We often, through vanity or self-esteem, mistake mere nonconformity with ourselves for it.

These are among the ways in which the disciples must have tried the mind of their Divine Master; and these are some of the tempers and characteristics which to this hour try and fret us in our brethren. It may be thought that the instances here adduced are but faint and minute expressions of these different wrong tempers. That may be. But we must remember how pure and perfect the mind of Jesus is,

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and then we shall know that though the instance was faint, and the occasion a small one, *yet His finer sensibility gave it more than the importance of the greatest occasion.*

And comforting, let me say, it is to see the Lord going before us in such trials as these. But if He has gone before us in the *trials themselves*, He has also left us an example of a *series of victories* over them, and in these victories He has told us to "follow His steps;" for not only in His ways with His *adversaries*, but in His way with His *disciples* is He our pattern. If, in not answering reviling with reviling, nor wrongs with threatenings, He is an example to us, so also in His *going on* still with His disciples, in spite of naughty outbreaks and many shortcomings among them. For we have returned to Him as "the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls," in *all* things as the One who is a pattern to us—how we should carry ourselves to all, adversaries or brethren. (1 Peter ii. 21–25). And He, as I said, was never overcome of evil that was in another, but ever overcame it by the good that was in Himself. (Rom. xii. 21.)

Thus did He suffer from His disciples, and thus did He conquer. How ready are our selfish hearts to plead our right to part company, if another do not please us. But this was not Jesus. The pride, the indifference, the ill-temper, and the low unspiritual mind, which the disciples were continually betraying, did not tempt HIM to take distance from them.

For at the END of their walk together, He is *nearer to them than ever*. (John xiv. xvi.) He did not *part company* with them because they gave Him much exercise of heart, and were continually drawing upon Him. He warned and instructed them; He rebuked and condemned them; but NEVER GAVE THEM UP. Blessed, perfect Master! lover of our souls at all cost! (John ii. 6.)

J. G. B.

“HIMSELF.”

A WORD TO BELIEVERS.

I have been greatly delighted of late in contemplating the blessedness of being engrossed with Jesus; and *one* effect that the many questions, strifes about words, vain janglings and contentions which beset one on every side, have had, is to drive me closer to *Himself*. I desire to recall the scattered and bewildered minds of saints from everything else, and to present before them an object that is worthy—oh, how worthy!—of their entire, constant, continued attention, adoration, and praise. The Lord help me to write what He has taught me “*concerning Himself!*”

It is exceedingly blessed to observe the prominence which that one word “HIMSELF” has all through the Word. If the Holy Ghost would direct the thoughts to the cross, that great judgment of sin, the scene of that complete payment of *all* our debt, Calvary, the place of life though the place of a skull, it is by presenting “HIMSELF,” and hence it is in 1 Peter ii. 24, “Who HIS OWN SELF bare our sins in HIS OWN BODY on the tree . . . BY WHOSE stripes ye were healed.” Beloved, the centre of it all is Jesus—it is “*His own self*”—it is “*His own body*”—it is “*His stripes!*” Oh, blessed particularity and speciality! How sweet to the heart it is! The same thing is to be observed in Isaiah liii., where it is all “*Him,*” “*He,*” “*His:*” the Holy Ghost would fix the undivided, undistracted gaze of my soul on “*Jesus Himself*” as my perfect sacrifice!

Again: HE has finished the work, He has endured the cross, and sin, that mighty barrier standing in the road of the sinner's return to God, is taken out of the way: the mountains of my guilt, yea, "the tops of the highest mountains" of mine iniquities, having been "covered" by "THE BLOOD OF JESUS," the Saviour rises from the dead. The grave could not detain Him. He rises, He bursts the bonds of death, for it was "not possible that He should be holden of it." He presents himself to His disciples, who, with blighted hopes and scattered prospects, are terrified and affrighted. All their hopes had been laid in the grave of Jesus; never again, as they thought, to rise. Consequently, when He appears, He causes fear and affright among them. And how does He re-assure their hearts? What is the plan He adopts to restore their confidence and peace? He presents HIMSELF, saying, (Luke xxiv. 49), "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I MYSELF." Then, (ver. 49), "He showed unto them HIS hands and HIS feet;" mark, beloved, "HIS hands, HIS feet." Still it is HIMSELF:" it is not even a clear announcement of the proofs of what He was; it is not a recalling to their minds that He had taught them these things. No, beloved, precious as this would have been from His lips, there was something yet more touching, more melting, more convincing, and that was—presenting HIMSELF—"Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I MYSELF." How blessed is all this!

But there is a step even further in this blessedness, for we find the Gospel by John ends, leaving the disciples and Jesus *together*, leaving them with HIMSELF. In the 21st of John, Peter is restored, and then, when fully restored and reinstated in office, the blessed Master says, (ver. 19), "Follow ME." John, we are told, was seen by Peter "following." Well, when Peter enquires of the Lord about John, the reply was, "What is that to thee? follow *thou* ME."

Here we see again the blessed Lord would have the mind engrossed with HIMSELF.

And now that He has come and gone away, and that we, His poor weak ones, are left in a world that disowns and rejects Him, what has he left us to *cheer* our hearts, to *occupy* our souls, to feed our hopes? "HIMSELF." "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto *myself*: that where I am, there ye may be also: (John xiv. 3) and so in kindred words of comfort does the Holy Ghost console the Thessalonian saints in their sorrow: "For the Lord HIMSELF shall descend from heaven with a shout: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them, to meet the LORD in the air." . . . If our *past* be HIMSELF, if our *present* be HIMSELF, our future is also HIMSELF, and "so shall we ever be WITH THE LORD."

Oh, the exceeding preciousness of all this! It is truly "Jesus only;" and well may we sing—

"The bride eyes not her garment,
But her dear Bridegroom's face.
I will not gaze on glory,
But on my King of grace;
Not on the crown He giveth,
But on His pierced hand.
The Lamb is all the glory
Of Immanuel's land."

Beloved, may the Lord deliver us from every object that would seek to intrude itself into the place HE HIMSELF ought to have in our hearts! The devil is not wanting in skill and stratagem to draw the minds and affections of the saints to various points which are indeed connected with Jesus, but which are not "HIMSELF," and to make these, (right and proper in their place), the *all-absorbing* subjects for the mind; and when he succeeds, what is the result? A manifest chill among the dear saints of God, a coldness

which must ever be the consequence of having *any* object but JESUS next the heart. May the dear LORD JESUS HIMSELF give us all the grace to abide in that happy place, of which we sometimes sing—

“ Oh, that I may, like favored John,
Recline my wearied head upon
The dear Redeemer’s breast:
From care and sin, and sorrow free,
Give me, O Lord, to find in Thee
My everlasting rest.”

W. T. T.

Think—if we realised practically that there is no separation between the Head and the body—that we are one with that *Only One*, who never had a will, never had likes and dislikes, whose whole course was the bringing out of “Thy will, not mine, be done.” He went in obedience to the death of the cross, and was raised up to the Father’s own right hand, where we see Him above the range of everything: and He says to us, “You are risen with me, and one with me; and if you walk in the power of that, you also will be above everything.”

The Lord Jesus Christ is not the Head of humanity, because then the whole human race would be saved, but the Head of a poor people to whom eternal life has flowed from Him, the smitten Rock. “The sanctified ones and He who sanctifieth are all of one.” We know our unity with the Lord, unity which none can divide, and the Lord acts upon that, “For which cause he is not ashamed to call us brethren.”

G. V. W.

LETTERS ON SOME PRACTICAL POINTS
CONNECTED WITH THE ASSEMBLY.

I.

DEAREST BROTHER,—It is upon my heart to write to you, freely and familiarly, about some things affecting the practical state of the gatherings, which the Lord (we may trust) is bringing into being in so many places now, often in great weakness and isolation, separated by long distances from one another, as on this immense Continent of North America especially. The weakness, if only realized, would be indeed matter for thanksgiving and an occasion of real strength; and the isolation from other help should cast them more immediately upon the church's living Head. I cannot speak then of *felt* weakness as being really that, or lament that circumstances should be favorable to that walk with God alone, which is what at all times the Lord has called His people to. Still these circumstances have their peculiar difficulties, and call for some special consideration, as I think,—some special attempt to minister to the need by those who have in some measure felt it, and who by their very mistakes and failure, have been taught what they would desire others to learn in a better way. Still that so much of what we have to speak of, has been knowledge acquired in this painful manner, may serve to free the writer from even the appearance of self-conceit in communicating it.

Without further preface, then, let me commence with some thoughts as to the gathering itself, which is indeed naturally the first consideration, and a matter of all importance. For this very reason the beginning

of things in any place is so critical a thing. A bad constitution at the beginning, just as in the physical condition of an individual, may lead to an unhealthy state which may never be recovered from. Let me say then, that the first of all requisites for a true gathering to the Lord's name, is that it be of the *Lord's making*. You will understand that I do not mean by that merely that those gathered together should be themselves the Lord's. That is a matter of course, which I need not dwell on, for I am not now seeking to establish what the church of God is, or what the gathering to Christ's name: I assume that as known and acknowledged by those I speak of. But I mean that their actual drawing together should be by the Spirit, working by the truth upon the heart, and by *nothing else*.

I believe the very thought of the unity of the church of God may be unintelligently used to hinder this. That every Christian (the maintenance of a Scriptural discipline being understood of course) has a right to the Lord's Table, may become an argument for methods of gathering, which are quite unsuited to the days in which we live, and tend only to produce confusion instead of what will glorify God.

For real gathering the Holy Ghost must gather, and Christ therefore it is who must be the attractive object, for thus alone the Holy Ghost works. It is only weakness for instance, where a wife follows a husband into fellowship, or a husband his wife, or children their parents, without personal exercise and conviction. Or where pleasant companionship is the object, even in divine things. Or where people come in, just because converted under one in fellowship; or where one's own personal blessing is the object sought. All these are motives short of Christ Himself, and all acting upon them should be as far as possible discouraged. We cannot indeed refuse Christians their place upon this ground only, but we

can and ought to put them solemnly upon their responsibility to act as to and under the Lord alone.

Intelligence as to more than fundamental truth we must not require. When the Church first began, and disciples came together to break bread, the truth of the one Body was not yet known; and 'babes' have their place at the Father's board as well as full-grown sons. On the other hand, profession is absolutely worthless except justified by the life; and we have to remember that our rule for a day of failure is to purge ourselves from the vessels to dishonour, and "follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." We do not pretend to judge who is who, as Christians; we do not pretend, in refusing fellowship, to say the person is not a Christian: "the Lord knoweth them that are His," not we. But we cannot associate with 'vessels to dishonour,' and be ourselves 'vessels to honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use;' and we know the pure-hearted by the righteousness, as well as faith and love, that we follow with them. In days of common and easy profession, the test which is not imposed by the circumstances amid which we move, must be only the more rigidly imposed by those with whom "truth in the inward parts" is recognized as the Lord's requirement.

And here let me insist a little,—for there is need,—that a most Scriptural test, and an important one, is that of one's *associations*. Even the world has its proverbs bearing upon this. "Tell me who are your companions, and I will tell you who you are," says one of them; and as an estimate of moral character we recognize the truth of this. A man's moral level cannot be much above that of his voluntary associations. Above all, where Christ is denied or dishonoured, one who winks at this dishonour is plainly unfit for communion with Himself. Let me illustrate this by an example. A Freemason, if a Christian, is

not only yoked unequally with unbelievers, but still more with those who purposely omit the Lord's name out of their corporate prayers, to accommodate Jews and unbelievers generally: he is openly linked thus with the Lord's dishonour. The same may be said of those who sit under the teaching of fundamental heresy, or who sit down in communion with it. The teaching of Scripture is that, "he that biddeth him God speed," or gives him salutation, "is partaker of his evil deeds," and that "if any one purge himself from these [vessels to dishonour], *he* shall be a vessel unto honour." (2 John; 1 Tim. ii.) Have we then any right to count those vessels unto honour, who do *not* so purge themselves?

It is a question thus of practical walk, this association; and as truly a matter of discipline, or of exclusion, as any other. In these days in which 'confederacy' is so leading a principle, it is one of very solemn importance.

Now a word or two as to reception. It is the act of the whole gathering in a place, just as much as is exclusion; whether there be 'two or three' gathered, or two or three hundred. This leads to the practical necessity of submitting the name of any one to be received, to the whole gathering a sufficient time before reception, to allow of all to know and realize what they are doing. Practically it may be that there are a few who have the confidence of the assembly, upon whom the work of visiting and enquiry will usually devolve; but these ought never upon such ground to assume to act for the assembly, nor can the assembly rightly rest their responsibility upon these. Communion is a thing which concerns every individual; as to "receive one another" must of necessity be individual.

It has been objected that there is no Scripture for making people wait a week or more, and it is

quite true that *in that shape* there is none. But every text which enforces our responsibility as to our associations with others, enforces also the necessity of giving opportunity to all to be of one mind in such a matter as this. And a really godly person who understands the reason of his being asked to wait, to proceed from care for the Lord's glory, and to have fellowship a real thing, will be content to wait, if it were a month, rather than hinder this, nay, will be only too glad to see this care practically exercised.

This touches another point—the matter of *introduction* to fellowship on the part of a brother or more, for one occasion, as of a person accidentally present, and known by him to be a Christian. Ought such individual judgment to be imposed on an assembly, without giving them time or opportunity to express their own mind intelligently about it? It is my own clear and deliberate conviction, that this ought never to be done, and I think full and Scriptural reason can be given for it.

The right of a Christian to communion is not in question: the question is who is to recognize the right? Is it the assembly or is it the individual? The two or three gathered to the name of the Lord have His promise to be with them; but they cannot transfer this to one or more among them acting for the rest. If it be allowed to all to introduce, how many are there whose judgment could not at all be trusted in a matter of the kind? If on the other hand it be only the privilege of a few to do so, an official class is set up, very hard to define, impossible to be allowed to define *themselves*, and wholly unknown to Scripture.

If it be said, this only applies to occasional not regular communion, I answer, if a person be recognized as entitled to 'break bread' for a single time, he cannot be rightly refused at any other; except of course in a case where discipline has to be main-

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tained, to which all are equally subject who are at the table of the Lord. The place is the same for all exactly, and reception is exactly the same also. If we admitted the idea of 'occasional' communion, we should make provision for what is contrary to the Lord's mind; for *He* certainly gives no permission to wander from His table. And while we cannot prevent this, nor require intelligence as a pre-requisite where the heart is really right with God, we cannot and may not on the other hand *ourselves admit* the title to wander.

I have said all this, dear brother, in so brief a way, that I feel there is need to ask you not to mistake brevity for dogmatism. I have indeed myself the strongest belief that what I have said will stand the fullest test of the Word of God; and I trust and believe you will not receive anything on my part, that that blessed Word does not authenticate. Here, for the present then, I close, though with much more upon my mind, to which at a future time I may ask you to listen.

* * *

As believers, we are cut off from all thought of *futures*, from making plans in connection with this world. I shall not be ready for Christ to come, if I am settled down in Sodom and trying to heap up its dross. Whatever duty the Lord has meant us to be doing, each one should be found at, when He comes.

When we get into glory there will be no longer hope for eternal blessedness with Christ, but the full position of our present hope. In the glory, the Spirit will always be permeating all, as the energy and medium of everything.

G. V. W.

IN THE PHARISEE'S HOUSE.

A GOSPEL ADDRESS.

(Luke vii. 31-50.)

We are naturally, beloved friends, when we wake up to realize that we have not got any real solid peace as to the future (I do not say hope, for I suppose everybody has something which he likes to call hope, if it is not very solid), but when we wake up to find no solid ground for the future we are still, if awake, yet in the darkness. We wake up ignorant how to secure what we are so anxious to secure, and therefore it is that we commonly miss, for a time at any rate, what we are seeking after, because we seek it in a wrong direction. We are very apt to impute it to God, and think God is dealing hardly with us, and that God is not willing to give it to us. We have got to wait upon God we think, until He is ready. Whereas God is all the time waiting upon us. We have not to wait at all for God, but we are moving in one direction, and the thing we want to find is in another. Therefore the Gospel has to set this right ; putting aside the thoughts and feelings of our own hearts to give us God's thoughts instead. What is meant by repentance ? Everyone naturally—not merely moralists, but the most ungodly, when he is aroused, thinks it means putting himself right ; and thus takes a wrong direction—seeks exactly in an opposite way for the thing he wants to find. Scripture has to come

in and correct our thoughts, to turn us right round upon our path; and then the end we thought we had so far to reach, is nigh at hand.

We find our Lord here with a Pharisee. These Pharisees were not all hypocrites, though we know there were many hypocrites among them, and the 'leaven of the Pharisees' was indeed hypocrisy. It is inseparable more or less from such a position as they were taking, however many who meant to be honest might be taking it. Law-keepers for righteousness cannot afford to be quite honest. It would spoil their stock in trade, if they looked too narrowly at what their hands are manufacturing for God. It is inseparable from their business that they cannot afford to keep a scrupulous conscience; and here they bring in the thought of God's mercy, and hope that God will take their shoddy for good cloth.

The Pharisees in fact included almost all the religious people of the day, and they are types of a large mass of the religious people of any day. We can find plenty of them all about us in Christendom now. A class of people who cannot speak of having attained salvation or got peace with God; but whose religious life is a busy industry to provide themselves the wedding garment they must have to appear in before God.

They are not irreligious, and not at rest. They are *sinners* in general, but not *sinners* in particular; not perhaps good enough for heaven, and not quite bad enough for hell; and so, if they do not believe in purgatory, puzzled where to place themselves; but certainly not with publicans and such like. Thus one who sits down with publicans they do not understand. The gospel He comes to announce passes right over their heads and never touches them, or if it touches, it only gives offence.

John the Baptist had come in a totally different

way, and in a way more striking naturally. He had come as a man separating himself from all alike, and all together. Preaching in the wilderness of Judea, never seen in their cities, never taking part in their religious ceremonies, although of a priestly family, with his strange unfashionable garment of camel's hair, and his food of locusts and wild honey, he stood off from men, calling a whole nation to repentance and to flee from coming wrath.

He did not suit the Pharisees either. The "way of righteousness" was not more to their taste than the way of grace. Opposite as he was in so many respects to the Lord, there was one point in which their testimony perfectly coincided. Neither made any difference in favour of religious people. If the Lord received all, welcomed all, the Baptist stood off from all, condemned all. Neither took account of their meritorious striving for goodness. If they went after John they must go with the common crowd of sinners; if one invited the Lord into his house, a sinner would follow Him in even there, as if His presence were sufficient title.

So they believed in neither. When called to mourning they would not weep, and when piped to they would not dance. God's righteousness was too severe; God's grace was too free and bountiful. Bent upon justifying themselves before God, His righteousness condemned them as sinners, and as sinners His grace too alone would justify them. In either way Pharisaism could not exist. Both proclaimed them in a wrong path,—a path in which each step of apparent progress carried them but further away from the end they sought. All their effort was to establish a difference between themselves and others, while neither righteousness nor grace would make a difference at all.

The strange thing is, that we who try in vain to justify ourselves are called instead to *justify God*.

For ourselves "it is God that justifieth" and God alone. But we justify Him when we take our places according to His estimate of what we are, who has pronounced upon us with a plainness which we cannot (except wilfully) mistake, and an absoluteness which allows of no contention. "The Publicans justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John." They were all baptized in Jordan, the river of death, "confessing their sins"—the sins of which death was the just due; and thus they proclaimed God's righteousness against themselves. That was repentance; and there it was that God could proclaim *their* righteousness whose testimony was that they had none.

The Pharisee here helps to illustrate these points. He asks the Lord into his house; and the Lord goes. You never find anybody seeking for Him whom He refuses or turns away. If He will not refuse to sit down with Publicans and sinners, He will not refuse a Pharisee's invitation either. And so let me say to anybody here: if there be a heart to welcome Him, fear not that He will not come because your measure of sin is not the due measure of it. The offer of the Gospel is world-wide, and God knows perfectly how many and various are the states of soul addressed by it; but they are sinful states, all, with all their variety; and a Saviour of sinners is a Saviour for all. Quite true, that if He comes into Simon's house, Simon's heart will not escape the testing of His presence, and it will be soon seen if the reception is real. If it is, His word will be submitted to, in proportion as He Himself is known, and has authority with the soul.

Thus all turns really upon what Christ is to us. Faith in Christ Himself—and that means a welcome given to Him—is the beginning of everything to us. Christ is light. To welcome Him is to get the light into our souls. We cannot be in His company without

finding out what we are, and learning the only terms upon which we can be with Him; but those terms are surely submitted to, when we so learn them. All really turns upon this, what Christ Himself is to us.

And this is what we find here. Only that the one who welcomed Him in the Pharisee's house was not the Pharisee. Alas, no; the only one found to appreciate the Son of God from heaven was one marked out comparatively as a *sinner*. "A woman in the city, that was a *sinner*, when she heard that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment."

What a wonderful attraction there was in Him for sinners! We may be sure that a Pharisee's house would be just the place of all places she would naturally have kept away from. But if He is there, the place changes its character directly.

His presence even in a Pharisee's house could give boldness to the sinner to be there too.

What a wonderful thing is grace, beloved friends! How it changes all our thoughts, all our relationships with regard to God, as we realize it! Where is the man who, after a long life of service to God, could say, as the fruit of that, "I go to God without any fear?" It is just that very class who call it presumption for them to say that. And it is quite true, it is presumption for anybody on that ground; who but must tremble to draw near to God? But here is a poor sinner who does not tremble. Here is a sinner who gets boldness, by the very fact of His being there, to come in after Him, uninvited, even into a Pharisee's house! And, moreover, He has not said even a word to her yet, that we know of. She has just discerned what is in Him for such as she is, and lays hold upon Him in her faith without a question.

No syllable, as far as we know, had He ever yet addressed to her. Either she had seen Him, and heard for herself the gracious words that were so constant on His lips—seen, perhaps, the deeds of love by which the words were evermore confirmed. Or perhaps she had only heard of Him through others. Words repeated, it may be, by unbelieving lips, or the story of what had been to the teller but a gaping wonder, may have sunk into her soul to be the seed there of eternal blessing. Any way, faith in her knew and apprehended Him; and in Him found its need met, found what made Him hers, and made her His eternally.

And there she is now in the Pharisee's house, heedless of everything else, in His presence. She feels no other eyes upon her. The presence of others neither daunts nor restrains her. There she is with her tears, not all of sorrow, to wash His feet, her hair (her woman's glory) abased—was it abased?—to wipe them, her box of precious ointment to anoint them with. All was (how much!) too little for Him. All her wealth could rise no higher than His feet; but He who had come so far to win man's heart to God, valued and acknowledged the gift of love—owned and justified the giver. "She loved much," from His own lips here, is the first word of this kind that meets us in the gospels.

But the Pharisee does not understand it. "He spake within himself, saying: This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner." The Lord shows him that He is a prophet by reading his unspoken thought. "And Jesus, answering, said unto Him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence and the other fifty."

There was a difference in the amount of the debts;

there was no difference in this respect, that they were both debtors. So says the apostle: "There is no difference, for all have 'sinned'"—not all equally, he does not say that, but all have sinned. Who has not? Who is not God's debtor? Then mark, what a personal interest this gives us in our Lord's next words. Simon, or one of us, might owe his fifty pence only; another his five hundred. But if the first made that difference his plea, what would it show but hardness?

"And when they had nothing to pay,"—*there* is another point in which there is no difference, and yet the greatest possible difference, if you look at it in another way. As to *ability* to pay, there is no difference at all. Not alone His holiness could not allow us to compound, but we on our parts could not. All we can do is to draw drafts upon the future—a bank where we have no credit, and where not one of our drafts is honoured. We can promise: that indeed is easy; but which of our performances ever did anything else but increase the debt? And if it did not, for which of them, even as a single item, could we presume we had made God our creditor.

If we will take God's word for it, simple enough it is, not only that "there is none righteous," but there is none that doeth good." In this sense, therefore, clearly, we have got nothing to pay; still, that is not quite yet the sense of our Lord's words. If it were, since all of us have nothing to pay, *all* would be forgiven, whereas forgiveness is the portion of some, not all, and there is a point at which people have to arrive, before they are forgiven. This is, in fact, the point of which our Lord speaks. It is when the having nothing wherewith to pay becomes a truth in our consciousness,—when we reach the fact of our utter bankruptcy,—when we give up the effort to compound with God, and are obliged to take our places before Him as mere beggars,—sinners quite undone, that

mercy becomes actually ours. "If we confess our sins"—that and nothing more—"He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

This, then, is a word meant for any soul in the consciousness of its ruin to take as applying to itself. If the first part consciously applies to you, beloved friends, the second part does. If it be true of you that you have nothing to pay God with, it is assuredly true that He frankly forgives you. Take the sweet assurance to your heart. Keep it, as you have perfect title. Fear not, because it is so much beyond your thought. God's thoughts are not as our thoughts; nor is that unbelieving proverb that a thing is "too good to be true," applicable at all where He is in question. The really best thing of Him is ever the truest.

"The Son of man is come to seek and save that which is lost." Hear it, ye lost ones. Let it fill up your hearts with joy and adoration. "When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both." The amount of the debt made no difference in this respect. The Pharisee and the sinner of the city might alike here be met. There was no difference as to the way or the certainty of forgiveness. The difference that this would make would naturally be of another kind. "Tell me, therefore," says the Lord to Simon, "which of them will love him most?" "I suppose," says Simon, forced into honesty by the appeal; "I suppose that he to whom he forgave most." "Thou hast rightly judged," replies the Lord.

The natural conscience thus judges, and judges rightly, that the greater the debt forgiven, the more the heart of the debtor would be turned in grateful love towards Him who had forgiven him.

Love then here—and the Lord teaches us in the application that He is illustrating how love to God is produced in the soul—love is based upon the know-

ledge of forgiveness. Grace is thus the spring of holiness in us. The gospel not only sets the soul free from fear of wrath and condemnation, but *in* setting it free, binds it to God for ever. "O Lord," says the psalmist, "truly I am Thy servant: I am Thy servant, and the son of Thine handmaid: *Thou hast loosed my bonds.*" This is the principle. And the apostle says, "And not only so"—not only is salvation sure—"but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation."

Thus the gospel provides for holiness by the freeness of its forgiveness, and (mark it well) by the certainty also of the forgiveness which it proclaims. If the love is founded, as it is clearly taught here, upon the sense of what one has received, then it is absolutely necessary to this, that forgiveness should be a certainty to it, far removed from doubt and question. And this is ever what Scripture supposes as to the Christian. It supposes that he has definite certainty as to that which alone gives him his place, and forms his character as a Christian; and the first thing of course is forgiveness.

You may turn round on me perhaps, and say: "I have not had the Lord's voice speaking to me, as the woman in this story had." But that is your mistake, not mine, beloved friends. In the first place, as to the woman here, when the Lord pronounced her a forgiven one upon this evidence, that she loved much, *He had not yet spoken to her.* It is a thing which seems to give such remarkable beauty and simplicity to her faith, that it had no direct word to herself to go upon. She had seen His acts and ways of love with others, and she had laid hold upon the grace in it for her own need. His lips confirm it to her only—vindicate that simplicity of faith in her, and show it was no mistake. But the love the Lord speaks of, the love that was manifesting itself in her actions

there, was a love based upon the sense of a forgiveness which she already enjoyed, and which was working its blessed work upon her.

And then again, if the Lord spoke to her, He speaks here, beloved friends, no less to us. "When they had nothing to pay, He frankly forgave them both," is a word as definite as can be for any soul who is consciously in that condition. To all beggared and bankrupt souls, consciously that, the good news is here proclaimed of a forgiveness for them as clear, as free, as definite, as heart can desire. If your soul only says to Him, "Lord, I have nothing to pay," then you shall know the grace of a giving God. Without presumption, without pretension to be anything, without having to look unto yourself to find anything, except sin and misery, you may, nay, you are called upon to appropriate to yourself a forgiveness which God has pronounced yours. The Gospel does not expect to find ready-made saints: it *makes* them. It is preached not to saints, but to sinners, and the first thing is to receive it as such; God's good news, declaring the character of God, bringing His love into your souls to *produce* love again to Him. All commandment-keeping comes as the result of this: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and *beloved*, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering." All such things are fruits of the Gospel, and, therefore, the Gospel is first of all to be received, in order to them.

The Lord Himself, not judging here in a direct divine way, but by the evidences, pronounces as to this woman's forgiveness from the tokens of her love, contrasting it with the coldness of the Pharisee's reception: "And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she has washed my feet with tears, and wiped them

with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman, since the time that I came in, has not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore, I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, *for she loved much*: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

Mark, how gently the Lord deals there with Simon's conscience. He will not say Simon does not love at all. Himself there his guest, he will give him all possible credit for the invitation. He will leave it to his own soul if he loved so much even as "a little." But the woman, with her sins 'many,' as He says they are, she shall have from His own mouth the assurance of how little ashamed of her He is, or of the grace in which she has had such just confidence. "And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven." Let them cavil as they may, He will confirm it. "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

And may some who listen to me now, with an equal simplicity, lay hold upon a love whose unexhausted treasury is as full to-day as ever for all demands upon it. May you too, beloved friends, believing, go on your way rejoicing in a peace made for you by the blood of the Cross, and proclaimed to you by its Maker.

We have to judge our whole course down here in the light of His coming. To all I would say, are you in life and ways like people who wait for their Lord? Like the Thessalonians, occupied with that thing, can we honestly say, "If thou, Lord Jesus, hast thine heart set on coming to gather thy children home, *the sooner the better for us.*"

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

(21) What is the Melchizedec priesthood of our Lord? and does He exercise Aaronic priesthood now, or both? and wherein do they differ?

Ans.—The Lord is not an Aaronic priest at all, He is always a priest after the order of Melchizedec; but His present work a priest is after the pattern of the Aaronic priesthood, and He does not fulfil Melchizedec's office yet. As having a priesthood unsuccessional, derived from none, and handed down to none, He is after Melchizedec's *order*; but He will fulfil the office only when He comes forth as King and priest together, establishing righteousness first, with resistless power, and then peace as the effect of righteousness; blessing men on the part of the Most High (God's millennial name), and the Most High on the part of men. Psalm cxxxiv. gives us the fulfilment of this in brief; and it is the last of those 'songs of degrees' which give us the gradual accomplishment of Israel's blessing.

The office of the Aaronic priesthood was to maintain the people before God upon the ground of atonement: it was thus essentially sacrificial and intercessional. The Melchizedec *priesthood* (not of course including therefore the exercise of kingly power which accompanies it) is essentially eucharistic God-ward, a ministry of blessing man-ward. The outcome of the sacrifice is here the 'bread and wine,' which, as the memorial of an accomplished work, cheers man's heart and brightens his countenance.

(22) In Col. ii. 16, how are the new moons a shadow of things to come?

Ans. They seem to be a picture of Israel's national re-appearance in the last days, in the light of divine favour. Ps. lxxxix. 3 and Sol. Song vi. 10 probably refer to this, and Rev. xii. 1 also.

A SAVOUR OF REST.

It is wonderfully significant, and surely should admonish our often dull hearts, that whilst a *yearly* day of atonement was appointed for Israel, of which the chief feature was the sin offering, and there were other set occasions on which sin-offerings were to be brought, as well as for special failures; yet God instituted, as a morning and evening sacrifice *perpetually*, not a sin, but a burnt-offering. Sin is a thing which must be dealt with, and how fully so the cry of anguish from the blessed Lord upon the cross may tell us. But what He delights to have ever before Him is that which, whilst it was for sin, and to make atonement, yet spoke pre-eminently of the infinite worth of the victim. Morning and evening this ascended up to God, a savour of rest and delight. Besides this upon the altar of burnt-offering outside the tabernacle, there was the burning of incense upon the golden altar morning and evening in the holy place, the type of the sweet fragrance of Christ to God. What volumes this speaks to our hearts, reminding us that whilst sin has been dealt with, Divine righteousness satisfied, yet the infinite worth of Him who bore the judgment is what God is occupied with!

How little we enter into that as God would have us to do. "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, rejoice," often wakes but little response in the hearts of redeemed ones. Should we not be saved from many a snare, and find ourselves carried over many a trial that now may overcome us, were He more the constant subject of our meditations? How dishonoring too to that blessed One, the self-occupation that so many indulge in!

Another thing we must not forget, and that is, that with the burnt-offering went *always* the meat-offering. It is "the burnt-offering, and *his* meat-offering." The one, Christ in His death atoning for sin; the other, Christ in His person and life. If I ask what atoned for my sins, surely it is only a dying Christ suffering judicially the penalty due to me. No life of holy devotedness to the will of God, however perfect, could atone for sin. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." But if I ask what is the measure of my acceptance with God, the answer is, a whole Christ, perfect in the obedience of His life as in His death. The meat-offering and the burnt-offering go together in this. "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." May we know more what it is to know Christ, through the Spirit, in His own worth as before God continually!

The two altars present to us Christ in two different aspects. The brazen, which stood outside the tabernacle, was Christ as He was in the world. The golden, on which the sweet incense was burnt, Christ risen and ascended into heaven. No sacrifice was burnt upon it, nothing but the incense morning and evening, when Aaron trimmed the lamps; though once a year the blood of the sin-offering was put upon it, so as to connect the atonement made outside in the world with the person of Christ in the sanctuary. But whilst the altar of burnt-offering spoke of Christ in connection with His life and death, and the sweet savour that has gone up to God about sin, the golden altar is more the perfection of His person as known in the sanctuary, and the incense was not the fruit of sacrifice consumed, but connected with Himself personally.

R. T. G.

LETTERS ON SOME PRACTICAL POINTS
CONNECTED WITH THE ASSEMBLY.

II.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—In my last letter we were speaking of the gathering as such, and necessarily somewhat of communion, as what is involved or implied in gathering. I want now to say a few words as to *how far* this is implied in it, and as to its true nature.

Our fellowship is first of all “with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ,” and thus only, and in the measure in which this is attained, “with one another.” We are united together by the centre, as the spokes of a wheel are with the nave. We are gathered *to* the name of the Lord Jesus, and find our place at His table as having individually heard Him say, “This do in remembrance of Me.” This alone puts fellowship with one another in the right place, and, while it tests, maintains it. It makes my presence at the Lord’s table a matter of loving obedience to Him whose voice alone I am to listen to, and *not* first of all a pledge of fellowship with all who may be there.

It is very needful to maintain this, as a point of duty to the Lord Himself; for clearly I must not make my remembrance of the Lord depend upon the right condition of those with whom I sit down at His table. I must be in my place with Him, whatever may be the state of others, so long as I can recognize it at all to be His table at which I sit. I can neither ensure, nor assume, a right state in all. *I must be right*

myself, of course: "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat."

And at this point, let me diverge a little (if it be that) to say, that the less we *assume* as to anything where we are concerned, the better. It is a day in which universal failure is the most patent of all things, and the more we are with God the more we shall realize it. God has not failed—will never: we can answer for Him, and for no one else; for ourselves certainly least of all. Confession, not assumption, as with Daniel in his day, alone suits the real character of remnant times. Suppose you put in (as some incline to do) into the gracious promise in Matt. xviii, "where two or three are *gathered* together to my Name," the words "by the Holy Ghost,"—could we always assure ourselves that without doubt our gathering was that, as to all in it? And if not, how far could we claim the promise, "There am I in the midst of them?"

These words 'by the Holy Ghost' are not there, as, if they were essential, they certainly would be; nor does the word 'gathered' necessarily imply them. All sorts of assemblages—of the multitudes, of the Pharisees, for example—are described in the same language precisely; and it is a great blessing to us that it is so, for only thus can we, without assumption or pretension of any kind, grasp in faith the promise upon which so much depends. We can be honest and real, lowly and self-suspecting, and yet draw near in confidence to Him who vouchsafes His presence in the midst.

Ought it not then to be 'by the Holy Ghost' that we are gathered? Surely; and let us test and see how far it is so. Just as with communion, *ought* we not to be, each one of us and all together, in the enjoyment of this among ourselves? Yes, undoubtedly; but let us test ourselves as to this, and seek earnestly after it, and not assume it. We may be happy with

each other in a very different way, and yet mistake it for that which alone can please God; and thus we may force Him even to come in, and break up what we deemed so happy, because we are assuming the sham to be the true, and because He would give us the true and not the sham.

But there is a danger with us, if 'communion' takes the form of what is man-ward rather than what is God-ward, that the first unhappiness between us and our brethren—the first suspicion, or perception, of what is wrong in them—should make us act as if it were the Lord we had fallen out with, by withdrawing from that which is the remembrance of Him, and the expression (in the first place) of fellowship with Him.

There is the more danger because that which brought Christians constantly together in the first fresh days of Christianity, has ceased to be with most what it was of old. The coming together to break bread has been largely displaced by meetings for prayer and preaching, apart from this; and the value of the Lord's supper is the less realized often even by those who do come together to it. The great meeting of the Church, in which we recognize what the Lord is to us all, and what we are to one another, and in which He Himself has the central place, has given way to meetings over which preside officially appointed teachers, and in which church and world alike have place. The Lord's supper would, they think, lose its solemnity by frequent repetition; whereas in fact it is thus it makes its mark upon us, bringing us back week by week face to face with those wondrous relationships which are established upon so dear a foundation as 'the Lord's death,' and to be realized in their fulness at that time, unknown but ever looked for, when He shall come again.

To be with Him where He has specially promised His presence, looking back together to His death and

forward to His coming, this is what pre-eminently characterizes the sweet and solemn meeting "to break bread:" in which surely He Himself has the central place, and fellowship with Him is the one great essential, which, if it be maintained, brings us into fellowship with all His people who are capable of, and enjoying, fellowship with Him.

This, of course, does not in the least set aside the obligation to promote the latter in every possible way; and it would be an immense thing if we realized each breach of fellowship, where such there is, as a breach with Him. How it would free us from the petty, personal feeling which so besets us, if we understood (as I have before said) our connection with one another to be *by the centre*, and only so. With what a different spirit we should take up any thing of this kind, when we looked at it as somewhat between the Lord and one of His own, and only thus affecting us at all! Are we not apt to take such up in the very reverse way, and feel that which touches us, first and weightiest? It is for this very reason that it is so safe to refuse ever to pursue what may be deemed *our* quarrel, and to leave it (if the first steps to '*gain* one's brother' are not effectual) in the hands of those who can give more dispassionate judgment than we may be capable of.

If we realized this connection by the centre, would not the bonds that bind us together bind us each more closely to the Lord, and the least relaxation of them be felt as introducing and implying less practical nearness? And would not He be the One we turned to instinctively to settle things and get them right, instead of, first of all, the assembly? Would not He be thus between us and our brethren, instead of (as it so easily may be) *our brethren between us and Christ?*

You will understand that I am not making light of the necessity for holiness, or of Scriptural discipline to maintain this. Here we cannot act singly: all

must act together. To separate ourselves from the Lord's table, is to put ourselves where discipline is no longer practicable, and to leave the evil (if such there be) behind us *at* the table and to defile our brethren. Moreover, how large a class of things there is in which the assembly should never be called in at all! How many personal matters in which the apostle's question becomes pertinent, "Why do ye not rather take wrong?" Above all, how needful to remember that *grace* is that which gives dominion over sin, as *law* on the other hand is its strength. We must not *ever* deem it allowing unholiness, to show grace, or imagine for a moment that there is no way of putting away sin except by judgment.

I feel I have spoken somewhat vaguely in all this, yet after all Scripture gives mainly principles, leaving us to apply them to each case according to what the case is. Simplicity and dependence upon God alone can guide us right.

* * *

It is an awful sin that nominal Christianity commits in making so little as it does of the blood of God's Son. It is either something that I know as shed for me, or something repudiated by me; and the not accepting that blood as what God has declared it to be, is one of the solemn sins of the present day. I dishonour the blood if I do not believe that it has washed my sins away, if I do not see all guilt gone, if I am not quite at peace and free in the presence of God, looking for the Eternal Lover of my soul who is coming to take me to be with Him as the One who bought me with that blood and saved me for ever. Saved thus, the dying thief went to the paradise of God with the same liberty as Christ Himself.

THE FIRST RESURRECTION AND THE BODY THAT SHALL BE.

We have already seen that the first resurrection, or that of the saints, precedes the resurrection of the wicked by more than a thousand years, and is always carefully distinguished from it. It is the *first* resurrection, as distinguished from that of the 'rest of the dead,' who live not again till the thousand years are finished, and whom we then find assembled before the great white throne. (Rev. xx.) It is therefore the resurrection *from*, not merely *death*, as all resurrection is, but from or out from *the dead*—a selective, peculiar one. It is a resurrection in which he who has part is 'blessed and holy' by the very fact; nay, a child of God and equal unto the angels: language that could not be applied to a general resurrection, which would include the wicked also. (Rev. xx.; Luke xx.) It is a resurrection which takes place "*because of His Spirit that dwelleth in you*"—as the margin of Rom. viii. 11 correctly gives; and is therefore the "resurrection of life" in contrast with the 'resurrection of damnation,' or rather, 'judgment.' (John v.) It is a resurrection which takes place at the Lord's coming ('they that are Christ's at His coming') in contrast with that of the wicked, when the earth and heavens flee away. Scripture thus carefully distinguishes as to time, circumstance, and character between the two.

On the other side, what are the arguments by which the popular creed as to a general resurrection is maintained? I shall not be wrong, I believe, in saying that the strength of the argument lies in the

interpretation of three passages, of which one (the gathering of sheep and goats in Matt. xxv.) has nothing to do with resurrection at all, but is the judgment of the *living*, when the Lord appears; the second (John v. 28, 29) is made to apply only by the false interpretation of 'the hour,' which does not mean any narrowly limited time, but in verse 25 takes in the whole present time of gospel grace; while the third (Dan. xii. 2), literally taken, will not apply to a general resurrection * at all, and is really a figure, kindred to several elsewhere, of the national revival of God's people, Israel.

The consistent teaching of Scripture is then, that when "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, the dead in Christ shall rise first," even before the change of the living saints. But that then "we which are alive and remain shall be"—first, "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." † and then—"caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we be ever with the Lord."

Who would not willingly turn aside from the routine of earthly life, and from its daily struggle, to contemplate this which in one moment of ecstasy shall end it all? We are disappointed only, it may be, that Scripture which deals so little in sensation, so much more with the convictions, describes in terms so brief and simple this glorious scene. Imagina-

* "*Many of* them that sleep in the dust of the earth" cannot possibly be made to mean 'all.' To the first resurrection it can apply as little, since in it none will "awake to shame and everlasting contempt."

† It has only just occurred to me: Does not this expression, "the *last* trump," which has perplexed many, as there are certainly trumpets to sound after this, really contrast with the *first* trump, the trump which God sounds first to awaken the dead, as we see in 1 Thess. iv. ?

tion may not supplement this brevity with human thoughts; but meditation may be rightly used to draw from the inspired words, if it were possible, their full depth of meaning. If we did but more fasten our gaze thus upon these wondrous realities as embodied in the very words which with all their brevity, being the Divine words, must best convey them to us, it may be that we should find what we little thought at first, that what was needed to give them to us in power and vividness was not a fuller description, but a heart sufficiently in earnest to lay hold of what is given.

It is our purpose now, avoiding all rashness of speculation, yet to linger a little upon the blessedness of what is here presented to us. Oh for power to scan its every feature, until nothing of what surrounds us here was so familiar to our hearts! What a lever to lift up heavenward these affections that gravitate so earthward, to realize that at any moment, as we are occupied with daily tasks, in the house or on the highway, we may find with more than ecstasy the life eternal with its pulseless tide pervading a body moulded in an instant to its will, henceforth "the image of the heavenly"! In an instant the life behind, no more to be counted life, dropped into a past from which a great gulf, never to be repassed, separates! Christ's, and in His image! Our Beloved ours indeed; we His!

But we must tarry at Resurrection here. What we shall realize then in a moment—and oh, how much more than this!—we must be content, in our slow way of acquiring knowledge now, to get before us bit by bit, searching and weighing and meditating, and all the while—and let us never forget it!—absolutely dependent upon the teaching of Him who alone conveys to us what "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man," yet "the things which God hath prepared for them

that love Him." "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

In two ways is death triumphed over when the Lord comes. By the change of the living it is shown to have no title to assert against the redeemed of the Lord; by resurrection of the dead, that it has no power to retain those over whom its title has seemed to be made good. It is the open manifestation of the truth in the Lord's words to the sorrowing Martha: "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth in Me shall *never* die."

Thus He who has "the keys of death and of hades" displays openly His power over both. Death is cancelled, Hades gives up possession. Redemption is completed, as far as the heavenly people are concerned; taking effect now upon the body as before it did upon the soul.

The *style* in which it is effected has often been remarked. "The Lord Himself shall descend." Why that? Could He not commit it to others? Could He not speak the word from the throne above, and never leave it? Surely in one sense: but how it should stir our poor, slow hearts to see, when the time of His patience is over, how *His* heart comes out in the action here. He must come Himself out of the gate of heaven, as we rush out, forgetting all slow formality, to greet the approach of a dear and intimate and long-absent friend. His voice must greet them first of all; His must be the shout that breaks the slumber of the grave, and brings out its tenants. All is accomplished as in a moment; delay is at an end: and this is the fitting introduction to the end which alone satisfies Him whose time has come to see the fruit of His soul's travail—"so shall we be ever with the Lord."

But let us look at these rising dead; and let us not think it *necessarily* a fool's question, and to be repressed, that which rises involuntarily to our lips, "With what body do they come?" The apostle blames it only as the question of a sceptic, such as we know some of these Corinthians were. But he uses the opportunity to give such an answer as will meet other thoughts than these; and to his answer it cannot be folly to give attention. There are different bodies, he says, and different glories. The grain of wheat you sow dies to give birth to the harvest, and that which you sow you reap, and yet what you sow is not the body that shall be. There is continuity, and in that sense identity; yet there is dissimilarity also between the seed-germ and the plant its product. So with the body: "it is sown, it is raised;" there is continuity and identity as in the figure used; but it is sown in one form, it is raised in another. "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body."

The body is the same, though wherein consists the identity it may be quite impossible to define; nor need we define it. Sceptics have urged a renewal of the whole every seven years or less of life, but we have nevertheless a conviction of its being to all intents and purposes the same. The seed-germ and the plant its product are different as to the amount of substance; yet they too are practically identical: and this is the illustration which the apostle employs, as we have seen. Needless as it may seem in the eyes of some, God cares for the very dust of His saints, and their resurrection is the 'redemption of the body'—a body already claimed by the Holy Ghost as His temple, and to which He will make good His claim: "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, *because of His Spirit that dwelleth in you.*"

Yet while identity is preserved, and that which thou sowest is quickened out of death—the analogy used here by the apostle—in another way, as He also applies this, “thou sowest *not* that body that shall be.” Incorruption, glory, power, replace the opposites of these; and “a spiritual body,” suited to those who are partakers with the ‘heavenly’ Second Man, is the glorious outcome of Divine power working upon the “natural body” in which the saint falls asleep.

This last we must give attention to, for it seems exceedingly little understood, and its misapprehension gives rise sometimes to thoughts misleading further. No doubt we can know but scantily what is implied in ‘a spiritual body;’ yet we may speak positively as to certain things which are *not* implied in it; and more, we can tell with some exactness what the expression, as an expression, means. But for this it is necessary to have in our minds what Scripture teaches us as to man’s present condition, for the phrase is designed to point a contrast between the present and the future one.

‘A spiritual body’ is contrasted with the ‘natural body,’ out of which nevertheless (as the plant out of the seed) it is developed. And this last expression, more exactly given, is rather ‘a *soul* body.’ We have no adjective of ‘soul’ in English, and we can only use the word soul itself as an adjective therefore; meaning by the phrase a ‘body related to the soul,’ as ‘a spiritual body’ really means a ‘body related to the spirit.’

The meaning will be at first only a new perplexity to those who are unacquainted with the distinctive force of soul and spirit, as used in Scripture. But it will be found not a mere curious question, as certainly it is one that admits of clear and decisive answer from the Word. I can only briefly state what Scripture teaches as to this here indeed, but the Word itself, only authoritative, is in all our hands, and

what is stated as fact may thus easily be compared with it.

“Spirit and soul and body,” if we take Scripture, make up the man—not any class of men as such, but men in general. I say this, because some have the thought of ‘spirit’ being the new nature, and of course only proper to the children of God. The mistake is founded on a misconception of John iii. 6. But while “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” in its own nature, it is never called *the* spirit of man. “What man knoweth the things of a man,” asks the apostle, “save the spirit of man which is in him?” (1 Cor. ii. 11.) Thus the apprehension of all that is distinctively human belongs to the spirit; and of course all men have it. The beast has not,* and God is thus called exclusively the “God of the spirits of all flesh,” and the “Father of spirits.” The spirit it is that thus brings man into relationship with and responsibility to God, such as no beast has, nor can have. ‘Mind’ proper is an essential characteristic of it. It is the highest part of his composite being; for “God is a Spirit,” and the angels too are “spirits.”

The beast on the other hand is, and has, a soul. In the margin of Gen. i. 30 you may read as to the lower creatures, “everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is a living soul.” The animal life is one of sense, emotion, instinct, often very wonderful, and in its results sometimes apparently superior to reason itself. But even this shows the difference. If there is no defect, there is no improvement. A bird builds its nest from the first just as it builds its last. The economy of a bee-hive or an ant-hill, with all its marvels of architecture and political combination, never alters in the least. They fill the place God has given them without exhibiting any traces of a fall, of

* The passages urged against this, with an examination of them, and of this subject generally, will be found in the first part of “Facts and Theories as to a Future State.”

an imperfect condition such as man's work so constantly exhibits: incapable of a place with God such as could admit of a fall at all. Yet these are souls—'living souls'—not immortal, of course, nor *human* souls, but not merely perfect organisms either; not merely material machines, or automata. Materialism is as far as possible from getting any countenance from Scripture.

And man's soul, as the link between his spirit and his body, is that which though, as immaterial, connected with the spirit (and like it, immortal, surely), is on the other hand that which animates the body, so much so that the same word is used in Scripture for soul and life. It is looked at as the seat of the senses, as well as the emotions: it loves, it hates, it joys, it sorrows, and it hungers and thirsts also. A brief examination of Scripture will suffice to show how little our current ideas are in accordance as to this with the exact and persistent language of the Word. "Meat to relieve the soul," "to satisfy the soul, when he is hungry," "cold water to the thirsty soul," "the full soul loatheth the honeycomb": these and such like expressions meet us everywhere.

And yet, as connected with the spirit, the soul in man has to do with God, and with the highest emotions of love and adoration. It is the soul that "follows hard after God," with desire and longing. The common kinship and distinction between heart and man, in our ordinary speech, is in fact very much that which in Scripture we find mentioned between soul and spirit. But on the other hand the bodily sensations and appetites which we carefully distinguish from the soul, Scripture ascribes to it in the distinctest way.

And this is the reason why the adjective of soul, wanting in English, is translated twice in our version (Jas. iii, 15, Jude 19) 'sensual,'—a force which our use of the word now never would have given it; and

the 'natural' man, too, is in the same way, the man captivated by his senses,—*soul*, not spirit, led.

We may further see too, and thus approach our text more nearly, why a child of Adam, as that, should be called 'a living *soul*.' It is man's peculiarity, of all spiritual beings that we know, to be a *microcosm*—a being in fact in which all the known elements of the universe find place. The mineral, vegetable, animal kingdoms, all find somewhat that they can claim in him; but what is specially remarkable is that which gives materialism all its apparent force, the *subjection*, in some sense, of that which is spiritual to that which is material.

For what seems most purely mental, when we examine it closely, we find ourselves, in a way at first startling to us, indebted to the senses, and through these to the material universe. Powers and faculties there are in the mind, no doubt, which no laws of matter can at all explain. Matter is but the material, as it were, it uses: but still so necessary that no observation can be carried on (to our knowledge) without it. Our ideas, our language, our whole mental furniture almost, is borrowed from the world in which we are placed, and to which in this sense we are limited.

This then is why Scripture speaks of us as 'living souls.' Our spirits, though higher than the soul, are bound to it, in a manner which characterizes us and distinguishes essentially from purely spiritual beings. Our souls too are bound to the bodies which they permeate and vitalize; and how these drag upon and limit them, and through them the spirit itself, we are too constantly and painfully reminded to need much dwelling upon it.

The 'natural' body is thus a 'soul' body—a body fitted to the soul; and this is what suits one who is characteristically 'a living soul.' The body for the higher capabilities of the spirit is (apart

altogether from the fall) inefficient and unequal. The old creation was but after all a step to another which was in God's mind from the beginning; and in this the 'spiritual body'—the perfect vehicle and servant of the spirit—will take the place of the natural body, the body suited to the man who was (even as the beasts thus far) a living soul.

This then is the meaning of the expression. We may look at it a little further yet in the light of other passages, at another time.

If John at Patmos instead of seeing Christ had been looking at himself and his own conscience, he would not have had faith to get beyond saying, "I am pardoned and accepted through the blood." There he would have stopped; but rays of glory were coming down from *that Person* which made his heart burst forth in further praise. Hope bent forward and carried John beyond Patmos: he looks into the face of the Beloved and says, "There is a priesthood and a kingdom, and I am to be there, He has done it all for me."

If John knew that that blood had washed him, what shall I, one thousand eight hundred years later, say? Who was near to me to tell that that blood had another voice than that of Abel, and that that blood had washed me? Who? it was *Jesus Himself*. And there is not one of you who once writhed under the burden of sin who does not know that it was Jesus who washed you. And why? Because God delights in mercy. Why? Because God is love.

G.V.W.

“BAPTISM UNTO DEATH.”

There are two very distinct parts in the testimony which God has been giving to man. His testimony of grace, the sweet and suited witness given in His beloved Son, could not be given without long testimony of another kind, preparatory to it. Though in His heart from the beginning, as His gospel surely was,—“promised” even, “by the prophets” of the old dispensation,—it was long before His heart could freely utter it. That glory of God, which was His “goodness,” a veil covered, through which few rays could pierce. He dwelt in the thick darkness. His face was hidden: none could look on it and live. Weary years went by, in which Job’s question, “How shall man be just with God?” was still a question. Prophets even, who “*prophesied* of the grace that should come,” enquired diligently as to the coming salvation, “searching *what* . . . the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify,” and yet got but this answer that “*not* unto *themselves* they did minister.” (1 Pet. iv. 11, 12). Of how grave import must that have been in the eye of God, on account of which He could so long suspend the utterance of that which He could freely give up the Son of His love that He might utter—His own “glad tidings!”

Yes, there was a needs be,—a “due time” for the world’s salvation to be proclaimed. There was a “wisdom of God,” in which, “*after* that the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” (1 Cor. i. 21). The world was to be proved bankrupt in wisdom before God’s wisdom could be declared.

And in the same way men had to be shewn, after long ages of patient dealing with them, "*yet without strength*" and "*ungodly,*" before the "*due time*" could arrive for Christ to die." (Rom. v. 6).

To bankrupt and beggared man, *two* things were to be preached together in His name whom men with wicked hands had crucified,—"*REPENTANCE and remission of sins.*" (Luke xxiv. 47).

On man's part, as what God still claimed from him, lost and ruined as he was, yea, *because that—repentance.*

On His own, freely bestowed, but yet *annexed* to that repentance which He claimed from man—"*remission of sins.*"

Both, and both together, "*in His name.*"

Thus, the gospel goes forth in the end of the ages of preparatory dealing with men, bearing upon its face the *moral* of those ages not in vain gone by, and joining to it its own peculiar "*good tidings of great joy.*" The wisdom of God does not set aside, but confirms and combines with it the wisdom of the past, divine also, and now in its maturity manifested so; wisdom that waited for the "*due time*" to come, and wisdom that acted in the "*due time*" come—one and the same all through.

"*Repentance,*" the moral and issue of the past.

"*Remission of sins,*" the revelation of the present.

Both bound together by the zone of that divine "*love, which is the bond of perfectness,*" and which the gospel manifests.

At the dividing line between the past and the present, the cross stands. The full end of man's history is reached there. Bankrupt in goodness, desperate in evil, hopeless as regards further trial, must he indeed be, who has put to death with mockery, the Lord of glory. Yet you and I have done it, reader. Yes, though our *hands* never did it, and the lapse of eighteen centuries lies between, not thus can we escape the solemn charge. Our *hearts* are accomplices to the

awful deed. The world at one time is the world at any other. Man is *man*: there is no "second man" outside of the One crucified by man.

And this gives its true character to the gospel, for it is evident that a "good news" for a lost and ruined creature must be equal to his need. And if the trial of man be over, and his sentence gone forth from God, as indeed it is, no doing better will meet his case. He who believes not in Jesus is "condemned already." Yes, "all the world is guilty before (or subject to the judgment of) God." (Rom. iii. 19, *margin.*) To call upon those in such a condition to do better, would be to ignore the judgment already pronounced. Hence the "repentance" to which man is solemnly called, can be by no means reformation. To that men were exhorted long before. Long before had the wicked man been exhorted to forsake his ways, to turn from his wickedness and do that which is lawful and right, and save his soul alive. It was all over now. The "Son of Man" had been "lifted up from the earth," and the "judgment of the world" was come. (John xii. 31, 32.)

But what, then, was this repentance? It had already been shewn forth in word and deed. Before the cross,—before the formal presentation even to men of the One whom men rejected,—as the needed preparation even for His presentation, the voice of the preacher of repentance had been heard. From the wilderness of Judea it had reached to the Great Sea westward, and northward filled the valley of the Jordan as far as Galilee of the Gentiles. It had been heard in the streets of Jerusalem, and heard as no unmeaning thing. For the "word of God came unto John the Son of Zacharias in the wilderness; and he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." "And there went out to him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins."

This was the call, and thus was it responded to. But before we look at this more closely, let us look at the preacher, and the people to whom He does His errand.

As to the people, they were the little remnant that had come out of the Babylonish captivity. Once the people of God. they had already been solemnly, for their sins, disowned as His. He had named them by Hosea "Lo-Ammi," not my people;" and that sentence had never been recalled. Doubtless the mercy of God yet lingered over them, and a little remnant had been suffered to return, build again a temple to which no visible glory was any more vouchsafed, and feebly imitate the form of worship in better and bygone days. The real reason for all this was what was clung to as a hope still by many, Messiah was to come, the Lord whom they sought, suddenly to that temple, the latter glory of that house was to be greater than the former, and in that place the Lord of Hosts had promised He would give peace. (Mal iii. 1; Hag. ii. 9).

Still they had forfeited all, and upon what ground could he who came as a messenger before the Lord, to prepare His way, come among them? Must not righteousness go before peace? Must He not call them to recognize what and where they were—to own the ruin from which no hand but Jehovah's would suffice to pluck them? Was it not fitting and needful that the deliverance should be owned for what it was? All this finds its answer in the Baptist and his message.

He had grown up in the wilderness as one outside them all. In raiment and in food he would owe them nothing; the one was of camel's hair; his meat locusts and wild honey. He stood apart from the cities, preaching in the wilderness which for thirty years had hidden him; as if the Lord had said to him, as to another Jeremiah, "Let them return

unto thee, but return not thou unto them." His preaching was of repentance, and his baptism was the baptism of repentance; and they who came out to him were all baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

That it was in "Jordan" he baptized, gave it deeper meaning. To us, at least, there is nothing obscure in the significance of that river which meets us so often in the chequered history of that people of Israel, so many of the events of which, we are assured by the apostle (1 Cor. x.) "happened unto them for *types*." (Verse 6, *marg.*) We sing in hymns familiar to us all of that river of death with its "green fields beyond the swelling flood," the land of our possession and our rest. That river of Jordan, Israel in their youth had crossed, the flood dividing under an almighty hand, to give them passage. Now to that stream the same almighty hand was leading them back, no more to divide as once its waters, but to baptize them as sinners in the river of death, to death. Yes, the "wages of sin is death." All was over really. Judgment was just ready to be pronounced, and the call was to anticipate that judgment by one self-pronounced, and cast themselves upon a mercy which might even yet suffice, but which *alone* could.

"They were all baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." Their *sins* were their title to his baptism,—title sure, simple, unchallengeable. Those who had so well earned their "wages" might put in their claim without presumption.

That baptism "unto death" was also "the baptism of *repentance*." So it is expressly stated; and if we need still ask therefore what the repentance is, to which God is calling lost and ruined men, the question finds its plain and ready answer by these banks of Jordan. The repentance God requires of sinners is to own simply what they are, and what the wages

they have so justly earned, to take one's place with the "mouth stopped" as only "guilty before God." It is for this purpose the law has spoken, (Rom. iii. 19), which speaking of life to the keepers of it, is "found to be unto death," (Rom. vii, 10,) because *none have* kept it, so that "as many as are *of* the works of the law"—upon that ground—are "under the curse." (Gal. iii. 10).

Thus as "by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. iii. 20.) the "moral and issue" of it is the confession of sin. If as many as are of it are under the curse, the due place to which it brings is to the place of the curse—the mouth stopped, as guilty before God;—the place of ruin and death which Jordan figures. If the taking of that place in death were the baptism of repentance, then we can understand the fitness and force of what is written of these self-judged sinners: "they were all baptized of him in Jordan, *confessing their sins.*"

How vain and unsuited to that solemn place was a mouth filled with promises of amendment? easy drafts upon a bank at which they had no credit,—promises for a future which was not in their hands,—promises to do what neither had they ever done, nor any man anywhere, for "*all the world*" was thus "guilty before God." Reader, look back over your past, that sad, sad past, and tell me, Can you trust yourself for the future? Ah! if you are speaking thus to God, you have not come down to Jordan, you are not one of John's disciples yet, and much less Christ's! You are not come down yet to death. *Death* is the end of self, but you are parading self before the Searcher of the hearts of men, who is searching yours,—telling Him what you will do and be. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." "Either make the *tree* good, and his fruit good; or else make the *tree* corrupt, and his fruit corrupt." *Is* the "*tree* good," my reader? Are you going to make it so?

"You must be *born again*." And how? "Not of blood, nor of the *will of the flesh*, nor of the WILL OF MAN, but of GOD." (Jno. i. 13.)

Do you ask, "what can we do then?" *Nothing* as to salvation; *nothing* as to good work. But if you are a sinner, own it; it is written, "If we *confess our sins*, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Take the place of confessed guilt and need. The God who gave His Son up for us all has pledged Himself to put away the guilt and to meet the need,—to *do* the things you never could. He has commanded repentance and remission of sins to be linked together, and preached together in His name. He has bid you confess alone your *sins*, and He will forgive them, tells you He is "faithful" to do it. And not only so, but to make the *tree* good—"to cleanse you from all unrighteousness."

Do you ask, how? Who was it that came from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of Him, and whom John was for forbidding, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee." Do you remember His reply? "Suffer it," He says, "to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." And he suffered Him.

Do you know how "righteousness" was fulfilled by Him?

Was it simply by His subjection to an ordinance designed for sinners?

Was *He* one?

Was it then designed for Him? or was it on His own account He could stoop to it, and do it "to fulfil righteousness?"

Surely we must look below the surface if we would understand this, and yet the meaning is not far to seek.

Sin had brought Israel to that place of death, that sin in which each individual there baptized confessed

his part. But was there not a "baptism" also to which sin brought Jesus, the sin which in grace He took upon Himself? And if *sin* brought Him down to death, because laid on Him, did not righteousness lead Him down to death as One upon whom it was so laid?

He died then to fulfil righteousness,—righteousness that called for the death of the sinner. But the question is, In what way does His baptism here bear upon that death? Or how are His words here, as to fulfilling righteousness, connected with the fulfilment of righteousness in His death?

Very simply, in this way; that, insomuch as the baptism of John was on the people's part the confession of sin and that which was its due, so the Lord's baptism was His own solemn seal put upon that confession in both its parts. But for Him who having no personal need stooped to that figure of death,—how distinctly that other baptism of which He afterwards spoke rose up before Him! He was indeed to put His seal upon these sinners' confession of their guilt and of the death which was its due by stooping once more, not to the figure but to the dread reality what it was indeed! How much it cost Him to bear this witness to man's condition before a holy God! "thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness!" Yea, and He did, when He could only do it at the cost of bearing the sins whose due He witnessed to, in the death of the cross.

How fitly the heavens opened then, and, while the anointing Spirit came down upon Him, the Father's voice gave its attestation of delight! "Therefore," said He at another time, and His words seem like His own comment upon the scene—"therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again."

But what shall we say to all this? Can self-righteousness live in presence of the Cross of the Son.

of God? Was it not my due solemnly borne witness to in the very blood shed to meet it? God Himself could save me at no less a cost. Himself could do nothing but condemn *me*, even when His Son stood in my place! How it humbles, but how it blesses me. Is it presumption to claim that cross He took,—*Barabbas' cross*—as mine? He in His wondrous grace is on it, true; but it is mine. I can see He has come down even to *me*—yes, even to the sinner's place, for me the sinner. I *stoop*—if it *be* stooping, to claim my due of death; but I stoop to death to find Jesus there for me—and mine.

What a delight for the sinners who had come to Jordan's banks, to find if sin had brought them there, it had brought Him there, too, no less. Their baptism of repentance was indeed "for the remission of sins," for it had brought together *Him* and *them*—the sinner and the Saviour. And for us also, how does the Apostle present in the same figure of baptism, the same precious truth? "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ were baptized unto His *death*?" No less, mark, it is baptism unto death, but *His* death. Have we not been down to Jordan too? he asks. But then for us, Jordan is indeed divided. The only death *we* know is "His death." *He* has known it, been in it, passed through it, left for us a path to go over dry-shod to that resurrection-shore, where in living Presence He awaits us. Do you know that path, reader? *Through* death, owning it yours, yet never touched by it? Do you see yet how "repentance and remission of sins" are linked as to be preached together in His name? Can you understand how it is that "if we confess our *sins*,"—not our being better than others, nor our good resolves—God "is *faithful* and just to forgive us our sins?" "Faithful" because Jesus died for *sinners*, and your confession of your sins in view of that is putting in your sure, your simple, your unquestionable title to all the value of His death?

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

(23) What proof is there that the fourth empire of Dan. ii. and vii. is the Roman?

(*Ans.*) It was the only universal empire that succeeded the Grecian. Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, you have in Daniel already named; and in Luke find Augustus Cæsar commanding 'all the world' to be taxed. It was strong as iron, crushing to atoms the kingdoms it absorbed, and allowing none to exist as individual organizations; yet its strength broke up by degrees, and the various nationalities refused to mingle. The fourth beast appears again moreover in Revelation, supporting a woman who is plainly identified with ecclesiastical Rome, while the present non-existent state of the empire is foretold, with its yet future revival, and its destruction at the coming of the Lord, enabling us to account for the present condition of things, and carry on its history to the end predicted by Daniel and the Apocalypse alike.

(24) What is the application of the house built for the ephah in the land of Shinar; can it be a prophecy of the rebuilding of Babylon, and *that* be the city destroyed in Rev. xviii?

(*Ans.*) The last answer, as to the four empires, shows that not Babylon but Rome is the last empire. There are but four, and no hint in Daniel certainly of the restoration of the first. As to Rev. xviii., the Babylon there is of course that of the 17th, and no possible amount of torturing can make that anything but Rome. I need scarcely specify the points which show this decisively. As to Zech. v., it is sin in Israel that is there dealt with, and the last part of the chapter must not be divorced from the first. In the first the curse upon sin in its double character as against God and man (specified as stealing and swearing) consumes the houses of the sinners; in the last

part sin is sent to where it belongs, the land of Shinar, not of Israel: there its house is built upon its proper base, to meet the judgment known as threatened to all that land. No revival of Babylon can be at all argued from this, which is a pure symbol of the dealing with sin by judgment and casting it out of the land which it had polluted, that the blessing of the previous chapters may abide there.

(25) Will you explain 1 Cor. xi. 33. It seems to teach that believers are saved from condemnation with the world, *not* because they have been judged on the cross, but because of the judgment which they receive from themselves (v. 31) or from God, between the cross and their manifestation.

(*Ans.*) Both are true thoughts and perfectly reconcilable with each other. They belong respectively to the spheres of the grace and of the government of God, which we have to distinguish all through Scripture. The Lord put away David's sin, yet the sword followed him through his life for it. "What a man soweth that shall he also reap" is still a necessity of holy dealing which the cross has not set aside, but made consistent with the fullest grace. The sin and trespass offerings shew these different characters: in the one sin is judged purely as before God, according to the necessities of His nature, and grace without requirement is the out-flow of it; in the other, though grace and the offering are kept in view, restitution has to be made according to the Divine estimate of it. God could not justify His government in the condemnation of the world, if He let the sins of His people go without rebuke, a rebuke which grace turns to their fullest blessing. How David learned his own sin, when sinned against in like manner! The end with His people is to bring them to the same mind about sin as Himself; we are chastened, "that we may be partakers of His holiness," if then we judge ourselves, this judgment of the Lord's will be avoided.

NEARING.

The day of grace is passing,
Fast draws the judgment nigh ;
The world deceived is sleeping,
Nor hears the midnight cry.

Yet shadows fast are growing,
Of a bleaker, darker night,
When God, no more beseeching,
Withdraws His heavenly light.

Oh man, how great the darkness,
That now hath closed thine eyes,
Who welcomes not the kindness,
That God still testifies.

What end can there await thee
But banishment and dread,
In a bleak and drear eternity,
With the lost and with the dead ?

And where are the saints contending
For the faith given them to keep ?
The enemy's smooth deceiving
Is lulling *them* to sleep.

Where love should be, contention,
And worldly strife, and gain,
Have wrought their wide dispersion,
And filled true hearts with pain.

Yet a little flock is waiting,
To see His welcome face,
When in an eye's brief twinkling,
They are found in that wondrous place.

If the world in its evil ripens,
And the pathway narrower grows,
Let us follow the One that beckons,
Content that the way HE knows.

R. T. G.

THE FIRST RESURRECTION AND THE BODY THAT SHALL BE.

II.

The meaning of the expression, "a spiritual body," being ascertained, we are freed from many wrong conjectures as to it. We find that it is not in contrast with a *material* body, but that material it still is assuredly, as the outcome, though by Divine power, of what is 'sown' in the dust. But it is a body fitted now, as never before, to be the servant of the spirit, not confining it to slow acquisitions of knowledge by sense-perception of material things, nor saddling it with the infirmities of a frame constantly exhausting itself and in need of recreation and repair, but able to accompany it in the ceaseless activities of a scene where no night is, or is needed.

It is with reference to this state, we see at once, that the apostle says of 'knowledge,' that "it shall vanish away," or rather "be made void" (1 Cor. xiii. 8). The next verse gives us the reason, "for we know in part, . . . but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away," or "made void." It is of the slow, toilsome and imperfect processes of acquiring knowledge (of 'knowing') that he is speaking, and which will necessarily be made void, when the spirit is no longer confined to the attainment of the spiritual by means of groping (for the most part) amid material things. The things known will still remain known; but the *knowing* of things, in the partial way now necessitated, will be done away, in the perfect apprehension of spiritual knowledge.

It is with express reference to the spiritual body that the apostle further tells us that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (1 Cor. xv. 50).

These words have again been misunderstood by many who have upon their warrant denied the resurrection of the *flesh*. Yet Job's confident expectation of resurrection was expressed in these terms: "in my *flesh* shall I see God." The Psalmist also, prophetically speaking of One greater, says: "My *flesh* also shall rest in hope." And He of whom this was spoken, when risen from the dead, affirms that still He had flesh and bones: "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have."

Surely this language is decisive. Nor does it in the least conflict with the apostle's words in Corinthians just quoted. For he does not speak of flesh simply, but of flesh *and blood*, a not infrequent term for man as at present constituted. The Lord as risen does not speak any more of 'blood;' and a very little consideration will enable us to realize the force and appropriateness of this distinction. *Blood* is the vehicle of that waste and repair which our present constitution necessitates. The worn-out particles of the body are taken up by it, to be removed from it by the proper organs; while the fresh supply of material is poured into it, to be carried with the circulation to every needy part. In a body no longer dependent upon supply, because no longer subject to waste, blood would naturally have no longer place: and thus the Scripture language finds its explanation.

The 'spiritual body' is thus not merely in contrast with that on which is imprinted the stamp of mortality and corruption. It is a body in contrast also with Adam's, when he came fresh with vigour and beauty from under the creating hand of God. Even then, Adam was "of earth, earthy;" in resurrection we put on "the image of the heavenly," and are

conformed to our head, the "second man" who is "of heaven."* Our resurrection-body is therefore also, "our house which is of heaven"—heavenly in mould or pattern. It is no restoration of the old creation passed away: it is a new creation, of which the body is now the subject, as the soul and spirit were before.

Yet it is still material. In it matter is redeemed from the reproach under which it has so long lain, is taken up and glorified. By it we are still in connection with a material universe, which Scripture gives no hint of ever passing away. Our link with this is not broken when we are introduced into the heavenly sphere. It is purified, re-adjusted, refined, but never broken. What fields of service in which love—weeping no more—shall bear her precious seed, and fill her hands with golden sheaves of harvest does this imply! Surely, as the "prepared" body, which the Lord retains for ever, is as the 'digged ears' † of the 'Hebrew servant,' the pledge of service too highly prized to be ever given up; so the body for us prepared, and like His

* *Ex ouranou* in opposition to *ek ges*, "of earth;" just the same expression as is used in the second epistle (v. 4) of this resurrection body, "our house which is of [not 'from'] heaven." The expression is not an easy one to render exactly into English, but the contrast with "of earth" helps to its apprehension. It does not mean either that the Lord's body or ours comes from heaven: that would be *ap' ouranou*, and false doctrine plainly. We may say perhaps, "of a heavenly type," or "mould."

The editors generally omit "the Lord" in 1 Cor. xv. 47, and, I cannot doubt, correctly.

† It will be known, I trust, to a large part of my readers, that "mine ears hast Thou opened" (*marg.* 'digged') of Psalm xl. 6, and which refers to Exod. xxi. 6, the sign of voluntarily chosen perpetual service, is translated in the Greek version of the Septuagint: "a body hast Thou prepared me," and this the apostle adopts in his rendering of the Psalm in Heb. x. 5. It is a remarkable instance of how God in His providence has watched over His word, that what might seem but an eccentricity of translation could thus be made to develop fresh beauties, and to bring out the meaning further of the inspired text.

own, must have a similar meaning as to us. Thus, as man's body as first created was a prophecy of the place he was to fill in the earth to which he belonged; his resurrection-body is a prophecy of the new place and wider relationships he is henceforth to fill with regard to the new creation of which the last Adam is Head. This place we shall have to look at, as Scripture develops it (the Lord willing), at another time.

But thus, while the materialist or the hyper-spiritualist may scoff at the idea, "the spirits of just men,"—happy as they may be, and are, "with Christ," while "absent from the body,"—are really "perfected" only by resurrection. This body is no more the 'tent' or 'tabernacle' of the man: it is the "*house*," the "building of God," prepared for eternity. It is the 'clothing' of the spirit, else 'naked'—stripped of its possessions in that material universe, which as God's creation, we may not and cannot contemn, and which will yet be to its furthest limits vocal with God's praise. In this temple we are to be His kings and priests for ever: the material henceforth no longer a drag upon the spiritual, but its complement and helpmeet.

We have to judge our whole course down here in the light of His coming. To all I would say, are you in life and ways like people who wait for their Lord? Like the Thessalonians, occupied with that thing, can we honestly say, "If thou, Lord Jesus, hast thine heart set on coming to gather thy children home, *the sooner the better for us.*"

The Jerusalem sinners had it brought home to them by the Holy Ghost sent down, that if they had indeed been the aggressors, there was the aggressiveness of love up there, and that through that blood which their hands had shed, there was alone forgiveness of sins.

G. V. W.

FAILURE AND CONFESSION.

One meets with two opposite sources of failure in many places to-day, against which it is needful to watch. On every point the enemy assails God's people, too often, alas! successfully; the circumstances and condition of the church, now in the closing moments of its history as the vessel of God's testimony on earth, afford him many an occasion to get saints to deny important truth.

There is a common abuse of a passage of Scripture which is very sad, and arises often from a misunderstanding of the passage; but *this* is not the fruitful cause of the evil of which I speak, so much as the state of soul which seeks to find in it a way of escape from simple, honest dealing with God.

How often do we meet with, in one who has sinned, and whose present state affords no evidence of restoration, "I have confessed my sin, and it is forgiven." Now, it is quite true that God has said, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," &c. But is this the use to which the passage is to be put? In other words, does the Spirit of God furnish us in this passage (1 John i. 9) with the way of restoration from failure, or is it something else? The context clearly shows. Verses six and seven define two positions, the darkness and the light; false profession put to the test in verse six, and the privileges of one who has the truth in the seventh. Next follow three verses which look at the condition of peoples' souls, which answer to the two positions. In v. 8 we have the self-justification of the natural man, ignorant of God and of himself, which answers to the darkness of v. 6. In v. 9 we

have the self-condemnation of one who has come into the light, and stands there a confessed sinner, and whom God forgives and cleanses; this answers to v. 7. In v. 10 the apostle, as his manner is, returns to his first proposition in v. 8, only intensifying his statement. It is thus a most precious statement of the *gospel* in v. 9, and not the way of restoration from failure. Used in the latter way it often leads to a weakening of the sense of sin, and deadening in consequence the conscience, as well as, with some, obscuring the sense of Divine forgiveness, which is as eternal as the work it is based upon.

Some will say, There you deny the need of confession. The answer is simply this, that confession, as it is the beginning, in a sense, of Christian life, so it is the *principle of it all through*, and confession both to God and man, if not maintained where needed, will entail immense loss upon the soul. This passage, however, does not speak of what is termed governmental forgiveness, but of forgiveness of sin before God in view of eternity, and the consequences of our guilty condition by nature. Using it in another way for failure and restoration, has often left many satisfied with a confession they have made, but rather as a Romanist would be satisfied with priestly remissions, while there has been no restoration to God, or discovery of the roots which led to the sin.

I need scarcely say, 1 John ii. 1 2 gives the Divine way of restoration. The One who gave Himself for us upon the cross, is He who restores our souls to lost communion, as He stooped to wash the soiled feet of His disciples; and we are dependent upon Him for this grace as for salvation at the first. Of His readiness to do it these passages assure us; and if I am seeking to regain lost ground through turning to God and His word, and not beginning to mend and repair myself the damage sin has done, I shall soon learn the grace of His heart, and get my

eyes turned to the righteous Advocate, and from my poor, worthless self, with an enhanced sense of the perfection of the work which has atoned for my sins, and but for which eternal ruin must have resulted from my failure. But that propitiation abides, in its eternal efficacy, the work of the Righteous One, and that is why I am still "meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light." With how many, alas! confession of sin as believers for forgiveness, without any real self-adjustment, has led to the smearing over of the conscience in a very sad way—when intercourse with God, who is light, has not been restored, if ever reached indeed before.

Another point is where those who have failed, with honest conscience and self-adjustment have never reached the full sense of Divine forgiveness. With some Christianity has grown to be a good deal tinged with human thoughts, and this element has weakened Divine statements, which yet are by no means denied. There is a good deal of attempted maintenance of human righteousness, which, whilst it is very well in its way, yet is of no account with God, simply because it is human, and not the development of divine life. The Christ God has given to be life in us, is what He is aiming to bring out. Religious, moralized human nature, of which there is plenty, will not take the place of this for Him, though we may try to please ourselves with it. But many have never broken with the first man, not merely in their neighbours, which is in appearance easier, but in themselves. Hence they are aiming at maintaining their characters, Christian it may be; and the flaws that reveal themselves from time to time they would save themselves from the humiliation of, and put a patch upon, instead of learning by them, what indeed the cross alone truly teaches, to pass the sentence of death upon all that is of the old man. What comes out to humble self is evaded, and there is nothing

the flesh so hates as being exposed and put down. How little, alas! to-day of, "yea, doubtless I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." If a thing is loss, nothing is more sure than that I shall put it away, and religious self and reputation to keep is the worst loss of all.

But failures in Christians are apt to hang as a blank over them a long time. No doubt the fruits of failure, if very marked or extreme, would abide in some measure, as giving an increased sense of humiliation. Its consequences in the government of God may often be most painfully felt. Even Paul carried with him the sense of his sin as a persecutor, before the Lord met him, right through his blessed and faithful ministry. But he was not meet to be called an apostle, because he persecuted the church of God. The memory of the past abides, for his humiliation, but *not* as a *cloud between* him and God. The sword never departed from David's house; yet the discipline of God gave him the broken spirit which made his closing days fruitful in the spirit of grace. Judging by their ways, there are not wanting those to-day who would be reproaching Peter for the rest of his life for his denial of the Lord, if one may judge by their occupation with the failures of God's people. It only betrays, however, how little sense they have of grace, and what Divine forgiveness and restoration are, and that, self-righteous, they are ministering to their own good opinion of themselves at the expense of others. I am not speaking of those whose path seems habitually worldly and perverse, but of those who, with a generally upright, godly walk, and purpose to live godly, have yet failed, and brought reproach upon the Lord. If there is an honest judgment of self before Him, a passing sentence upon self and all its acts in the light, should there be doubt as to full and perfect forgiveness, and because it is a believer's failure, should there be a

morbid, self-occupation resulting? "I have sinned against the Lord," was met by the prompt reply, "The Lord hath put away thy sin." God never withholds forgiveness from a self-judged soul, who takes that place before Him. But how easy, with the sense of failure, to get away from the thought of grace, and down into a morbid, self-occupation as hurtful as it is distressing! I do not mean of course those who can easily confess when convicted, and as easily return to the same or similar sins, and who, though they have had, it may be, much sorrow over the exposure of their ways, yet never have been honestly before God about the thing. It is this that marks Divine dealing with our souls, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned;" and where that is found truthfully, it is surely limiting most seriously the work of Christ, and most dishonouring to the fulness of God's grace, not to return to the sense of full and perfect forgiveness. How He needs to repeat again the lessons taught in the beginning of His ways with us, so slow are we to learn; and how easily we let the workings of our minds and hearts hide from us the blessed statements of His precious word! For surely there it is He speaks with us, and there we have to go as sinners, or as failing saints, to get the answer to our difficulties, instead of undertaking the hopeless task of seeking to work them out in our experience.

Few Christians, it is feared, are fully reconciled to God, but keep up a suspicion of His love, which is an unjudged root of Satan's lie of old. How little can it please Him who has spent His Son upon us, as it were, and that when we were yet without strength and ungodly! May we learn to rise in the sense of His grace above our own poor and narrow conceptions of it all! Surely it needs little discernment to see that to have any just thought of Him and His ways, we must learn of Himself alone, and not take counsel of our own hearts.

R. T. G.

RAHAB.

A GOSPEL ADDRESS.

(Joshua chap. ii. and vi.)

I need hardly say, beloved friends, that we have here a beautiful picture of a sinner saved by grace. Jericho is a type of the world. We know that the things that happened into Israel, as the Apostle tells us, "happened unto them for types, and are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world have come." Jericho is a sufficiently simple type of the world under doom from God. Doom which is continually threatened by His Word, which will come assuredly from Him, but which comes only after a day of grace, and a long announcement of judgment, which on the one hand God uses to alarm souls and wake them up to fly for safety to the hope set before them; and on the other hand which because it goes on for a long time, men harden themselves against, to worse destruction.

Jericho is a striking type of the world under the curse, as we see here, devoted by God to utter destruction, as we know the world is, seated, however fair its surroundings, by the "river of death," Jordan, very near to the Salt Sea, the sea of judgment, into which it flows. The word Jericho means "Sweet Savour," in striking contrast with what it was to the Lord Himself. The whole land really stank before God. And this City of Jericho is especially branded with His special curse.

But that name, which they of course themselves had given it, only shows how differently men estimate the world from the way God estimates it. How highly esteemed among men is that which is an abomination in the sight of God. Our natural thoughts are totally opposed to God's thoughts.

Most surely, if we look around upon the world about us, we shall find everywhere the tokens of God's goodness. His mercy makes the "sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends His rain on the just and the unjust." That is quite true. And if people call the world fair and beautiful, we can allow fully that the evidences of His goodness who created it, are not effaced even by the fall, and that assuredly His mercy lingers over it. But if we look at it in its moral character what is it? "All that is of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father." There is not a good that has not been abused to evil, not a pleasant note which has not been perverted into discord.

There may be, of course, and are, plenty of natural resources: of things which show us that God had given us a goodly portion naturally. This we believe: and people are finding out these resources and getting the mastery of them more and more: all that is permitted to man; but there is nothing for God or for one who sees with God, to rejoice in all that. Do you think there is joy in heaven when people invent railways or telegraphs? Can you possibly suppose that anything of the kind can give joy really up there? You know it does not hinder the display of the greatest wickedness. You know that on the contrary people are turning this into ruinous self-confidence; are arguing that, having done so much, they can do more. They have mastered so many difficulties, they will master their whole condition, if you only give them time.

Yet they die! None the less rapidly does the

river of death flow down to the lake of judgment. Nothing that men have done or can do has contributed in one iota to remove the stamp of God's wrath, or the sin, which is, alas! everywhere; and if His judgment tarries, it is not hindered by the marvellous growths of human intellect, but by His long-suffering, and because that long-suffering is for salvation.

"Jordan overfloweth all its banks all the time of harvest," and that was the time when judgment was, in the Israelitish army, advancing towards the city. The time of judgment was the time of harvest, the very time the citizens were going out to reap their fields, and bring in the products of their labour. Has not that got a voice? Does it not speak? Man thinks God is waiting for his harvest, and it may be, in one sense, He is. Waiting, on the one hand, in mercy—waiting until the last limit of it has been reached; on the other, waiting until sin too has reached its ripe maturity. And then? Why, as they of Jericho never treasured up the produce of their fields, but the swift executioners of God's wrath were the reapers, so when the world's harvest comes, God, and not man, will put in the sickle.

Alas, because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the hearts of the sons of men is thoroughly set in them to do evil. How long a respite Jericho had. You know, long before, the iniquity of the Amorites had approached the full. Forty years before this God had cleft the waters of the Red Sea, and brought His people through; and their journey through the wilderness was one constant miraculous display of Divine power. They had only a little while before seen the destruction of those kings of the Amorites, Sihon and Og. They might have known, their hearts were witness, *who* it was that was really coming with those Israelites. It was not their own power which was so terrible,

that was plain ; but there was One coming with them who had power to dry up seas, and make mountains fell down at His presence.

What was all this but a warning of judgment, which would be gladly stopped by man's repentance ? And so it ever is ; so it is now. Why give such wide and public assurance that He is going to execute judgment, but for them to take the sentence home to themselves, and so to prevent the need of actual execution ? He speaks it aloud ; He utters it in men's ears, in order that they may turn to Him. Never a soul turned to Him, with a sense of coming judgment, that did not find from Him mercy, the freest and the fullest possible. We find a striking instance of this in the case of Rahab here. She certainly had a history with nothing to recommend her in it. Certainly in all Jericho there was none who might seem to have less claim to mercy than she : a sinner amongst sinners she plainly was. Yet the one thing distinguishing her from the rest was, that while, with the rest, that delay of judgment only hardened their hearts, she kept it in her heart and sought escape from it.

There is nothing in that that could make anything of her indeed ; nothing morally great or meritorious in the desire to have salvation ; but yet very great indeed was the result. Just as with the prodigal son, away in a far off land, there was nothing particularly to recommend him in the fact that starving and destitute his hunger forced him to think of the bread in his father's house. Yet in result it set his feet upon the way back to his father. It is nothing to recommend us, when, by need and famine we are forced to turn to God. No ! yet blessed be His name ! we do not need recommendation. That is what we have here. One soul hears in the voice of judgment an invitation, so to speak, to escape from judgment, and that one soul is saved by

faith. The visit of the spies to the city was made the occasion in God's hands of her getting the thing she was seeking. She was part and parcel of the city, shut up in it, with no escape; and except those spies had found their way into the city, there was, humanly speaking, no way of escape for her; God sought and found her there,—He, and He alone. There was no way of escape, God made a way of escape: it was in His hand alone to do,—He did it! He never fails to hear the first breathing of a soul after Him. Though Rahab might have thought herself outside all interest to the God of Israel, and if she prayed, that He scarce would hear her prayer, yet He had. We make a great mistake if we think the first sighings of a soul in its distress are not heard. He Himself is in them; and He cannot fail to respond to the cry which He has aroused, and so here, Rahab, who had nothing else to distinguish her, pronounces judgment upon herself beforehand, and escapes in the mercy of the One coming near to judge. The two spies come to her house, and are the means, so to speak, of dividing between the living and the dead. It is not exactly a message of mercy. The spies are sent to search out the land; but nevertheless, they are made the means of distinguishing between the city and those appointed to salvation out of it.

Instead of the king and citizens of Jericho availing themselves of any hope of escape from the judgment so near, they only conspired against the men who came. All their thought was to rid themselves of them, and to stop the voice which might have been raised, as in Rahab's case, in their behalf. And, beloved friends, how many are doing this very thing? How many rise up against the message of judgment, as if to stop that would be to stop the judgment itself. The judgment comes none the less surely, if it comes silently and unannounced. Yet

how many stifle the voice of conscience, and then suppose that judgment is cancelled too! But that is plainly as false as can be. Conscience is not the arbiter in any wise. Conscience can be bribed, and falsified, and hardened almost to any extent. It is God's word alone that gives true witness, whether to His wrath or to His grace. Jericho might be walled up to heaven, and with store sufficient to defy starvation, and her citizens might build impregnable arguments upon these. It availed nothing that Israel had no battering rams for the siege, when at God's word these walls fell to the ground. And whatever our hearts may say, though we may be as comfortable as possible in unbelief, it does not make the wheels of judgment linger for a moment. Already do we not see it on every side taking effect? If the world were ought else but a condemned cell, how should each tick of the clock be the summons of a soul to meet its God? Why must we die? It is God's original sentence because of sin. Ought we not to hear that voice? Does it not appeal to us solemnly on every side, in the stilled and silent voices of our nearest and dearest? People may call it natural; but we do not feel that it is natural. Our hearts bear contrary witness to our words. We feel that if God break the staff of our lives, it is to prostrate us at His feet with whom mercy yet rejoices against judgment, who can make judgment itself the handmaid of mercy.

A free gospel can be published freely in a world like this to everybody without exception and without mistake, because we can be sure that without exception all are sinners. Rahab had no such gospel indeed, but faith in her, with an instinct that belongs to it, laid hold upon God for mercy. The spies,—enemies of her people, nature said, were for her identified with the God she sought. She shelters them at her own risk, sends them forth in peace, and commits to them the matter of her deliverance from

the doom approaching. She finds them ready to pledge themselves in her behalf, and to give her a token in assurance of mercy. "Our life for yours," they say to her, "we will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us to swear. Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by; and thou shalt bring thy father and thy mother and thy brethren, and all thy father's household home unto thee. And it shall be that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless; and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be upon our head, if any hand be upon him."

How sweet this assured and abundant mercy! How precious to find these Israelitish messengers able at once to give the needed assurance, without hesitation or peradventure at all! Such is God throughout all dispensations, that those who know Him can always answer for His gracious response to the cry of need. Faith has indeed in her to be in exercise all through, and so it is with all of us. But if she can trust the token they have given her,—if she has confidence in those who have given it to her,—then she is not only safe, she is at rest also; although judgment is still before her and ever approaching nearer, she can meet it (as far as she herself is concerned) in unruffled peace. Is it not more than a faint type of those Thessalonians of long afterward, who turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, even Jesus, who delivered them from the coming wrath?

Let us look at this token closer—this line of scarlet thread under the security of which, not Rahab only, but her whole house, abide. Some of us know at once, and know well, what it refers to, and have no doubt at all that here we have one of those allusions,

always recurring, to what was always in the mind of God from the beginning—to what the ages were hastening on to as their fore-ordained completion—to what divides in two all human history, as it divides the human race itself—the blood, the precious blood, of Christ. The more you look however, the more certain and significant does the type appear.

That scarlet line was the sign of a life given up, however lowly a one—a lowliness which has itself significance. It was the product of death—although but a worm it might be, and was, that died. Death none the less provided the token of salvation for Rahab, as for us the death of Another has furnished us with the certain pledge of ours.

Nothing but death would do, and that not a natural death, as men speak, but a death surely most of all unnatural: a violent death, at man's hand deliberate murder, but God-ward a sacrificial death in which the innocent paid the debt of the guilty, the just died in behalf of the unjust. This is that which saves us, and alone saves us.

But we can trace this further, and find in the very fact of the death of a *worm*, a parallel with the death of the Lord of glory which should make us bow our heads in adoring worship. Who speaks really in the 22nd Psalm? Who knows not, as we cite its opening words, words that find their echo and application in the New Testament alone?

“My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Why art Thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, and Thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent!

“But Thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

“Our fathers trusted in Thee; they trusted, and Thou didst deliver them. They cried unto Thee and were delivered; they trusted in Thee, and were not confounded. *But I am a worm, and no man!*”

Who is this holy Sufferer? Who is it that justifies God in the midst of (as far as himself was considered) inexplicable abandonment? Who is it that is the one solitary exception to all God's ways with the righteous? righteous above all, and yet forsaken, as no righteous person ever was beside?

Yes, it is the Lord, the Life-giver, the Saviour! It is the Highest in the place of the lowest! Lower than man—a worm,—but, oh for what, but that the token of salvation might be ours? the pledge of a mercy which puts those who take shelter under it in absolute and assured security, and gives, with Rahab, “boldness in the day of judgment” itself?

Christ had to take that awful place of a worm and no man; not treated as other men, but apart from all that was natural in God's holy ways of government. For when were the righteous forsaken? Never! They had gone through death, but they had gone through it with God, with the Lord as their Shepherd, fearing no evil, His rod and His staff their comfort. But when the Lord went through it, over whom death had no title at all, it was a totally different thing. That cloud of darkness that hung over the cross was but a symbol of deeper darkness which pressed upon the soul of Him who made atonement for our sins there. It was not that, as a very beautiful hymn says, but here misinterpreting:—“The darkness sought His woes to hide,”—here it was rather our darkness, the due of our sins, which fell upon Him who bore them for us, and blotted out the sun at midday: the terrible shadow of our curse borne, and needed to be borne, by Him who was made a curse for us.

But Rahab has more than the scarlet thread. Indeed, of what use would this be to her, if she had not her pledged and living witnesses in the camp of Israel? After all, her hope must be in the living, not the dead. Death alone would not do as her security, if she had not the living as witness in her behalf. And

so it is again with us. Not only Christ has died; He who died liveth. Risen and gone up on high, His life is the pledge of our life: "Because I live," says He to His disciples, "ye shall live also." "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*."

It is a living Saviour who thus makes good to us the value of His death. It is One who has not only pledged his life for us, as the spies did theirs for Rahab, but has laid it actually down, and whose resurrection is the assurance of His work being accepted for us. It is His voice still which speaks from heaven,—the old invitation, the old assurances which He gave on earth, but now with a love no more straitened in its expression. It is not only of forgiveness He can now speak, but of justification—of acquittal; for we are "justified by His blood," and His blood has been shed. "Through this Man is" therefore "preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

Wonderful it is for sinners such as we are to be forgiven; more wonderful a great deal, for sinners to be justified. As forgiven, God's mercy reaches out its hand to us; but as justified, His righteousness shields and covers us. God, with all that He is, is for us. Himself is our "hiding-place." What arrow of the enemy can pierce through such a defence?

He who has been in death as the due of our sins, has been raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father. The brightness in the face of Him who represents us to God is the assurance of how complete has been the putting away of cloud and distance between us who believe, and God. The two spies, back in the camp of Israel were Rahab's security: how secure are we, who have our pledge in the risen Saviour at the right hand of God!

When judgment should fall upon the devoted city of Jericho, then would appear how safely the scarlet line could protect Rahab's house of refuge. The crash of Jericho's walls would only be to her the announcement of deliverance, complete and final. The time of the world's judgment will be for us the time when we too shall be displayed in the full completeness of our salvation.

But let me guard against a possible mistake here. We must not imagine that we have to wait for the day of judgment in order to realize salvation for ourselves. Rahab had indeed to wait for it, but in applying the figure here, we must remember that faith anticipates and substantiates to us things not seen as yet, and that, for faith, the cross of Christ is already the judgment of the world. So the Lord expressly says: "Now is the judgment of the world, and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." Rahab's deliverance then will more closely represent to us that in which for us the world's judgment is passed through and escaped. The cross is both the judgment of the world and our salvation.

Faith can see judgment passed over already, and realize already deliverance out of a present evil world. To it we belong no more,—no more of the world than Christ is of the world.

Just as it was in the night of the Passover, when the blood of the lamb was put upon the door-post, and Israel, in order to their first step out of Egypt, had to learn the shelter of the blood, to see the judgment upon Egypt come and roll over, and to know it passed and gone, and themselves saved.

Christ's death for us is thus what Scripture teaches us to reckon our death, and by that death with Him to know ourselves free from condemnation, dead to sin, to law, and to the world. We look back on judgment and not forward to it. We have heard the blessed words of Him by whom alone God will at

last judge the world, saying, "He that heareth My words, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, *and shall not come into judgment*"—so the words ought really to be read,—“but is passed from death unto life.”

Thus furnished, we start upon our journey. God's perfect love casts out fear, for him that is perfect in the lesson He would teach us. For “herein is love made perfect with us, that we should have boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world” (1 John iv. 17 *margin.*) As He is,—who is now with God—we are. And when He comes to judge the world, we shall be, not shut up with Rahab within the walls of the doomed place, but rather, like the liberated spies, in the army of the Avenger. “Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?”

But let us return for a short time to Rahab's house within the walls. How beautiful that request of hers for all her house! How sweet the grace that invites now all within the City of Destruction to take refuge where the scarlet line protects equally all who take refuge there. In the house or outside it, that was the only question. The different conditions, experiences, feelings, aye, or degrees of guilt or of goodness found among those assembled there had nought to do with their safety. Salvation was the common lot and portion of all of them. They were saved by that scarlet line in the window, and not by anything in themselves at all. Every one is welcome, invited, besought to take shelter under the precious blood of Christ. It is not a question of our thoughts or our feelings, or our experiences; no, it is not any question even of faith, except just so far as this: that it be faith sufficient to carry us there where the only effectual shelter is to be found. No way to God is there but by Christ; no faith, save faith in Him will avail at all. And thus God preaches to us in this

wonderful way in these records of the past, what He is just now telling us so plainly in the Gospel. These types are so precious because in them the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New are so plainly one. Thus He would press upon us what He is, and invite our hearts to confidence in Him.

And oh! if we reject the loving mercy, which has cost Him so dear—the loving mercy which He delights to show, what will it be for us when, unsheltered and unsaved, we have to meet God in wrath and judgment? The scarlet line was no safeguard for the city at large; the Cross of Christ, whatever the dreams of dreamers, is none for the world. There was one place of refuge only, where an insignificant scarlet thread was proclaimed in a woman's story a safer trust than the city-walls. The very house was itself upon the wall; who could have supposed that a line of scarlet thread would hold up the house, when the wall fell?

And the cross is foolishness as great to men. Why should faith in it have so much virtue? Yet the foolishness of God is wiser than men.

How will it be with you? I want you to realize, beloved friends, while we are speaking here so quietly, yet that judgment is surely, silently coming nearer on the wings of each passing moment. Up to the very time when it took its course in Jericho, the people held out defiantly. They quaked, no doubt, when they heard of the Jordan passage; but after that, what took place would only reassure them. Seven days of mere marching round a wall, and blowing trumpets. Did it not look like consciousness of utter impotence in face of these walls, of which they had long ago spoken so hopelessly? Yet at the word of the Lord those walls fell flat, and judgment came upon all but those saved by the sheltering token of the scarlet line.

Will you accept that foolishness of God, which is

wiser than man? or will you take your refuge in human wisdom, to prove its folly? The Lord grant that you may realize that salvation which is offered to you to-night freely! It has cost God an infinite deal; it will cost you nothing, because you could not possibly contribute to its purchase. Will you, beloved friends, to-night accept it? God only knows when the end will be; when the last trump will be sounded; when the last word, so to speak, of reconciliation will be uttered; when the Master of the house will rise up, and shut to the door. Then with doom in view, it will be vain to say, "Lord, Lord, open to us." Your lips will utter that cry when too late.

How solemn to think that it may be so with some of us now here! The Lord grant in His grace that that story of old may speak to your souls to-night, and that you may find shelter under that precious blood of Christ, of which Rahab's scarlet thread is the mere type and pattern!

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

(26.) What does Paul mean when he says, in 1 Cor. vii. 6: "But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment;" and in ver. 12: "But to the rest speak I, not the Lord?"

(Ans.) He means that he was permitted to give his own judgment in the matter, which it was not obligatory for any to follow, as where the Lord Himself spoke by him. The exception made in this case, and needing to be made, shews conclusively what the character of the rest is, as he affirms it in ch. xiv. 37: "If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the *things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.*"

It is not at all a question of inspiration: he was inspired to give it all; but in this case he was inspired to give advice merely, and has to distinguish it on this account from the rest which was authoritative.

(27.) If Christ now reigns on His Father's throne, over whom does He reign? And what is the difference between the kingdom in mystery, and that into which we have been translated? Are we in both, and professors only in the former; or how is it?

(Ans.) As upon the Father's throne, the Lord's 'authority' is necessarily, as He declares, over 'heaven and earth;' but the actual 'kingdom' is the fruit only of "the word of the kingdom," the sowing of the gospel seed, and limited therefore to where the word has been (professedly at any rate) received. There is but *one* kingdom, in which all are, true and false professors alike: but the former only are "translated" into it *by God*, and "delivered from the power (or authority) of darkness" (Col. i. 13.)

(28.) Do the remains of animals now found in the rocks belong to a period previous to man's coming on the scene, and to the earth being "without form and void?" and are existing animals a special creation since?

(Ans.) I have not myself the least doubt of this. Scripture clearly shows the earth to have been existing before the six days' work, although "without form and void," or as this might be better rendered, "waste and desolate," words which speak of a state of ruin, not of creation. After this it is, that the six days' work brings into being the earth as it now exists with its present vegetable and animal life. Scripture, of course, says nothing as to the former condition of the earth, before that 'waste' condition; but it *leaves room* for the long series of living forms which geology assures us existed, ages before man was upon the earth; and it is there, as I believe, that they really come in.

(29.) What is meant by the expression in Judges: "In those days there was no king in Israel,"—"when as yet they had no king?"

(Ans.) These passages refer back, perhaps, to Deut. xvii. 14-20 and xxviii. 36, where their having a king is anticipated and provided for; or, as most believe, show that the Book of Judges was written in the times of the monarchy (either in the reign of Saul, or David's reign in Hebron). But the words signify also a moral state, when respect for all authority was little to be found, even for Jehovah their true king: "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." This was the secret of the awful condition pictured in ch. xvii.-xxi.

(30.) While the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel both to Jew and Gentile, if they believe, can the expression "from faith to faith," or "on the

principle of faith to faith," as applied to such as are believers, warrant the inference, "where faith exists, faith is added?"

(*Ans.*) The passage does not speak of this. It is God's righteousness that in the gospel is revealed, "by faith," or on that principle; and it is God's righteousness also that is revealed "to faith." The first expression is the same as in "The just shall live *by faith*:" and it shows that the way of the revelation of Divine righteousness in good news to sinners requires only faith to make it avail to such; while "to faith" shows that wherever it is revealed, it avails for the person to whom it is revealed. He *has* the faith which is the only requirement.

(31.) What becomes of the saints on earth at the end of the thousand years' reign?

(*Ans.*) There is to be a 'new earth' where righteousness dwells for ever, and where the "tabernacle of God" will be "with *men*." These are doubtless the millennial saints. As the present period is the time for gathering the heavenly people, so the whole millennium seems to be for the earthly.

(32.) In Mark xvi. 16, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," why did the Lord add "and is baptized," and does it refer to water baptism?

(*Ans.*) It does undoubtedly, as in all passages where something is not added to show that it is something else than water. The reason for its being added here to faith is on the principle that "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. x. 10). In a world which has rejected Christ as Lord He calls for us to own Him, and to transfer ourselves from the ranks of His enemies to those of His friends. Baptism is taking this place of subjection to Him and entering openly into His kingdom.

(33.) Are we in Christ as individuals, or only collectively, in the Church?

(*Ans.*) As individuals surely also. "If any man be in Christ;" "I knew a man in Christ;" "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." These passages have nothing to do with the truth of the Church. It is not as being in the Church that we are in Christ, but rather as being in Christ we are in the Church.

(34.) Please give your thought as to the meaning of Paul's expression in Gal. ii. 20: "And the life which I now live in the flesh, *I live by the faith of the Son of God.*" Does it mean that this life of faith we live is the fruit of the faith exercised by the Son of God while on earth,—He by His obedience and death purchasing for us this life of faith we live? Or does it mean that Christ *now* exercises a faith which enables us to live spiritually? Or does it refer to a faith in ourselves, exercised in the Son of God, by which we are able to maintain spiritual life?

Ans. "The faith of the Son of God" is a parallel expression to Rom. iii. 26, which in the original is "justifying him that is of the faith of Jesus." It is only a fuller and more forcible expression than "faith in the Son of God," meaning "by the faith of the Son of God's having loved me, and given Himself for me." The last words thus really define what the faith is, and of course show that it is not the faith of the Lord Himself, either past or present, but Paul's faith as to this wonderful love of His. This agrees with the context perfectly, which speaks of the Christ crucified for him now living in him. This was the result in his practical life down here: what gave it its character was now the faith of this marvellous love.

THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR.

Rev. xxii. 16.

When the trav'ler weary,
Bending 'neath a load,
Through the darkness dreary,
Toils along the road;
Toiling slowly onwards,
Hoping rest to win,
Sweet the shining taper
Of the welcome Inn.

When the storm is pouring
O'er the midnight sea,
And the surge is roaring
'Neath the vessel's lee;
To the trembling sailor
Rapturous is the sight,
When, through thickest darkness,
Shines the Beacon's light.

When the church contending,
Lonely, sad, forlorn,
Yet, on God depending,
Watcheth for the morn;
Then what joy and gladness,
When, from heaven afar,
Ending all her sadness,
Shines the Morning Star!

Jesus, Lord of Glory,
Lord of life and peace,
Theme of angel's story,
Bid our wand'rings cease!
See, our bark is riven
By the tempest's jar;
Shine, oh shine from heaven,
Bright and Morning Star!

H. M.

“ENTERING INTO THAT WITHIN THE VEIL.”

The future is what we practically live in. It is the evidence of the ruined condition of all amid which we move, not *abide*. Present circumstances yield full content to none; and did they, would soon change. The very wordling is thus forced to live and walk by a faith of his own, however poor it may be, and however little rest of heart may be in it. *He* has his future, for which and in which he really lives, though it be not eternal. The picture of one gone out from the presence of God, a fugitive, building cities where spite of himself he is a wanderer, and seeking to make enjoyable a world which he must leave behind him to others with as sad and weary hearts as his:—such is God’s own portraiture of man as he was at the beginning; and such in this nineteenth century he is. More feverishly busy, perhaps. And with the accumulated inventions of six thousand years of vanity,—a heritage from generations numerous and brief-lived, which have passed from the scene before him,—inventions which only tell how laborious the task has proved to undo a curse not yet undone, and transmit to posterity whatever may be perhaps less perishable than the hands that wrought it.

Yet man’s heart is in the future, even though it perhaps yields him more of care and dread than satisfaction. Yet peer into it, if he can he will, or when he cannot, fill it up with the imaginations in which he is rich enough at least.

Sad and sorrowful all this, the blankness of a future into which fear no less than hope compels the soul, but where the fear is so much surer than the hope.

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The language of Job is in the end the language of men as men. “The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me. *I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.*”

But enough of this. The future of which I am going to speak lies beyond these shadows. Not distant, therefore, but so near that we know of nothing necessarily interposing between us and it. So near, that it can be said, “Ye are *come* to . . . the heavenly Jerusalem.” Like the pilgrims of men’s histories, who in mistaken devotion journeying to the earthly city “in bondage with her children,” would hail it from the mountain-tops over which their pathway wound,—we have our mountain-tops of faith from which our eternal city may be not dimly seen, bright under her cloudless morning-skies.

“Ye *are* come.” Thus do we bring into the need and trial of to-day the needed strength and assurance. The glory in the light of which we walk kisses the clouds of sorrow into beauty. Believing in Him who as having purged our sins is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, our hope as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast, enters into that within the veil, whither our Fore-runner is for us entered. We are “strengthened with all might according to the power of His glory,”—for all that we look upon is *His* glory,—“unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father who *hath made us meet* for the inheritance of the saints in light.”

Our hope has thus two elements of exceeding power in it. It is a hope “sure and steadfast.” No uncertainty enters into it. Its *being* sure is what enables us to wait for it with patience. Doubt would beget *impatience*. If all be surely mine in the end, then I can wait.

Yet it is a *near* hope: near, in that I know not the

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day or the hour, but know that He who comes to introduce me into all the blessedness He has prepared for me, has said, "Surely I come quickly." Men may tell me, centuries have passed since that was said. They are right, and yet wrong. Right in the fact, wrong in the interpretation of the fact. Centuries *have* passed; that is true. It is *not true* that I may say, "My Lord delays His coming." I am told to watch as well as wait for Him. And it is the time of His patience as well as mine. Will He wait longer than absolutely needful for the fulfilment of His own joy? Meanwhile we watch. "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching..... And if He come in the second watch, or come in the third watch and find them so, blessed are those servants."

He, too, our Fore-runner, has not been unmindful of us, down here in the wilderness. If we have not yet the inheritance, we have the earnest of it in Him who has come down to be with us in the place of the Absent One, and who is not only *with us*, but *in us* the Witness to us of the glory which is to be our own. "Eye," indeed, "hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him," and many—*the* many, perhaps,—stop there, as if it were all therefore an impenetrable mystery; but how does it read further? "but God *hath* revealed them unto us by the Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.)

Thus, if hope enter into that within the veil, that veil does not shut out from faith the things we hope for. They are "revealed:" that is "*unveiled*." And "we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may *know* the things that are freely given to us of God."

Would any one think it was needful to plead for this? Would it not be supposed that, on the other

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hand, Christians would be so entering in with eagerness and desire into that which is their own, and which they are thus qualified to enter into, that there should be no more need to insist upon the possibility of so doing, than of proving the possibility of the sun's rising for those who day by day rejoice in its beams?

But so it is, and we proclaim it ourselves in hymns that show indeed what we have arrived at,—that proclaim openly there *is* no Pisgah-view for faith over our land of promise:—

“*Could we but stand where Moses stood,
And view the prospect o'er!*”

Alas, and can we not? Certain it is, that the Word of God not only puts us there, but carries us right through that flood upon the brink of which we are supposed to stand. Antitype of Joshua and his hosts, and yet in contrast with those who wrestled with flesh and blood, “we wrestle,” it is expressly said, “with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places.” (Eph. v. 12, marg.) How, if we are not there? But there we are, for not only are we “blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,” but also, we are “seated together in heavenly places,” too, in Him. What is needed is faith to lay hold of that position. But then we soon become practically aware, that for us those heavenly places are as yet no peaceable possession. We become involved in that conflict, the object of which is on Satan's part to drive us out of the practical enjoyment of that beforehand, which he cannot, blessed be God, prevent our attaining at last.

But in the meanwhile the effect of defeat here is sad enough. We have its tokens in the worldly condition of all around us, which alas, speaks us not “rooted and grounded in the love of Christ” so much as rooted in the love of ease, of lazy, luxurious living, of that which Scripture characterizes as a “present

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evil world," out of which we are told we are delivered, (Gal. i. 4.,) and friendship with which is enmity to God. (Jas. iv. 5.)

Thus the pilgrim-character has in great measure ceased. The book of Joshua has ceased to be a type intelligible to the mass of Christians. To speak of being in heavenly places is to be considered an unpractical mystic. And he is accounted wise who never has fallen into the fanaticism of imagining that he is to take literally the injunction to be watching for Him who has earnestly enjoined it, and pronounced the blessedness of those who are found so doing.

Nevertheless the word of God abides, and its wisdom too, though the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. It abides for whosoever has an ear to hear. By it through the teaching of that blessed Spirit in whom alas, we have almost lost faith, we may still be guided into *all* truth, and possess "the *full assurance* of understanding," as well as the "full assurance of faith" and "of hope." All three are Scriptural expressions which cannot but tell us what is God's mind for us, however little we may have attained to it. Need we then say, how blessed is he that reads and they that hear!

The testimony of heavenly things is what we need to attend to, that we may be outwardly and manifestly what in God's thoughts and purposes, and by virtue of the new life given to us, we already are,— "heavenly" (1 Cor. xv. 48.) Soon for us all, the "image of the heavenly" shall be put on. Are there no affections to be sent on before into that city which the glory of God lightens, and where the Lamb is the light? Is it nothing that we may beforehand tread its street of gold, and stand on the banks of that river of living water upon which blooms and fructifies the tree of life! Will it have no practical result upon our

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walk and ways to converse with that which if it be unseen is yet the only real and eternal? Will it not be rather for us what to Paul was that catching up into Paradise, of which he tells us most when telling us that he heard “unspeakable things?”

But if there are, then,—and there are,—things *unspeakable*, there are also things spoken to us, and spoken to be understood, as to that bright and blessed place—“things above”—where we are told to set our affections,—where He who has gained our affections is: “where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.”

There is such a thing as peace. If I go to the New Testament, I find that, “being justified by faith, we have *peace* with God,” and again, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you *rest*.” Beloved friends, He means what He says. Is anxiety rest? Is doubt rest? Is not knowing where you will be in eternity rest? Is it peace to say “I do not think anybody can know whether he is *saved*?” There may be indifference and carelessness in all that, but not rest or peace. But there is such a thing as peace, and *knowing*. “These things I have written unto you, that ye may know ye have eternal life.” People say, but that is presumption. Is it presumption to know what the apostle wrote that we might know? Is it presumption to take God’s word and believe it? The fact is, if you have got eternity before you, how can you rest for a moment with the question where you are to be in it unsettled? You cannot, beloved friends; it is impossible.

THE TWO NATURES, AND WHAT THEY IMPLY.

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John iii. 6; Gal. v. 17.
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When we speak of there being two natures in the believer, as these passages with others plainly teach, it is needful in the first place to explain the words that we are using. The more so as the word 'nature' is not of frequent use in Scripture, and such expressions as "the old nature" and "the new nature,"—in frequent use among ourselves—do not occur. I am not on this account condemning the expressions. They may be useful enough, and accurate enough, without being taken literally from Scripture; and he who would exclaim against them upon this account would show only narrowness and unintelligence really.

But what such persons have a right to insist upon, and what we should all be as jealous for as they, is that these expressions should really represent to us *things* that are in Scripture,—not fancies of our own, but truths of the word of God. Our business, therefore, must be to explain the terms we use, and justify them by the appeal to Scripture,—by showing that the things themselves are there, for which we use these expressions as convenient terms.

There is no word for 'nature' in the Old Testament at all. In the New, the word translated so is, in every case but one, the word *phusis*, "growth." In the exceptional case it is *genesis*, a word familiar to us as the title of the first book of Scripture, so called from its describing the origin or 'birth' of the world. The

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two words in this application come nearly to the same meaning; they express the result of what we have by our origin—the qualities that are developed in us by growth.

Now for us as Christians there are *two* births, and two growths, and thus we can rightly speak of two natures,—two sets of moral qualities that belong to us: the one as born of Adam; the other as born of God. Each is dependent upon the life received, and from which it springs. We are one thing as children of men merely; we are another as children of God. Let us look at these separately now; and first at that which is first in order of time.

Men we are, of course, all through. Here again we must learn to distinguish between what we are as men by God's creation, and what we are as men fallen from the uprightness in which God created us at the beginning. We must distinguish between our nature as men, and our nature as fallen men. Men we are, and are ever to be; whatever change we pass through in new birth as to spirit and soul, whatever change awaits the body at the time when the Lord shall call us to be with Himself, we shall never lose our essential identity with what God created us to be at the first. We are the same *persons* all through,—the same *individuals*. No question of life or nature, such as we are about to consider, affects the reality of our possession of what we commonly call *human* nature all the way through. The youth differs much from the infant; the man from the youth; yet the same human being, the same person, passes through these different stages. The caterpillar is the same being that is at first in the egg, and that finally is the butterfly: so changed as to conditions that if we had not traced its continuity through these different forms, we should regard it as three or four different creatures; and yet we have the most absolute persuasion of its identity throughout. We might dis-

tinguish between the 'nature' of the egg, the caterpillar, the chrysalis, and the butterfly, and yet again affirm its *insect*-nature to be unchanged throughout, and its individuality to be maintained too, all through. It would be even its 'nature' as an insect to go through these several changes. So we must distinguish between such terms as our 'human nature,' 'our fallen nature,' 'our new nature.' The fall did not unmake us as men; our new birth does not unmake us on the other side. What is essential to manhood we never lose, and our individuality too is never changed.

These distinctions are not useless, but on the contrary, most important. Did we keep them in mind, there could be no misunderstanding (such as there often is) as to the Lord assuming our nature, for instance. The words of the hymn, "He wears *our nature* on the throne," are objected to by some, because they do not make such simple distinctions; and, on the other hand, some would press that taking of our nature into consequences as to our blessed Lord, such as every true soul would indignantly repudiate. He *did* take our human nature: He was in all respects true *man*; the consequences and conditions of the fall are as essential to manhood, as the fracture of an image is essential to the image.

Let us consider then briefly and simply what is essential to man as man, in order to separate from it as far as possible what is due to the fall: *human* nature from *fallen* nature, or what Scripture calls 'the flesh.' We shall find mysteries, no doubt. Mysteries surround us, into which all our researches will enable us to penetrate but a very little way. Our knowledge is very partial; our ignorance is great. And nowhere among created things do we find more mystery than when we attempt to penetrate the secrets of our own being. But in keeping closely to the Word we shall find a sure and unfailing

guide here as elsewhere, and a means of testing whatever may be gathered from other sources.

Man is constituted of spirit, soul, and body. He has lost none of these by the fall; he has only these, when born again and a child of God. Mind, judgment, and therefore conscience, are properties of his spirit. The affections and emotions are faculties of his soul, which is also that wherein is found the link between the spirit and the body, and by which the former, while highest of all in its nature, and (rightly) controlling all, apprehends the things of sense.

Man is thus by constitution a conscious, intelligent, and moral being, but dependent in his present state upon his senses for the furniture even of his mind—a ‘living soul,’ as Scripture terms him, and not a pure ‘spirit,’ as the angels are. Yet with other spirits, he is in relation to God as his God, and his Father too: only that in this last respect he has sold like Esau his birthright for a mess of pottage.

The fall has affected man in all his constituent parts. It has subjected the spirit to the soul, and the soul to the body. The scene in Eden, which Scripture represents to us at once so simply and so graphically, is recalled to our minds as we ponder the inspired descriptions of what man now is. The link of affection, reverence and dependence, which held him to God, being broken, he is like a building in which the roof has fallen in upon the base. Named from his lowest part, into which spirit and soul have sunk, he is ‘*flesh*.’ Thus ‘*flesh*’ is the Scriptural designation of his old or fallen nature.

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food,”—there the body, and in its lowest cravings, is first;—“and that it was pleasant to his *eyes*,”—meeting the emotional desires of the *soul*;—“and a tree to be desired to make one wise,”—there the spirit is,—last, but aspiring to independence of God. “Ye shall be as gods” had been the temptation.

Yielding to it, his mental and moral structure had collapsed. A thing of sense rather than God he had chosen for his dependence: the things of sense became his necessity and his masters; his wisdom, henceforth not from above, was "earthly, sensual," and so, "devilish."

And this word 'sensual,' which, while it may well have that meaning here, is in fact the adjective of the word 'soul,' is the same word as that translated 'natural,' where we read, "the *natural* man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14).

The spirit here has given up the reins to the soul; the soul is swayed by the allurements of sense; the body itself, unbalanced and perverted in its natural instincts and appetites, becomes in turn the tempter of the soul. The man is 'sensual.' His nature is 'flesh.'

We must not expect to find this use of the word 'flesh,' however, in the Old Testament, for a reason which will easily suggest itself to one who knows the peculiar character of the Old Testament. The Law being the trial of man in nature, as long as the trial was going on, the character of man could not be fully brought out. Nor is it even in those first three gospels in which Christ's presentation to man is God's last experiment with him. "Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved," as the Lord Himself puts it in the parable, "he sent him last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son" (Mt. xxii. 6). But in John's gospel it is seen that this trial too has failed: "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not; He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." That is in the very opening chapter; and thereupon he immediately goes on to speak of 'the flesh,' and of new birth: "But to as many as received Him, to them gave He [not 'power,' but] authority to become the

sons of God, even to those who believed in His name." And who were these? "Which were *born*, not of blood, nor of the *will of the FLESH*, nor of the will of man, but *of God*."

One passage there is in the Old Testament, in which man is characterized as 'flesh,' in a manner which seems to approach the style of the New. And this passage is found in almost the beginning of Genesis. Before the flood, the Lord says: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh, but his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." Yet even here the declaration seems more to point to the frailty of a creature with whom it would be unseemly for God to be always striving. And the limitation of his days seems to coincide with this interpretation. It is like the appeal in Job: "What is man, that Thou shouldst magnify him? and that Thou shouldst set Thine heart upon him? and that Thou shouldst visit him every morning, and try him every moment?" Or like that in that 144th psalm, so striking a contrast with the eighth: "Lord, what is man, that Thou takest knowledge of him? or the son of man, that Thou makest account of him? Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away! Bow Thy heavens, O Lord, and come down . . . cast forth lightning, and scatter them!"

All through the Old Testament, 'flesh' is thus the symbol of weakness and nothingness: a use of it which is carried on also into the New. Witness a passage which is often cited in another way and very falsely applied: it is the tender apology of the Lord for His disciples' sleeping in the garden: "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Here the 'weak' flesh is clearly not at all the old nature. It is bodily infirmity which prevents it yielding to the will of the spirit.

In the gospel of John we find, for the first time, the 'flesh' used in the other signification of an evil nature,

our sad inheritance by the fall. We hear of a 'will of the flesh' from which new birth does *not* proceed. And in the third chapter of the gospel, the Lord enforces upon Nicodemus the absolute necessity of a new birth, from the irreclaimable character of this: "That which is born of the flesh"—of man characterized as this,—“is *flesh*; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit: Marvel not that I said unto you, Ye *must* be born again.”

Thus out of man's fallen nature proceeds nothing that can be acceptable to God. Like a field unsown, the heart of man will never produce aught, so to speak, but thorns and thistles, fruit of the curse. Life of the right sort must be dropped into it in the living germ of the word of God, as our Lord teaches in the parable, and from that alone is there fruit for Him.*

New life is thus introduced into the field, and while this does indeed take up and assimilate material from the soil, and thus there now goes on an active transformation of this kind, yet how false an account would it be to give of this to make this transformation the whole thing, and ignore the new life which was effecting it! Yet in the spiritual change of new birth people are doing exactly this. They look at the moral transformation going on, and ignore what Scripture speaks of in the most decisive way, the introduction of a positive new life from God, from which the moral change proceeds.

It is no wonder if, in trying to define this, we soon lose ourselves, and are made aware of mysteries which crowd upon us at every step. Even natural life is a mystery which the mind of man, vainly seeking to penetrate, is trying in an exactly similar manner to deny. We are told that we may as well talk of a

*It is one of those lessons from the book of Creation of which there are so many, that wheat is only found in connection with the presence of man—never wild.

principle of 'aquosity' in water as of a vital principle in a living thing. Yet as a cause of certain effects otherwise unaccountable, it is as vain to deny as it may be impossible to define it. So spiritually we may learn lessons from experience which at least rebuke the folly of not listening to the Word. And Scripture points out these also, giving us, as needed explanation of what every child of God finds in experience, a doctrine which alone makes all intelligible, and enables us to learn and use the experience itself aright.

As for natural birth there must be not merely certain processes, but the communication of a life-principle which produces, controls and harmonizes these processes, so is there precisely for new birth. The voice that soon will quicken out of death natural,—which all that are in the graves shall hear and shall come forth,—now quickens similarly the spiritually dead: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live: for as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself" (Jno. v. 25, 26). Here there is a life communicated by One who has it in Himself to communicate, a new life for those 'dead;' in whom, if there be not this first, no moral change is possible at all.

This new birth the Spirit and the Word combine to effect. A man is born of water and of the Spirit, the water here, as the symbol of purification, taking the place that the seed of the word does in the parable elsewhere. As the apostle Peter tells us, we are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God . . . and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." (1 Peter i. 23, 25.) And so the apostle of the Gentiles explains Christ's purification of His Church to be "with the washing of water by the Word." (Eph. v. 26.)

To take up again the former figure of the seed, used by both the Lord and the apostle: the seed is the incorruptible word which gives form and character to the life-manifestation; but the life itself must be in the germ, or it cannot be manifested. So the word of the Lord embodies and manifests the new life we receive, but the energy of the life communicated by the Spirit works by the Word, and there is 'growth'—the development of a new nature, which is characterized by its blessed and holy attributes.

Thus Scripture speaks of "the *engrafted Word*" (Jas. i. 21); and the apostle John, similarly connecting the new nature with the word, says: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for *his seed* remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." (1 John iii. 9.) This is Peter's 'incorruptible seed' of 'the word of God,' but the life communicated by the Spirit, as already said, causes it to germinate; and, being '*everlasting life*,' his seed remains.

The 'nature' of the seed determines the form of life. The new nature, God's gift, is not a mixed or partially good thing. It is in itself perfect (though capable of and needing development), without mixture of evil from the very first. In the man in whom it is implanted evil indeed exists, as thorns and thistles in the field in which wheat is sown: these things being not the imperfection of the wheat in any wise, though hindrances to the crop they are. The character of the seed we have just seen, where the apostle says that the child of God "doth not commit"—or rather, 'practice'—"sin; *for* his seed remaineth in him." The new life, if obscured by the evil, is untouched by it, and in essential, nay, victorious opposition to sin. It will vindicate its character in one born of God, and manifest him as born of God; and where we do not see this result we cannot recognize as a Christian the person in whom it fails, although granting the

possibility of seed being in the ground that has not yet come to the surface. But "faith"—the first principle of the new nature—"worketh by love;" and "faith, if it have not works, is dead, being alone:" "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Gal. v. 6; Jas. ii. 19; Rom. viii. 14.)

It is needful to insist on this at all times, never more needful than at the present time. It is no exaltation of faith to maintain it as justifying and saving, and yet possibly without power to produce fruit in the world, or glorify God in a holy life. The apostle's faith was the power of a life devoted as his was: "the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20).

Such then in its character, and such in its energy, is the new nature. It will be understood that the gospel has to be received, and deliverance realized, before this can be properly known; nor do I dwell upon these now. But such is the new nature; and being such, it is the means of effecting that wonderful change in a man which we speak of as 'conversion.' As the seed converts the lifeless elements of the soul into the beauty of the living plant, so the powers and faculties of soul and spirit are brought back from death to life. The spirit, redeemed from self-idolatry, and having learned the lesson of dependence upon God which faith implies, is reinstated in its old supremacy; the affections of the soul are taught to trail no longer upon earth, and set upon God as their only worthy object. The body, yet unredeemed, and 'dead, because of sin,'—awaiting its redemption at the time of the resurrection (Rom. viii. 10, 11; 23),—can only as yet be 'kept under, and brought into subjection' to the man new created in Christ Jesus (Rom. viii. 13; 1 Cor. ix. 27).

But now we must again draw some very important

distinctions. We speak of the old nature or 'flesh,' and of the new. We speak also of the 'old *man*' and of the 'new.' Is there any difference between these? and if so, what is the use of the distinction?

A *nature* and a *person* are in many ways widely different. Unconverted and converted, the person is of course the same. It is the one who was dead in sin who is quickened and raised up; it is the same person who was condemned and a child of wrath who is justified, sanctified, and redeemed to God. It is the person too,—the 'man'—to whom accountability attaches, and not to the nature. *Acts* belong to the individual and not to his nature; and in the case of man, the only rational and responsible creature of whom we have something that can be called knowledge, we know that he is responsible to walk contrary to—not indeed his nature as God first constituted him, but yet—his nature as he actually now possesses it, fallen from its primitive state.

Only in fact by a license of speech do we speak of nature acting. To say of a person, "nature acts in him," whether said approvingly or disapprovingly, still implies that the man himself has lost command of himself, or does not exercise it. Many a Christian thus talks of the flesh in himself or others, as if its being flesh that was exhibited explained matters sufficiently. Yet if he thinks about it he will realize that even he uses this language to escape responsibility, so little idea has he of responsibility attaching to a nature. Yet if this excused him, it would excuse every sinner that ever lived; and how could God judge the world? In point of fact men do use every where the truth of their sinful nature in order to escape condemnation; whereas if they would listen to conscience they would assuredly find that not a single sin have they ever committed which they could truthfully say their nature forced them to. It *inclined*, no doubt; but they should, and might, have controlled

the inclination. The essence of their guilt is, that they do not.

In the day of judgment, therefore, the award will be given, not according to the nature (in which they are alike), but to their works, in which they are not alike. God "will render to every man according to his *deeds*." (Rom. ii. 6.) And this, and this alone, will be the exact measure of guilt and responsibility.

It may be objected to all this, "how then can the man in the seventh of Romans, who is converted, and has a will for good, find on the other hand the flesh in such opposition, that what he desires he is quite unable to perform? How can there be still no ability, when the will is right?"

But the answer is plain, that the good he desires would not be good really, if done in other than the sense of dependence upon God, which is the only right condition of the creature. The power of sin from which he has to be delivered lies in the self-complacent self-seeking which assumes the shape of holiness to a converted man. For a holiness that makes *him* something, he has to accept a Christ who shall draw him *out of* himself. The 'good' (in one sense, that) which he is seeking, is really a phantom shape which God has to destroy, to give him instead the true and only good. Thus only crippled Jacob can become Israel.

"Power belongeth only unto God." True; ever true. But were we right with Him, could it be lacking to us? Assuredly it could not. Still then it remains true, that no one is shut up powerlessly in bondage to evil. The key of his prison-house is in his own hand.

It is the *man* then who sins, and is the sinner; it is the *man* who has to be forgiven and justified; it is the *man* who is responsible to walk, not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. It is the same person, the same individual all through.

Yet in another way we may surely say as to the Christian, that the man that *was* and the man that *is* are total opposites. I *was* a sinner in my sins, freely following the evil that I loved. I *am* a child of God, with a new nature, new affections, and a new object. Between these two persons there is a wide interval indeed. The first is what Scripture calls the "old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Eph. iv. 22); the second is styled "the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (ver. 24), and "renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him that created him, where . . . Christ is all and in all." (Col. iii. 10, 11). The first it speaks of as being "crucified with Christ," as it does of our "having put off the old man with his deeds." (Rom. vi. 6; Col. iii. 9.*) The second similarly it speaks of our 'having put on.' What we were we are not, and never can be again. But, while this is happily true of us, it is also true that the 'flesh'—the old nature—we have in us still, and shall have, till the body of humiliation is either dropped, or changed into the glorified likeness of the Lord's own body.

The old man is gone for ever; but the flesh abides: in those who are possessors of the Spirit, still "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh;" and the exhortation is, not to destroy the flesh, as if that were possible, but "walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh" (Gal. v. 16, 17). A poor conclusion this, to many in our day! but to those who know themselves how great a relief to find thus an explanation of what experience testifies to. It may be, and is, a mystery, how we can have at the same time in us two natures, total opposites of each other; how Christ can dwell in us,

* Eph. iv. 22 is not different from this, although the common version might make a difficulty. But the 'putting off' here, and the 'putting on,' ver. 24, are really in the past.

and yet sin dwell too ; but Scripture affirms it, and experience also. If it is God's mind to allow us to know thus for awhile what evil is, not by yielding to it surely, but as realizing its opposition, can He not make this experience even both to serve us and glorify Him !

The flesh remains, and remains unchanged : " I know that in me, (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing," must always be said by one who identifies himself with the flesh. " The mind of the flesh is death ; . . because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be " (Rom. vii. 18 ; viii. 6, 7). Thus the Word speaks of the incurable evil of the old nature, which attaching itself, as we have seen it does, to the things of time and sense amid which we are, God's remedy for it is Christ as an object for our hearts in heaven, and His cross as that by which we are crucified to a world which the flesh lusts after, and which in its moral elements consists of " the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." We are not in the flesh ; we are in Christ before God ; our life is hid with Christ in God. The knowledge of our portion in Him as given us by the Spirit divorces our hearts and turns away our eyes from that which ministers to the evil in us. " As strangers and pilgrims," journeying on to a point which faith, not sight, beholds, we learn to " abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul " (1 Pet. ii. 2), and as a consequence to " mortify the deeds of the body " (Rom. viii. 13).

It is not conflict with the flesh to which we are called, as many mistakenly imagine. Conflict we all know indeed enough of, and being surprised by the enemy, have to fight ; but this is because we have been *too little* ' pilgrims and strangers,' and so *too little* ' abstaining from fleshly lusts.' To ' abstain ' is to ' hold off from ' ; which is the very opposite of

fighting. Our true power is in absent-mindedness, a heart set upon that which stirs no lust, for it is our own for ever, and we are invited to enjoy it.

This *satisfies*, and this alone. By "the exceeding great and precious promises" we "become partakers of"—or rather 'in communion with'—"the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet. i. 4). The new life within us is strengthened and developed, and this alone can divine things work upon. Christ seen and enjoyed by faith, we grow up unto him in all things, from the babe to the young man and to the father, when we have but to sit down, as it were, and endlessly enjoy our infinite blessing.

Before closing this brief sketch of an important subject, let us look closer at this question of growth, as the apostle puts it before us here. Growth, mental not physical, the growth of a babe into a man, is a matter of education; not merely what professes to be such, but the influence upon it of surrounding circumstances which call forth the hidden energies of the mind and heart, and of examples which stimulate and encourage to imitation. God has thus on the one hand for us His discipline of trial; on the other His perfect example of what He would have us to grow up to. In general men reach about the level of what is thus before them. God puts before us Christ, that we may grow up into Christ. Our occupation will tell upon us. What we give ourselves to, will make its necessary mark upon us. The exhortation to us is, "Set your mind on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God."

The admonition therefore of the apostle to the babes and young men,—to the fathers he has none—is to let nothing take away their eyes from Christ. The babes he warns as to Antichrist, not that he may perfect them in prophetic knowledge, but because in their little acquaintance as yet with the truth of what

Christ is, they might be led away into some deceit of the enemy. Satan's first snare for souls is some distorting error, which shall in fact deform to us the face in which alone all the glory of God shines, or substitute for His face some witchery for the natural eye, in which the heart may be unawares entangled, supposing it to be the true and Divine object before it. This is Antichrist,—not yet the full denial of the Father and the Son of course,—and anti-christs there are many.

Oh that Christians did more realize the immense value of truth,—the terrible and disastrous effect of error! What presents to me, when seen aright, the blessed face of God Himself, may through Satan's artifice darken, obscure, distort this, or present to me a treacherous and destructive lure instead.

The apostle, therefore, warns the babes as to false Christs doctrinally. The young men are not in the same danger as to this. They are strong, and the word of God abides in them, and they have overcome the wicked one. Their danger now lies from the allurements of a world into which their very energy is carrying them. The word to these is, "Love not the *world*, neither the things that are in the world." For the eye effects the heart. And it is one thing to have seen by the word that the world is under judgment, and another thing to have gone through it in detail, looking it in the face, and counting it all loss for Christ.

This the fathers have however done: therefore he says to them (and it is all he needs to say), "Ye have known Him that is from the beginning." It is all we gain by looking through the world; yet it is a great gain to be able to say of it all through, "How unlike Christ it is." And what when we have reached this? Has the 'father' nothing more to learn? O yes, he is but at the beginning. He has but now his lesson book before him, for undistracted

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learning. But he needs not caution in the same way not to mix anything with Christ, and not to take anything else for Christ. How much toil to reach, how slow we are in reaching, so simple a conclusion! But then the joy of eternity begins. O to have Him ever before us, unfolding His glories, as He does to one whose eyes and whose heart are all for Him! The knowledge of the new man is "Christ is all." To the martyr, in the fire which consumed him, this knowledge broke out in the words which told of a joy beyond the torment—"NONE BUT CHRIST."

God's righteousness is revealed in the cross, and that is not against sinners, but for sinners. The cross is death, the cross is judgment: the cross, beloved friends, is not the fruit of good works, or anything of that sort, it is the fruit of sin, although the sinless One took it. And if you want a title to the cross, your sins are the title. Take your sins, put them down there in the presence of God, and God is faithful and just to forgive you your sins. Aye, and to give you the whole value of the work of Christ as you prove yourself thus to be one of those for whom Christ died. He will put you in absolute perfection before God, the absolute unchangeable perfection of Christ for ever and ever.

If we cannot meet God upon the throne and in judgment; if we cannot by all that we can do get into His presence; what are we to do? Beloved, *He* has rent the veil and come out to us. He has come out Himself when we could not go in. And, Christ's blessed work being accomplished, He has opened heaven itself to us. Opened the way of access, by the blood which has been shed for us, and His free and gracious invitation now from the heights of glory into which He has gone is still: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

FRAGMENTS.

We must look *above* our path to be able to walk *in* it.

The eyes upward on Jesus will keep the heart and the steps in a path conformable to Jesus, and which consequently will glorify Him and make Him known in the world.

A Jew who had the secret of Jehovah, and who waited for the Messiah, was pious and faithful according to the law. A Jew who had only the law assuredly did not keep it.

Seeing what we are, we must have a motive above our path to be able to walk in it. This does not prevent our needing for our path the fear of the Lord to pass the time of our sojourning here in fear, knowing that we are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

A Christian who has heaven before him, and a Saviour in glory as the object of his affections will walk well upon the earth; he who has only the earthly path for his rule will fail in the intelligence and motives needed to walk in it: he will become a prey to worldliness, and his Christian walk in the world will be more or less on a level with the world in which he walks.

They *put on*, therefore as such, as elect, holy, beloved (Christ being their life), the character of Christ, mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, patience forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if offence had been given, even as Christ has done to us; finally, they put on love, the bond of perfectness, that which gives a divine character to all the qualities that have been enumerated, and that were manifested in Christ, *and a divine check in taking amiable nature for divine grace, for divine love is holy.*

J. N. D.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

(35) In what sense does Paul say, in 1 Cor. xv. 31, "I die daily"? And is this the same thing as Col. iii. 5: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon earth"?

(Ans.) The two passages are quite different. In the first it was the actual fact that the apostle was going through death as it were every day, having it before him at every turn, and passing through it in his soul; as he says elsewhere, "in deaths oft."

But the passage in Colossians refers to the list of fleshly lusts which follow, "fornication, uncleanness," etc., which the body would betray us into if we did not keep it in the place of death. The word "mortify" even there does not speak of daily doing this, but is in the past—"have mortified your members": keep them in the place of death.

(36). Can you give me a word on Exod. xix. 5? I have some difficulty in applying the word 'covenant' here to what was afterwards written on the tables of stone, because of what the people say: "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." This implies something already given, while the law follows in the next chapter.

Now in Deut. vi. 5, we get what the Lord calls in Mk. xii., the first of all the commandments, and the second which is like unto it, but these are neither of them in what are called the ten commandments. Again in Exod. xxxi. 18 the tables are said to be "written with the finger of God;" and this is repeated, Deut. ix. 10; but in Exod. xxxiv. 27, the Lord says to Moses, "Write *thou* these words." My diffi-

culty is in making this distinction, and finding that which answers to each.

(*Ans.*) In the first passage I have no doubt that a covenant is simply proposed, its terms not being made known till afterwards, as in ch. xx. "All that the Lord hath spoken" only refers to "obeying His voice and keeping His covenant." In Mark xii. 5 the Lord only sums up the two tables in general as two commandments, giving what is implied, as Deut. vi. 5 does for the first table. The two tables were written the first time with the "finger of God;" the second time by the mediator Moses; which is significant, the second time it not being mere law, but law mingled with mercy; the mediator pointing on to One to come.

(37.) Is not the answer to a correspondent, p. 83 of this volume, calculated to mislead? as there is no such thing in Scripture as being gathered in the name of *Jesus*; there is "in the name of our Lord *Jesus Christ*." The Lord when speaking of being gathered to His name was revealed as God's Christ, and charges them that they should tell no man that He was the *Christ*. Being rejected as the earthly Messiah, He takes the title of Christ under a new aspect in connection with His body (1 Cor. xii. 12). In 1 Cor. x. is it not the one body, the mystical body of Christ we get spoken of? Therefore the cup comes first, the blood giving us our place before God; the unbroken loaf being the figure of the one body, which is the ground of our gathering in the name of Christ; Christ being the One in whom we are; whereas, in ch. xi., the loaf *when broken* sets forth the actual body of the Lord Jesus given for us. To be on the ground of the one body, we must be gathered to the name of Christ, as members of the body of Christ. Would it not be as wrong to say, "gathered to the name of Jesus" as to say, "your brother in Jesus?" The Lord Jesus builds His Church on the confession that He

was '*the Christ.*' Paul says, "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

(*Ans.*) The use of Divine names and titles is so significant, and our (unknown) correspondent's letter will be so suggestive to many, that I have given the whole for that reason, not as contesting it. Still, as to the point in question, I am compelled to demur. The quotations on p. 83 will show that the 'name of Jesus' was not intended in the exclusive way in which our correspondent has taken it, but only as a brief way of expressing what in full would be "the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." But on the other hand, I certainly see no reason for substituting "the name of Christ," as an expression, for the other. We want in fact both names, as I believe. If His being Christ gives the foundation on which the Church is built, as I do not question—when the point is rather what is our *attractive centre*, can we omit—nay, rather, must it not be of the very essence of this—that He is that Emmanuel, which His name of 'Jesus' is intended to declare?

As to 1 Cor. v. 4, the force seems clearly to be "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ) to deliver such an one unto Satan." It is 'in' here, not 'unto,' as in Matt. xviii., and does not express *what* gathers them; though I mention this only for the sake of accuracy, having already said that I fully agree as to the thought.

Being gathered to the 'name of *Christ*' alone, would (as it seems to me) not exclude in principle even a denier of the Lord's Deity. However, I quite own that the words on p. 83 may lack full explicitness; and I am thankful to have the omission pointed out.

SANCTIFICATION IS SEVENFOLD.

There are 7 distinct characters of Sanctification in the New Testament.

First. In 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5. Food is "sanctified," by the Word of God and prayer, *i.e.* separated to our use as we own God with it.

Do *you* ever eat anything common or unclean?

Second. In 1 Cor. vii. 14, we are taught that an unbelieving man is sanctified by (or in) his believing wife, and that the children of such are holy also, *i.e.*, they are seen by God to be in a "separated" position on the ground of such a connection with a believer, for, by such a privilege they are removed from out of the mere darkness of nature.

Is the responsibility of this place sufficiently felt and urged?

Third. In Heb. x. 10, we find we "have been sanctified" by the will of God, like as in Rom. i. 7, and in 1 Cor. i. 2 we are termed "called saints." This is the "sanctification of the Spirit" in 1 Pet. i. 2; 2 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Cor. vi. 11, and Rom. xv. 16. This is an act of the absolute will of God and effects a marked, eternal change of the individuals place, that nothing can afterwards alter or impair.

Do *you* enjoy this personal position before God thoroughly?

Fourth. Growth in grace (1 Thess. v. 23) is the ever increasing expression of this in our daily life. The true enjoyment of the above third aspect of sanctification, results largely in this fourth one. Are *you* in your own life more "separate" than ever?

Fifth. In 2 Tim. ii. 21, a believer who purges him-

self from "vessels to dishonour" is "sanctified," and meet for the Master's use. In the confessed failure of the church of God, to express its corporate unity and its separateness from evil,—the tares have grown up among the wheat—"vessels of wood" are introduced into the house. Do you, while surrounded by tares, purge yourself from *all* that is "to dishonour?"

Sixth and Seventh are personal to our Lord Jesus Christ. Sixth. In John x. 36. The Father separated the Son and sent Him into the world. Had He come in His glory, it must have been judgment, and not grace. Seventh. John xvii. 19. The Lord separated Himself from earth to heaven.

E. C. P.

The seal of God is upon you, marking you, sealing you for God, and the earnest for all that is before you in that joy. Oh, beloved friends, that is not all, I have been only looking at one side; there is another side, and ah! it is so blessed for us, I speak now of the path of Christ, because as surely as He has associated us with Himself, with His place in the glory; then you will find also that He will associate you with Him in His path down here. The path follows from the place. Now you should not try to reach the place by the path, but reverse it. How many are wanting to reach the place by the path? The path follows from the place, but first the place. My soul basks in all the sunlight of His love as I see my place in Christ before Him, and then the path. Will it be a somewhat different path from Christ? No! He is not going to disassociate us from Himself as to the path. He has associated you with Himself in all the fullness, all the blessedness of the place, and according as you have seen Him the Pattern of the place, now you will see Him the Pattern of the path in the World.

J. A. T.

KOHATH, GERSHON AND MERARI.

3. MERARI.

Merari's charge is given us as "the boards of the tabernacle and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof and sockets thereof, and the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins and their cords, with all their instruments and with all their service."

We have seen that the curtains of the tabernacle speak of Christ Himself as the One in whom the Word, made flesh, 'tabernacled' amongst us: just as with a kindred meaning He spake to the Jews of "the temple of His body." In Him, in fact, as thank God we know full well, dwelt bodily all the fulness of the Godhead. But there is another aspect of the tabernacle also, for we too are God's 'house,' that house which Christ as Son is over (Heb. iii. 6). And this is shown out in the *boards* of the tabernacle, over which these curtains fell, covering them with their manifold beauty.

The boards were forty-eight in number, upright, and fitted together with 'tenons,'—in the Hebrew, 'hands;' each board resting upon two silver sockets, made from the atonement money, and each overlaid with gold, with golden rings for the bars which united all together. Thus the Church consists of those individually resting on the testimony of redemption, and fitted together by God as His own habitation, in which His glory shines out of the face of men as the typical gold* from the shittim-wood.

*The "cherubim of *glory*, shadowing the mercy seat," (Heb. ix. 5). I do not doubt to be the Scriptural key to the meaning of the 'gold.'

The bars of shittim-wood, covered with the same gold, and fitted into golden rings upon the boards, speak of special gifts for maintaining all in place, which need however a corresponding receptivity on the part of the saints individually, in order to make them available: the 'bar' was of no use without the 'ring.'

The pillars were first the pillars of the veil, four in number, of shittim-wood and gold as before, each standing on *one* silver socket, the veil hanging from these by golden hooks. Secondly, the door of the tent had *five*, of the same material, but upon *brazen* sockets, the hanging being here also suspended from hooks of gold. The gate of the court was again a similar hanging, suspended by silver hooks from four pillars of shittim-wood, with silvered capitals, and standing, like the last, upon brazen sockets.

In veil and door and gate we shall have no difficulty in seeing Christ; and Christ as a way of access; though the veil must be rent before we can in fact draw near to God. The hanging of the gate we easily read as pendent from the silver hooks of atonement, and these borne up upon the four pillars which speak of tried and perfect humanity, the silvered capitals proclaiming still pre-eminent grace. That of the door of the tabernacle hangs from golden hooks, for Christ "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father" receives as 'Son over His house' those already partakers of salvation by His blood. Here therefore the pillars of shittim-wood are overlaid with gold; but they stand, as do those of the gate, upon the brazen sockets which speak of unchanging perpetuity of strength. The veil (rent, as we know) gave the way of access to God Himself, and it too hung from golden hooks supported on four pillars of shittim-wood overlaid with gold; but which stand again upon *silver* sockets. Is it not "the gospel of the glory of Christ" that is here expressed to us? of Him in whom, as "the image of God," we find God expressed?

The pillars of the court rest upon brazen sockets, and are surmounted with silver capitals, while the fine linen curtains are suspended from them by silver hooks. Thus grace enables us to hold up before the world the character of Christ, and divine strength is what we rest upon in doing so; the pins and cords still further coming in to brace all up against the contrary influences which are too much for our unassisted strength.

Merari's service thus has to do with the house of God, the church of the living God, with the holding up of Christ as the way of access in to God, and with the supporting, strengthening, and steadying of that which is His witness in the world. He represents the workman, as Gershon does the 'stranger'-pilgrim, and Kohath the one occupied with Christ. His name—Merari, 'bitterness,'—speaks of the painful character of such service, at which self-love will break down, or run off from it into some eccentric path, less burdensome to flesh and blood. Indeed in our day the family of Merari has dwindled down into a very small number; and their work has been very ill done. Who cares for these boards and bars, and pillars and pins and cords? Who thinks of God's plan and pattern, and all the minutiae of Divine appointment? Who desires work of this menial kind, costing so much and bringing in so little? The pattern is old, and will not adapt itself to the fashion of changed times. It gives no room for human invention to display itself in. It requires only plodding accuracy and diligent obedience. And yet is it not true, that in the Divine interpretation of these types, Merari's service is the full ripe fruit of what we have seen depicted in Kohath and in Gershon?

"If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us." And this love, if true, manifests itself in service; if *Divine* love, in service according to the Divine pattern. To put a 'pin' in

its true place may involve a surrender of one's own will to God, a voluntary taking up of what is little, not counting it little,—an attentive hearkening to God's words, which to Him is sweeter than much that is thought more costly sacrifice. Service about God's house must own Him Master, and that He may have things to His taste, not we to ours.

Does it disparage Kohath or Gershon to put Merari's lowly and painful service as the fruit of theirs? Not so! For without Kohath you can have no Gershon and without both these no true Merari. "Faith, if *it* have not works, is dead, being alone." Does this disparage or exalt faith? It is *faith* must have the works. These are not independent of this, any more than fruit is of the root it grows on, and which nourishes and gives it character. So faith comes first, because Christ, whom faith alone embraces, and from whom it draws all sustenance, is absolutely needful. And then faith's fruits are produced by love, which is the stem upon this root. "Faith *worketh* by love." Thus Gershon is the link between Kohath and Merari.

How important this connection! How needful to maintain this order! First Christ:—'high truth!' as high as Christ in glory. Never lower it, never omit it, never talk against it as unpractical. If Merari fails, never turn Kohath from his work on that account. Only your truth must be high enough to reach Christ Himself, a living, personal Christ, who is at God's right hand alone. If it be not this it will fall with its own weight, and be wrecked utterly.

But then Gershon, the 'stranger,' will display the beauty of his fine linen, his curtains and his veils. The response of love in man to the Divine love will be also maintained. The moon, because *in* the sunlight reflects the sun to us. Our responsibility is measured by our place, and the grace, which has given it us, is alone power for the fulfilment of our responsibility.

Then comes Merari, the Timothy-service in the house of God. Ear, foot, and hand, all testify to the power of the blood of Christ, and are set apart to God as purchased by it. The living water, being drunk in, flows out, and in channels already prepared of God, that it may bring fertility and beauty to many a plant of the Lord's planting, and carry His seed moreover to enrich many a barren spot, and make the desert blossom as the rose.

“ We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” Love is of God; there one comes to the fountain of all the love that supplies the trickling streams of love down here; but what we want is to have our hearts opened to the fountain for more love. It is a very trickling stream now, though very blessed to find ever so little. Yet why are we to be straightened in our own selves? There is no straightness in the fountain. If God is love, and he fills His Christ with all this love, do not you and I want it to flow as rivers of refreshment through our souls? Oh that we might taste more and more what that love is! Does God's love dwell in us? Yes: because God says so; but the waters are choked up. Is there that eternal fulness flowing into the soul, the fulness of that matchless love that picked up the vilest sinners as channels for it to flow in? love that settles the competency of people by the Holy Ghost in them, to understand what this love is that flows out from God and through Christ to them? Can you say individually that that love, flowing from God, is filling your soul to all fulness, and is as a river flowing from you?

G. V. W.

LETTERS ON SOME PRACTICAL POINTS
CONNECTED WITH THE ASSEMBLY.

III.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Having already taken up in some measure the subject of the Lord's Table, it is natural to go on to think a little of the Lord's Supper, that solemn and precious remembrance of Christ Himself which puts us in the right attitude, if it be real with us, for looking at other things. It thus, as you will probably have noticed, precedes, in the epistle to the Corinthians, the whole question of gifts and of their exercise, and even of membership in the body of Christ. With our eyes really on Him, we are in communion and competent to entertain these questions.

And therefore the great importance of seeing clearly in the first place the object and character of that great central meeting which gives its character to all other meetings. It is described for us in simple and familiar style in the Acts, but so as to show us what it was that in the mind of Christians was its primary object: "On the first day of the week, when the disciples came together *to break bread.*" As the passover had changed for Israel the order of the months, and the year must begin with the sign of accomplished redemption, so for Christians time must begin its reckoning with the joyful celebration of the love that had visited them. On the first day, therefore, they came together to 'break bread.' It does not say, as we may sometimes hear, 'to a worship meeting.' Worship, no doubt, they would; but that

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was not what was present to their minds. It was their Lord who was before them,—Him of whom that bread spake. So in 1 Corinthians xi. : “when ye come together into one place, this is not”—it was a rebuke because their way of doing it destroyed its meaning;—“this is not to eat the Lord’s Supper.”

The purpose of coming together should be distinctly before our minds. We must be simple in it. In two opposite ways this simplicity may be destroyed, and the character of the meeting be lowered, and souls suffer. Let us spend a little time in the consideration of this.

In the first place, when we come together, after six days of warfare in the world (would that it were always warfare, and that we realized the world as an enemy’s country simply), we are apt to come full of our spiritual needs, to be recruited and refreshed. We may not use the term, but still the idea in the Lord’s Supper to us thus will be that it is a ‘means of grace.’ We bring jaded spirits and unstrung energies to a meeting where we trust the weariness will be dispelled, and the lassitude recovered from. We come to be ministered to and helped. We require the character of it to be soothing and comforting, speaking much of grace and quieting our overdone nerves for another week before us, in which we know too surely that we shall go through the same course exactly, and come back next Lord’s Day as weary as before, with the same need and thought of refreshment, with the same self in fact as an object, and scarcely Christ at all, or Christ very much as means to an end, and not Himself the end.

This is the evil of this state of things. Christ is not in any due sense before the soul, but our need, which He is to be the means of supplying. No doubt there is a measure of truth in this view of the Lord’s Supper. Can we come ever to Him without finding refreshment from the coming? Does He not,

blessed Lord, delight to serve us? Do not the bread and wine speak of refreshment ministered,—“wine that maketh glad the heart of man, . . . and bread which strengtheneth man’s heart”? Has He not spread us here a table in the wilderness? a table in the very presence of our enemies? Is not His language still “Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.”?

Surely all this is true. But true as it is, it is not this that gathers us. “To shew forth the Lord’s death,” has not this deeper meaning? Are not His own words, “Do this,” not for the satisfaction of your own need, not for the recruiting of your own strength, but “in remembrance of Me”? Thus this sacramental use of Christ (as I may surely term it, common as it really is, alas, among those who think that they have out-grown sacraments,) essentially lowers the whole thought of the Lord’s Supper. The remembrance of Christ is something more and other than what I get by the remembrance; something more than “the strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the body and blood of Christ,” although in this secondary way indeed, His body and blood may be remembered in the sacrament.

The purposed end is not, moreover, attained in this way. Of course, I do not mean to deny that Christ is gracious, and meets us oftentimes in unexpected ways. Sovereign He is, and beyond expression gracious. Still, if our blessing flows from the apprehension of Christ, how will such apprehension of Him as this shows ensure a blessing? If we make ourselves our object, will it be blessing? What honour has Christ, and what place in all this? And what must be the character of meetings to which languid and way-worn souls come seeking a stimulating cordial to send them back to what seems only too sadly indicated to be the main business of their lives?

We may have to approach this subject from another

side. Let us look now however at the other way in which our souls may be tempted from the simplicity of the remembrance of Christ.

Scripture does not speak of a 'worship meeting': it does not of course then style the meeting to break bread this. The term may be used very innocently, I do not at all doubt; nor do I in the least oppose the thought that the atmosphere, so to speak, of the Lord's Table will be, 'worship.' "In His temple doth every one speak of His glory." But we have need to guard against an abuse of this also,—no imaginary, but a frequent one.

When we look at the worship of heaven, in that picture which so often tempts our eyes in Rev v., it is the simple presence of the Lamb slain that calls out the adoration of those elders, in whom some of us have learnt to recognize our representatives. Worship with them was no arranged, pre-meditated thing, but the pouring out of hearts that could not be restrained in the presence of Him who had redeemed them to God by His blood. And here is the mistake on our parts, when we think we can make worship a matter of pre-arrangement, while it is in fact a thing dependent upon another thing, and that the true remembrance of the Lord.

We can recognize the fact that in this thought we have a very different and a much truer one than in that which makes the motive to come to the Lord's table a motive of mere self-interest. Still the mistake often leads to a similar result that the very thing we are seeking becomes an impossibility. Worship itself becomes a legal claim, which as such we cannot render. We are in the presence of ourselves, not of the Lord; and the result is, a strained and artificial service, painfully reaching out after an ideal which is quite beyond it, and robbed of power and naturalness.

Thus there will be blessing on the one hand and

worship on the other in proportion as our eyes are taken off ourselves and fixed upon the object which both ministers the one and calls forth the other. Blessing there will be, for how can the sight of Him do otherwise than bless? And worship there will be, for this is the true and spontaneous response of heart to the sight of One who, being Son of God, yet loved us, and gave Himself for us. The great point pressed therefore in Scripture is discernment,—remembrance. “This do in remembrance of Me.” “Ye do shew forth the Lord’s death.” “He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.” Earnestly, affectionately, solemnly, is this pressed, as the pith and essence of the whole matter.

Of course we are not to forget that while our eyes look back upon the Lamb slain, it is from the hither side of His resurrection that we contemplate this. ‘The first day of the week’ speaks of resurrection out of death, and gives Him back to us in all the reality of a living Person. While we remember His death, we do it in the glad knowledge of His resurrection, and with the Lord Himself in our midst. Who could celebrate the Lord’s death but for this? Who could sound a note of praise, did He not Himself first raise it? as He says: “In the midst of the church will I give praise unto thee.” No spectre, as the astonished disciples thought,—not conquered of the grave but Conqueror, Himself with us: this alone turns the most calamitous sorrow into exulting joy. Death, but death *passed*, do we celebrate; death which thus seen is only the depths of a living love which we carry with us, unexhausted, inexhaustible; unfathomed and unfathomable.

“ Lo! the tokens of His passion,
 Though in glory, still He bears,
 Cause of endless exultation
 To His ransomed worshipers.

“ A Lamb as it had been slain ” is the object of the elders’ worship. The Living One bears with Him for ever the memorials of His blessed death. The cross is not only atonement effected for us, but the bright and blessed display of God in Christ only manifest ; and *for us*, in every attribute displayed.

* * *

If an angel from heaven were to come to my bedside, and tell me that Christ was occupied with me, as a member of His body, should I be more certain of that love than I am ? It is no delusion, but a fact, that Christ loves me, and will love me right on to the end ; and He will not cease making me know it till He gets me into the Father’s house to be eternally in the full fruition of it.

The Lord Jesus Christ at God’s right hand is the Rest of our hearts now. Can you say, just where you are, “ Christ is to be magnified in my body, whether by life or death ” ? Can you spread out all the details of your life, day by day, showing in everything that the present desire of Christ’s heart is that which guides you ?

What a happy people we should be if we were mirrors reflecting Christ, in the perfect consciousness of our weakness, but looking at Christ in heaven, bearing up amidst all the evil that is coming in like a flood, because He is up there.

Sorrows and trials are not only like the sand and grit that polish a stone, but I shall be made to taste, through the trouble, what Christ is to me.

G. V. W.

MAN'S SUPPER AND GOD'S.

Luke xiv.

How beautifully everything fits when God is the worker. The encounter at Jacob's Well, the tarrying till Lazarus dies, tell His wisdom as well as His love. And, as in the Scripture before us, what more fit place to work on the Sabbath-day than in a chief Pharisee's house?—Verses 1-6. Could there be a subject who needed more than a Pharisee to learn that all in the first creation is ruined, and therefore rest in it impossible—as well for God as man? In John v., “the Jews did persecute Jesus and sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath-day.” He answered, “My Father worketh hitherto (until now), and I work.” Nothing roused them like seeing Him work on the Sabbath. The Sabbath was rest after a week's *perfect* work. “God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was *very good*. . . . And He rested on the seventh day from all His works which He had made.” Work on that day, therefore, by the One who “came forth from God,” was unanswerable proof that something wrong had happened in that creation. Had not the Ass or the Ox *fallen* into a *pit* there would have been no call for work. Had not sin come into the world, there would have been no dropsy (v. 2), no impotent at Bethesda (John v.), no withered hand (Mark iii.), no blind eyes (John ix.), in God's way on that day; there would have been no need of His mightiest work carried on the whole length of that day: His death. No one

acquainted with man's heart need wonder at the Jews being so much excited to wrath by this one thing. It revealed the ruined condition of man, and of all that was entrusted to him, as a consequence, and there is nothing man seeks to hide from himself as much as that. Even now, in Christendom, where men profess Christ, receive His doctrine as true, have His death staring them in the face, is not *moral improvement* the almost universal idea? Does it not prove clearly that man is not only fallen, but also blind and wilful enough to deny it practically, if not doctrinally? If it were not so would they not have perceived that it was *man* who had broken *God's* rest, and that Christ working untiringly among the ruins was to the end God might introduce another, the real, eternal Sabbath, which "remaineth for the people of God?" God works when things are in ruin, and rests when they are perfect. Man is the opposite: he insists on resting when all is wrong, and now that "it is finished," now that the work is *done*, and that "to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness," he insists on "doing the best he can." O, man! what wilt thou say when thou shalt appear before Him whose ways thou hast steadfastly opposed?

(7-14.) As seen before, man shutting his eyes against his ruined condition, has nothing left but moral worth. Then as now, and now as then, he makes that the ground of admittance. It is *his* supper. He therefore calls in his "friends, brethren, kinsmen and rich neighbors," *i. e.* those of a similar moral standing. Did any one ever see such "in lowliness of mind, esteeming others better than themselves?" Nay, but each one filled with self seeks out the "chief room." What a scene for God's contemplation! Men, with hearts as they appear before Him, pretending to a high seat! Yet, go where you please, ask the first man you meet, and, except he

have been taught of God that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and *desperately* wicked," you will find him a guest at the Pharisee's supper, and looking out for a chief room. He will represent you heaven as an inclined plane, and all doing their best to get a good seat in it.

This is *natural* religion; what suits the infidel Sadducee as well as the orthodox Pharisee, because it never stirs up the conscience nor reaches the heart.

How truly God has said, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways." (Isa. lv. 8.) He has gazed at the Pharisee's supper, and at the guests there found, and now He will tell what kind of supper would please Him: "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind . . . for they cannot recompense thee." This is *grace*, and, O how comforting, how soothing! Poor, weary, precious soul, is thy heart sick with the human worthiness sounded in thine ears from every side? Turn and refresh thyself at a feast where thy *need* is considered, not thy *worth*. It is God's feast. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John iv. 10.) And again: "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 8.)

"For they cannot recompense thee." Sure enough, what can we return to God now for that wondrous salvation which He has prepared for us through Jesus Christ? The most we can do is, like Mary, "Sit down at His feet," and feast on the supper spread out for us. But He will be recompensed at the resurrection of the just," when "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (Eph. i. 18) are manifested.

Moreover, the character of such as sit at that feast is shown by the Master's words, "Go and sit down in the lowest room." *Grace* seeking out and meeting

their *need*, has made them conscious of their ruined condition, and they are effectually humbled. They can "rejoice evermore," because "they *know* they *have* eternal life," (1 John v. 13), they know they "*have* redemption through His word, even the forgiveness of sins," (Col. i. 14); but they walk with their heads low because they also know and often *feel* "that in them, that is in their flesh, dwelleth *no good thing*." (Rom. vii. 18). These are the ones who can "esteem others better than themselves," not in word, but in truth.

"And when one of them that sat at meat with Him heard these things, he said unto Him, blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." He had felt the contrast, and esteemed "blessed" him who would sit at God's feast. My dear brethren in the Lord Jesus, are we not indeed a *blessed* people: In the midst of all our tears is not our heart lifted up within us at the thought that we are hasting on to see Him?

(15-24.) Thus God's mind has been made known. He has said what kind of a supper He loves, and one feeling drawn towards it indirectly expresses his wish to sit at such a one. So Christ answers, "A certain man *made* a great supper, etc." Yes, dear reader, the supper *is made*. Men may tell you you have something to bring to it, that all is not quite finished, that Christ has done His part and you should now do yours; but God says, He has "made a great supper." He says, "Come, for all things are *now* ready." The offering has been made, the blood is on the mercy-seat, and sinners may come in boldly by the blood of Jesus. (Heb. x. 1-20.) If the supper were not made He would say "*Do* and live," but now He says, "*Hear* and live," (Isa. lv. 3; John v. 24). Salvation is finished. It is God's work through Jesus Christ. You have nothing to do to it nor to get it. All you need to know, is your need of it and to accept it

as God's free gift. Nor has God done as some would represent, *i. e.* shut that supper up so that some should not get at it.

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) Again, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have *all men to be saved*, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth; for there is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who *gave Himself a ransom for all*, to be testified in due time." (1 Tim. ii. 3-6.) *Not one* soul among Satan's ranks will be able to take for excuse that there was no salvation for him. Why then so many lost?

"He sent His servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, come, for all things are now ready. *And they all with one consent began to make excuse.*" Again, "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, *and the world knew Him not.*" (John i. 10.) That is the way man treats God. Not content with departing from blessed Eden, he refuses to recognize the blessed God Himself, and mocks His grace. Surely then, even the freedom of salvation will turn against man in the day of judgment. It was finished, ready, freely offered to all; by it God was offering to justify the *ungodly*, but man's pride looked down with scorn on such a low seat; it was too humiliating to own the title of "ungodly," of "lost," of "sinner;" and his will, whose freedom he contends for so fiercely, led him to choose the wealth, the cares, and the pleasures of earth.

But while salvation is thus offered to man "without money and without price," it has cost God something; nothing less than His only begotten Son, of whom He says, "Let all the angels of God worship Him."

Think, dear reader, O, think for a moment of what

salvation has cost God. And is the One who has so faithfully "finished the work He was given to do" going to get nothing? Shall the obedient Lamb go empty and the "roaring lion" get all, because man's will is for evil? Verily this would be making man the potter and God the clay. Thank *God* it is not so. Thy blood, Thy cross, Thy agony, Lord Jesus, have not been in vain, for God has ordained that Thou "shalt see of the travail of thy soul and be satisfied," (Isa. liii. 11). Accordingly the servant is sent out with the admonition, "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and *bring in hither* the poor, etc." The command is carried out, the servant returns with the word, "Yet there is room," and again he is sent out with the order, "Go out into the highways and hedges and *compel* them to come in." God in love provides salvation for a lost world. The world answers by rejection. Faithful to His Son, He will now provide for Him by election. His sovereign grace will now *call out of the world*. (John xvii.). Amazing ways of God! Short-sighted man may form religious parties out of pieces of truth which he isolates from the rest, but, viewed as a whole, how beautiful! Every individual saved being a direct act of God's sovereign and gracious will, which, instead of limiting a salvation more free than the air, but reveals man's wilful and universal rejection of it.

Some precious soul may ask here, but is a sinner saved against his will? To this I reply: Why is it you were in such distress for weeks and months before you found peace with God. Your will, your wretched, wicked will, had to be broken before you would bow to God's will, and be saved through Jesus Christ. There was no *need* of your suffering so. There was nothing in it for God. Christ had done it all. But the Shepherd was after you, while you held out against Him as long as you could. All the children of God will find out some day that this is all

the part they acted in their salvation, and their walk on the earth is not a little influenced by their recognizing it at the start.

It is scarcely needful to notice, "the servant" here is the Holy Ghost, sent down after Jesus was rejected on earth and glorified in Heaven and what a lesson for us, beloved fellow-workers. How it should lead us to bow low before our Lord and Master. There is none brought in here who has "not on a wedding garment," as in Matt. xxii., where the "servants" are the ones viewed in service. What the Holy Ghost is doing is perfect. He is after Christ's interests, even as Christ was after God's, therefore all is right. But in *our* service, too often an hour of sleep, a selfish motive has marked it, and the door has been opened to let in a plant which the Father had not planted. It shall be rooted up to our shame. O! that we might learn to yield ourselves up to God as passive instruments in His hand; like the Holy Ghost, stay here, work here, suffer here, only with Christ's interests at heart.

(25—end.) So far *grace* only—what God has prepared for man—has been set forth; therefore "great multitudes went with Him." Such is man, and the unbounded selfishness of his heart. Give him, without attaching responsibility to the gift, and he will flock in. But the Lord now throws in salt. He declares. He has come to bless, but the blessing is coupled with something that will test and manifest the truly blessed. "If any come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." There is no room for doubting or hesitating. If in anything, those nearest and dearest to us, the very ones God holds us responsible to love in nature, hinder our walk with Christ, they must become to us as hated objects, no more to be heeded. And as to our life here, it matters but little if it be made miserable by our connection with Christ, we are following one who gave up *all*, His

own life, too, for us. How sweet to give up all for Him, thankful if nothing and nobody hinders, letting go all, if all is in the way.

That is the cost, if Christ is the one we follow. Art thou willing, O man, to suffer that? Thou hast been apparently rejoicing under the sound of His grace, but hast thou reckoned on that if thou *really* set out to follow Him? One may say, this has gone by. Times have so changed, that "suffering loss" is no more a consequence of following Christ. Such we can but refer to 2 Tim. iii. 12: "Yea, and *all* that will live godly in Christ Jesus *shall* suffer persecution." Mark, moreover, that the admonition is for them of the "last days, when perilous times shall come." Let true souls throughout Christendom earnestly enquire of God why the sailing is so smooth in their testimony on earth. It is a deserving enquiry which will not be fruitless, if we carry it on to the end before God. It is of importance that we find out, Christ "came not to send peace *on earth*, but *a sword*." (Matt. x. 34.)

Such is the cost every follower of Jesus must reckon upon, and yet, if a man begin to sit down and reckon the cost, he is sure to turn back. The man about to build a tower sits down, counts the cost, discovers *he* has not enough, and does not build. The king fears the enemy, counts *his* men, and refuses to fight. Surely this is not *faith*. Sight reckons on what it has, faith on *the Lord*. Faith never counts, but suffers all; "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

Thus stripped of all, and self-emptied, David joyfully cries out to the giant, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied;" and he confidently affirms, "This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and with spear, for the battle is the Lord's." P. J. L.

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(38). When does the believer receive the Holy Ghost? Does one knowing forgiveness as preached by Peter to Cornelius, have afterwards to go through the experience of Rom. vii? My own thought was that deliverance is the getting of the Holy Ghost, and that a man 'in the flesh,' as in Rom. vii., has not the Holy Ghost; but this would not appear to agree with other Scripture teaching.

(Ans.) As to the first question, Scripture supplies in Eph. i. 13, and 1 Jno. iv. 15, the only answer that I can give. The first is literally: "In whom having believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise," and this seems to show that there is no interval between believing and being sealed. The second seems also to teach the same: "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, *God dwelleth in him*, and he in God."

To the second question I should reply, that the experience of Rom. vii. is one distinct from that gone through before the knowledge of forgiveness. They may coincide in point of time, and forgiveness and true deliverance be found together; and under the half-gospels of the day this is more apt to be the case than under the preaching of the full gospel.

But it is quite certain that the reception of the Holy Ghost does not necessarily involve the deliverance of Rom. vii. at all, that is, of a coincident thing; though a man must have the Holy Ghost, to be delivered. And a man may be 'in the flesh' two ways: *actually*, in his unconverted state; or *in conscience*, as not yet delivered. The latter is the case in Rom. vii.

(39) In what way is the righteousness of the law fulfilled in us? By Christ's death for us, or in our own walk as delivered?

(Ans.) The latter, clearly. It is fulfilled *in us*, not

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for us by Another; and "in us who walk,"—that is in our walk.

(40) Will you please explain Rom. ix. 8. Of what use to his brethren would it be for him to be accursed from Christ?

(Ans.) None, of course; nor does he put it as a deliberate wish. "I *was* wishing" is the true force. His love and anxiety for his brethren had led him even to wish to be sacrificed in their behalf, and give up his blessing to accomplish theirs. Vain as the wish might be, it showed his longing after them.

(41) If the Church is not to be found in the Old Testament, what does the apostle mean by his quotation of Ps. xxii. 22 in Heb. ii. 12: "In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee"?

(Ans.) The church *is* in the Old Testament, if you merely mean the word translated so, which merely means the 'assembly,' without saying what. So Stephen speaks of "the church in the wilderness," meaning of course the Jewish. "The Assembly which is *Christ's body*" is not to be found in the Old Testament, nor the thought of it ever. The apostle's quotation here refers to the disciples, no doubt, after the resurrection and fulfilment of it is in John xx. But the disciples were not yet the Church (in the New Testament sense) which had no existence until the baptism of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (1 Cor. xii. 13; Acts i. 5, etc).

The spirit of the quotation takes us in, no doubt; but the prophecies even of the Old Testament pass over the whole present dispensation (comp. Matt. xiii. 35 and 10, 11; Rom. xvi. 25, 26; Eph. iii. 4-6).

(42) Will you give me some light on Rev. i. 5? Is this company the Church, or that in ch. v. 10? But then why does it say, "shall reign upon earth."

(Ans.) At the close of Rev. i. 5, no doubt it is the church's voice breaks in. In ch. v. 10 it is the whole company of heavenly saints, whether of the Old Testament or of the New. "*Reign* upon earth" does not

imply at all *living* upon it, and 'upon' is better translated 'over.'

(43.) In Rev. i. as 'Son of man' the Lord goes forth for judgment, does He not? And going as Judge, He yet wears priestly garments, indicative of grace, are they not? Why then is He clothed in priestly garments? As High Priest He is forever set down. When He rises up as John saw Him (Rev. i.) do we suppose His office as High Priest to be ended? Or does that continue into or through 'the regeneration' or millennium?

(Ans.) The judgment of Rev. i. is priestly judgment as in Lev. xiii. Grace and government go on together hand in hand, as every book in the New Testament bears witness; and there is nothing inconsistent, but the contrary, in the One who bears us on His heart before God, exercising the keenest oversight as to His people's ways.

It is as to offering sacrifice His work as priest is done (Heb. x. 12), and His sitting down must not be pressed too far. It is in opposition to the constant offering of the Jewish priests, and has no reference to intercession or to priestly judgment. John in Rev. i., does not see Him *rise up*, which would seem to refer to and end His sitting down, but He sees Him standing, not offering but observing and pronouncing. Of course His office of High Priest was not then ended. for Rev. i.-iii. applies wholly to the present time, and not to the millennium, but He is priest upon the throne all through the millennium.

(44.) Should 'Messiah' of Dan. ix. 26 be "Anointing?"

(Ans.) Certainly not: the text is quite correct.

(45.) How do you understand "had the wound by a sword, and did live" (Rev. xiii. 14)?

(Ans.) I believe it to refer to the revival out of death of the Roman empire. It is as so revived the apostle sees it come up in the latter day: "the beast that was, and is not and shall be present."