

HELPS IN
“Things concerning Himself.”

EDITED BY W. T. TURPIN.

“Christ is all.”—Col. iii. 11.

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Helps in "Things concerning Himself."

THE HEAVENLY MINISTRY.

(2 COR. III. 7; IV. 9.)

THERE is a great contrast introduced in this third chapter between the ministry which had its day on this earth and that ministry which is now in progress, and, I may say, very near its close. It is of importance to understand what is the character and nature of these two ministries. They are in complete contrast, the former not answering in any measure to the latter. There is a distinct and definite ministry *from heaven* at this present moment, which has for its object a formative character in God's people. There are two things that stand out very prominently in this ministry in contrast with the former ministry; and when I allude to that, of course I refer to that which was instituted on this earth at Mount Sinai, given to Moses with a distinct and definite purpose of God in it. The two things which mark the present ministry from the heavens are quite apart from, and not to be found in, the ministry from Sinai. They are spoken of in this third chapter, and I would not that they escaped my readers' attention;

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they are *liberty* and a *formative efficiency*. These are the great characteristics of the present ministry. I will speak presently of what the purpose of God is with respect to the character which this is intended to produce in God's people; but these are the two great features of it: liberty in contrast with bondage, and a formative power in contrast with the entire absence of anything of the kind in the ministry from Sinai.

To be simple about it: when the ministry of Sinai came, it was embodied in the ten commandments, which were written upon tables of stone, and were given by God in the righteousness of His claim, thus making a demand upon man as such, he being incompetent to answer to it. That was the special characteristic of it. It was God demanding; God come to look for that which man had not to give. He looked, for instance, for righteousness, but man had none; He looked for a character suitable to Himself in the then revelation of His name, but man had not that suitability; and the consequence was that man, being unable and incompetent to render to God what God was claiming from him, fell under the condemnation and power of death which was attached to that ministry. Hence it was "the ministration of death." (Chap. iii. 7.)

And that must be always a ministry of death

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which makes a demand upon man *in the flesh*. I do not exclude even the most exalted ministry that could be conceived; if that ministry were to come and claim from us on the ground of what we are, it would be a ministration of death, just as the Sinai ministry was. The moment a demand is made upon man as he is, that instant condemnation is fixed upon the creature on whom the demand is made. That is the special mark of what we may now call the Sinaitic ministry—that worn-out system which has now passed away, in God's grace. The consequence of that ministry was bondage and not liberty; hence you see the apostle, in contrasting it here in this chapter, says, "The Lord is that spirit." It should be a small s; it is not the Holy Ghost; what he means to say is, that the Lord is the spirit of all that is in the Old Testament. You will find certain things represented in the former order of things, in the way of types, and so on; but the *spirit* of it all was the Lord Himself. Then you have the Holy Ghost in the next clause, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." It marks the new position in connection with this new ministry. The Holy Ghost is there; but if the Holy Ghost be there, then there must have been previously a ministration of the very thing that was formerly demanded, namely, righteousness; because it is the ministry of righteousness, and glory, and the Spirit, in contrast with the

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ministry of bondage, death, and condemnation.

Well, now, that is simple enough, I trust, at least as to the doctrinal part of it. The previous order of things, and, I may say, that which people want to revive in a mongrel way now, consisted in God making demands upon man in the flesh ; and, if God do so, man must necessarily come into the condemnation which inevitably flows from it, for he has no righteousness for God ; he is in unrighteousness. But now what comes out is this : that God, from the glory, from the very place where that blessed One is at the right hand of God, *ministers to* man upon this earth a righteousness that he had previously *demande*d from him. He *ministers it to him*, instead of looking that man should be up to the glory of God, from which he had fallen so far short. It is a ministry of glory, and of righteousness, and of the Spirit ; that is, the Holy Ghost is the characteristic power of everything which is based upon this righteousness, the pedestal upon which it all stands.

But there is something more, an exceedingly blessed and important element, in this second ministry, in addition to what I have spoken of as to righteousness and the Spirit. It is its formative power ; the effect of being under the ministry of glory is to be transformed into the likeness of the blessed One in whose face the

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glory shines. The law never did that. The law never made a man like itself, but condemned him for his *unlikeness*. It cursed him on account of his shortcomings ; and let me say, that if it did not do that, it would cease to be the law. You will thus see the folly of taking away the penalties of the law. What good would it be if they were taken away? If you take away the penalties of the law you destroy the whole power of it. The law, without its necessary penalties, is a miserable thing, good for nothing. The principal constituent element of law, its characteristic, its very nature, was this, that it condemned man for being short of its requirements. Man was short of the chief claims of the law of God, and it condemned him necessarily because of it.

What is it that suits a poor wretched creature now, in the full consciousness of his shortness, and inability, and feebleness? Just this, that the very thing that he had not for God, God has for him ! Man had no righteousness ; God gives him righteousness. He was under bondage ; God gives him liberty. He could not stand in the presence of the glory ; God ministers glory to him. And the necessary consequence of that is, the *formative* power of which I now treat.

I ask you, dear reader, affectionately, are you in the *liberty* of that ministry? Do you know,

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in your soul and in your conscience, the liberty that comes from being under that ministry? That you have got a righteousness which is suited to the presence of God, and that the glory from whence that righteousness is ministered to you, and the One in whose face the whole glory of God shines, is just the One who suits you; and beside that, as you look at that blessed One in all the glory of God where He is, do you know the transforming power and effect of that vision, producing in its feeble measure (because of the vessel upon which it acts) something of the likeness of Christ, "changed into the same image from glory to glory"?

You see, it is a wonderful thing to think of, what the purpose of God is about it; and this is where the deficiency is in every one of our souls. The thought of God is to have a people on this earth walking in the steps of His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is now in the heavens. That is His thought, His present thought about His people; and if you and I have not in our souls the sense of that, that God is seeking to have a people upon this earth, in their feeble measure the reflection of His own Son in the heavens, how can we have that communion with God which apprehends His things? If the thought of God be to have a heavenly people upon this earth, in the interests of His Son, you cannot go on with this world; and if this be

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not God's thought, what is? If God be seeking to have a heavenly people, a people in their practices, and ways, and walk, and character, and relationships, heavenly, if that *be* His thought, then we cannot possibly go on with the age. We do violence at once to the purpose of God if we do.

If we mean to go on with the world, I think it would be far more honest if we said, "No, God has *not* such a thought in His mind at all. His purpose is to have a people here to enjoy the world as much as they can; that is His purpose." I believe there is a solemn call at this moment that we should be honest with our hearts and consciences. There is nothing God hates and detests so much as unreality. The great thing that He is looking for in His people is *reality*, and not to be trifling about these things. I can understand those who give a denial to the fact, and say, "God has no such purpose; Christ did *not* go up to heaven to form a people like Himself, and the Holy Ghost did *not* come down to keep a people here occupied with Christ." It is easy to understand how such go hard and fast with the world. But there is nothing so miserable and detestable as a sort of truckling with this wretched, polluted world, taking just as much of Christianity as you think will suit you. This is exactly what people are doing. They take just as much of the truth of

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God as they think will put some sort of status upon them ; but the part that cuts them, that strips them of the thing their heart clings to, they turn aside from. It reminds me of what used to be done in days gone by, and is even now very common : people take and read the word of God—the Old Testament ; they find most wonderful promises and blessings, and wonderful prospects for the Jew, and they take them to themselves with the most perfect self-complacency ; but what is done with the curses ? They quietly leave those. This is, I fear what people are doing in their consciences with reference to the truth. They take as much of the truth of God as suits them (what a terrible snare it is !), just as much as will make their consciences easy to go on with the flesh and the world ; but the part that cuts them asunder, that exposes them for their worldliness, that brings them in as short of this wonderful testimony, and shews them up with the light of God streaming upon them in all its brightness and glory—they turn aside from that. Believe me, you must either take Christianity or leave it. You cannot mix Christianity and earthly religion. This is what people are trying to do, but it is the destruction of the testimony of the people of God in these last times where it is the case. They are semi-Christians and semi-Jews. They find that God gave certain things

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to a people on this earth, and they take them for themselves, thus setting aside the heavenly character of the testimony committed to them.

But when I open such a scripture as this, for instance, a scripture that shews me the beloved Son cast out of this earth, rejected, refused, and despised, spit upon by the world and the people of the world, and the glory of God put in the face of that blessed One up there whom man despised, I have no question whatever about the character of the ministry, and about the character of the glory. The very rejection of Christ upon the earth, and the very glory of Christ in the heavens, opens my heart to all the liberty that is up there, but equally shuts me up to the narrowness of His path down here. You cannot help it. And therefore I feel it is really of moment to bring people to an issue with their consciences about it ; and I do feel it is a solemn thing to write this ; I feel, before God, it is a very responsible thing to speak any word for God in such a moment as this ; but there is nothing that is working more mischief and more harm at the present time amongst the people of God than that sort of half-and-half bowing to the truth. There is a want of straightforward, open facing of the question with conscience, a turning aside of the edge and power of the word of God from the soul. And not only so, but some are positively seeking by the scriptures to

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vindicate this departure from the truth of God. I say it is a very solemn thing, and one which every one of us ought to seriously lay to heart. Do we really mean to be governed in our ways by the thoughts of God? May He give you and me a firmer grasp in our conscience as to what the character of the thing is that He has introduced from heaven, in connection with the glorified Man up there! His purpose is to find down here on this earth a people in some little measure after the fashion of that blessed One who is in glory. That is His purpose and thought.

And therefore you get that verse of the third chapter, which comes in in connection with this: "We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord;" not like Moses, who had his face covered that the children of Israel could not look upon it. You will remember the circumstance which the Holy Ghost refers to. Moses went up to the mount to receive the tables of testimony, and when he came down the second time his face shone; and the shining of Moses' face, as he came down, was the reflection of the condemning power of that law which man could not stand, and therefore he covered his face, not when he went in to God, but when he came out to man. Man could not look at him, because every ray that shone from that face made a demand upon man which he could not meet. But here is a

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more brilliant glory: a glory that shines, not from the face of a poor weak man like Moses, but the whole glory of God itself, the undivided radiancy of His glory, the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of His own Son. Is not that a wonderful thing, that you are positively capable of looking at the radiancy of the glory of God as it streams from that blessed face? Capable of gazing at it! Why? Because I have got righteousness under my feet instead of condemnation, and the Holy Ghost in me instead of my being in bondage; and every ray of glory that shines from that blessed face in the heavens is the reflection to my soul of the completeness, and sufficiency, and fulness of His finished work—the eternal pedestal of blessedness He has set us upon.

But there is more than this. As I look at that glory it has a *formative* power as well. I tell you, beloved reader, and I say it to myself, as well as to you, what we all stand in need of (I write especially for those who have a genuine desire in their souls to be a little more after the power of this ministry) is, to be long enough in the presence of that blessed Christ who is glorified to catch His features, and so have Him engraven upon the “fleshy tables of our hearts.” That is what is wanted. It is not an *effort*. You might try to be like Christ in glory until you were worn out with trying, and you would

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not catch one feature of His. The very fact of your striving proves your inability. But what is it? It is a thing that nobody can explain. I do not believe you can ever convey to another what it is to sit engrossed with that blessed One who is there in glory. Who could explain it? It is a thing that a person may speak of out of the fulness of his own heart; but who could convey either the satisfaction of it, or the effect of it upon oneself, individually? The word of God speaks to us of the fact, but there is no man living, nor has there ever been one, who could convey to another, be he ever so intelligent, or spiritual, or earnest, the sense which the heart gets, of what it is to be clay in the hand of that glorious Potter. It is impossible to describe it, and yet it is a *reality*. It is a reality, that the person who, by the Spirit, is detained in the company and presence of the glorified Christ, insensibly to himself, is changed into the same image, from glory to glory.

When Moses came down from the mount, though it was the mount of condemnation, there was a glory streaming from his face which no one could look at; but there was only one man in the whole of that company who was insensible to the fact that there was glory in his face, and that was himself. Where did he get that glory? He went up and he was alone with God in the mount, and the glory, though it was connected

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with the ministry of condemnation, was reflected upon his face when he went down. You and I, gazing on that blessed One up there, no veil being on His face (for I think the passage primarily bears that thought), and as we by faith look steadfastly at Him, as we sit before Him, as we are sufficiently passive in His presence, He is engraved on our hearts by the Spirit, and thus there is the reflection upon us.

You know, I am sure, what it is to meet a person who gives your heart the sense that he has been in the company of Christ, who reminds you of Christ. But how seldom is this the case! What I feel so deplorable, and what one mourns over, is that, even with reference to the very best of things, we leave so much the impress of *ourselves* upon them, instead of Christ. That is what is so sad. In what is done for Christ, we are more impressed with the one who is doing it than the One for whom it is done. What one longs for, what one's heart yearns after, is to be just like clay in the hands of the Potter, as our hymn expresses it:

“Thou art the Potter, we the clay.”

God's thought is that we should be as clay, *absolutely passive*, so that the potter might leave the mark of His own beautiful hands upon us. What a wonderful blessing it would be if that were the case with us, as we move through these

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scenes of sorrow, and difficulty, and trial, and temptation, and besetment, surrounded by all that is in this poor, wretched, miserable world, which the devil will head up with his masterpiece of iniquity against Christ. Oh, to be distinguished, not so much by what we say and do, as by the way that hand governs us, controls us, guides us—the hand of the potter. That is the meaning of this last verse of 2 Corinthians iii. As I said before, it is not *effort*, it is not grasping after something, it is not seeking to possess yourselves of anything, it is simply this—“We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image.” That is the clay under the hand of the blessed Potter.

It is a wonderful thing that God should take such a thing as clay to reflect His glory in. I will refer to that more fully presently; but what I want to press now is that there is this *formative* power in this ministry. Instead of demanding or seeking for anything from us, it brings *to* us from the heavens the thing we could not give, and besides that, it transforms us into the image and likeness of Christ, as we are sufficiently like clay in His hands.

Now, may I ask you affectionately—and I do not want to make you depressed or morbid—but I ask you, how much of your time do you really sit in the Lord's presence? How much time

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and leisure have you, not merely from the business of this world, but even supposing your service is for the Lord, how much time have you for this that I am speaking of? Do you not know that in order that there may be great *outgoings*, there must be great *incomings*? There will be no outshining, if there is not inshining. What is it then? Simply this, that the heart and soul have *leisure enough*, both from the things without and within, to sit down in the solitude of the presence of that blessed, holy, glorious Person who is in heaven, finding delight in Him for His own sake. Now what do you and I know about that? What do we know, in our own souls, of that blessed, wonderful retirement, sitting in the company of Christ, blind to all else save His beauty and His glory, deaf to every other sound but that of His voice

“Oh for a heart, submissive, meek,
My great Redeemer’s throne,
Where only Christ is heard to speak,
Where Jesus reigns alone.”

Would not a person fresh from a scene like that be *redolent* of Christ?

Some one once said to me, speaking of another, “I like to be in the company of So-and-so.” I replied, “Why?” The answer was, “Because he always conducts me into the presence of a third person.” “Who is that?” “The blessed One in glory.” Oh, what a blessed thing it is

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to walk through this world, and as we meet each other, in our business, our households, or domestic relationships, to remind each other of that One in glory, to have the likeness of that Christ, in measure reproduced in poor, wretched creatures like you and me! It is a most blessed reality—the most marvellous ministry that could be conceived.

W. T. T.



“THERE WERE NO BREAKERS IN
THE LIFE OF JESUS.”

FINALLY, if the Lord leaves His own, He leaves them peace, which He could not have done had He remained with them, for peace would not have been made ; but He defines this peace in a way that gives it a perfection, which the fact of the purifying of the conscience would not have procured for them. That indeed took place by His blood : the disciples would be perfect as to the conscience. His conscience was always perfect ; ours is made perfect by His blood. But with the exception of the cross, and the anticipation of the cross, the heart of Jesus was ever with God. Feeling everything in love, *nothing distracted Him, nor weakened His communion with His Father.* Perfect obedience and confidence maintained in Him, a peace which flowed from a walk with God, and from communion with His Father, that never belied itself.

“ THERE WERE NO BREAKERS,” ETC. 17

The current of the life that He lived on the part of the Father was uninterrupted: there were no breakers in the life of Jesus. The difficulties He met with were but the occasion of the shewing forth of divine life in the heart of a man, of the peace, which the consciousness of being always with God gave Him. Thus His words and actions were words and actions that came directly from God, in the circumstances in which He found Himself as man. A perfect sensibility, a perfect measure and characterising in His mind of all that acted upon Him, gave occasion to the answer, to that which the presence of God and the divine impulse produced in man. What could trouble the peace of Jesus? When it was a question of being made sin, and of bearing our sins before God, it was another thing; because that was taking place, the answer of God in His soul was not the effect of His perfect and blessed presence, but the being forsaken, according to the perfect opposition of His nature to sin. But here we approach sufferings that no one can fathom.

The Lord does not give as we give anything which consequently we do not possess any longer; *He brings us into the enjoyment of all that He Himself enjoys:* the glory, the Father's love, His joy. He keeps back nothing for Himself which is reserved to Himself, and in which we have not part,

J. N. D.

BORN OF GOD.*

BEING born of God marks a new nature, and, as shewn to us in John iii., the moral necessity of that new nature from Christ's divine acquaintance with what heaven was. With man on earth, and flesh, there could be no link formed. He came from heaven, and as Son of man in heaven he could say with absolute certainty, that is what must be, what is in a Son of man that can be in heaven. But being raised (risen) with Him is something more, though it be that life, *because it changes the position of the person, and implies the death of the old thing, the old man.*

Now this is not merely a new life, it is deliverance—the whole condition is changed. Hence it is now revealed salvation. And hence, also, salvation is spoken of as come, and ready to come, because redemption is wrought, and we are partakers of the place and title, into which redemption brings us, in which a risen Redeemer is, and we in Him, but we wait the actual bringing into it, which will be our change or resurrection, for “we shall not all sleep,” which is complete deliverance from the whole condition and scene in which we are in flesh—the redemption of our body. We are in it as in

* “Notes and Comments,” Part XIII., page 109.

Spirit—our “life is hid with Christ in God.” We wait for it as to actuality in our bodies.

In the Ephesians, though we get the divine nature and presence, without “now” or “then,” holy and without blame before Him in love, yet we do not get “being born again,” but “being quickened together with him,” and “raised up together,” putting “off the old man” and putting “on the new man.” We are “risen with him,” “created again,” and the like. Christ as in the world spoke of being “born again,” a new nature, for He was then in life, the new thing, but had not wrought redemption. Therefore He says, “If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things,” and then goes on to the cross. Hence He could speak of being “born again,” but He could not say, “reckon yourselves dead.” Now, we do—we say, “I am crucified with Christ,” “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God,” reckoning Christ dead and now risen again. We received life in that way, that is, as dead and risen again, and our place is in Christ thus risen. Thus we are “dead to sin,” “crucified to the world,” “dead to the law.” To the two former it is having done with them—the nature and the sphere it belongs to and moves in, under Satan. In the last the law does not lose its authority in itself, but we have died **as** to the nature to which

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it applies. We are not in the flesh. Hence, when it is only "born of God," we are in the condition of Romans vii.—the new nature working inwardly, but leading to the discovery of the old and our weakness.

When we know redemption, we are delivered and free. Hence it is when we have received "the truth, the gospel of our salvation," that we are sealed. In the beginning of Ephesians i. we have therefore "before him," as well as "holy and without blame, in love;" and in the end, the same power has raised us up in Christ. The Holy Ghost has sealed us, as in the place where redemption sets us, and makes us have the consciousness of the salvation, of being saved, and is the "earnest of the inheritance." Also we have Him as "the spirit of adoption."

J. N. D.



"DEAD WITH CHRIST."

ROMANS VI. 8.

IT would be impossible in words to express sufficiently the momentous and solemn nature of the subject, conveyed by the above words of scripture. As the Lord may help, I would set before my readers a little of what they bring before the heart, as to the great *fact* announced in them, as well as the corresponding effect intended to be produced in *practice*; it

"DEAD WITH CHRIST."

were an evil day when doctrine and practice are divorced ; and there are not wanting at the present moment signs of deep-seated danger in that very direction. How solemn a triumph of the enemy in this would be ! How easily he will succeed if the truth be received only in *terms*, heard only in the utterance of the loftiest and highest *expressions*, without any corresponding effect in manner of life. Let us not forget that the characteristic mark of the last days is the having *a form of piety*, but denying the power of it. See *2 Timothy iii.* 5, 6. It is our wisdom to watch jealously all the inroads of the enemy in this direction. First, then, let us seek to enter into the meaning of the words, "dead with Christ." What do they imply ? Surely there is a far deeper thought in them than that which occupies the first part of Romans, namely, the bearing our sins. Have we not in the words "dead with Christ" such an *association* with Christ in His death, as closes for ever before God our *previous history* and *condition*, as that of fallen, sinful Adam ? I could not better express the truth which by God's grace my soul has bowed to, than in the following beautiful words of another : "When He died, He, who knew no sin, came out of that condition of life in flesh and blood, to which *in us* sin attached, in which we were sinners, and in which He, the sinless One, in

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the likeness of sinful flesh and a sacrifice for sin, was made sin for us." "Christ, the sinless One, came and stood for us and God's glory substitutively ; that is, as a sacrifice in that place, He was made sin, underwent the forsaking of God, and, glorifying God, died in and to the place, *to the whole condition of being*, in which we were, and in which, as made sin, He stood for us before God." "Christ took human life in grace and sinless ; and as alive in this life, He took sin upon Him. Sin belongs, so to speak, to this life in which Christ knew no sin, but was made sin for us. But He dies—He quits this life. He is dead to sin ; He has done with sin in having done with the life to which sin belonged, *not in him indeed*, but in us, and alive in which He was made sin for us. Raised up again by the power of God, He lives in a new condition, into which sin cannot enter, being left behind with the life that He left. Faith brings us into it by grace.'

This I believe with all my heart to be the truth, of deepest moment just now, and shortness as to it, not only leaves us outside the mind of God as thus set forth, but correspondingly leaves us in *our soul's apprehension*, in the condition of being in which we were as in Adam fallen, and out of which Christ's precious death alone could extricate us. It is thus there can be no recognition whatever of man in the flesh, either as to *allowance* or *acceptance* of it.

"DEAD WITH CHRIST."

There is also another point now to which I desire to call special attention. I will do so by italicising the word *association*; when I use the expression "with Christ in death," I mean by it, the *association* of the believer with Him in His death. I do this to distinguish it from *union*. Union with Christ was impossible until He had risen out of death and ascended into glory. Union with Christ *in incarnation* is a solemn denial of His own words (see John xii. 24), and is the root of popery and its adjuncts. *Association* or *identification* are not the same as union. A Christian is indeed united to Christ *by the Holy Ghost*, but it is to Christ who *has died, is risen again, and gone into glory*.

Nothing can be more important in its place than a distinct and definite apprehension of this great reality. Not only has Christ died for us, but we have died with Him, believers can say. Oh that we might see, that the saints of God might see, how this cuts at the root of everything. What can a dead man seek down here in this world? This question is suggested by the great fact that I am seeking to press; everything that man in the flesh had to reckon with God about, but which he never could have settled, has all been disposed of between God and Christ. To nature and to common sense, the thing is impossible, unreasonable, absurd.

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But to faith, not only is it most blessedly true, but the believer can also say that he has died with Christ, is past the judgment, and out of the condition on which in relation to us judgment rested, so that there is naught against him, but he is alive for evermore in a life which death cannot touch, which knows no grave, is beyond judgment and the judgment land, yea, even in which judgment is turned into victory.

Further, as regards this life, nothing can be more blessed than to see how it has *objects* and *motives* entirely its own. This is what may be called the *positive* side of the question, and on which I do not now dwell. But I do press Christ's death in the special aspect of it already before us, and the association of the believer with Him in death, and the value of that association, not only to get judicially clear from the penalties resting upon man as a fallen creature, a descendant of Adam, though without all question, in that light, all judgment is past and that for ever : but that which is beyond all doubt most blessed, is, the value of that association as setting the believer free from *self* and the *world*, so that he can brightly and happily say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." This it is that a man must be fully assured of through faith and by the Holy Ghost, even that in the sight of God,

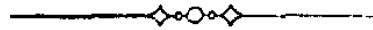
he has died with Christ, that he is regarded by God in that sense, as dead, and that he so regards himself; this it is that enables him, as is well said, "to reckon himself as dead, for him to be able to use that death against Satan, the world, and the flesh: to give, if I may be allowed the expression, by it, the slip to himself, and all that self furnishes as a handle to Satan, the world, or lust to lay hold of." How true it is that "Christ's death is made of little effect by most Christians; that they have Judaised it out of its eternal value and the estimate heaven forms of it, and reduced it down to be a part of a human system of their own, borrowed from the law of fallen humanity, and the elements of the world, both of which marked Judaism, and that this is a most solemn sin. The Colossians who had been dead in their sins, and in the uncircumcision of the flesh, that is morally dead, are thus charged: "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" They would sanction worldliness, and accredit their own flesh if they did so. And he adds, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." He has so appropriated all that I was, as to bear the record of it in His own body. My soul knows those hands, those feet, that side, that forehead; but, blessed be God, I know them in

26 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Him who was dead, but is alive again. I know them in Him who shall reign for ever as the Lamb who was dead, but is alive again for evermore."

Beloved reader, has God in His infinite grace brought these things before our hearts? If indeed it be so, may this further grace be given us, that they act in power upon us, and that we may find grace and power to act on them.

W. T. T.



JOHN I. 5 AND I JOHN II. 8.

NOTE the remarkable contrast between John i. 5. "The light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not," and I John ii. 8, "The darkness passes, and the true light already shines."

We get the full character of the living Christ in the presence of men, brought in by redemption after the Lord's death. In life He was the Light of men, but men were darkness, opposite in nature, and the Light did not expel the darkness at all. It remained as before, darkness, and did not comprehend the Light. But redemption came in—there was a new state of things—Christ had overcome the power of darkness, and brought a new condition of men in resurrection into existence, and vivified according

JOHN I. 5 AND I JOHN II. 18. 27

to the power and place of this life, which was in the light as God was in the light, and had left the darkness and the whole scene and power of it where it was, behind, the other side of the cross. Thus those who had received Him, had received light in their souls—cleansed by the blood they walked in the light, and were light. It was not the strange phenomenon of light shining and darkness remaining, but the darkness was passing, and already the light shone as light, not in darkness merely. This is an immense change indeed. It is then easy to see how this connects itself with “Which thing is true in him and in you.” It shews the relative place of the Gospel and Epistle very clearly, and more, it shews very powerfully the difference between Christ’s position and witness on earth, and the light brought in after redemption was wrought and He was risen. It is a very important comparison.

J. N. D.



FRAGMENT.

CHRISTIANITY depends in its work on what it brings, not on what it finds; our side and relationship to God by it, wholly on what we find, not on what we bring. In a word, it is grace not man, though he be formed and led by it. Thank God it is.

YOUR FATHER KNOWETH.

Words by L. W.

Music by J. S.

Precious thought, my *Fa-ther* knoweth, In His love I rest;

For what-e'er my *Fa-ther* do-eth Must be al-ways best.

Well I know the heart that planneth Nought but good for me:

Joy and sorrow in-ter wo-ven- Love in all I see.

Precious thought, my Father know-
 Careth for His child: [eth,
 Bids me nestle closer to Him,
 When the storm beats wild.
 Though my earthly hopes are shat-
 And the tear-drops fall, [tered,
 Yet He is Himself my solace,
 Yea, my "all in all!"
 Sweet to tell Him all He knoweth,
 Roll on Him the care,
 Cast upon Himself the burden
 That I cannot bear;

Then, without a care oppressing,
 Simply to lie still,
 Giving thanks to Him for all things,
 Since it is His will.
 Oh, to trust Him, then, more fully!
 Just to simply move
 In the conscious, calm enjoyment
 Of the Father's love;
 Knowing that life's chequered path-
 Leadeth to His rest; [way
 Satisfied the way He taketh
 Must be always best.

THE VESSEL OF THE MINISTRY.

2 Cor. iv.

AS we turn to this chapter, there are three things I will refer to in connection with this ministry. They are in the seventh verse. He says, "we have this treasure," and it is "in earthen vessels," and there is what is called "the excellency of the power," or, as I believe it should be, "the *surpassingness* of the power." These are three wonderful things to get before our thoughts.

"This treasure," what is it? I do not think the treasure is so much the estimate that my heart forms of Christ, as *the value that God has found in Him*. That is the reason, I believe, why it is called a "treasure." I do not deny the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is to be a treasure to His people, because you get the scripture elsewhere, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also;" but here the treasure, which is, of course, Christ, is presented more as it is looked at from God's side. It is the treasure in God's estimation. It is what the thought of God is as to this blessed One. Christ is *His* treasure. How did that treasure come into the vessel? Look at the sixth verse for a moment. He says: "For God, who commanded that out of darkness light should shine, hath shined in our hearts, for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

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That is the way the treasure comes in. It is not that *I* have possessed myself of the treasure. It is a wonderful thing—it sustains one's heart—to think of the sovereignty of the grace of God ; to think of that sovereign grace in its actings, as well as its purposes. How, then, did this treasure find its way into our hearts? Let me ask, how did light come into this dark world? Remember this, the sun was not the creature of the first day ; it was created afterwards. How then did light come? What was the light of the first three days in the old creation? This: "God said, Let there be light ; and light was." Just so spiritually in our hearts : God, in His wonderful, blessed, sovereign way of dealing, God Himself, who commanded that out of darkness light should shine, is the God who has shone in our hearts. It is not merely a ray from Him, or some emanation from Him, but God Himself shining ; that is a very different thing ; God Himself shining in a man's heart, in all His blessed illuminating power, for, or in order to, "the shining forth of the radiancy of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Take an instance of it. This very Saul of Tarsus himself, on the road to Damascus, a persecutor, who had never had a good thought of Christ, nothing but hatred, a man who thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, suddenly, in a

THE VESSEL OF THE MINISTRY. 31

moment, without the slightest warning, saw "a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun," a light that eclipsed the sun, shining in his noonday splendour, and the Saviour in glory was revealed in his soul. He is thus the living instance of the way this blessed treasure is deposited in a man's soul. Paul himself, who was writing this, is the living instance of the way in which God would command the light to shine out of darkness in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The whole glory of God is thus expressed.

And you cannot understand anything about the glory of God, except as you understand how it is seen in the face of Jesus Christ, and it is in the presence of that glory that conscience is dealt with; and if you think you can learn God in any other way, you are seriously mistaken, because the moment you bring your understanding or your mind to bear upon the things of God, apart from your conscience, there is the greatest danger of shipwreck as to faith. If I really see the whole glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ, I cannot help being challenged in the depths of my conscience, and that is the blessedness of it. There are royal roads to learning in other things, but not in this. The moment you have to do with God and Christ, you are convicted, and the earliest ex-

32 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

pression of your heart in the presence of that glory must be, "I abhor myself." And yet, as I said, this leads to confidence, and is the only thing that is *formative* in our hearts.

That is the first thing. Next observe where this treasure is placed; that is the second point in the verse: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." You may have often observed that when man has anything valuable, he generally encases it in something that is at least in appearance far more valuable. The outside coverings of man's valuable things are generally to sight a great deal more brilliant and valuable than the thing that is inside. The casket eclipses the jewel. Not so with God. He takes His treasure, the costliest thing, the most valuable and precious to Him, and puts it in the most contemptible vessel that you could conceive, that is, a poor, fragile vessel of clay. This is what he calls an earthen vessel; a poor, perishing, fragile vessel of clay.

But then He has a purpose in this; it gives Him the opportunity of doing two things. First His delight is to *make everything of the treasure*, and second, He is pleased to bring out the surpassingness of the *power*. There is not only the surpassing glory of the treasure, but the surpassing power with which He works in the vessel—the vessel broken to atoms; indeed, not worth anything until it is broken to pieces; but

THE VESSEL OF THE MINISTRY. 33

behind this poor vessel there is surpassing power. This, indeed, is a wonderful sight to look at. The whole power of God goes along with the poor vessel, into which He puts this treasure. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassingness of the power should be of God and not of us." But we have not only to accept the breakings that God brings upon us; but beside that, and in addition to that, we must keep the sentence of the cross, the death of Christ, which has given us liberty from the condemnation to which we were exposed—we must keep that death upon ourselves. God breaks the vessel; but we must keep the sentence of death upon it as well, in order "that the surpassingness of the power may be of God and not of us."

I do not pursue this further, but would ask you to think of these three things which are connected with this ministry: first, the vessel of clay, just what you and I are; secondly, a treasure placed in it of surpassing glory; and thirdly, a power that is surpassing in its efficiency *behind* it; and that power ever working in company with nothingness and weakness and self-abnegation, as well as a complete, utter, thorough denial of the flesh and the world. You cannot have power otherwise; and there is no manifestation of Christ, no shining forth of Christ, except as this vessel is entirely as clay in the hands of the

34 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

potter. There is no shining in, or shining out either. It must be clay for Christ, the treasure, to shine into, and clay for the Holy Ghost to bring the features of Christ out of, so that others may see them.

The picture alluded to here is no doubt Gideon's army. They put the light into the pitcher, but the light never shone out until the pitcher was broken. They had to break the pitchers, and then the light shone. And no doubt the Spirit of God alludes to that fact here. You have the shining in of the glory, and you have the surpassing power working that it may shine out. These two things go together, namely, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ shining into our poor earthen vessels, or pitchers, and the surpassing power of God that works through these vessels for the display of the glory of Christ.

How little our hearts are really up to God's wonderful purpose in giving such a ministry as this from those opened heavens! How little of affection there is in our hearts to enter into the purpose of God and into His thought, that, in a world which rejected His Son, cast Him out, despised Him, nailed Him to the cross, there should be those who should be the expression, the manifestation of that blessed, wonderful One whom the world rejected, but whom God glorified. Do our hearts desire that? Is that what

THE VESSEL OF THE MINISTRY. 35

we long for? Is that our purpose and object? Is that what we propose to ourselves? God will help us if we have such purpose of heart. Can we say to Him, I have only one desire, that I should be upon this earth a vessel in whom the display of the glory of Thy Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, should be found in every circumstance here? God delights to help us, and we shall have the comfort, the sustainment, of being in communion with His thought. I do not know any greater comfort in the whole word of God. Oh, the blessedness and rest of having, through grace, common mind with the Lord in any little measure! God and His people of one mind about those things that relate to the glory of His Son. It is most wonderful grace on His part to bring us into such a place that we can have like mind with Him, and to enable us by such *surpassing* power.

Suppose I see one turning his back upon everything in this world, who looks for nothing in it, who has no interests here, who does not expect anything, and would not take anything from the world. I say, What surpassing power is displayed in that man! If I see a poor, feeble creature lying on a bed of sickness, racked with pain, the poor body pressed down with disease, morn, noon, and night, and one who might be tempted to say, What good am I, a trial to every one about me, and a burden to

36 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

myself?—Yet if I see, amid all the weariness and pain, instead of complaint, satisfaction; instead of querulousness, rest and quietness; instead of quickness of temper, the blessed manifestation of Christ in meekness and endurance, I say, What a surpassing power there is there!

That is what this ministry is able to do, beloved reader, and that is God's thought about us in relation to it. There is not a circumstance in life, or a detail in our history, or a position that we can be called into—whether sickness or health, pain or its absence, prosperity or loss, trial or ease—there is not a single thing too many for the one who is satisfied to be clay in the hands of surpassing power. And more than that, it is in these very circumstances that Christ is endeared to us, for He alone is our sufficiency for all. Also, it is *where we are*, not where we would be, that the blessed God desires to have His Son seen in us.

This is the testimony that is really lacking at this moment. Every one is heard speaking of *doctrines*, and is supposed to be clear about them; but people are amazed to see so little of the doctrines *practised*, and they fail to see the corresponding grace in the propounders of them. Oh, for the manifestation of the truth in love, that exhibition of Christ which would stop the mouth of the rejecter, and commend itself to the con-

“THE GOSPEL OF THE GLORY OF CHRIST.” 37

sciences of men! And hence, says the Holy Ghost, “by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” (Ver. 2.) Men would be forced to say, Though I hate those people because they are so narrow, yet at the same time my conscience is bound to give this testimony, that they seek to please God. Herein is the efficiency of the power manifested, that in every circumstance, every service, everything I have to do, I am to be an expression of the skill of His hand.

The Lord, by His Spirit, give our hearts to desire to be His handiwork, to say in reality, and to act it as well, Lord Jesus, take me, and form me after the fashion of Thine own heart, place me where Thou wilt, only grant me this desire, that Thou mayest be magnified in my body, whether I live or die! Oh, may our hearts prize more than ever this blessed ministry, characterised as it is by such glories as we have had before us!

W. T. T.

“THE GOSPEL OF THE GLORY OF
CHRIST.”

2 COR. IV. 4.

SUCH is the way in which the great apostle, once Saul of Tarsus, expresses by the Holy Ghost the testimony committed to him, and which he elsewhere calls “My Gospel.” (2 Tim. ii. 8.)

38 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

The meaning of the expression, gospel or good news of the glory of Christ, is of the deepest moment for every soul, and I am assured before the Lord that if the truth as to the *Second Man* being now in glory, is either denied or unperceived, there will be a corresponding defect as to *peace* with God in the scriptural sense of the term, as well as in the *power* and *object* which is given in this good news, for heavenly walk and witness here.

I would seek to trace a little, by God's help, the good news which the glory of Christ sets before us.

1. What blessed cheer and comfort are carried to us in the *fact* that Himself, God over all, blessed evermore, who was pleased to become man ("the Word became flesh") is now as man in His own place in heaven, the Second Man and last Adam in the glory of God; further, that in glory in heaven He cares, and shews He cares, that poor rebel sinners who care not about Him or His glory should not perish through the blinding power of the god of this age. How blessedly does He not thus in glory stand out in striking contrast with all that is seen of man and his ways in this poor scene?

2. The good news of the glory of Christ brings before us in very blessed reality the great fact that all the work of redemption had been fully and entirely finished, for He who had come

‘THE GOSPEL OF THE GLORY OF CHRIST.’ 39

as the sent One of the Father, as well as in His great love given by God, having now accomplished all, has been (*as man*) received up in glory. It is not only that the sins of which we were guilty as sinners have been forgiven, but in the cross we see *the end of man, as man was*; the old man has been crucified with Christ. How blessed to see in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ the end of man driven out of Paradise, His resurrection the beginning of the *new state of man* according to the counsels of God, and His place as man in glory, the *new place of man*.

3. What good news is conveyed to us in the glory of Christ, of the fact that judgment has been inflicted by the death of Christ upon the first man, and that He who in His blessed love to His Father and the objects of His donation to Him, having passed through death and judgment when He was made sin for us, has begun again His life of man in an entirely new state beyond death and judgment.

4. We have said that the gospel of the glory of Christ brings to us the proof of the sin Christ had borne being utterly put away. But it also tells us of victory over death, and the introduction of man into the presence of God in glory, according to the eternal counsels of God's love.

Further, to use the beautiful words of another :
 “It was withal the full display of divine glory

40 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

in man according to grace, which the Holy Ghost takes to shew us, in order to form us after the same likeness. It was the glorious ministration of righteousness and the Spirit which opened the free way for man to God even into the holiest in entire liberty."

Now it is important to see that what the apostle terms, "the gospel of the glory of Christ," and elsewhere "my gospel," had reached him when a blasphemer, persecutor and injurious; on the road to Damascus, armed with full credentials to express his hatred and violence toward Jesus of Nazareth, the light of the glory of Christ had been kindled in his soul, in order that it might shine before men. How truly it was the power of God which had wrought in Saul of Tarsus, in the same way as when of old God had said, "Let light be, and light was."

Let it be borne in mind that Paul was to be both a minister and witness of the things which he had been. What had he seen? Had he not seen Christ in glory? And did not that light eclipse for him all else beside? How did man, and earth and all in it, look as seen in the "light above the brightness of the sun, shining from heaven"? What, I ask, could be more beautiful or wonderful than this blessed good news, beginning and consummated in the bright and beautiful circle of God's presence in glory?

Further observe how much is conveyed to us

“THE GOSPEL OF THE GLORY OF CHRIST.” 41

in the announcement of the Spirit, that the subject of Paul's first preaching was that—“Jesus was the Son of God.”

How blessed to know that the Saviour, who is in glory, is the Son of God. It is this which conducts the soul outside all that belongs to *man* and *earth*. Alas, how few there are who *in soul and heart* have been laid hold of by that which shone in the apostle's heart! Beloved reader permit me to ask, *Have you?*

It is the gospel of the glory of Christ alone that can assure the heart of how entirely the first man has come to an end judicially before God. I desire with all my soul to emphasise *judicially* as it is now denied and refused. The second man, risen out of the death and judgment, which He voluntarily underwent for God's glory, is now a man in the glory of God; as seen there by faith, all of man and earth is distanced. It is this and this alone which conducts the soul into what I may call the heavenly eclipse, and leads to such an expression as is thus set forth, *admired* by all, but *made good*, alas, in so few of us—

“Marvel not that Christ in glory
All my inmost heart hath won;
Not a star to cheer my darkness,
But a light beyond the sun.”

“All below is dark and shadowed,
Nothing there to claim my heart,
Save the lonely track of sorrow,
Where of old He walked apart.”

42 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Yes, beloved reader, the Saviour in the glory of God, seen by faith, is the true heavenly *starting point*; but He is also, as seen in glory, the true *gauge* of all else beside, and He is as well the *centre* for the soul to rest in. It is this heavenly object which turns this world into an *inn* with its "guest chamber" for those whose eyes have rested upon it; the tendency of our poor hearts is to make a *nest* in this world, but the gospel of the glory of Christ takes us into the scene where the Saviour is in glory, and then it is not a sad thing, but a happy thing to be a *heavenly stranger* where Christ is not.

W. T. T.



"THE ROOT OF THE MATTER."

THE veil is rent, Satan's power is broken, the sting is taken from death, and the victory from the grave—moreover, He who in His love has accomplished all this in His death, is risen and in glory.

Now this makes the gospel of Christ so precious for every soul. Do you, my reader, believe there is a man at the right hand of God, because He died for our sins?

Will you come to Him now? There is an open way. Jesus never said "Come" until He Himself came first. When He came, and was here in the midst of sin and sorrow, His blessed voice said "Come," and further—"him that

“THE ROOT OF THE MATTER.” 43

cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.” Now that He is in glory, having finished all the work, He says, “Let him that is athirst come.”

I think I hear you speak somewhat like this—

“Well, I trust I have come and cast myself on Christ alone, I believe He is the only Saviour, I believe nothing else can avail for me but His death ; but yet somehow I am not at rest, and am often full of doubts and anxieties.”

Now hearken to me for a moment. I was in conversation not long since with one who expressed herself much as you have done ; after a little, I said to her, “What are your doubts about? Have you any doubts about the *fact* of the cross and death of the Lord Jesus Christ?”

She replied—“None.”

You are quite sure that all the work that Jesus came to do was finished on the cross?

She replied—“Yes, quite sure.”

Do you believe that the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanses from all sin?

She replied—“Yes, I do believe it, but I am not sure if the root of the matter is in me.”

Is that your trouble? Let me assure you as to that. Thank God, the root of the matter is in Christ ; if it were in you, you would not need Him.

“But,” she replied, “I have other doubts. I

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am not sure whether I have the right kind of faith.”

Have you faith *at all*, I said; that is the point. And I sought to illustrate it in the following way—

“Suppose a very startling piece of news were brought to you by some person, how would you feel with regard to it?”

She replied—“If the person were a *competent* and *reliable* witness, I should of course believe it.”

Just so. And you would not think of your belief in the matter at all; the only question you would have, would be as to the *reliability* of the witness—if it were a truthful witness that cannot lie, all questions would be at an end.

Now, my reader, so it is with respect to the certainty of salvation: the unerring, unfailing testimony of God’s own word ends all doubt and uncertainty for whosoever believes. Scripture declares that Christ died for our sins, was raised from the dead, ascended into heaven, and is in the glory of God; and scripture also declares that by Him all who believe are justified from all things. How blessed to rest on the

WORK OF CHRIST

and the

WORD OF GOD.

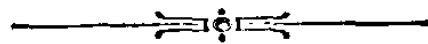
W. T. T.



GOD DWELLING WITH US.

HAVING often spoken of God's dwelling with us only in virtue of redemption, I was led to think of Christ's presence upon earth, and this really throws great light on His sojourn here. He did not dwell in the midst of any one. He came to represent God to men, and the Son of David, the Messiah to the Jews, but only that. It was not taking up His abode with us. That does belong to grace and redemption, Israel historically, and the saint and the church by the Spirit. But He was here presentatively and alone. The Holy Ghost could dwell and abide in the redeemed when He had accomplished His work and gone up. He was in the way with Israel to the judge—God was in Him reconciling the world, not imputing their trespasses. This was another thing than dwelling in it as an abode. Hence in John i. "dwelt among us" is another word *ἐσκήνωσεν* (tabernacled) amongst us, and even this applies strictly only to the apostles. Still it implies that He was sufficiently there for the display of God revealed in grace, which is the capital point. But His Person was all alone, full of grace and truth, and declaring God; His place even then was on the bosom of the Father.

J. N. D.



“REPROACH.”

THERE are two kinds of reproach to which the saints of God have ever been exposed from the world ; first, for the name of Christ, as we read in 1 Peter : “ If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye ” and in Hebrews xiii. : “ Let us go forth therefore unto him, without the camp, bearing his reproach.” But there is also that which too often comes upon us as the result of our ways, whether collectively or individually, and where it is in no way a glory but a shame. We find interesting instances of these varied thoughts in the history of God’s earthly people, which surely have a word for us in the present day.

First, then, we would look at Hebrews xi., where we find the Holy Ghost records for us about Moses (ver. 26), “ Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.” This comes first both in order and morally ; in order as to time, because (although in the New Testament) it is the divine comment on what did actually come out in the life of Moses ; morally, because it is as individuals we first learn reproach for Christ in accepting in faith God’s record about the despised and rejected Saviour, and we find, more or less, that the world that hated Him, hates also those that belong to Him.

“REPROACH.”

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Then we come to the history of God's dealings with the people when they enter the land; in Joshua v. 9 God says, “This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you.” How wondrous an answer of divine grace to the reproach of this world, realised now to faith, for directly we get to God's side of things we see it.

When Moses was in Egypt he could “esteem the reproach” because “he had respect unto the recompense of the reward,” he looked at unseen things; so for us, the more we have to do with “those things which are above,” we shall find that, whilst actually here, the reproach is as strong as ever—the stronger, indeed, the more we are occupied with the unseen—but when faith brings God in, or rather takes its place with Him, then we hear the word, “I have rolled off the reproach”—what compensation even here! But let us look on a little further in the history of the very same people from whom God had rolled off the reproach. In 1 Samuel xi. 2 we read: “And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this condition will I make a covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it for a *reproach* upon all Israel.” Here is an attempt made by the enemy to fix a reproach upon “all Israel,” and, though not successful, because of the intervention of the Spirit of God (ver. 6), yet

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was it not a solemn warning to the nation in the changed position in which they were? They now had a king of their own, a seen king, "like all the nations;" they had given up their unseen King, though He had not given them up. It is almost directly after they had so acted this attack comes, and from whence? Not yet from the Philistines, but from the Ammonites, from the descendants of Lot, who "lifted up his eyes and beheld" (Gen. xiii. 10); God's people exchange the path of faith for *sight*, and are immediately opposed by those who already occupied that ground, and how nearly are they overcome, for they say to Nahash, "Make a covenant with us and we will serve thee;" they appeal to the mercy of the seen enemy rather than to the oft-proved grace of their unseen God. But He uses the very rigour of the terms proposed to hinder their falling thus low, and meanwhile the Spirit of God works in energy by the king of their own choice (for Saul is not yet set aside), and thus a deliverance is wrought out for them.

But further on, in chapter xvii., we find them in a more terrible trial than even this had been (ver. 3): "The Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side. . . . And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines named Goliath. . . . And he stood and cried

“REPROACH.”

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unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul.” What a change! servants to Saul, these over whom Jehovah Himself had been King. In verse 10 he says, “I defy the armies of Israel this day: give me a man, that we may fight together. When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.” What a position for God’s people to be in! what a sorrowful page in their history; how different from Gilgal, where, brought to God, they hear Him saying, “I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt;” yes, the world might fix its stigma on them, but God would have none of it; He had “borne them on eagle’s wings,” and brought them to Himself. How different too from Jabesh Gilead, with its sad witness of turning to seen things instead of to God, and where in spite of defection God wrought a deliverance for them by His Spirit.

But now Saul and the people are still the same, but the Spirit of God was not with them, for he had departed from Saul (chap. xvi. 14), and they are there alone face to face with the raging power of the enemy.

Well might they be “dismayed and greatly afraid;” but we do not read of any recognition of its being *a reproach*—they were too dull to

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see that; no one in that host seems to feel that.

But *it is a reproach*, and the one to discern it is the one who enters that camp from the wilderness where he had been alone with God; and he discerns it at once. (Ver. 26.) "David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the *reproach* from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

The Philistines had thought simply of Saul and the armies of Israel; Saul and Israel thought only of their awful danger in presence of such foes; David thinks of, and brings in, God, linking the dismayed people with the *living God: this is what faith ever does*. Is there not a lesson for us here, for all believers surely, those from whom our God has rolled off the reproach of Egypt? And in that sense it cannot be put on again, for *He* has rolled it off: "they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world," but the enemy succeeds too well in attaching a reproach to the Lord's people where their walk is concerned. Amongst those, too, who are professedly gathered to the Lord's name has there not been a grieving of the Holy Spirit by our getting occupied with present things here instead of with "those things that are above"? though it can never be with us

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as with Israel, that He departs from us. But have we not to learn from this present attack that He has been grieved?

We may well be dismayed and afraid if we look only at the foe, and perhaps we wonder why the Lord has allowed him thus to assault His own; but let us ask ourselves seriously David's question, "Is there not a cause?"

The one who has been with God is able to discern the reproach in the very words, "ye servants of Saul," Jehovah's chosen people owning a creature instead of Him. Is there no reproach to us, in that we have walked perhaps more before one another and less known what it is to be alone with God. But let us not be afraid nor dismayed, but each seek to get alone with our God about it, each one individually. There will be conflict even there, as with David, for it was in the wilderness he had to face the lion and the bear; but he comes forth from it able to discern what none else spoke of, and to meet it also in the power of the God he had been with. May the Lord grant to us to desire the sensitiveness which springs from communion, so as to discern what touches Him; and the power which belongs to Himself, so that we may each be really for His glory and the blessing of all those who are so dear to Him down here.

J. R. D.



IN THE HISTORY OF ETERNITY THE CROSS STANDS ALONE.

SEE how, in the cross, the whole question of good and evil was brought to an issue in every way. First, it was the complete display of man's enmity against God,—the contemptuous rejection, alas! of God come in love, for His love He had "hatred;" and in every detail, disciples, priests, Pilate, all bring out the evil that is in man. Then Satan's power is fully manifested, and that over men in their passions, and, in one sense, in death, at least in the sorrow of Christ's soul.

Next I get the perfect man as nowhere else; perfect love to the Father, perfect, absolute obedience, and that in the very place of sin, and the cup it had filled. And thus in human weakness, Satan's power (though above both, by looking to God), and the forsaking of God. And then God Himself, in perfect righteousness against sin, and sovereign, perfect, infinite love to the sinner,—His majesty and truth, both made good.

Such is the cross! In the history of eternity it stands alone. Man in God's glory is its blessed result.

J. N. D.



“I *CRIED* HE *HEARD*.”

TROUBLERS are multiplied, but the first thought of faith is “Lord.” There the spirit is at home and looks at troublers from thence. Jehovah is thus trusted. When Lord comes in the heart before those that trouble me, all is well. Our spirit sees Him concerned in matters, and is at peace. He is a glory, shield, and lifter up. Another point is, it is not a lazy, listless view of evil and good, nor listless confidence. Desire and dependence are active, the links of the soul with Jehovah—I cried and He heard. That is certain. That is the confidence that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears, and if He hears, we have the petition. We do not desire, if sincere, to have anything not according to His will; but it is an immense thing, in the midst of trial and difficulty, to be sure of God’s hearing and God’s arm, in what is according to His will. Hence peace and rest, “I laid me down and slept; I awaked: for Jehovah sustained me.” How emphatic and simple! Is it so with you, reader? Does all trouble find your heart so resting on God as your Father, that, when it is multiplied, it leaves your spirit at rest, your sleep sweet, lying down, sleeping and rising, as if all was peace around you because you know God is and disposes of all things? Is He thus between you

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and your troubles and troublers? And if He is, what can reach you? The thousands of enemies make no difference if God is there. The Assyrian is gone before he can arise to trouble or execute the threats which after all betray his conscious fear. We are foolish as to difficulties and trials, measuring them by our strength instead of God's, who is for us if we are His. What matter that the cities of Canaan were walled up to heaven, if the walls fell at the blast of a ram's horn? Could Peter have walked on a smooth sea better than on a rough one? Our wisdom is to know that we can do nothing without Jesus—with Him everything that is according to His will. The secret of peace is to be occupied with Him for His own sake, and we shall find peace in Him and through Him, and be more than conquerors when trouble comes; not that we shall be insensible to trial, but find Him and His tender care with us when trouble comes.

This testimony is so blessedly true, so comforting and yet so soul-searching that I have transcribed it in full. There can be but little doubt that the Psalm was the experience of David, and the bitterest and most painful kind of attack is thus expressed, "There is no help for him in God." It was to this part the great Reformer alludes when he says:—"They not merely speak as if I were abandoned and trodden upon by all

creatures, but as if God also would no longer help me, who, while He assists all things, sustains all, cares for all, for me alone of all things has no care, and ministers to me no support. Though every possible assault, the assaults of a whole world, and of all hell to boot, were concentrated on one head, it were still nothing to the thought that God is thrusting at a man—for preservation from which Jeremiah tremblingly begs and prays (chap. xvii. 17), 'Be not a terror unto me, O thou my hope in the day of evil.'"

There is one other point here full of very real comfort in the midst of trouble and troublers: it is that the taunt of "no help for him in God" is blessedly met and answered by the words "salvation belongeth unto the Lord." May every tried and sorrowing heart in this day of distress and rebuke enter into the precious comfort of these words, "*I cried . . . and he heard,*" "*I laid me down, and slept; I awaked, for the Lord sustained me,*" "*I will not be afraid.*" Thus there will be both heavenly vigour and courage imparted, which these words so aptly express:—

"The best return for one like me,
So wretched and so poor,
Is from His gifts to draw a plea,
And ask Him still for more."

W. T. T.

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“FROM HEAVEN.”

SENT from above, Himself our life and glory,
 Here as His witnesses—our path His Cross ;
 Light be our tread, and pilgrim-told our story,
 How for Him now we count all else but loss.

Fill'd with the brightness of Himself in heaven,
 Strangers on earth, and portionless below,
 Cheer'd by His love—not orphans or forsaken ;
 Borne on His heart, the road we onward go.

Friends of the Christ, our earnest expectation
 Here to hold fast and magnify His name,
 In this poor scene of woe and degradation
 Rising superior to our former shame.

Little in strength and weak our best endeavour,
 E'en to maintain His word and name and cross ;
 This be our joy, 'mid sorrow, trial, pressure,
 Waiting in patience for His well-known voice.

W. T. T.

FRAGMENT.

IT is only as the heart is fresh in communion with the Father and with the Lord Jesus Christ, that there is *real love* to the brethren. The children of a family are not found together because born of one father and mother. If the tender mother, the beloved father be gone, the power that kept them together is gone from among them. So with regard to fellowship with the Father and the Son, if that be not maintained with all freshness, love to the brethren fails.

G. V. W.

THE POWER OF THE MINISTRY.

2 Cor. iv.

I TRUST it has been clearly set forth that there has been a ministry on this earth, which had its day and purport in the mind of God, introduced at Mount Sinai by Moses, which carried the law, which claimed righteousness from man, and was in form written on stone; that thereby the knowledge of sin came in, and thus consequently it became a ministration of condemnation and death. It is to this ministry these words refer, namely, "If the ministration of death, written and engraven on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away, how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious."

It is of the deepest importance to remember that this ministry was suited to bring out the unwelcome but solemn truth, that the trial of man in the flesh only displayed his entire and complete ruin; not only had man come short of the glory of God, but the reflection of that glory in the face of the mediator, carrying with it, as it did, the claim for righteousness from man, repelled him instead of attracting; the glory of God in the face of Moses, had the same effect as "the sound of the trumpet and the voice of

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words" at Mount Sinai. With regard to the first, Israel demanded that Moses should hide his face ; with respect to the other, they entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more.

Moreover, this ministry being, as has been said, one of claims and demands from man in the flesh, it could never be formative in character or power ; indeed, it would cease to be of its own nature were it to *produce* in man that which it *claimed* from him under the sanction of condemnation and the curse. To sum up, then, respecting this ministry, its sphere was the earth, its character, a principle of claim and demand, and its issues, bondage and death.

Now the contrast to all this is, what is entitled in chapter iii. the ministry of the Spirit, as well as the ministration of righteousness, and the great point in the contrast is that what the first claimed, the second carried with it. The source of this ministry too, was very different from the former, as was also its basis. Its basis was the accomplished victories of the Son of God, who as Son of Man, glorified God on the earth, and finished the work which was given Him to do. It is to this blessed culmination of all His obedience, He Himself refers as follows, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him." (John xiii. 31, 32.)

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We know that this was spoken in anticipation of the sufferings and judgment of the cross, as well as the blessed proclamation, in resurrection and ascension, of how completely and fully He had glorified His God and Father. The basis then of this ministry from the heavens was the perfected atonement of the Lamb of God; therein was demonstrated the truth and love of God, as never before; therein was established a righteousness before God for man, in perfect accordance with the claims of His throne; and therein was judged sin, the world, and Satan. True it is, that He, in whose precious death all this was made good, died to establish it before God in consistency with His nature, yet He was raised from the dead on the third day by the glory of the Father, afterwards ascended into heaven, and is not only the one Man now before God—"the last Adam"—but the One in and from whose face the whole glory of God now shines.

But there is even more contrast in the consequence of these two ministries, for the effect of the first was bondage and condemnation, as well as the entire absence of anything approaching to likeness to the mind and thoughts of God; it were impossible for the law from Sinai to be in any sense formative in its nature or effects; in truth we may say plainly, that if it in any sense *imparted* to man, it would cease to be what

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it was in principle, a *demand* upon man ; but not so this ministry from the heavens, the very nature of which is to impart and thus to be formative. In this respect its contrast with the law is its glory. By what it ministers, namely, righteousness, and the Spirit, the believer is competent both as to title and power to gaze at the full and undimmed glory of God, as seen in the face of Jesus Christ, and thus the formative power of this ministry is maintained. Righteousness and the Spirit are the basis, transformation into the same image from one degree of glory to another is the result. What a blessed, wonderful ministry! Well may our hearts exclaim—Surpassing glory! excelling glory!

Now it is perfectly clear that, as another has truly expressed it—“A man of like passions with us, he (Paul) was one who in a wonderful manner lived with God so as to carry out this ministry ; he (Paul) laboured more abundantly than they all. Still what he ministered we receive ; only he was a vessel filled in more than ordinary degree. But this same blessed truth, as it especially regards the testimony, is committed to us, whatever the sphere, whether the greatest as an instrument, or the least, and therefore the thing that he ministered is ours, so that we are vessels, each one in his own little measure, of that with which he was filled.”

THE TOWER OF THE MINISTRY. 61

It is very instructive to see in the case of Paul the double character of testimony, if I may so say, which he was called to bear. We read in Acts xxvi. 16, "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a *minister* and a *witness*, both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee." We learn from this he was to be a minister and a witness, if I rightly apprehend the mind of the Spirit of God; the expression "witness" meaning that he was to exemplify practically what he ministered. What a wondrous calling, beloved reader, poor, feeble, failing man on this earth, now the vessel, and the "chosen vessel" of heavenly glory, was to be in his own person the expression, as a witness, of that ministry to which he was called by the Son of God, whom he had seen in the way. I cannot conceive anything more wonderful than the testimony of a witness; all are not called to be ministers, but I submit that every saint is called to be a witness, and I am bold to say the most telling and weighty ministry at this present time, is the silent, noiseless, but explicit unfolding in one's own person of this heavenly testimony. Oh, to be more like clay in the hands of the potter; shaped and fashioned by His blessed hand as He Himself pleases. The purpose of God as to His people being His witnesses here on the

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earth, is their being so controlled and held by Himself, that He can point to them as the living testimony to what His own Son from glory can effect for His people on this very earth. Now, in this chapter, where the subject of the ministry is pursued practically in every detail, we find in verse 7, three distinct subjects, namely, "this treasure," "earthen vessels," "surpassingness [excellency] of the power." It is on my heart to write a little on each of these.

"We have this treasure." This is described in verses 4 and 6; it is, according to verse 4, "the radiancy of the glad tidings, of the glory of the Christ," as well as in verse 6, "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." What a treasure to enrich us, as well as for us to be enriched by! Nor is it less wonderful and blessed the way in which we are taken possession of by it, hence we read, "The God who spake that, out of darkness, light should shine, has shone in our hearts." The possession of this treasure is nothing less than a revelation of the Saviour in glory in us; producing, as illustrated in the history of the apostle himself, a moral revolution in the subject of it: this, and this alone, takes the brilliancy out of the best here. I ask, can you say, as the apostle did, "We have this treasure?"

Second: The next subject is the vessel, and the contrast is sharply marked between the

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treasure and the vessel in which it is lodged ; nothing could be more significant than the expression, "earthen vessels," that is, perishing vessels of clay ; it is not the vessel holding the treasure, but the treasure governing the vessel, and displaying itself through the vessel. Could anything be more blessed ? In verses 8 and 9, are set forth the inward and outward exercises to which the vessel is subjected, with a view to the display of the treasure. Then in verse 10, we have *the only power in our hands* by which we can have common thought with God in His purpose for displaying this treasure through us ; hence we read, "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus." Observe, it is *not our dying*, but the dying of Jesus, the practical application of the cross to every part of us ; the death which alone could set us free from all that was against us being now used by us to silence all that would interfere with the display of the life of Jesus in our mortal flesh. Wonderful object, wonderful power for accomplishing it ; glory the starting point, but death the only road back to glory, and Christ the goal ! And as we travel that road back to the heaven we have come from, His blessed purpose about us on the way is, to display His own Son in each one of His people, this costly, blessed treasure, placed designedly in these poor earthen vessels of ours.

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Thirdly, we have a power working as well as a treasure shining, hence we have the word "that the surpassingness of the power may be of God and not of us." What wonderful contrasts are thus grouped together by the Holy Ghost; the costliest conceivable treasure to shine out through an earthen vessel, by the surpassingness of Almighty power!

This power, too, is displayed, at this present time, so differently from what we would naturally conclude; there are two scriptures which speak of it in the manner of its energy, namely, Colossians i. 11: "Strengthened with all might according to the power of his glory unto all patience (endurance), and longsuffering with joyfulness." These are the elements in which surpassing power declares itself in earthen vessels at this present time. The other scripture is, 2 Corinthians xii. 9: "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me"—that is, "may pitch its tent over me." What a calling, beloved reader, vessels in whom such a treasure shines, weak and feeble in ourselves, but so held by the treasure, and so wrought in and upon by surpassing power, Almighty energy, that Christ and Christ alone is seen and heard; and each circumstance on the road to the Father's house, used up by Himself, and wonderful to say, by us too, in fellowship with Him, that He may be

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magnified in our bodies whether by life or by death. The Lord awaken our hearts to the dignity and glory of such power.

I need not say, I trust, that this power is that of the Holy Ghost; the very power "from on high," which was *waited for* until He came, the very promise of the Father, which, says our blessed Lord "ye have heard of me;" He, and He alone is the power of the ministry. Oh may He be known and owned as such by His servants and witnesses. Of Him truly we can say in adoring faith,

"Thy blessed unction from above
Is comfort, life, and fire of love.

W. T. T.



WHAT CHRISTIANS HAVE TO LOOK
FOR IF THE LORD TARRY.

[The following paper, written nearly twenty-five years ago, is so deeply important in itself, as well as receiving such abundant verification by the rapid course of events, that I place it before my readers with the earnest desire for their profit and blessing.—ED.]

I NEED hardly assure your readers that I have no desire that they should meddle in politics; I do not do so myself, nor do I think that a

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Christian ought. He believes that God governs, and governs with a view to the glory of Christ, and that He will infallibly bring about His purposes. But it seems to me to be well that Christians should apprehend what they have to look for, and be prepared for it, if the Lord tarry. Did it not concern them religiously, you would have no word from me on such subjects. What I purpose doing is to review briefly the course of events, and state what seem to me their results. Parties are all alike to me; they are all alike guilty, and have all alike their part in what is going on. Lord Derby it was who banished the scriptures from Irish schools, and set up the Irish National (really, Popish) School System. He stated that there was no proselytism, but that "the use of scripture" was a fatal objection, because it was displeasing to the Priest.

We must remember that politicians have no idea of principles, but only of existing influences to which they must be subject.

The next step was that of that most short-sighted man, however great a general he might have been, the Duke of Wellington. I take no side with any party—I distrust them all, but he was a Tory, as they call it, aristocratic in principle. He with Sir Robert Peel passed the Catholic Emancipation Bill, so called, which admitted some sixty or seventy violent demo-

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crats into the House, and by that party (as it is well known) the Reform Bill of 1832 was passed ; the majority of English members were against it.

Now, for a state with a political machinery like that of England to work smoothly, a large *portion of influential masses must not be outside its institutions.* The Duke of Wellington declared the system perfect which did shut them out, after introducing elements which made it impossible to hold that ground.

He thought to stem it by the House of Lords, and nearly brought on an open revolution ; and Lord Harrowby and the waverers, as they were then called, gave a majority to the Reform Bill in the House of Lords ; the bill was a revolution. That is, it was not an admission of excluded influences into existing institutions, but a total change in the institutions themselves.

Democracy became ascendant and possessed the power. The House of Lords became insignificant, and populous boroughs acquired the power once wielded by the land.

Old habits modified the effect, but every one knows that this is what took place. The ancient institutions of the country were in principle overturned. With this railroads and the commercial movement, and the refusal of landlords to increase the population on their lands, concurred to throw the population into the towns,

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Vaunted education ministered immensely to general infidelity, Satan in that being let loose in that respect, and by the growth of this and of dissent, which predominates in the great towns, the clergy were on the one hand thrown into ritualism and popish principles, or on the other adopted infidel or semi-infidel principles; and (the bands of the Establishment, and its general hold on the population of the country loosened), infidel notions acquired a powerful influence over the mental activity of the country, and exercised a great power in the governing body, the House of Commons.

Morally speaking, the Protestant Church was gone, and rationalism and popery, in principle, divided the country.

Evangelicalism became practically null in the Establishment.

In this state of things the democratic influence has acquired an immense accession of power by the new Reform Bill.

It is an immense stride in legally revolutionising the country's checks and balances, and reckoning on the English character is all nonsense.

Power is put into hands which' will use it. The forms are immaterial; they will probably be changed immediately or ere long.

But my object is to notice the effects on the state of society.

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God cares for the poor. But the poor have ceased to be in the scriptural sense of the word. They are masters. The effect on the masses and on the active minds of the country will be infidelity, exalting man.

Even popular religious preaching will take this character. It will keep up the name of Christian, but will exalt man in its statements, not Christ :—Despise government, says the apostle, presumptuous, self-willed, not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Human reason, not God, will be the arbiter of good and evil.

What already prevails so largely, will be open to a vast party in the country. The will of the people, confidence in man, his rights, his general perfectability, will be the banner of all this class. The aristocracy, on the contrary, having lost power will seek to compensate themselves (vexed and dissatisfied in heart) by luxury and pleasure. To maintain quiet (principle having gone in both classes), and some influence—some barrier against the strong will of the people, they will rapidly seek to increase the influence of the clergy—the only remaining one over those that constitute the bulk of those around.

In the country it will be the body of the poor subject to priestcraft, and in the towns a very large increase of popery, so as to have an integral place in the population ; the bulk of those

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who are not so, or who do not side with them, being infidel.

It may be thought that I have not sufficiently allowed for the influence of religious dissenters. It is really next to nothing, and will be always becoming less.

Already exalting man is the system that most widely prevails, going on with the age. But there is another thing, they will join with the Roman Catholic in putting down the Establishment, which has little or no political hold on the country. The episcopalian must then, as against dissenters, base itself on its distinctive character, in alliance with (if not in the form of) popery, successional grace and sacraments, and the clergy the only channels of it. I do not expect Protestantism nominally to cease, but it will be really infidel.

You may find individual ministers, Independent or Episcopalian, preaching Christ, but the disruption that is taking place, is a disruption into infidel radicalism or popular will, and popery in the aristocracy and in all that they can bring under its influence, as a check upon that will.

I have no doubt that God will keep every faithful soul, and maintain every needed testimony, but it is well that Christians should know what is before them, as time goes on more rapidly, perhaps, than we are aware.

I do not look for violence, because I believe

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there is no courage anywhere to resist the course of events.

I do not pretend to say how long it may take to bring these things about.

God knows, and God holds the reins or looses them ; but I have no doubt as to what is coming on.

The Christian may walk in peace through it all, waiting for God's Son from heaven, and keeping the word of His patience : yea, having a specially blessed place of testimony in the midst of it all, but a lowly one, content to be nothing in a world that has rejected Christ, and is ripening for His judgment. Their part is to *keep His word* and not deny His name.

The result as to the western world will be, as known to students of prophecy, that the Babylonish or idolatrous power, with which the kings of the earth had committed fornication, will be utterly destroyed, and the popular will in the same sphere will give itself to the beast destroyed, with the false prophet, by the Lord Himself coming from heaven.

The present result of what is now enacting will be : the aristocratic part of the community giving itself up to luxury and pleasure, and, with the dependent part of the population, to Popery ; the independent and mentally active part to infidelity. The opposition to Popery will be infidel not Protestant.

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The general public effect will be a great and rapid increase of centralisation or despotic power, and loss of personal liberty. Individual personal independence of character will disappear almost entirely. Men must go with others to be anything. Protestantism having lost its integrity and energy, God allows infidelity as a check on popish power. If things go smoothly, I apprehend the first move towards centralisation will be the substitution of a paid for an unpaid magistracy ; to set aside, nominally, local territorial influence and gain efficiency, but throwing a vast power into the centre of government, and being the first move towards despotism or central power as a counter-balance to multitudinous self-will or anarchy ; personal liberty and independence being proportionately set aside.

Other social questions, as primogeniture, will soon come in ; the importance of money and luxury, the necessary consequence of its abolition, will rapidly increase, and the moral degradation and dissipation which go with it. All this will be modified by existing habits, no doubt, and the love of something aristocratic is inherent in the human mind,* but this will not materially affect the result. J. N. D.

* Liveries and armorial bearings are coming in in New York, and carefully studied genealogies where there are any.

THE PERFECT SERVANT.

Psalm xl. 6-10 ; Isaiah l. 4-5 ; Exodus xxi. 26.

BOTH the latter scriptures are connected with the first. That which makes the Psalm so wonderful and so blessed is that in the 7th verse we are taken into the secrets of eternity. Is it not wonderful grace in our Father and God to permit us to stand as it were in His council chamber of eternity, and to listen to the communications which passed between Himself and the eternal Word?

This is what we find in the opening verses of this Psalm.

In the 6th verse the blessed One says, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire. . . . then said I, Lo, I come : in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God : yea, Thy law is within my heart : " that is, He proposes Himself in eternity, to do what the sacrifices and offerings which would be instituted in time could never do. How blessed to sit before Him, the glorious One who could discourse with Jehovah in eternity ! God had no pleasure in the blood of bullocks and goats, they could not satisfy His holy, righteous claims, they could not discharge the conscience of a sinner. It has been truly and blessedly said as to this, that " The Son and

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Word (who was with God and was God and in the beginning with God), according to what was written in the roll of the book, has the place of obedience prepared for Him, ears dug, a body prepared, and according to the divine counsels (and love for us) freely and willingly undertakes the same place, the place of obedience; His delight (when He has taken it, and is man—has taken the form of a servant) is to do God's will. God's law is written within His heart. Such is Christ as man, obedient, who in free-will had come, taking the body prepared for Him, and entered into the willing servant's place, the place of willing and glad obedience."

The grace of God, beloved reader, stands out strikingly before the heart, when we think that creatures like ourselves, poor worms of the earth, should be brought into such blessed nearness and relationship to the Father in the Son, and then graced to listen in adoring wonder to such communications as these.

Now in the 6th and 7th verses we are in eternity; in the first we have the thought, and counsels of God, in the other the voluntary mission of the Son, to give accomplishment to the will of God in accordance with those counsels. In verse 8 the blessed One speaks as being actually in the place of dependence and obedience *as man*. His words, "I delight to do thy will, O God: thy law is in my heart;"

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express in all their preciousness His own perfection *as a man* ; but not only have we this, but elsewhere He is set before us as the poor and needy one on the earth, waiting patiently for Jehovah, and making Him His trust and hope ; oh that the hearts of His own might by His grace discern this place that He was pleased to be in, and thus enjoy the blessedness of the next Psalm, even that of “he that considereth the poor.”

The place of perfect dependence as man which the Lord Jesus was pleased to take is a blessed theme for holy contemplation. Observe well how the will of God was the spring and motive of all that was in His heart : this was the character and nature of His obedience, “the obedience of Christ.” Man as such is characterised by *his will*, and this is in its essence *sin*, but “in him was no sin.” I would here for a little refer to Luke xxiii. 44. As to the “ninth hour” there spoken of, I believe it was the hour of prayer ; if this be so, does it not point to the fact that now in the Saviour’s death an acceptable evening sacrifice was offered to God, the savour of which had reached the very presence of God ? How blessed to dwell upon it ! Further, in the gospel of Luke, we find the blessed One *as man*, superior to death, while submitting to it ; full of strength, the Saviour commits and commends His spirit to His Father, and expires ;

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in the presence of such moral glory how the heart thus expresses itself—

“ We adore thee evermore ; Hallelujah !
 Saviour for thy boundless grace ; Hallelujah !
 For the cross whereby to us ; Hallelujah !
 Sure is made eternal bliss ; Hallelujah ! ”

It is specially interesting to the heart to observe the words which the Holy Ghost uses in the gospels in recording this transcendent moment.

In Matthew's gospel, where He is set forth in an especial way as *the victim*, the words used for “ yielded up the ghost ” are ἀφῆκεν τὸ πνεῦμα.

In Mark's gospel, where He is seen throughout as the *servant prophet*, the word used is ἐξέπνευσε, His service is closed as it were in its greatest act.

In Luke's gospel, where He is seen *as man* all through it is ἐξέπνευσεν. This along with the blessed words “ Father into thy hands I commend my spirit,” gives us the truth so precious set before us here in these words, viz. ; “ It was death in absolute faith which trusted in the Father, death with God in faith.

In John's gospel, where a divine person is presented to us throughout, the words are παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα these set forth His divine competency, He Himself *delivered up His Spirit*.

Let us in conclusion look at the other two scriptures for a little in Isaiah l. 4. His *life service* is set before us in its own perfect, patient, dependent nature, He ever waited *for* and *on* the word of Jehovah. Let us not be wanting in true adoration as we hear Him say—

“He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.” Yes, truly such was His grace that He stooped to become a man, and as such had given Him a *disciple's tongue* and a *disciple's ear*.

Lastly, in Exodus xxi. 6, the ears *bored*, point to His being *a servant for ever*. Oh how plainly He said “I love my master, my wife, and my children ; *I will not go out free.*”

May our hearts adore Him as we dwell upon all His perfections, in the place He was pleased to take becoming a man, “the Word became flesh”—as in all His lowly and lonely path of suffering and service here below.

W. T. T.

ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY
INSPIRATION OF GOD.

1 TIM. III. 16.

I HAVE a profound, unfeigned (I believe divinely given) faith in the Bible.

I have, through grace, been by it converted, enlightened, quickened, saved.

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I have received the knowledge of God by it, to adore His perfections—of Jesus—the Saviour, joy, strength, comfort of my soul. Many have been indebted to others as the means of their being brought to God, to ministers of that gospel which the Bible contains, or to friends who delight in it. This was not my case. That work which is ever God's was wrought in me through the means of the written word. He who knows what the value of Jesus is, will know what the value of the Bible will be to such an one.

If I have, alas, failed it, in nearly thirty years arduous and varied life and labour—at least such, as far as the service of an unknown and feeble individual usually leads, I have never found it fail me; if it has not for the poor and needy circumstances of time, through which we feebly pass, I am assured it never will for eternity. "The word of the Lord abideth for ever." If it reaches down even to my low estate, it reaches up to God's height, because it comes hence; as the love that can reach even to me, and apply to every detail of my feebleness and failure, proves itself divine in doing so; none but God could, and hence it leads me up to Him. As Jesus came from God, and went to God, so does the book that divinely reveals Him come from and elevate to Him. If received it has brought the soul to God, for He has revealed Himself.

in it. Its positive proofs are all in itself. The sun needs no light to see it by.

I beg to avow, in the fullest, clearest, and distinctest manner here, my deep, divinely-taught conviction of the inspiration of the scriptures. That is, while, of course, allowing if need be, for defect in the translation and the like, when I read the Bible, I read it as of absolute authority for my soul as God's word.

There is no higher privilege than to have communication direct from God Himself.

My joy, my comfort, my food, my strength for nearly thirty years, have been the scriptures received implicitly as the word of God. In the beginning of that period, I was put through the deepest exercise of soul on that point. Did heaven and earth, the visible church and man himself crumble into nonentity, I should, through grace, since that epoch, hold the word as an unbreakable link between my soul and God.

I am satisfied that God has given it me as such.

I do not doubt that the grace of the Holy Spirit is needed to make it profitable, and to give it real authority to our souls, because of what we are ; but that does not change what it is in itself. *To be true when it is received, it must have been true before it was so.*

And here I will add that, though it requires the grace of God, and the work of the Holy

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Ghost to give it quickening power, yet divine truth, God's word, has a hold on the natural conscience from which it cannot escape. The light detects the "breaker up," though he may hate it. And so the word of God is adapted to man, though he be hostile to it—adapted in grace (blessed be God!) as well as in truth.

This is exactly what shews the wickedness of man's will in rejecting it. And it has power thus in the conscience, even if the will be unchanged.

This may increase the dislike of it; but it is disliked because conscience feels it cannot deny its truth.

Men resist it because it is true. Did it not reach their consciences, they would not need to take so much pains to get rid of and disprove it.

Men do not arm themselves against straws, but against a sword whose edge is felt and feared.

Reader, it speaks of grace as well as truth. It speaks of God's grace and love, Who gave His only begotten Son that sinners like you and me might be with Him, know Him, deeply, intimately, truly know Him—and enjoy Him for ever, and enjoy Him now; that the conscience, perfectly purged, might be in joy in His presence, without a cloud, without a reproach, without fear. And to be there in His love, in

such a way, is perfect joy. The word will tell you the truth concerning yourself; but it will tell you the truth of a God of love, while unfolding the wisdom of His counsels. . . . Let me add to my reader that by far the best means of assuring himself of the truth and authority of the word is to read the word itself.

J. N. D.



"A CHRISTIAN—WHO AND WHAT IS HE?"

THIS is one part of a Christian. He is a pilgrim, and a stranger in the power of a resurrection life, with the mediation of Christ carried on, not to procure for him life, but to maintain his intercourse and communion with God in the light on the footing of what Christ is there. On the footing of that, *himself imperfect*, he is maintained in intercourse with a perfect God. Everything that the heart of man can be exercised about is met by the fulness of God through the mediation of Him who is both God and man. The other thing is this (where there is no question or trial at all), the Christian sitting in heavenly places. And there let me say, it is not yet the church, though in touching on it we touch the church's position.

As resurrection life did not take a man into heaven; so taking him into heaven does not, in

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itself, put him into the church. That is, it may be viewed as an individual thing.

When I get into heaven I am getting wonderfully close to the union of the church with Christ. Still I may look at myself as a single individual in heaven, without at all taking in the unity of the body, which is the church. I can speak of the "children of God," and of "joint heirs," without bringing in the idea of the body.

I take the Christian sitting in heavenly places. As an individual Christian I have done with conflicts when I get there; it is no longer the journey in exercise of heart. I shall still have conflicts with Satan, but these are for God. I may, too, have daily to judge my flesh in these conflicts, *but judging the flesh is not conflict for God*; it is a different thing to have conflict for God, and to be judging the flesh as hindering. When in heaven I am in the result of God's work.

And here comes in the connection between our sitting in heavenly places and our passage through the world. I should be manifesting distinctly what is heavenly here, and thus be practically a heavenly man in the midst of worldly men. I should be *a heavenly man*, as one that is there and at home there, shewing out what I have learned and enjoyed there.

Christ was while walking and acting on earth, "The Son of man which is in heaven." He

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manifested toward the world the blessedness of the Spirit and tone and character of heaven.

There are things in which we have to be faithful on earth ; but there are also things that belong to us because we are sitting together in heavenly places in Christ.

A man may be consistent in the one, without displaying the heavenly man. You may see some tolerably consistent on earth, whose souls are not seeking to realise what is theirs in Christ.

Satan's effort is ever to hinder our doing that.

J. N. D.



THE VESSEL.

Troubled, perplexed, persecuted, cast down ; 2 Cor. iv. 8.
 "That the excellency of the *power* may be of God."

"Troubled on every side" are we,
 "Yet not distressed"—we cannot be
 Because, O blessed God, from Thee
 Our consolations flow.

Thou'lt *comfort* us on every side, Psalm lxxi. 21.
 While in Thy presence we abide,
 There we can rest, whate'er betide,
 While this resource we know.

"Perplexed" but yet "not in despair,"
 We see no exit anywhere,
 But on Thyself we roll our care,
 And lift our eyes to Thee. 2 Chron. xxi. 12.

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Not knowing what to do, we own
That power belongs to Thee alone,
Thy way is perfect, Thine alone,
And thus, there's victory.

Though "persecuted" we may be,
Yet "not forsaken" Lord are we ;
To know Thy blessed company, Heb. xiii. 5.
 Is wondrous matchless grace.
The vessel is but *earthen*, still
Thou dost Thyself the vessel fill,
To carry out Thy blessed will,
As all Thy ways we trace.

"Cast down," no lower can we be,
"But not destroyed," we count on Thee,
For now Thy strength can perfect be, 2 Cor. xii. 2.
 While we our weakness own.
The *power, O God, is all of Thee*,
Delivered unto death are we,
That life may manifested be,
E'en Jesus' life alone.

L. W.



TRANSFORMATION AND SATISFACTION.

(2 COR. iii. 18.)

IT is very clear and distinct, feeble though the measure be in which the soul apprehends it, that it is only as we are occupied with Christ where He is, that we are like Him in our ways. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

But, I may ask, have we grasped in soul, or rather, have we been possessed by, all that is implied in these wondrous words? Do we not often detect in ourselves a lack of that spring and power of life which imparts quietness and ease and restfulness of heart? And in the absence of these, yet knowing they ought to be there, are not many forced into what I must call an artificial state of soul, which carries on its very bearing the opposite of life and the Spirit?

There is something refreshing and beautiful in the spring and freshness of life, and it matters not how diligently or carefully formed anything *resembling* life may be, the difference between what is artificial and what is real is at once apparent.

Light and heat are neither of them, nor both

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together, the tree, most necessary though they be as the soil and atmosphere, as it were, in which it is planted. A Christian is, as such, in the light, and he is moreover the object of the Father's love, even in the measure of it in which Jesus was loved—"hast loved them *as* thou hast loved me." (John xvii. 23.)

Now, is there not a great difference between a soul held and governed in divine power and reality by these things, and one who, because painfully sensible of the mere outside owning of them, is seeking to hold them? It is just the difference between the heart keeping the peace of God, and the peace of God keeping, as in a garrison, the heart. But there is more than this difference, for there is the practical effect. If the soul be not held, but seeking to hold, there is ever prominent in its state, the unrest that invariably accompanies *effort*: disquiet and fear about almost everything, as well as uncertainty even where most was expected from God. The contrary to all this is Christianity. Unseen heavenly realities are the governing power acting on the soul, absorbing and commanding it, the affections of the man *formed, sustained, and satisfied* by Christ on high their only object; and, as a consequence, rest, quietness, and ease in the most untoward circumstances, walking in that path which "the vulture's eye hath not seen."

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There ought not to be anything forced about us as Christians ; effort of any kind betrays the absence of power. The presence of Christ not only imparts to us, but secures for us, all that is suitable to His presence ; effort tells the tale of our being out of His presence, and is invariably resorted to for the purpose of acquiring that which is the simple result of being in His presence, and of being acted upon by Himself. I do not for a moment wish to excuse anything like sloth, or ease, or self-indulgence of any kind, in anything, much less so in these things which have to do with a man in Christ and not in the flesh : but I do feel it is a great and solemn reality to press upon the people of God that the presence of Christ can alone command the heart. What a blessed thing for a poor worm to be held by the presence of the Lord of glory ! Oh, I cannot but speak of it ! such glories as are indeed to be found here : to be the subject on which His presence acts, instead of our poor hearts and thoughts acting on Him ; to be the subject of light and heat, such light and love, too !

What was it formed John ? Was it not that he leaned on the bosom of Jesus ? John lay there because he knew it pleased his Lord and Master ; and may we not do the same ? How much effort was there about John when he lay there ? Did he find it difficult to say, " Lord, who is it ? " Peter may have felt it difficult, and

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was glad to use John's nearness ; but as to John, the question came forth as the simple and natural result of being where He was. That bosom was everything to John : he was not thinking of *being there*, or the *results* to him of being there ; he was there for its own sake ; hence he was not restless or unnatural. That blessed Person on whose bosom He reclined was to John "all." Oh, to have the sceptre of a glorified Christ swaying its dominion of life and liberty from pole to pole in our poor hearts ! Our looks would then tell of Him, our words speak of Him, our thoughts rise and set in Him, and all so easily and naturally, that is, in spiritual power ; in a word, Christ would be our life practically, as He is our life truly and really ; the glory of the Lord would thus transform us into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord.

The Lord alone knows what searchings of heart this would lead to. The heart that has passed through it alone knows what it is to rise and walk apart from all that once governed and influenced it, often, too, beyond what we suspected even ; but so it is. Yet Christ is worthy. May we know what it is to be in some more full measure the subjects of His power and simply before Himself, formed by Him alone, long enough in the mount, as it were, to catch the pattern of the glory, not because of the good of

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it, nor even in the first instance that we may be a testimony to others, or enrich ourselves, but because of what He is to the Father, as well as in His own intrinsic blessedness and preciousness.

It is a great cheer to the soul to know that the whole power of God, by the Spirit, is for us in the maintenance of this blessed walk on earth ; only as Christ alone fills our eyes and hearts are we enriched ourselves, or any testimony to others ; thus it is we are at rest, having reached the haven of quiet. Another has blessedly said, "Heaven is the metropolis of Christianity ;" may we know it is so in deep blessedness. If a Jerusalem or Rome were enough to divert for a moment such an one as Paul, surely much less prevails with us who have so little of that heavenly light, divine energy, and power which characterised him in so remarkable a degree.

May He by His own Spirit so attract, win, and satisfy the hearts of His beloved people, presenting to them Him in glory who alone can secure this in them, that they, finding their all in Christ, may be like "a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."

W. T. T.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

BUT the gospel of John gives us large communications on this humiliation of Christ. His Godhead shines in every page of all the gospels, but John, as every one knows, in a peculiar way, gives us the person of Christ—the Word made flesh. Now I have remarked elsewhere the fact of the way in which He is everywhere One with the Father, *yet receives all*. But it is the direct expression of the truth we are studying. He is God, He is One with the Father, He is I Am. Everywhere He speaks to His Father on a divine footing of unity ; “ I have glorified thee, now glorify me.” But He has taken the form of a servant, never, “ Now I will glorify myself,” “ My Father is greater than I ”—“ The glory thou hast given me ”—yet it was a glory He had—“ With the Father before the world was ”—“ Thou hast given him power over all flesh ”—“ I receive whosoever comes, for I came not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.” He finishes the work the Father gave Him to do—it is the Father that sent Him ; so viii. 26. But it is in this chapter that the Lord says “ Before Abraham was I am ”—which the Jews well understood. In a word His path was, “ that the world may know I love the Father, and as the Father hath given me commandment, so I do.” His divine nature and Godhead shine throughout, but He receives everything—is sent

—and has taken the relative place of reciprocity and subjection. John v. has a peculiar character in this respect, and presented at first some difficulty to my mind. “As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will;” “My Father worketh hitherto and I work,” as the apostle notes from the Jewish consciousness, making Himself equal with God. But in verse 19, He at once takes the place He is come into, “The Son can do nothing of himself [*ἀφ’ ἐαυτοῦ*], but what he seeth the Father do.” “Whatsoever he doeth, these doeth the Son likewise,” and quickening comes part of this. “The Father loves the Son, and shews him all.” But He, though He acts with the same divine power as the Father, yet is shewn all—does nothing of Himself; and in verse 26 He hath given to the Son to have life, *i.e.*, the Son in the form of a servant down here, and given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is Son of Man. So that we know that it is in this humbled state that this applies. . . . But this humbling of Christ by Himself is divine love, and in exercise—we know God by it. It is Himself in activity, yet in giving Himself up in this unspeakable way. In the Father He remains in essential Godhead, in the Son one with Him in the exercise of it, coming down to serve, the object in which we know God and see the Father.—J.N.D.

“SERVICE.

TWO things give a peculiar character to all true service in the present day. One is, the world has rejected Christ ; the other, the judgment of this world. (John. xii. 31.) These two facts, if practically acted upon, would materially alter the character of that which professes to be the service of God, as well as change the labours of many who seek to render true service to God, but whose chief efforts are misdirected. “In every good work doing the will of God.”

A work may be good in itself, but if it is not according to the will of God, for this day it loses its savour to Him.

In Romans xii. we have a complete summary of different characters of service. It embraces every member of the assembly of God, assigning to each his proper sphere of service. All are exhorted to present their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is their intelligent service. We are to place ourselves absolutely in the hands of another. The first requisite of a true servant is intelligent, but absolute obedience. This gives the positive side. In verse 2 we have the negative side, “not conformed to this world.” As the certain result of devotedness to God on the one side and separation from evil on the other, a practical acquaintance with the Master’s will is obtained,

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"proving what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

To admire a truth is not enough; it is only in practice that one proves its reality. "He that doeth the will of God shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God."

In 2 Samuel, chapters 15, 17, 19 we find three classes of servants, each rendering to David in the day of his rejection intelligent and acceptable service, and illustrating the New Testament truth that "all members have not the same office," and "there are gifts differing according to the grace given to each"—truths often practically ignored to-day, when so much is "of man," as well as "by man."

The first class may be illustrated by Ittai, the Gittite (chap. 15, 20), a stranger and an exile; his heart has been attracted to the person of David, who tests the professed devotion of his servant by putting before him his own portion as that of his followers, warning him that an outcast and a wanderer in this scene is the only prospect before him. In spirit he says, as it were, "The world hateth me and it will also hate you."

How beautifully this test brings out the depth of Ittai's devotion, as he replies, "As Jehovah liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in life or in death, even there also will

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thy servant be." Practically he put his life in his hands.

This self-abnegation is a grand requisite of a true servant. It is this the apostle speaks of when he says, "We who live are always delivered unto death. . . . and are made the off-scouring of the world." Ittai is willing to leave Jerusalem, with all its attractions, to be a servant, and a homeless wanderer.

God in His sovereignty has called out, in a distinct manner, certain men to be here for Christ. Home, friends, wealth, position, all that man values most, must be relinquished when there is a distinct call from God. We have a striking example of this in Saul of Tarsus. Peter, too, must leave his nets, boats, and fishing at the call of Christ. Obedience to such a call will never be accompanied by ease and comfort after a worldly sort. The "minister" must wait on his ministry, the "teacher" on his teaching, the "exhorter" on exhortation: that is to say, the Lord's service is to be the distinct business of his life—all other things being subservient to this one end. He may make tents, though tent-making is not his object. This is important to notice, for some imagine that a true servant ought not at any time to be engaged in a worldly calling. This example of him who was "not a whit behind the chiefest of the apostles" teaches otherwise. "These hands," he

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could honourably say, "have ministered to my necessities, and to those who are with me."

In closing the first lists of gifts and class of servants (Rom. xii. 16, 8) he adds (ver. 9), "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil ; cleave to that which is good." A "separated path," and a "devoted walk," are the grand moral requisites for a true servant.

2nd. But not only has God called out some distinctly to be His servants here, by leaving everything that would in the least interfere with his service, but we read of others, who in the exercise of "brotherly love" are "not to be slothful in business or in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord ; rejoicing in hope ; patient in tribulation ; continuing instant in prayer ; distributing to the necessity of saints ; given to hospitality." Zeal, fervency, patience, joy, and dependence are to be exhibited in service towards those who belong to God, the circle of Christ's affection, the members of His body, the church, which He loved, and for which He died, and now lives. This will call forth service of a very varied character. The action of Shobi, Machir, and Barzillai in 2 Samuel xvii. 27, 29, furnishes a beautiful illustration of the second class of servants. Their service is as grateful in its way and season as that of Ittai, though differing in its nature and character. They do not go out, leaving everything, to follow a rejected

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king; but they place their wealth, their beds, their basons, and their food, at the disposal of David and those who shared his rejection. "The people," say they, "are hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness."

This carries our thoughts to the faithful Gaius of New Testament days, and to the devoted women who ministered to the Lord of their substance. A cup of cold water given in the name of Christ is treasured up by Him in sweet remembrance until that day when "Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of one of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me," will recall many a long-forgotten act of "brotherly love."

This, beloved, has a very practical application. It may be I cannot evangelise, teach, or exhort, but this I can and ought to do—*hold all that I have in this world absolutely at the command, control, and disposal of my Master*, reckoning neither wealth, home, nor comfort as my own, but as a "good steward of the manifold grace of God," using all for Christ.

Experience proves that nothing conduces more to the well-being of saints in any locality than the practical activities of that love which looks not upon its own things, but upon the things of others.

But some may say, "I have no special gifts wherewith to serve the Lord, nor house nor

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means to place at the disposal of those that are His. What can I do?" You can serve by waiting for Him. The Lord Jesus in Luke xii. Himself distinguishes between a "waiting" servant (verse 37) and a "working" servant (verse 43).

He *serves* the former, and *rewards* the latter ; but both are equally termed servants. Paul tells us the crown of righteousness awaits all who *love the appearing* of their Lord. The heart that is freed from itself can "weep with those that weep," and can "rejoice with those that rejoice." This, if done in communion with the Master's mind, is service of a very grateful and acceptable kind to His heart ; and is within the reach of the least gifted member of the body of Christ.

The service of a waiting servant is beautifully exemplified in Mephibosheth, during the absence of his beloved though rejected master. His demeanour and conduct from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace (2 Sam. xix. 19, 24) tells a story of affection centred on an absent one. During the whole time of David's exile, this devoted servant, unable to follow him in active service, or minister to him of his substance, was the standing witness to the fact that his heart was far away with his beloved master. His body expressed this practically. He had neither trimmed his beard nor washed his clothes

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from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace.

Let us ask, beloved, is it so with us? Are our bodies the lamps through which the light of companionship with a rejected Christ is seen? He cared neither for *ridicule, appearance, position,* nor wealth. He can say to the time-serving Ziba, "Let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house."

What will things be worth here when we see the Master in His "*own house?*"

May we each earnestly desire and ask—

"Lord, awaken in our hearts the desire to be thine, *only thine, wholly thine*; to use all that we have and are in thy service in some way or other, either like Ziba using our gift for the edification and blessing of others, or like Barzillai ministering to such, or like Mephibosheth waiting and longing to see thy face; and as we wait entering into the joys and sorrows of thy beloved saints and servants."

H. N.



ASPECTS IN WHICH THE BLESSED LORD IS PRESENTED IN THE GOSPELS.

The first three gospels give to us the presentation of Christ to responsible man, and especially

to Israel. John presents to us the divine and eternal character of the Lord Himself.

Matthew sets Christ before us in the character of the Son of David, and of Abraham, that is to say in connection with the promises made to Israel, but presents Him withal as Emmanuel, Jehovah, the Saviour ; for such Christ was.

At bottom, the life of Jesus was like ours. He was in all things tempted in like manner as ourselves. It was, indeed, God manifested in flesh ; but it was also life, and the expression of a life perfectly acceptable to God. Outwardly Jesus was only a poor Nazarene, but perfection was in His ways and in His heart, and it manifested itself in the midst of every difficulty, of all contempt, and all that was false.

In order to make progress in spiritual life we must study the Lord Jesus, whether in the grace of His person, or the circumstances of His life, or, lastly, in the glorious position He has near the Father, and which we shall by-and-by share with Him.

The gospel according to Mark has a character that differs in certain respects from all others. Each gospel has its own character. Each is occupied with the person of the Lord in a different point of view, as a divine person, the Son of God, as the Son of man, as the Son of David, the Messiah presented to the Jews ; but Mark is occupied with none of these titles. It is the ser-

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vant we find here, and in particular His service as bearing the word, the active service of Christ in the gospel. The glory of His divine person shews itself, it is true, through His service, and, as it were, in spite of Himself, so that He avoids its consequences; but still service is the subject of the book.

The gospel of Luke sets the Lord before us in the character of Son of man, revealing God in delivering grace among men. That which especially characterises the narrative, and gives its peculiar interest to this gospel is, that it sets before us that which Christ is Himself. It is not His official glory, a relative position that He assumed, neither is it the revelation of His divine nature in itself, nor His mission as the great Prophet. It is Himself, as He was a man on the earth—the person whom I should have met every day had I lived at that time in Judæa or Galilee.

The Son of God, a child partaking in all the weakness and all the circumstances of human life, thus manifested appears in the world. That is to say as an infant. He did not appear like the first Adam, coming out in his perfection from the hand of God. He is born of a woman, the Son of man, which Adam was not. This poor infant is the object of all the counsels of God, the upholder and heir of the whole creation the Saviour of all who shall inherit glory and eternal life.

Such, then, is the sign of God's accomplishment of promise and of His presence in the world, a babe in the manger, the least and lowest thing. But God is found there, though these things are beyond man who cannot walk with God, nor understand His moral glory. But God's sign is within the reach of faith. It is the token of perfect weakness, a little infant who can only weep. Such born into this world is Christ the Lord. Such is the place God chose—the low degree.

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.” “His human intelligence being developed, He, though ever perfect, became so in a full way—the perfect Man. The lovely plant grew up and unfolded before God *and man*.”

The gospel of John has a peculiar character. It does not present the birth of Christ in this world looked at as the Son of David. It is neither His birth, nor the commencement of His gospel, but His existence before the beginning of everything that had a beginning. In the beginning *was the Word*. In short, it is the glory of the person of Jesus, the Son of God, above all dispensation, a glory developed in many ways in grace, but which is always itself. It is that which He is, but making us share in all the blessings that flow from it when He is so manifested as to impart them.

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John presents God to man. His subject is, God, and eternal life in a man. The three gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, always speak of Christ as a Man down here presented to men historically, and they follow up their account until He is positively rejected, announcing then His entering into the new position which He has taken by resurrection. "The Gospel of John regards the Lord in quite another manner: it presents to us a divine Person come down here, God manifested in this world; a marvellous fact, upon which all in man's history depends. It is no longer a question here of genealogy; it is no longer second Man responsible toward God (though that be ever true), and perfect before God, and all His delight, while we see upon every page that it is no longer Messiah according to prophecy: it is no longer Emmanuel, Jesus, who saves His people; it is no longer the messenger who goes before His face: in John it is God Himself, as God, who in a Man shows Himself to men, to the Jews—for God had promised Him—but first of all to put them entirely aside (ch. i. 10, 11), shewing at the same time that nothing of man could even comprehend *who* was there present with Him." ("Notes on the Gospel of St. John," p. 3.)

The words of Jesus expressed what He was, and being thus the true expression of God manifested to man, they put man into the place of

either receiving or rejecting God, and God as light of men. If God speaks and expresses Himself, man accepts what He is or rejects Him.

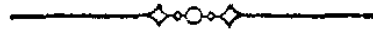
That which the Lord said expressed His nature, His divine character. He reveals the Father. His words are the words of God ; that which He said revealed Him to the world. (Chap. viii. 26, 27 ; chap. i. 10 ; chap. iii. 32, 33.)

The truth supposes the full revelation of what is divine and heavenly, that which was revealed in His person and in His words.

In John it is always a question of the world ; also, it is not a question of the Messiah according to promises, but of what the Lord is in Himself, of what He is, He only in the midst of darkness. In following Him one would have the light of life, for the life was the light of men. The Lord having thus announced Himself as light (and light manifests itself and manifests everything), His testimony is rejected as being that of a man who bore witness to Himself. (Chap. viii. 13.) They do not see the light, they reject it. That which is divine is hidden, although it is light. He was the light, and His words were the expression of what He was. Jesus was the revelation of God Himself in that which He was as light. It was Himself and the word of testimony, the Father being with Him. If that were rejected it was not disobedience to a command-

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ment, but the rejection of divine life and light, so that those who rendered themselves guilty of it should die in their sins. J. N. D.



HAVE YOU UNDERSTANDING?

“DEATH proves the folly of all human wisdom and foresight, of all human grandeur”—a common observation, little acted on, but always true. As it is said of wisdom, “death and destruction have heard the fame thereof with their ears.” They cannot give positive wisdom, but they can negatively shew that only what does not belong to mortal man has any value.

Man establishes his family, perpetuates his name, but he is gone: nothing stays the hand of death. Ransom from that is out of man’s power. There is a morning coming when the *righteous* will have the upper hand of those who seem wise as regards this world. Death feeds on these, or as neglectors of God, they are subjected to the righteous when His judgment comes. But the power of God in whom the righteous trust is above the power of death. But further, Christ having died, the Christian’s connection with this world has ceased, save as a pilgrim through it. He has the sentence of death in himself. He knows no man after the flesh, no, not even Christ. His associations with the world are closed, save as Christ’s servant in it. He reckons

himself dead. He is crucified with Christ, yet lives ; but it is Christ lives in Him, and he lives the life he lives in the flesh by the faith of the Son of God, who loved him and gave Himself for him, so that he is delivered from this present world.

Oh, the folly of laying up and making oneself great and counting on a future in a world where death reigns and in the things to which its power applies.

Man being in honour abides not. How difficult, even if happy and heavenly minded in Christ as to one's own joys, not to look upon the things that are seen, to think that the wisdom and talents and success and approval of men is simply nothing, the food of death ; and that all the moral question lies behind, save so far as these may have deceived men ! The saint has to watch still, not to be afraid when success accompanies those who do not accept the cross.

We await God's judgment of things *in power* ; we exercise it *in conscience*. There is no divine understanding in the man whose heart is in the glory of the world. Men will praise him. How well he has got on, settled his children, raised himself in his position. The fairest names will be given to it. He has no understanding. His heart is in what feeds death, and that death weighs it.

All the motives of the world are weighed by

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death. After all, in them man is only as the beasts that perish, with more care." I feel what a solemn witness and word this is for every class. Is it possible, reader, to call it in question? Is it not true? Suffer a fellow passenger on life's great highway to ask you with real concern and affection and earnest desire for your everlasting interest, what are you living for? Whither are you hastening? Is your heart in the glory of the world? If so, there is no divine understanding in you. Have you never read the scripture which saith, "The world passeth away and the lust thereof" (See 1 John ii. 17)? Oh that your eyes might be opened as to this now; a man who had fuller and more extensive means of proving what all *under the sun* was worth, thus expressed himself:—

"I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards; I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits; I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees; I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me; I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces; I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments and that

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of all sorts. So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me; and whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy: for my heart rejoiced in all my labour; and this was my portion of all my labour. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun." (Eccles. ii. 4-11.)

What a record! and remember well, that it was while Solomon was in *possession of all* that he pronounced it vanity and vexation of spirit. You will often hear those who have *lost it all* say so, but Solomon the king said it, when he *had it all in his possession!* Ah yes, it could not *satisfy*, there is the secret of the whole matter, *the heart is too large and the passing world too small.* But, reader, there is One who can satisfy and fill your heart, even Him whose precious blood cleanseth from all sin; only trust in Him and His atoning work and all will be well. Are you, my reader, a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, the once crucified, but now risen and glorified Lord and Saviour? If this is happily the case, allow me to ask you, are your associations with the world closed by Christ's death, save as His servant in it? Have you learned that as a Christian, you are thus

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described in the words of scripture: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me" (See Gal. ii. 20)? How blessed to have great in our eyes Himself who hung on that cross: and to see the world that crucified Him in its true character in that cross; to glory in His cross, happy by its means to be dead to the world, to have it ended, crucified, put to shame for the heart—

" His dying crimson, like a robe,
 Spread o'er His body on the tree;
 Then am I dead to all the globe,
 And all the globe is dead to me."

W. T. T.



"THE LORD'S SUPPER."

THE Lord's supper is to be eaten as a memorial, or remembrance of Christ. This is His own interpretation of it. The bread sets forth His body;—the cup His blood—accomplishing the remission of sins.

To eat and drink this feast is to express our participation in the virtues of His sacrifice. (1 Cor. x. 18.) And it is thus eaten in remembrance of Christ, in token of the soul's fellowship with what His sacrifice has accomplished for sinners; it is therefore to be eaten with thanksgiving. This remembrance of what the

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sacrifice of Christ has accomplished must be accompanied with that. No supplication is needed, because it is a finished work—a full remission—which the table records.

To pray about the forgiveness of sins would be discordant with the voice of the table: it would be (quite unintended, it might be) a reproach upon the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. It would be a building again the things which Christ had destroyed; and in the language and sense of Galatians ii. making Him "the minister of sin"—making His blood, like the blood of bulls and goats, only the remembrancer and not the remitter of sin. But to surround it with thanksgivings—to wait on the feast with praise for redemption—this would be honouring the work of the Lamb of God, which the feast sets forth; and accordingly it is always as thus accompanied that the scriptures present it to us. Jesus, on taking the bread and the cup, gave thanks. (Matt. xxvi., Mark xiv., Luke xxii.) He did nothing else. The words "blessing" and "giving thanks" are to all moral intent used in the same sense. And in the like mind, the apostle calls it "the cup of blessing which we bless;" the cup at the taking of which we bless, or speak well of the Lord: because by that death and blood-shedding of Jesus, which it sets forth, He has richly entitled Himself to praise, or to have His name well spoken of.

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And again speaking of it, he says, that when the Lord parted the bread and the cup among His disciples, He simply "gave thanks." (1 Cor. xi. 24.) It may be accompanied with confession of sin because it implies our utter death in trespasses and sins; and therefore the confession of that would not be discordant with it. But still we do not find such confession either enjoined or observed in any of the passages which refer to the supper; but in them it takes the form of a simple eucharistic feast, or a season of thanksgiving for the remission of sin. But the service of self-judging, or self-condemnation, may well wait on this feast, because we are, by the remission of our sins, called unto holiness—just as of old, the feast of unleavened bread accompanied the passover—the Israelites celebrated their redemption from Egypt, but they also searched the house for leaven, that they might put away all that had offended Him who had redeemed them; this was most fitting, and indeed without this the Lord's passover was not kept.

And so with us, if we are not walking in a *self-judging* spirit, we are not behaving ourselves as the blood-redeemed people, we do not discern the Lord's body—in other words, I believe we do not keep the feast of the Lord aright if we are not honestly and holily searching for and removing all that would offend the Lord. This

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is in as full harmony with the table as thanksgiving. And the leaven should be put away both from the congregation (1 Cor. x.) and our own person (1 Cor. xi.); for the supper shews forth the Lord's death: and the death of Jesus has this two-fold sense—it publishes remission of sin, also God's hatred of sin; it releases the sinner, but condemns the sin—and the supper eaten, both with thanksgiving and in the spirit of self-judging, will be accordant with this; eaten with prayer about our sins will be utterly discordant.

It is to be a passover in union with the feast of unleavened bread, and therefore there is to be the expression of conscious rescue from Egypt, the place of death, or scene of judgment—and this is thanksgiving: and there is to be also the expression of our renouncing of that which brought in death—and this is self-judgment. Such I believe to be the simple character which the scriptures put on the Supper of the Lord. Many, indeed, and various have been the additions which human religiousness has attached to it, but the word of God preserves it. . . . I believe that if the word were very simply attended to in this matter, this beautiful service would be relieved of much which now encumbers it, and the table would give forth no uncertain sound. . . . And it is this service, or worship, that ought to gather us to His house

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every first or resurrection day; other things may then be given to us of the Lord, such as the word of exhortation, or of teaching, or the voice and spirit of supplication; but we should go there to give the Lord His praise, such as the table (which publishes through the riches of His grace the remission of our sins) does give Him. This is entering His house duly, entering it with praise because He has already blessed us, and not with supplication for a blessing;—entering it in the spirit of conscious victory over our enemies, tearing asunder all bonds, and silencing every tongue that would charge or condemn us. It would be entering His house in a way worthy of that house, where mercy has rejoiced against judgment;—where the sword of the destroying angel has gloriously been stayed, where, therefore, the spirit of the worshipper sings as he enters—“In the time of trouble he shall hide me, he shall set me on a rock, and now shall my head be lifted up above my enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy, I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord.” (Psalm xxvii. 5, 6.)

May His courts be thus entered in spirit now, for the bread and the cup are there, and the veil is gone. The memorials of the ransom have displaced those of sin, and at this altar it is only “the sacrifices of praise” we offer.

J. G. B.

“RISEN WITH CHRIST” AND ITS FRUITS.

(COL. III.)

IT would be impossible to overrate the importance of the great subject which I propose to consider ; it lies at the basis of all true practical Christianity. It is equally important to understand the relation of risen with Christ to dead with Him ; indeed, so essential is such apprehension, that it may be safely affirmed that, where the first is not known, the second does not follow. With regard to the place of the saint now, it is first of all to be understood that it is the exact contrast to all that belongs to nature. As born into the world, we are lost, and in that state we have contracted guilt, and we are moreover in a world into which death has entered, and where death is rampant. By nature then our condition is miserable, and this world, where we find ourselves, is both blasted and blighted, and, from the standpoint of “under the sun,” the testimony must be, “all is vanity and vexation of spirit.” Now out of this wretchedness and misery, God in mercy purposed to deliver us, and has accomplished all that was in His heart, in and through His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. But deliverance out of our misery, most full and blessed though it is, was not all His purpose, but introduction into all the

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blessedness of an open heaven through deliverance, and union by the Holy Ghost with Him who died, and rose again, and ascended up on high. It is very wonderful how apt we are to limit what was in God's heart for us, and what has been accomplished and secured by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus ; and it is this very limit, beyond which so many never get, which is productive of the very painful and low type of practical walk to be seen all around us. It may perhaps startle the reader at first, to be told that forgiveness of sins is not *of itself* power, nor can forgiveness of itself enable a man, that is, give him power, to walk so as to please God. Forgiveness is relief, and blessed and needed relief too ; but power relates to my place in Christ, and the portion I have in Him. For example, when we read in Colossians iii. 5, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth," &c., it is an exhortation flowing out of what is expounded in Colossians ii. and iii., viz., dead and risen with Christ.

It is all important and blessed to see that I get both relief and power from Christ. The first relates to how He meets me in my deep need ; the second has to do with the new place in Himself, into which he has brought me. Both are most blessedly expounded in the parable of the Good Samaritan, viz., "bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own

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beast,” &c. It is amazing how few there are who have laid hold by faith of the fact that the Christian has been transferred to an entirely new place, in and by Christ; that a Christian is a man after another order of being altogether, sprung from the second Adam now, as surely as, by nature, he was of the first Adam. Oh, what a reality to the soul is the deep blessedness of the fact that, as a Christian, I am now of Him who said, “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.) Who can overrate the magnitude of the fact that, as a Christian, I am sprung from Him—part of that fruit which His death has brought forth?

Then another truth, akin to this, and closely allied with it is, that a man in Christ no more belongs to this world than he does to the man who, upon it, fell. The same precious death which severed his connection with the one, has equally severed it with the other. This world, this ordered system, which Satan is heading up against God and His Christ, is no more my place; by the cross it has been crucified to me, and I to it, by a double death, as it were, a judicial sentence passed upon it, and me. I am for ever liberated from the slavery of being its friend. Blessed, wonderful emancipation! reaching up to the full tide of blessedness, when it is stated that His place, the One who has risen

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from the dead, has become, in sovereign grace, and by union with Him there, ours, who are quickened together with Christ, raised up together, and seated together in heavenly places in Christ. There remaineth nothing more for us to desire, save to see Him face to face, and, in a body of glory like His own, to be with Him for ever. In the presence of such manifested purpose and favour, so wonderfully accomplished by Him, and bestowed upon us, the soul bows down in adoring wonder, worship, and praise.

These two great kindred truths of which I have spoken, are very fully expounded in Ephesians ii. There the Christian is looked at as *out of man, and out of earth*. In the closing verses of chapter i., Christ, viewed as the glorious Man, is set forth as the subject of the working of the mighty power of God, "who raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Oh, the amazing brightness of the glory which shines in every line of this magnificent declaration! If God had a man to turn out of Eden for disobedience, He has also had

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“the Man” to reward, who glorified Him on the earth, even to death, the death of the cross. He it was, and none else, who was raised and glorified, and all things set under His feet, and He constituted “Head over all things to the church, his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”

Then in chapter ii., we are introduced to the same power in operation, quickening the heirs, to give them a part and a place, in and with Him, so glorified and exalted : and in order to set forth the blessed reach of this power, the position in which they are found is unfolded, namely, dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit working in the children of disobedience ; out of this state of death and distance from God, His power quickened them, so that they have been also raised up together, and seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. And in the ages to come, God will display in them the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness towards them through Christ Jesus. Then in verse 11, He contrasts the two positions, “At that time,” referring to their old history, “ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world, but now,” referring to their new history, “in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off [that is, dispen-

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sationally, for, morally, a Jew was no nearer than a Gentile], are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Blessed contrast, and still more blessed Person, in Whom and by Whom it has been all made good and secured !

There are some consequences which follow from our being *consciously* in this place, which I will note here. There is superiority to circumstances, as we pass along through this world, and there is rest amid the turmoils and troubles to which we are ever subjected in a region like this. Nothing can carry the soul into the atmosphere of superiority and rest, but the divine consciousness, by the Holy Ghost, of our place in Christ, and our union with Him in glory. When these are so possessed, known, and enjoyed, rest and superiority follow as divine consequences. No amount of effort can secure either ; they are not to be acquired by any artificial struggle ; effort always betrays weakness, and carries restlessness in its bosom. There is nothing more distressing to witness than the morbid and oppressed strivings of real and earnest souls after that which they make as truly a matter of attainment, as the sincere legalist does acceptance. The truth is, if a man is a Christian, he is in Christ, where Christ is, and the Holy Ghost dwells in him. He is out of man, and out of earth. Is there no sanctifying power in this, where it is really and divinely

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apprehended and known? I do not speak now of the mere assent of the understanding, but of the soul truly operated upon by these divine verities. The question has often been suggested, whether there is not a solemn danger of setting aside the truth of God by what I must call a kind of *credence* of the most exalted truth, when it is quite evident the soul has never been acted on in relation to it. I believe there is a tendency at this time in this direction, and I cannot conceive any result that can follow save failure of a serious nature. I do not see how the truth can control us unless there be on our part dependence and subjection, and that, too, kept alive constantly in our soul. All this most surely must be found in connection with what I have already spoken of, as well as "bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body," that is, the practical application of the death of Christ to ourselves; but this in no sense traverses the truth we have been considering, but, on the contrary, coincides and unites with it. Self-occupation, and "bearing about in our body the dying of Jesus," are as distinct as midnight and noonday; the latter, known, would strike at the root of the former. Self-occupation is an indigenous plant; it is not only, in one of its aspects, the noxious weed, which grows rank in many a field, and which is branded and shunned,

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as such, by nearly all ; but it is also, in another of its aspects, the apparently beautiful flower which fain would blossom, and give forth a refreshing sweetness, and invite the passer-by to pluck and regale himself with its rich perfume.

Another consequence which follows from our being risen with Christ, is practical separation from all around us. In proportion to the sense we have of being as it were in touch with heaven, do we practically walk, as from home, here on earth. No one can make himself a pilgrim ; no one can acquire strangership on the earth. The Spirit and mind of Christ, as well as familiarity with Him where He is, as our home, alone can impart the tone and character of pilgrims to us.

Another consequence of our being risen with Christ, is the manner in which all our *ways* and *words* are formed and controlled. The absence of this in persons who *assume* a very high place at the present time, is revolting, if it were not heart breaking. What are we to say when we are confronted with, on the one hand, a high profession, those who alone are on the true ground, those who alone care for the honour and glory of Christ ; and on the other, the "works of the flesh"—such as hatred, variance, strife, bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking, malice? Yes, beloved reader, and an awful absence of the fruit of the Spirit which is love, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

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meekness, temperance. Again I say, what can we think when confronted with such a fact as this? The thoughts turn at once to the record of the apostle's manifold perils as recorded in 2 Corinthians xi., and there we find one out of many recorded, namely "false brethren." May the Lord guard us from *mind acquaintance* with truth, which displays itself as occasion turns up as the very opposite to being risen with Christ, with its practical manifestation of bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering.

W. T. T.



THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST.

SOME obscurity seems to hang over the doctrine of Christ's intercession, in the minds of some saints, which I feel it would be profitable to seek to dispel.

Some, and it is a common case, put it in the wrong place, viz., as the means of obtaining righteousness and peace, and thus enfeeble (and that because they are ignorant of) the true character of redemption: others, seeing that this is perfect and complete, set intercession aside, as if incompatible with that perfectness, as if it enfeebled or denied it.

Both are wrong, and both mistake the nature of Christ's intercession. Christ's intercession is not the means of obtaining righteousness and peace. It is mischievous to use it to this end;

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and it does, so used, hinder the apprehension of our being made the righteousness of God in Christ. It is mischievous, too, to deny its use when we do know Christ as our perfect righteousness ; the doing so makes that righteousness to be *a cold and heartless security, destroying the deep and softening sense of His constant love to us, and our dependence on the daily exercise of that love.*

The former class, not assured of God's perfect love in righteousness, go to Christ to get Him to undertake their cause and go to God for them, and, so to speak, settle matters. They really, though they would not say so, see love in Christ and judgment in God ; and go to Christ to move God to compassion, mercy, and forgiveness. It is very natural we should go through this state, particularly with the current teaching ; but it is not really Christian ground. God's love is the source of all our blessings, and of the hopes of our salvation ; and that love is fully exercised in righteousness, because of Christ's work and glorifying of God. Grace reigns through righteousness ; we are the righteousness of God in Christ ; we have not to seek it. Christ is our righteousness, always and constantly. It is as perfect as it is constant and perpetual ; and as constant and perpetual as it is perfect. God has been, is—perfectly glorified in this respect, and His love goes forth freely and righteously on the

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Christian as on Christ Himself. It is a settled position before God, a standing and relationship which does not change. The intercession of Christ is founded upon it. How far the act which completed this ground of our place before God was the act of the priest, I will consider when speaking of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

But then it is equally true that we are poor, feeble, and often failing creatures upon earth; our place, our only place with God, is in the light as He is, through the divine righteousness I have spoken of, and acceptance in it there. Our actual place is in a world of temptation, in an unredeemed body, a feeble and dependent being, failing too, in a world where grace is needed, mercy and grace to help in time of need. And the best affections are drawn out by daily wants, daily confidence, and a daily sense of the Lord's faithfulness; not by the sense that we are safe, though that be the groundwork and basis of the other, needed to it and of itself drawing out thanksgiving and praise. But it is evident dependence, and all connected with it is not drawn out by being perfect, and always infallibly so. If I lose this last, my fears are servile, my looking to Christ only to be safe, when God is a righteous judge. If I lose the other I am content with being safe. It is my highest attainment, and I never possess it after all, and the best affections and graces lie dormant.

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Let us now consider what intercession really is, what place it takes in the christian system. There are two characters which the intercession of our Lord takes—Priesthood with God and Advocacy with the Father. In both He appears before God or the Father for us that we may receive needed blessing, but the former is more general. He is before God, so that we draw near and can do so. He makes withal intercession for our need. As Advocate with the Father it is more restoration of communion.

But here some preliminary difficulties have to be met. There are those who deny the force of the word intercession as implying active intercession or intervention for us; they say that *ἐντυγχάνω* merely means His personal presence or appearance there for us. But this is not so. The word *ἐντυγχάνω* is used for active intervention or intercession. So in scripture, He ever lives to do it. Surely not He ever lives to be present simply between God and us; so in Romans viii., “Who is even at the right hand of God, who *also* maketh intercession for us.” And in the same chapter what is said of the Holy Ghost clearly shews that this word is used in the plain, ordinary sense of intercessory pleading for us. He makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. The Holy Ghost does not appear (*ἐντυγχάνω*) in the presence of God, *for* us at all, but He intercedes, pleads *in* us,

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with groans which cannot be uttered. This use of *ἐντυγχάνω* cannot then be controverted. . . . But heavenly grace to us in an earthly condition while called to heaven, leads to the knowledge of the love, tenderness, sympathy, faithfulness, interest in all our state and circumstances, which are found in Christ—which our perfection in Him does not. It leads to dependence, confidence in Him, counting on His faithfulness, apprehension of the interest which He takes in us every moment, and a looking to the time when we shall see Him as He is, which our being in Him in heaven does not. . . . Advocacy then is founded on Jesus Christ the righteous being the Advocate, and His being the propitiation for our sins. This, a divine and perfect righteousness, and the perfect propitiation for our sins, have put us in the light as God is, to walk there ; and as we fail, if any man sin—that righteousness and propitiation being ever before God, there is, can be, no thought of imputation, it is impossible, the sins have been borne and righteousness subsists : yet sins are not to be suffered in those whom God loves, and hence, in virtue of His work and being our righteousness before God, Christ intercedes for us and the soul is restored.

This ground of advocacy leads me to speak of the analogous, or really same, foundation of priesthood. On earth He could not be a priest : but there is one work which the high priest did,

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not in the exercise of his priesthood, properly speaking, which was in the sanctuary, but which laid the foundation for it, in which he was substitute and representative of the people, the foundation of his priestly service proper during the year. This was the sacrifice of the great day of atonement. The blood put upon the mercy-seat and the sins of the people confessed on the head of the scape-goat. Reconciliation or propitiation was made for the sins of the people. All exercise of priesthood was founded on this, and this the Epistle to the Hebrews refers to, as well as to priesthood. His earthly life fitted Christ for sympathy, though He be now in heaven, and the sacrifice accomplished on earth (in putting away for ever as to guilt the sins He had borne) formed the basis of intercession for daily blessing and access to God by Him. Hence, while clearly stating that if on earth He would not be a priest, we read Hebrews ii. 17, "It behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation [more exactly, propitiation] for the sins of the people." On this is founded His gracious and constant priesthood and intercession. Imputation of sin to us is become impossible, because of Christ's sacrifice; and His suffering and tempted life enables Him in grace, intelligent of sorrow and trial, to suc-

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cour them that are tempted. Hence, in chapter iv. we Christians are called upon to hold fast our profession, "for we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, sin apart." We have then a Priest with God, and an Advocate with the Father—there, in virtue of a sacrifice in which He has once for all borne our sins and appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; there, in a perfect acceptance in which we have a part: Jesus Christ the righteous, the propitiation for our sins—able to save to the end those that come to God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them—who is even at the right hand of God, set down when He had purged our sins, a great High Priest set down at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.

Now, this leads us to another point. We do not go to the high priest, we come to God by Him, to a throne of grace. I do not doubt God's gracious goodness may have borne with the infirm faith which in trueness of heart has gone to Christ as priest, but it is not the teaching of the word of God. He appears in the presence of God for us, we go to God by Him. There is no uncertainty or exception in scripture as to this. Nor is it consequently on our return or our repentance that He intercedes, but for our infirmities, our need, and our sins. The

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activity is that of His grace, having that grace, His love and priestly grace toward us for its source—His work and position with God in righteousness, as we have seen, as its basis.

Our going to Christ thus is a sign that we have never yet learnt God's love, nor our place and relationship with God in the light as He is in it, to speak according to John ; or boldness to enter into the holiness through the rent veil, to speak according to the Hebrews : we have not yet learnt the "no condemnation" for those in Christ, nor no separation, of the 8th of Romans.

Priesthood, intercession, and advocacy suppose this. We have our place in heaven : we have been, or are, in danger of being inconsistent with it upon earth. Now God can, on one hand, allow of no sin, however accepted they may be, in those who are in relationship with Him. He must have their feet and hearts clean, because they are so : and on the other hand, He exercises them here below ; and Christ especially enters into all their sorrows, infirmities, seeking their progress, ministering to their weakness, and obtaining mercy, cleansing, and restoration in their faults. This has nothing to do with acceptance, but with consistency with, or restoration to, the actual enjoyment of communion with God in that relationship. Safety is not the end, it is the beginning of Christianity. Christianity is relationship and communion with

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God as He is, and our Father, and His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Priesthood and advocacy maintain, help into, restore this, when our relationship, according to divine righteousness, subsists already, but when we are in a scene of temptation and trial, which tends, through our weakness and by our exercises, in which we are to grow up into it, to interrupt it [communion]. But it is not *we* who get our great High Priest to move for us, He it is who does it of His own grace. Thus in a case, anticipative no doubt of His Priesthood, but in which it is displayed in its principles, the fall of Peter, we have Christ praying for him before he had even committed the sin, praying exactly according to what Peter needed, not that he might not be sifted, but that his faith might not fail and he fall into despair. At the right moment, by Christ's own grace and action, Peter's heart is touched, and he weeps bitterly over his fault. But this is the effect not the cause of Christ's action. Afterwards He fully restores his soul. So in His advocacy in John, it is, "If any man *sin*," not if any man repent, "we have an advocate with the Father." So in John xiii., where the application is taught, where Christ, already owned Son of God, Son of David, Son of man, now takes His place on high, and shews that He is still our servant, to make us clean, to have a part with Him there, as He could not remain with us here

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—it is His action, not what is sought by the disciples, clean as washed by the word—He cleanses their feet (moved by His own grace), from the dirt gathered in the walk. And note further, His intercession is for them in relationship with Him : I pray not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given me : so for others who should believe through their word. In the Epistle to the Hebrews it is equally clear that Christ is Priest for those in relationship with God, only that is more based on profession or the people, than in Romans or John ; still it speaks of *us*. As regards Christ's activity for us, there is less as to failure than in John. The great subject is the distinct nature and character of priesthood as contrasted with that with which law was connected, the passing away of that earthly one, and the establishment of the heavenly one. Still there is no thought of going to the priest. We go to God by Him ; we come boldly to the throne of grace, in virtue of His being there, but there is no thought of going to Him, but of going boldly to God Himself. Nor is there a thought of obtaining righteousness by it, nor any uncertainty as to that. By one offering He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified, and they are sanctified by the offering too. He offered Himself once for all. His priesthood is for tempted ones. He is able to help them, ever living to make intercession for them ; He is

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touched with the feeling of our infirmities, having been tempted like us, sin apart. It is help to the sanctified ones (perfected by the offering of Christ once for all), in passing through the wilderness, and He by whom they draw nigh to God. His priesthood is exercised then that we may find mercy and help at the throne of grace. This need of mercy for individuals is shewn remarkably in the well-known fact that the epistles addressed to individuals speak of it; those addressed to churches do not. This makes the character of intercession, priesthood, or advocacy very simple for us. They are exercised in favour of those who are in relationship with God, not to put them into it. It is exercised for those who are already the righteousness of God in Christ, sitting in heavenly places in Him. The advocacy is for those whose walk is in the light as God is in the light. Intercession is for those for whom God is,—to the charge of whom none can lay anything. It is used for their failure or infirmity in their path here, not to obtain a place in the heavenlies, but when we are there to meet every inconsistency in our walk in the wilderness, help our infirmities there, and enable us, poor and mixed as we are in fact here, to go boldly to a throne of grace to find mercy and grace in time of need. And thus it is that it keeps alive the sense of dependence and entire confidence at the same time.

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Were Christ not there we could not have that confidence in going. Were it a question of obtaining righteousness, it would be one of guilt and acceptance, not of help. Were it going to Christ, it would assume *we* could not go to God, the very contrary of what Christianity teaches. But it is none of these. We go boldly to God, because Christ is there as our high priest. We have no thought of imputation, but our being the righteousness of God in Him does not make us slight our inconsistencies in the path in which we walk. He takes notice of them, and is our advocate in virtue of being the righteous One and a propitiation for us. Thus the personal sense of fault is maintained, enhancing, not enfeebling the sense of grace; and yet our acceptance in righteousness is never touched so as to put us back under law or bring divine righteousness ever into question, or cause our conscious relationship to God to be ever at all weakened. All passes on the ground of these. Yet the holiness of God is kept fully up as regards our conduct, and a full spirit of confession maintained when we fail; our inward estimate of good and evil is kept alive and in growth without a particle of servile fear; and blessed confidence maintained in this very respect. I have already noticed the difference between the advocacy in respect of restoration and communion with the Father, and the

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approach to God, and help in our infirmities as men. But on the ground and nature of their exercise they are the same, founded on assumed relationship in righteousness and applicable to our walk in weakness here, when in that. If John shews us the Advocate with the Father when we have sinned, the Hebrews presents us with One who can sympathise with all our infirmities, can be touched with the feeling of them, though now all power is His in heaven and on earth. He is constantly occupied with our case and state. Hence not only holy judgment of sin is maintained, yet the sense of grace is intact, but confidence in unwearied love which has made itself like its brethren in all things, to be a merciful and faithful high priest. Thus the gracious affections of dependence and confidence are maintained and cultivated ; and that not as if we went to the priest in a difficulty, ran off to get help, but in the free blessed care-taking activity of His own love. It is not that He relents when we turn in due humiliation ; right feeling is *the fruit* of His blessed activity in grace. I know not that I need add more. My object was not to expatiate on this grace and the fruits of it in us, but to give the scriptural place of priesthood and advocacy, as founded on the establishment of divine righteousness and the accomplishment of propitiation, and the place we have before God by it,—not clouding

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this, but founded on it, and applying itself to reconcile our actual weakness and failure here below with that place ; so that neither it should be uncertain in grace, nor any inconsistency with it be borne, though nothing can be imputed, and instead of a cold and heartless certainty of being safe, dependence, confidence, and affection, united to security in Him who is the object of them, till we come where it is no more needed.

J. N. D.

CHARITY—LOVE.

I COR. xiii.

I FEEL greatly pressed to bring this subject before the prayerful consideration of my readers ; the importance of it none, I suppose, will dispute ; the urgency of it ; few perhaps will enter into. May the ever blessed Spirit, God the Holy Ghost the Comforter, suggest and control my thoughts, as well as guide me in the current of the scriptures of truth, while I write.

First as to the word "love," translated in the authorized version "charity."

It is not necessary to point out that the popular application of the word to the distribution of money, or the giving of alms, is an entire mistake ; the chapter itself will prove this, for the Apostle says it were possible to bestow all his goods to feed the poor and not to have charity.

It has been very beautifully pointed out

that our word "love" combines two notions which are expressed in Greek by two different words ἀγάπη (agapee) and ἔρως (erōs). Now this latter word for love denotes "the love of desire," which seeks its satisfaction in being loved. But the Greek language knows another love, the love of complacency, which is much more disinterested, which contemplates, approves and *yields itself*; this is ἀγάπη (agapee), a word, it is said, certainly related to the verb ἀγαμαί (agamai) *to admire*. Now to this term, it is thought, the word charity better corresponds; and it does seem reasonable and true as so presented. So much for the terms *charity* and *love*. But let us now see what our God says to us in His word as to charity. Even this, that we might speak with the tongues of men or of angels, have the gift of prophecy, understand all mysteries and all knowledge; have all faith so as to remove mountains, and yet not have *charity*! How solemn, how searching!

But it may be said, is it not merely a *supposed case* which is here presented? Let not such a thought for a moment rest in the mind of my reader. Alas! experience, both ancient and modern, only too clearly establishes the absolute truth of what is here set forth, and that the shrinking from *self-surrender* will accompany progress in this kind of endowment, leading to *spiritual pride* and *self-sufficiency*. It is very

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solemn to dwell upon what the Apostle compares this state with, namely—"Sounding brass and tinkling cymbal." These terms denote, the one a piece of *unwrought* metal struck to produce sound, the other the concave plate, used in the East as a musical instrument; and they describe in a most marked and arresting manner "the inflation of an exalted imagination, and an over-excited sensibility," and of these it is well said that "Religious language is then no longer the natural over-flowing of a heart filled with love; it resembles the resonant sound of a dead and hollow instrument." Further, it is said that the expression is very nearly allied to one which was a proverbial name for those who speak much and do nothing.

What a solemn message all this has for professing Christians at the present day; for who is so barefaced and bold as to deny that just now the children of God, at least professedly, are the standing reproach of an unbelieving, agnostic age. If I must needs supply proof for what I conceive is only too self-evident, I appeal to the hatred, variance, strife, party spirit, venom, spite, and bitterness which characterise a certain class of religious controversy at the present moment. I grieve to say I see it on all sides. It is a solemn sin which lies at the door of professing Christians, and, what is worse than all, it is practised by almost all under the devil's delusion of zeal for

Christ's glory. This is to me saddest of all, even that His blessed name who is Love, should be made a cloak wherein to wrap a mind the very opposite to Himself. How truly it is said that —“In our day, too, one may be a celebrated theologian, the instrument of powerful revivals, the author of beautiful works in the kingdom of God, a missionary with a name filling the world ; if in all these things the man is *self-seeking*, and if it is not the divine breath of charity which animates him, in God's eyes this is only *seeming* not *being*.”

“Behold the fruit of all these magnificent gifts : all speech, all knowledge, all power, and yet nothing ! Love alone is anything in the eyes of love.” It is well we should see who it is the apostle has in view here, even “a Christian carrying to this degree *the appearance* of love to Christ while seeking *at bottom* only his own fame or self merit in the eyes of God.” “The trickeries of self-love are unfathomable, and to deceive the very man who is their instrument.” “Love accepts only what is inspired by love.”

But, now, dear readers, how solemn is all this for us at this moment ; are we not met every day with the awful denial of it by those who call themselves Christians ? Brethren, who assume the very highest position, they would tell you they alone care for the glory of the Son of God, they alone are Philadelphia, they alone are “the

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people," and so forth, but in vain will you look for a manifestation of that love which is of God, in which being rooted and founded, there is full ability "to apprehend with *all saints*, what is the breadth and length and depth and height; and to know the love of the Christ which surpasses knowledge." In vain will you look for a manifestation of that love, which is developed in reference to others, who are not the motive, although they are the object. How blessedly descriptive of this love are the following words—"It has its source within; its strength is independent of the objects with which it is occupied. Thus it can act where circumstances might produce irritation or jealousy in the human heart. It acts according to its own nature in the circumstances; and by judging them according to that nature, they do not act upon the man who is full of love, except so far as they supply occasion for its activity, and direct its form. *Love is its own motive.* In us participation in the divine nature is its only source. Communion with God Himself alone sustains it through all the difficulties it has to surmount in its path."

It is the absence of this with which we are now confronted, and that in a most gross and unblushing form; faithfulness, trueness to Christ, close adherence to His word, and the danger of laxity, are no plea for the absence of that love which is of God, and a justification in some sort

of that spirit which bites and devours one another. Further, the *possibility* of a *spurious* charity is fully admitted, but that does not justify on the other hand a caricature of christian faithfulness and loyalty, which is nothing better than “a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal;”—by this system, for such it has become, the worst evils of the flesh and its works are condoned, and being dressed up in the external garb of a pretentious piety, claims the allegiance of reality. How solemn!

But let us turn for a moment to a far happier theme, and let us note well, how it is said that of faith, hope, and charity, the greatest is love; why is it the greatest? I will give two quotations which express the answer far better than I could —“Now love subsists already; there are faith and hope also. Not only shall these pass away, but even now, here below, that which is of the nature of God is more excellent than that which is connected with the capacity of human nature, even though enlightened by God, and having for its object the revealed glory of God.”

“We have just seen that faith and hope abide continually, but undergoing incessant transformation, the one into sight, the other into possession. It is not so with charity. Love does not see, does not acquire, it *is* the divine. God does not believe nor hope, but He loves. Love belongs to His essence.”

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The all importance of this love receives further confirmation from the exhortation, "Follow after charity"—the word follow after *διωκειν* (*diōkein*) shews the *indispensable nature* of what is thus pursued, in contrast with the next word desire *ζηλουν* (*zeeloun*), which expresses a faculty, simply desirable. May the hearts of the children of God be aroused to "follow after charity." Assuredly it is high time to awake out of sleep as to this great reality, have we not got down among the dead as to it? How true were the words penned in 1879 by one gone to his rest, when he wrote—"Did we walk even as once we walked? Was there devoted service among the poor and needy, visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keeping ourselves unspotted from the world I have long said brethren began by practical separation from the world. Though certain great truths for the last days were there, still what the world saw was that they were not of it It was not a discussion whether they were Philadelphia or not." What a voice those solemn words of twelve years ago have now, may hearts be opened in His grace to listen to the truth they convey, may we remember that "when God is at work, it is love for the truth, grief at the condition of the church of God, and separation of heart and ways to the truth, while waiting for Christ—not thinking of ourselves as vessels of it." W. T. T.

“CHRIST IS ALL THINGS.”

(COL. iii. 11.)

WHEN we are well grounded as to our place in Christ and the results of it, when it is consciously known and enjoyed in the soul, it is suitable to consider the portion of the saint now, and some of its corresponding consequences.

I trust we clearly see that our standing and place are in the second Adam, where He is, and not in any sense in the first. If this be not apprehended in the soul by the power of the Holy Ghost, everything else will be both vague and feeble ; it is the divine platform upon which, in grace, we are set, and where we are maintained by the Spirit, in order to our enjoying and using all that is ours in Christ.

There is a double danger, which it seems suitable to indicate here. First,—measuring the greatness and blessedness of what we have in Christ, where He is, by any enjoyment of ours, be it ever so elevated ; being in fact so one-sided about it, as to lead people to suppose that the possession of it depended upon the use of it, or the enjoyment of it.

Secondly,—overlooking the fact that earnestness and diligence of soul, prayerful dependence of heart upon the Lord, and counting on the energy of His Spirit, are all necessary in order that I may appropriate and use what is mine

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already ; and thus discover the good of what is mine ; like a man entitled to large estates, who never knew the value of his property until he lived on it, and worked it.

It is an important thing to preserve the balance of truth in our souls, and to give every part of God's word and revelation its divinely ordered place. Our portion, then, is Christ Himself ! And what a portion !

Now, while it is blessedly true, that it is not in our power to forfeit the possession of our portion, or to lose it by any folly of ours, it is equally true that the realisation of its blessedness, the satisfaction of enjoying it, the consciousness of our union with Him who is our portion, all depend upon ourselves. It is only by the Holy Ghost who dwells in us that we have power. If He be grieved, His witness in this respect is for the time suspended in us ; in that case He witnesses against us, that the failure which we have allowed may be judged, and He be free once more to pass the glories of Christ before our souls, and occupy us with them ; thus have we fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, and thus our joy is full.

It is also important to observe that our portion is our object ; that which marks Christianity specially is, that we are furnished with an *object* in heaven, and a *power* in us and with us on the earth. Nothing of this kind was ever known

under the law ; it proposed no object outside of self, and it supplied no power to meet its requirements, which were backed up with condemnation and death. The new order of things tells of power at every turn, the power of God quickening, raising us up, seating us in heavenly places in Christ, our portion and object, and "working in us." (Eph. iii. 20.) That is to say, power surrounds us on every hand, but power equally works *in us* for the realisation of the enjoyment of that *for which power has laid hold of us*.

Now, it is important to remember that neither enjoyment nor realisation are our portion or object, and yet the more earnestly our souls are fixed upon Him who is both, we do realise and enjoy, "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord" (2 Cor. iii. 18), secures two things to us :

First.—Satisfaction of heart with Him on whom the eye of the soul is steadfastly fixed.

Second.—Transformation into the same image, from one degree of glory to another,—moral likeness to our object and portion.

Stephen in Acts vii., is a fine illustration of all this. Filled with the Spirit, he steadfastly gazed into the opened heavens, and there his eye was filled with Jesus in glory, his portion and object! No strife or clamorous uproar, which, like a wall of fire, encircled him around, could prevail to turn his eye or heart from that blessed

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One who Himself filled them. No; he "looked up steadfastly into heaven." There was his place, his home, his portion: he is satisfied and at rest here on earth, from which he must shortly depart; he shares the fortunes of a rejected, crucified Christ; hatred, enmity, and violence here, are the counterpart of rest and satisfaction there, and to him, too, they are the consequence of it; these he accepts, as those he enjoys. It is a wonderful scene to us, but how heaven must have looked down upon it, who can tell? But this is not all; not only does he behold, but he is like the One into whose blessed face he looks; like Him who said, "Father, forgive them;" he too, says, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Truly, it is so; "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord," he was "transformed into the same image from glory to glory."

There is a beautiful illustration of our subject in Leviticus vii. 34, where we find that the wave breast and heave shoulder of the peace offering were the appointed portion of Aaron and his sons. "The wave breast and the heave shoulder have I taken of the children of Israel, from off the sacrifices of their peace-offerings, and have given them unto Aaron the priest, and unto his sons, by a statute for ever, from among the children of Israel." What excellent things are here for faith to feed upon!

"CHRIST IS ALL THINGS."

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The strength and the affections of Christ, as well as Himself, in whom is our all, are the blessed portion of His people. Of old, it was said of Israel, "The Lord's portion is his people." Now, in the highest way, we can say, "The Lord is my portion, O my soul," "Christ is everything and in all."

"My Lord, my life, my rest, my shield,
 My rock, my food, my light ;
 Each thought of Thee doth constant yield
 Unchanging, fresh delight."

I shall very briefly note some of the consequences which would follow from all this.

1st.—With such a portion, things here would be eclipsed, and esteemed as dung and dross. The knowledge of Christ Jesus is the most excellent of all sciences ; the possession of Him, true riches. Thank God, there is an all absorbing power in Christ, and, for the heart possessing Him, and possessed by Him, earthly themes now cease.

An incident in David's history is an apt though poor type of all this. When David returned to his own house after the death of Absalom, among the first to meet and bid him welcome, was Mephibosheth, the son of Saul. With genuine and true-hearted loyalty, he carried in his very person the evidence of David's absence, while the king was as yet away (2 Sam. xix. 24) ;

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but now that the king has come again to his own home in peace, Mephibosheth's cup is full ; his portion was David himself ; and because it is so, even the good things of David, the bounties and favour of his hand, can he let go with a willing heart. "Yea, let him take all ; forasmuch as my lord is come again in peace unto his own house."

2nd.—One other consequence is, the way in which every part of our history here is used up by us to shew the good of what we have in our portion ; there is not one trial too many, not one sorrow too grievous, for the heart that is possessed by Christ, to manifest the value and blessedness of Him who is our portion, and our compensation in every grief and perplexity. May the Lord give us to abound and have all things, in having Himself, until we see His face, are like Him, and with Him for ever !—W. T. T.



A NEW STATE.*

I AM more deeply convinced than ever, by renewed study of Romans and other scriptures, that the view I have insisted on, as to a new nature and place in resurrection, as contrasted with flesh under law, is not only true, but is the great fundamental point on which the Apostle Paul insists as distinguishing Christianity. That, while surely sins are expiated and put away,

* "Notes and Comments," Vol. iv., page 111.

“all are under sin” is what he is dwelling upon, and that wholly as in flesh, and hence death and a new state come in, through grace, in Christ. Besides the blessed fact of putting away sins, this is the truth of the Romans—righteousness being established by the obedience of Christ as such. But this, too, in contrast with law. Even as to convincing power, he does not say by the law is the knowledge “of sins,” for conscience told that, but the knowledge “of sin.” “All have sinned,” is in the end of Romans iii. ; so in verses 12–16 is offences under law specially. Both “sins” and “sin” in chapter iv. 7, 8 ; so verse 25. In chapter ii. 12, is actual sinning, as in iii. 23. From chapter vi., where death is applied, “sin” is the subject.

The details I have given here serve as reference, but only shew the force of the apostle’s argument. It is well to note them specially. I add, when I have said above, Romans vi., it must be remembered that that is founded on the great truth that we must not look to law, which is individual, but beyond it to the two great heads, Adam and Christ—one of sin, the other of righteousness and life. Only “for that all have sinned” comes in. In Galatians we have only iii. 22, where all are “concluded under sin,” where we have help to see what the force of “righteousness” (ii. 21) is, in contrast with “sin.”

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It is clearer and clearer to me every day that the whole gist of the apostle's teaching, especially in Romans, is that as the law was correlative with flesh, and so, we being sinful, a ministration not of deliverance but of death, we are brought in Christ into a new condition by the Spirit of life in Him, and that, this being by death, we are free in the new man according to the law of the Spirit of life. That deliverance is not by the law, but by having life in the power of the Spirit in contrast with flesh. The law came in by the bye, to bring clearly out what flesh was, but that Spirit instead of flesh is true deliverance, Christ's death set aside the title of flesh. The whole of Romans viii. is the teaching of this. The new power of life—the Spirit in the power of life—has set me free from flesh and its law of evil, has put me into another existence and life. But that my conscience might be true, and God's righteousness maintained in it, God has condemned sin in the flesh, in a sacrifice for sin, even the cross. Thus, Spirit and flesh are fully contrasted, and the law has no place even with either, for judgment has come on flesh, not law which could make no hand of it, and then Spirit replaces flesh. This makes the "fors" of verses 2 and 3 quite plain, which are otherwise difficult, and the whole bearing of the teaching clear.

J. N .D.



THE SEAMLESS COAT.

“Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.” (John xix. 23.)

THE Lord's Person and walk seem to be brought before us here in a figurative way. The coat was “*seamless*,” suggesting the thought of the indivisibility of His Person, the perfect union of the divine and human natures in Him. He was both God and Man, yet but one Person ; He did not, of course, cease to be God by becoming man, and He will never give up what He assumed in incarnation, namely, Manhood. But there can be no dissecting of His Person, He was, like the coat, unique, perfectly so. “Let us not rend it,” said the soldiers. “No man knoweth the Son but the Father.” He was, as another has said,

“Divine, yet Human ;
Human, yet Divine.”

“The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth.” One with the Father, yet receiving everything from the Father ; He, by whom all things received being, yet doing nothing from Himself, but only what He saw the Father doing ; never acting from Himself, but always moving in perfect consistency with what He had become, with the place He had come into—that of a servant. How marvellously lovely ! God Himself come

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down to, near to men, in a Man! And God has given Him to us according to all that He is. We have not to "cast lots for it, whose it shall be." Faith, which appropriates what love provides, says, "He is mine;" "My beloved is mine," "The Father's Gift of love divine."

And further, it was "woven *from the top throughout.*" Here we have the character of the whole fabric of His life, His life as a man, presented to us. He was a heavenly man upon earth, entirely governed by heavenly objects, motives, and principles. He was "the Son of man *who is in heaven*" even while corporeally upon earth. Heavenly, too, as to origin as well as character and walk. Essentially "*the heavenly One,*" "the Second Man, *out of heaven.*" We are never exhorted to be *what He was*; impossible! but "to walk as He walked." As has been said, "His life in connection with man (was) the ever perfect expression of the effect of His life of heavenly communion and of His divine nature." It was "woven *from the top throughout.*"

"Thy Name encircles every grace,
That God as Man could shew;
There only could He fully trace
A life divine below."

Probably "the coat" was the work of some loving hand, the delight of whose heart it was to minister to Him, and how it must have pained

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the Lord to have seen it thus disposed of, gambled for, for all was taken note of by Him, withal that he was passing through in that unutterable hour; it was one of His silent utterances to God when upon the cross, "They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture [the coat] they did cast lots." But thus the scripture was fulfilled, and the coat served a purpose that never entered into the heart of the weaver of it, it served as one among the many evidences of the Messiahship of Jesus.

Blessed it is to see that ere that coat fell to those dogs, without heart or shame, who compassed Him in that hour, it had in every way served the purpose of Him who suggested and gave the needed wisdom for the weaving of it, whether as clothing for the holy body of the Saviour, or as setting forth in figure the wondrous Person and heavenly character of life of the Wearer, for John took note of its peculiar characteristics, and the Holy Ghost has by him recorded them, and surely for our instruction, or as serving the accomplishment of scripture, and thus how well have those loving hands which wrought it been already recompensed.

It may also represent His mystical body, the church, composed as it is of Jew and Gentile, the unity and integrity of which cannot be marred; as also the heavenly origin, standing, and character of those composing it, for "such

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as the heavenly one, such also the heavenly ones ;” and in this aspect it will yet be delivered from “the power of the dog,” for “as we have borne the image of the one made of dust, we shall bear also the image of the heavenly one.” “Deliver . . . my darling from the power of the dog ;” “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

It might be added that just as there were the two sides to the coat so are there the two aspects under which His Person (one and indivisible) may be viewed. And they are distinguished in the word, and we do well to remember that distinguishing is not rending nor dissecting. Scripture is full of the most beautiful distinctions, and it is our wisdom to study them. In John’s Gospel, as we know, the divine side of His Person is what is prominent, while in Luke’s it is the human that is so. And therefore it is that in John His coming into the world is announced in that simple yet majestic way, “And the Word [a divine Person, the second, as we say, in the Trinity] *became flesh ;*” while in Luke we have the same blessed fact brought before us in the words : “Ye shall find *a babe* wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger”—“*the token of perfect weakness, a little infant who can only weep.*”* Luke, again, gives us in the most full way His agony in Geth-

* ‘Notes on Luke,’ by J. N. D., p. 18.

semane in view of His having to drink that awful cup, His being made sin and tasting death, and that, too, as the judgment of God on sin, and this was His piety as a Man; how could He do otherwise than deprecate it all; how suitable such feelings, and how consistent with sinless humanity in the presence of that hour and the power of darkness; whereas John entirely omits it as not in keeping with the presentation of Him as a divine Person, and shews Him to us as the One who willingly offers Himself, saying, "The cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink it?" So, too, His passage out of the world is beautifully in keeping with their respective presentations of the Lord, John giving us, "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and having bowed his head, he *delivered up* his spirit;" a divine act, the act of a divine Person, which no mere man could do, yet a man, for of course God as such could not die; while in Luke we have simply "*He expired,*" which of course is true of every one who dies.

Again, in Hebrews i. He is presented as a divine Person, as One who "having made by himself the purification of sins, *set himself down* on the right hand of the greatness on high, *taking a place* by so much better than the angels as he inherits a name more excellent than they;"

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while in chapter ii. He is the "Son of man" who *is crowned* (He does not crown Himself) "with glory and honour."

"How wondrous the glories that meet
 In Jesus, and in His face shine,
 His love is eternal and sweet,
 'Tis human, 'tis also divine.
 His glory—not only God's Son—
 In manhood He had *His full part*—
 And the union of both joined in one
 Form the fountain of love in His heart."

May the Lord give us greater power of abstraction from present things, that we may be more free, in the power of the Spirit, to meditate and dwell upon these "wondrous glories," for His name's sake. T. H.



"THE LORD IS COMING."

THE Lord is coming! Yes! that is true, it is *The Lord*. But because I am a son of God I wait for Him to come from heaven. The very inward life of the believer is formed in connection with the coming of the Lord.

The night was dark when these epistles were written, but, as in a dark night, there was a bright shining of the Star in heaven. However dark the night, and however many difficulties there are, we should be able to see that bright Star.

These Thessalonians were not fully instructed as to the coming, their minds were not at ease about those taken to be with the Lord. But

Paul does not write only because they were puzzled and perplexed, but brings out the mind of the Spirit quite simply.

The first epistle was probably the first of all the epistles, and when the Lord thinks of us, what are His first thoughts about us? Of the deep sands of the wilderness? No. He knows there is a certain responsiveness of heart in us to the thought of His coming, and His thought is that we are waiting for Himself from heaven.

If He let them come to their wit's end it was that He might shew them that he could meet all their need, and let the droppings of His love in. He always takes occasion from any difficulty to shew forth Himself.

If I get near the Lord Jesus Christ I find there is in His heart a speciality of things and affections for a people down here, who are waiting for Him. Not waiting for the glory; that is another thing. It is a craving in His heart that cannot be satisfied till He shall come to take us home to Himself. And can I think of this and not want to see Him? Formed for Christ's own individual presence, the heart cannot be *satisfied* till it gets there.

Notice the place He recognises them in—verse 1, "*In God the Father.*" This has no meaning to an unconverted mind on the earth among men. How can a people be in God the Father and in His Son Jesus Christ?

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It is an immense help to remember that our Lord Jesus never forgets His coming—there is a fixedness of heart in Him to come and fetch the bride home to the Father's house, and I can have sympathy with Him in that.

The to-morrow of the believer is formed on the yesterday of the believer and is connected with His to-day. For where does a soul get peace but by going right inside the veil where Christ sits? You must see the connection between what Christ did on the cross with the throne of God in heaven if you are to have a hope that maketh not ashamed.

The anchor ground of your soul is in Christ within the veil, the accepted sacrifice. Many cleave to the Lord Jesus Christ where God hid His face from Him on the cross. That is the yesterday of faith—therein I have brought out the knowledge of my faith and of my acceptance before God.

Have you brought nothing else from the presence of God? Not the love He bears you? Was all the love of Christ spent in proving to you your access to God? Oh, no. I cannot have been intelligently in the presence of the Lord without knowing not only that I want Him but that He wants me.

G. V. W.

(Notes of an address, 1866.)

“WHAT IS MAN?”

THIS striking question is three times asked in the Old Testament scriptures. 1. It is asked by Job (chap. vii. 17), in the moment of his boundless grief, consumed by suffering.

In the accumulation of his sorrows, and struggling under the hand of God, Job exclaims, “What is man?” asking to be let alone till he had swallowed down his spittle. The meaning of man here is, *frail mortal* man; in this connection it suggests the sense he had, more or less, of what a poor worm he was, and how strange that the mighty God should set His heart upon him, visit him every morning and try him every moment, even such an one as he whose foundation is in the dust, and who is crushed before the moth. It is well we should enter into the real secret of all Job’s trials; it was the discipline of God’s hand on His servant to lead him to the blessed consummation described in the words, “*I abhor myself.*” It was for this God had at the first proposed Job as the subject of Satan’s sifting. “Hast thou considered my servant Job?”—is met by the insolent question of the devil, “Doth Job fear God for nought?” This was a vile insinuation as to the purity of his secret motives; and suggests the thought that if needs be Satan would do as much himself.

It has been very beautifully observed that this

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was in reality an attack upon God Himself: "For if the most pure of mankind is incapable of loving God gratuitously—that is, really—it follows that God has not the power to make Himself loved. Now, as it is the perfection of a being to love, so it is His glory to be loved." "The most telling blow, therefore, which can be inflicted upon the Divine honour is to assert that even the most devout worshipper of God upon earth only serves Him with this *arrière-pensée*: What shall I gain by it?"

But we have the same question asked in other circumstances and connections in Psalm cxliv. Here we have the godly remnant in Israel crying to God in the last days ; they are passing through the bitterest trials, and plead with Jehovah the entire insignificance of their oppressors, "Man (*i.e.* frail, mortal man) is like to vanity, his days are as a shadow that passeth away." This is set forth as a reason why the speedy judgments of God's hand should work deliverance for them, from their oppressors, who are in prosperity all around them. When man is thus seen, there is a knowledge acquired both of the scene and of the great patience of God. But yet is it in striking contrast with the knowledge of the Christian, for him the cross has settled all and for ever, and he reckons himself to have died, yet alive unto God through Him who died and rose again ; further, he knows himself of a new creation, and a child

with the Father. How blessed is this, and how sad to see the desire to be *earthly people*, living only to die at the close of human life!

But now let us turn to the third mention of this question in scripture; it is as we have said in Psalm viii. 4, quoted in Hebrew ii. 6. There we find the spirit of Christ in the Psalmist asking the question, "What is man?" How blessed to see that He does so as the rejected One, put to shame by His own people and by men, His heart feeling a sorrow thus peculiarly His own, pours itself out to Jehovah, and from this His humbled place, taken and accepted by Himself, He asks, "What is man?" Jehovah's answer is, Christ!

He was this Son of man, set over all the works of God's hand.

It is most touching and beautiful to see the way this Psalm is quoted in Hebrews ii. already alluded to; "*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: thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet."

Observe how this and the explanation following is introduced; the inspired writer does not say, David in a certain place testified, for he knew well that a greater than David was there! How blessed to ponder all this and treasure it in

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our hearts. In the days of the sorrow and humiliation of this blessed man, babes and sucklings uttered His praise, and thus the enemy and avenger was stilled ; now He is crowned with honour and glory, though as yet all things are not put under Him. But there is a day at hand when His name shall be excellent in all the earth.

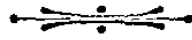
Thus, then, what is set before our adoring faith and praise here is, man in the counsels of God, the second Man, the last Adam, Christ the glory of Jehovah, as well as His delight, the wisdom of God and the power of God.

And as in that day that is at hand, when, as we have said, His name shall be excellent in all the earth, so the *whole inheritance* of this blessed man, the Redeemer-Heir, taken by Him under that title, shall reflect His praise and glory, displaying the power of His redemption, as at the first the material creation displayed the handiwork of the Creator, in all its variety of living beauty. This being closely connected with His glory in part, must ever have an affectionate interest for His own, while at the same time faith *now* turns on high, sees Him and knows Him *there*, knows too its own associations with the second Man in glory, leaves in spirit the earth and the earthly scene, to *dwell* with Him in the delights and joys of the Father's house on high, and to *journey* here where He is not, as a

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pilgrim of faith, whose "commonwealth has its existence in the heavens, from which also we await the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, who shall transform our body of humiliation into conformity to his body of glory, according to the working of the power which he has even to subdue all things to himself." (Phil. iii. 21.) Lord, hasten it in Thy time!

W. T. T.



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WITH HIS CHILDREN.

HE warns them by His word, and if they do not listen, He interferes in His power to stop them, in order that He may be able to bless them. "He sheweth them their work and their transgressions that they have exceeded." "That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man." (See Job xxxvi. 5, 14; xxxiii 14-30.) In the dealings of God, salvation is not brought into question. He looks upon His children, and chastens those whom He loves. The worst of all chastenings is, that He should leave us to follow our own ways. "Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone." (Hosea iv. 17.) Terrible punishment! Harder than the most severe outward chastening! The persons of whom the Holy Ghost is speaking in Job are called "the just." God does not withdraw His eyes from them, and He says also to Israel by

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the prophet Amos, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." (Amos iii. 2.)

In the Epistle to the Corinthians we see that, when the Christians turned the Lord's Supper into a scene of dissoluteness, God laid His hand upon them. Some of them were sick, and others had even fallen asleep (that is, had died); and the apostle in calling attention to it adds, "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." (1 Cor. xi. 31, 32.) Solemn thought! We are under the hand of the Lord, who punishes sin wherever He finds it. He is a consuming fire, and when the moment is come, judgment begins at His house. What a difference between such relations with God, and the joy of His love, and communion, when one has not grieved His Spirit, and when one is walking under His eye and in the light of His countenance! I do not doubt that a large part of the sickness and trials of Christians are chastenings sent by God on account of things that are evil in His sight, which the conscience ought to have paid heed to, but which it neglected. God has been forced to produce in us the effect which self-judgment ought to have produced before Him. It would, however, be untrue to suppose that all afflictions are chasten-

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ings. Though they are so sometimes, they are not always sent because of sin. There are things in the soul connected with the natural character which need to be corrected in order that we may live more in communion with God and glorify Him in all the details of life. What we do not know how to do, with regard to these things, God does for us ; but there are many children of God who commit faults which their consciences ought to feel, and which they would discover if their soul were in the presence of God.

Jacob had to fight all his life against himself, because God had known his ways, and, in order to bless Him, God must wrestle with him too, and on this account, also, He was not pleased to reveal His name to him. It is totally different in the history of Abraham. A thorn in the flesh was given to Paul to hinder evil ; for in his case the danger did not arise from his carelessness, but from the abundance of the revelations which he had had. . . .

The first start of a converted soul, however sincere it may be, produces anything but the judgment of self and the flesh, which, by unveiling to us our weakness, causes us to lay down our burden at the feet of Jesus. We then seek for strength only in Him, and confide in Him alone. The confidence which a soul that knows and distrusts itself, has in Jesus, is what gives it a lasting and solid peace, when it has under-

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stood, not only as a doctrine, but by the acceptance of the heart, that He alone is our righteousness. But we only arrive at this when we have been in the presence of God, and have there made the discovery that we are only sin, that Christ is perfect righteousness, and God, perfect love. From that time we distrust ourselves, we fight against ourselves, and the flesh and the enemy have no longer the same power to deceive us.

There are many Christians who are not stripped of self, and although we may all be exposed to the same dangers, yet such have more particularly to dread the wiles of the enemy, because they have not learnt how far the flesh deceives us, and do not know with how terrible a traitor we have to do. When we have come to a knowledge of this, although there may be a lack of watchfulness, yet Christ has a larger place in the heart, and there is more calm, and less of self. . .

How wily and deceitful is our heart! What slaves does an idol make of us! We may endeavour to escape the danger, yet be taking means to accomplish the thing we desire! What a terrible thing it is to get away from God! When the heart has abandoned God, it dreads man more even than God.

May God grant to all His children to seek His presence day by day! J. N. D.

THE PASSOVER AND THE RED SEA.

IT is well to distinguish, for our souls' profit, the difference between the Passover and the Red Sea. For a person may hear the gospel, and receive it with joy, and be rejoicing in forgiveness of sins ; he may see the loveliness of Christ, and have his affections drawn ont toward Himself ; but if full redemption is not known, as typified by the Red Sea, if he does not know himself to be risen with Christ on the other side of death and judgment, he is almost sure to lose his joy when temptation comes and he feels his own weakness. The joy of Exodus xv. is, that God has absolutely redeemed them out of Egypt, and brought them in His strength to His holy habitation. This is a very different thing from the joy of the Passover—being delivered from just and deserved judgment. In the Passover Jehovah had made Himself known to them as the God of judgment. The blood on the door-posts screened them from judgment ; it kept Him out, and He did not come into their houses to destroy. Had He come in, it must have been in judgment. At the Red Sea it was another thing—even God coming in strength as their salvation. The Passover delivered them from His judgment ; the Red Sea from their enemies. The moment His people are in danger from

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Pharaoh, He comes in. The very sea they dreaded, and which appeared to throw them into Pharaoh's hands, becomes the means of their salvation. Thus through death God delivered them from death ; like as Christ went down into the stronghold of Satan, went down under the power of death, and, rising again from the dead, delivered us from death. Thus was there an end of Pharaoh and Egypt to them for ever. The Red Sea is redemption out of Egypt ; God Himself is their salvation. He whom they had feared, and justly as a Judge, is become their salvation. They are redeemed ; no longer were hoping for mercy, but able to rejoice that judgment was past, and to sing His praises for having brought them to His holy habitation—to God Himself ; in the light as He is in the light—and brought there before they had taken one step in the wilderness, or fought one battle with their enemies.

There is no conflict properly till redemption is known. They did not attempt to fight with Pharaoh, but only to get away from him. They groaned under his yoke, but did not combat against him. How could they ? They must be brought to God first—be the Lord's host before they can fight His enemies or their own. And so it is with an individual soul. I have no power to combat Satan while I am still his slave. I may groan under his yoke, and sigh to be

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delivered from it ; but before my arm can be raised against him, I must have a complete and known redemption. The Israelites are not only happy in escaping the pursuer ; it is a full, conscious redemption from Egypt and Pharaoh, and they can count on God's power for all the rest. "The people shall hear, and be afraid: the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away." (Exod. xv. 14, 15.) Their joy does not arise from having no enemies, but from God's own divine power taking them up, and putting them in His own presence.

J. N. D.



"A STRANGER HERE."

Exodus ii. 22.

While the wilderness we travel,
Nought save dreariness around,
Not a gleam of earthly sunshine,
Only storm and tempest found.

Rich the joy of surely knowing
Home and rest are all above !
Won by Him on earth a Stranger,—
Proving timeless, changeless love !

See Him stooping down from glory,
Lowly, humbled, sorrowing here ;
Scorned of earth, by man rejected,
No bright spot His heart to cheer.

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See Him all along His journey,
From the mountain* to the cross,
Save His Father's love—how lonely !
Meeting shame, contempt, and loss.

Want and woe in man's sad story
Never wearied His blest ear ;
Widowed hearts and orphans' sorrows
Found in Him relief and cheer.

See Him in His hour of travail,
Contrast to our path below ;
We have Him for every sorrow,
He had nought save deepest woe.

Wrath of God in fiercest judgment,
Borne *alone* upon the tree ;
Love that passeth every knowledge,
Now flows forth unstrained, free.

Raised from death, His Father's glory
Claims Him Victor for His throne ;
There alone His ransomed know Him,
There alone their joys and home.

Here they wander through death's valley,
He beside them, yet on high ;
They like Him on earth but strangers,
He with them for ever nigh.

Soon His shout will greet His pilgrims—
Welcome long-loved home and rest ;
Now by faith enjoyed and entered,
Then with Him for ever blest.

W. T. T.



* He reached His highest glory *as a man* on Mount Tabor, and then descended to Calvary.

AFFECTION AND INTELLIGENCE.

(JOHN XX. ; MARK XIV.)

“WHAT wonderful times are ours!” are words on almost every lip at present. Showers of blessing, as they say, are falling on every side. Some have gone so far as to state that, like history, Pentecost is being repeated; as if the blessed Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, had left the earth since then; and that prayer, earnest prayer, had brought Him back. Truly these days of ours are strange and solemn. No doubt there is an energy of the Holy Ghost abroad in the land both in the spread of testimony, and in the awakening of souls. It is well to bear in mind that God is sovereign while we are to be subject, and that in the exercise of His sovereignty He may, and does use any instrument that He pleases: and the more His people are walking with Him, the more subject they will be on the one hand and the readier to rejoice in all that He does on the other. But what about the Lord Jesus Christ in these times? I would seriously and solemnly ask if it be true that this spring-tide of blessing, which, it is said, is carrying on its waves thousands of souls, is bearing them to His feet, there to worship and adore? Is it awakening in

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their hearts new affections which find their goal in Himself? Is it bearing them on high, so as to lead them to count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord? The inquiry is of the deepest moment to us all. God forbid that any of His people should undervalue or under-estimate any service rendered to fallen man. But is Christ dearer to us than every one beside? And is it a small matter to us if His desires and claims seem disregarded or forgotten? It is because such thoughts are awakened and kept alive by the aspect of professing Christianity, that I propose taking a glance at the two scriptures which stand at the head of this paper.

The touching story of Mary in John xx. is familiar to almost every one. It is a striking instance of ignorant, yet genuine affection. She might have known His glorious resurrection. She ought to have remembered His words—“After three days I will rise again.” But though her faith and intelligence were defective, her heart beat true to its object and her treasure. Contrast her with Peter and John, and does she not stand on a platform far above them? They can return to their home, satisfied that Jesus' body was not in the tomb, though they knew not where He was. This was not enough for Mary; her loyal heart pants to know where

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He is, and finding Him not, is ready to break with grief. She stands without at the sepulchre weeping, stooping to gaze at the spot where they laid Him. Unperturbed by the angels, disconcerted in no wise, there she lingers, and there her heart must be—beautiful instance of genuine though ignorant affection, and the amazing force of an object when the affections are governed thereby. “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. . . . Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.”

How was she rewarded? Most surely according to the desires of her heart towards Himself. First, He allows her to hear her own name on His risen lips. Wonderful moment for Mary! Wonderful moment for Jesus! Was not every pulsation of her devoted heart met, and more than satisfied, when His blessed voice caused her to look into His own face, her Master and her Lord? I am bold to say that two hearts were made glad that daybreak—hers who could find no home where He was not, and His who gave His life for worthless rebels like us. And I am bold to say further, that it gave Him greater joy to own her as His sheep, calling her by name, Mary! than it did her to be so owned and called. But this was not all, for He commissions her now to carry the most wonder-

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ful message ever entrusted to human lips (see ver. 17)—“Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.” He sends her forth to proclaim the victory of His love, not only that He had triumphed so gloriously, that every enemy was under His feet, but that He, the risen man, was Head of a new race, that, “both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren.” (Heb. ii. 11, 12.) He sends her forth out of the second garden, where the mournful history of the first garden (Eden) had been more than wiped out by the glories of His triumph, to say to poor trembling hearts like ours, that He Himself had not only won a new place for them, but that He had positively brought them into it Himself: “He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one,” which does not mean that He was degraded to their level, but that He, by His death, His glorious triumph and victory, had elevated them to the heights of His own new place before His Father and God.

What grace! wondrous grace! He passes by angels that excel in strength, and comes down to a poor weak woman upon the earth, owns her as His sheep, and then sends her forth to wipe the tearful eyes, and comfort the trembling hearts of

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His own, by announcing unto them the conquests of His love. Who can say now that Jesus does not delight to reward the devoted heart? And who can deny that in thus rewarding it, He gratifies His own changeless affections?

Let us now turn to Mark xiv. It is the only instance recorded in scripture of any one having intelligent sympathy with Christ: it is a wonderful scene; every one is thinking of death. Jesus has the vision of death before His spirit. How must the passover, with its lamb whose blood was shed, have brought forward death, before every mind? There we see the type and the antitype face to face as it were—the chief priests and scribes, with a hatred to Christ which nothing but His death could appease, seeking how they might take Him by craft, and put Him to death. Thus we see how death filled all thoughts; but there was present one, a poor weak woman, too, whose heart kept company with Him in all that He was passing through; she alone was in full sympathy with His feelings at the moment, and entered into the thoughts of God concerning the beloved Son.

It has been remarked that the account with which Mark furnishes us of the close of His blessed mission of love, presents Jesus more solitary in it than any other; incidents and

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circumstances which are recorded more or less in all the other gospels, are absent from Mark. If this be so, how strikingly significant is the record of this act of Mary's in the house of Simon the leper! Her heart and her affections, in true and genuine sympathy, traversing with Him the dreariness and loneliness of His path, as well as marking her sense of the utter worthlessness of all around in view of His agony and death; on one side intelligently apprehending not only who and what He was in Himself, but likewise His value in the eyes of His Father; on the other, making use of His tomb as a burying place for every valuable thing of hers on earth. For her, if Jesus dies, He carries all of hers down into the grave with Himself!

In Matthew and Mark, the blessed Lord is consciously in man's hand, in the closing hours of His life. This indeed characterises these gospels in their record of His death, His cross; which was both the fruit of the counsel of God in view of redemption, as well as the fruit of Jewish enmity, and man's revolted, reprobate heart. How blessed it is then to see Mary here at such a moment, marking her sense of the glories of His Person in the face of the accumulated hatred of both devil and man! It is a blessed sight, in the intelligent apprehension of faith, the homage of one willing, loving heart, thus laid at His feet—one solitary soul in that

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rebellious land owning Him Lord of all. All this sheds its light on His own words—"Where-soever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."

Let us now look at the facts, as they are here recorded, a little more in detail. Mary's affection, her intelligent sympathy, takes the precedence of the treachery of Judas. Her love to Jesus was of that order and character, that it secured for Him that which was suitable to Himself at such a moment, and that which entirely met His heart and thoughts. "The box of ointment of spikenard very precious," answered to all that was around Jesus, in the hatred and malignity of man, in that hour; but it also coincided with all that filled His soul; and it was, as well, community of thought with the Father concerning the Son of His bosom. It is a sight of surpassing blessedness to gaze at Him as He sits there; to see Him accepting, and vindicating, too, the affection, and sympathy which His own Person had created and called forth; to see her, too, fruit as she was of His grace, expending on Him to whom she owed her all—that all, as another has touchingly and blessedly expressed it. Mary, as it were, says by this action of hers, "While the King sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof."

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There is another point of solemn interest in this affecting scene, namely, how opposite the thoughts of men are to what suits the mind of God and His Christ ; the most that some could say concerning Mary's act was, that it was marked by waste. Oh, how little was He in their eyes, who measured the service rendered to Him after this fashion ! For it is the person to whom the service is rendered, that is the true measure of its value. Jesus, the eternal Son of the Father ; Jesus, the spotless and perfect Son of God ; Jesus, the willing and ready friend of need, and want and sorrow, stood so low in their estimate, as to call forth the expression of waste in regard to that which was voluntarily expended upon Him. It is the same to-day ; the present is but the offspring of the past ; the family character is not wanting in either ; the heir-loom of indifference to God's Christ, and no sense of who He is or what He is, passes on from generation to generation ; and to-day, with all its boasted light, superiority, and advance, the poor, the perishing, the destitute, and the oppressed, have their friends and allies, but Jesus, the precious, blessed, wondrous Saviour, is forgotten and neglected—and if remembered only to be slighted and despised.

There is a bright spot in this dark cloud ; turn your eye upon it for a moment : Jesus vindicates her. How blessed ! The eye under

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which this act was performed discerned its value, and the heart that had caused to spring up affections so suited to Himself her Lord, measures out its appreciation of all that was expended on Himself; and He lets every one know what He felt and thought of this manifestation of her devotedness to His Person. "Let her alone, she hath wrought a good work on me; she hath done what she could; she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily, I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done, shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." Oh, the joy of being vindicated by Jesus, and the satisfaction of knowing that, however feebly, we have truly ministered to the longings of His heart?

The Lord give His saints in these last days more genuine affection for, and true sympathy with, our Lord Jesus Christ, and His interests, that nothing may be able to divert their hearts from Him, engage their powers but Him, satisfy their souls but Him!

W. T. T.



THE TABLE OF THE LORD.*

IT is a mistake to think that the proper blessing and true character of the Lord's Supper is connected with the title "Lord."

That word is used as one of authority to guard against associating it with idols, and against profanations—to give it its dignity, and that is all right surely; but the proper word of blessing in it is "Christ"—"the communion of the body of Christ"—*κοινωνία* (communion) and Lordship do not go well together, so when we partake of the Lord's Table it is *μυστήριον*.

Many ideas are current on this subject, and that on the part of those I truly love and value, and used by others with different intent, which I think unfounded. It is insisted that the Table is the Table of the Lord. No one of course doubts it, or that He whose Table it is, is the Lord, has peculiar claim to this title, this distinctive title.

But while the heart joyfully owns this name, it is not, nor cannot be, the highest and happiest aspect of the Lord's Supper, not that which especially belongs to Christians in it. Of course were Christ not Lord, not only the Table but

* "Notes and Comments," Vol. II., pp. 218, 219.

Christianity would be gone. But "Lord" is not the name in which Christians have communion there; and that is their precious part in it. "Communion with the Lord" is an ill-sorted term. The term Lord is used as to the Table, when it is used in contrast with evil, or as a place of dignity and judgment.

The Table of the Lord in contrast with the table of devils, the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils.

Hence it is added, "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy; are we stronger than He?" Again, as to judgment:

"This is not to eat the Lord's Supper."

"He shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."

Hence if we would judge ourselves we should not be judged of the Lord; and so on.

But when the apostle speaks of communion, he does not speak of "the Lord" but "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?"

And this is the more remarkable, because the moment he begins, in the same passage, to speak of the authority, contrast as to devils, and judgment of evil, he says always "the Lord," but as to communion not.

The Lord's Supper refers both to the Pass-

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over and to Sinai : " This do in remembrance of me," evidently alluding to Egypt, and the occasion itself shewing the one, " the new covenant in my blood " referring to the other.

As Passover, it is the recollection of deliverance through One broken for us—deliverance from judgment and wrath ; as blood of the covenant, it puts us in a new relationship, on the ground of grace through the forgiveness of sins.

J. N. D.



RESOURCE AND STRENGTH.

(PHIL. IV.)

WHAT a blessed reality to know that which the apostle speaks of in verse 7 of this chapter, namely, to have the peace of God which passeth every understanding, keeping the heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

Now observe how we must be in spirit in the sphere of the peace, in order to have the heart and mind kept. Our poor hearts and minds could never keep the peace of God. The best illustration I know of the peace of God, is that magnificent declaration of Psalm xxix. 10 : " The Lord sitteth upon the flood, yea the Lord sitteth king for ever." It is striking too, that the word rendered " flood " is elsewhere applied only to the deluge of Noah. Thus above all the desolations of earth, in the serenity of His own

majesty the Lord sits as King ; and observe the verse that follows this, namely, "The Lord will bless His people with peace." In a higher and fuller way the apostle tells us that the peace of God which passeth every understanding shall keep, as in a garrison, your *hearts* and *minds*, that is, the affections which the word heart refers to, and minds, the motive power of the man as we speak.

There is nothing so often disturbed as our minds, especially if activity *characterise* them, but if our God puts His own peace as a garrison to guard the heart and mind, all of quiet and rest is secured in the stronghold of that divine fortification. Thus alone can we enter into the deep meaning of how our strength is to *sit still*.

When we stood as it were on the shores of the Red Sea, with its waters as yet unopened before us, and dreaded the descent of the overflowing enemy behind us, the word was, "*stand still and see.*" Then we beheld as it were a *divine transaction*, for us no doubt, but in accomplishing which we had no part ; now, as garrisoned by the peace of God we learn the blessedness of the word, "*be still* and know that I am God."

Now in verse 12, the apostle gives himself as an example, "I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound : everywhere, and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to

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suffer need." Thus he tells us how he had passed through all the *circumstances*: how often have I heard the remark: "You know nothing about it, for you are not in it." Now it is well to remember, that one needs to be *out of trial*, as having passed through it, in order to sympathise with one in it, then it is that we can be witnesses to the grace, peace, and power which sustained us, and we can say, in some sense, poor though it be, I have found Him all I needed, far more, thank God, but this most blessedly. It is very interesting to see how the apostle was passed through all the exigencies of human life, so as to be in his own person the witness to the truth we have before us. One of the distinctive marks of Christianity is, the *resource* and *power* which belong to it, and these are brought to light by the straits and difficulties through which the people of God pass in the wilderness way. In another day when a sight of the land tested Israel, Joshua and Caleb could say, "The people of the land are bread for us." Israel were in dread at the moment of being devoured by giants!

In verse 19 the apostle says, "My God." Why does he not say, "*Your* God?" Was He not the God of the Philippians as much as of Paul? Assuredly He was. But he was speaking of God as he himself knew Him, or, as we might say, *experimentally*: the apostle had proved Him

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as His God. He says as it were, "I have been all the world over and He has never failed me." "My God shall supply all your need." I can not only count on Him for myself, but also for you. Neither your need nor mine can measure what is in Him. What is the measure?

"According to His riches in glory." How blessed, how infinite! May our hearts and minds be thus kept in this divine fortification continuously.

W. T. T.



FOUR DIVINE PICTURES.

THE book of Numbers gives us the warfare, and the walk of a company redeemed by blood and by power, according to Exodus.

We have two sides presented. One is the history of unbelief, lust, and wandering. In contrast to this, chapters xxiii. and xxiv. present them as viewed under the eye of God.

The dark background of sin and failure only serves to bring into greater relief the bright picture of the sovereign grace of God, and proclaims the precious fact that God is ever *for* His people.

Balak and Balaam associate together to curse and destroy. Balak, the king, typifies Satan as the lion, the political enemy and opposer of God's people. Balaam, the prophet, gives us

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the same foe in his religious character. A scene to be reproduced at the end when the political and religious antichrist unite to destroy the remnant.

King and prophet ascend the heights of Moab and gaze upon the people in the valley.

As they stand there God takes possession of Balaam's mouth, and uses him to declare the four ways in which *He* sees them.

In the first place this most weighty truth comes out that God has a

SEPARATED

people on the earth. "The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." This redeemed company are declared to be absolutely set apart from the world. The waters of the Red Sea closing over the pursuing host, and the blood on the door post, told that they were no longer part of a *judged* world, but, more than that is implied in their "dwelling alone." Many a soul is glad to know that the flood of judgment is passed for ever, but fails to enter into the stupendous fact that we are never reckoned as part of the world again. The world is occupied with its religion, its honours and dignities, its lusts and pleasures, its wealth and its social progress. The Christian is no longer *of it*. The cross of Christ has raised a barrier, and, by it, the world is crucified to him and he to the world. Christ in glory is the full

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measure of this separation, they are not of the world even as He is not of the world.

The first view discloses a people taken out of the world to be for God, a people whom God claims for Himself.

Balak thus foiled, leads Balaam to another standpoint in order to accomplish his desire to curse the people. Instead of succeeding it only furnishes an occasion for a fresh display of the manifold grace of God. We thus learn that this separated company are a

JUSTIFIED

people. He has not beheld iniquity in Jacob nor seen perverseness in Israel.

“Every charge our God refuses
Christ hath answered with His blood.”

God is just and the justifier. Looking on to the cross He could in the language of Romans iii. declare His righteousness for the passing over of the sins of this people. His holiness is untarnished. The blood-sprinkled lintel witnessed that without shedding of blood is no remission. The Lamb's life given up in death told with no uncertain sound that His eye and heart no longer were occupied with their iniquity. That question had been raised and settled as the brazen serpent witnessed afterwards.

God was free to say that this people stood in a righteousness not their own, in virtue of a work

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which had met and hidden* for ever their iniquity and their perverseness.

Even so with every believer now. He is separated to God, and justified by God. He is become God's righteousness in Christ Jesus, his sins and iniquities never to be remembered any more.

God and Christ were once occupied with the perverseness and iniquity. The forsaking on the cross witnessed that, but all that is now over. We having judged ourselves according to that judgment, can rest in the fact that He will never raise that question again.

The enemy thus foiled in his second attempt seeks enchantments no more, but set his face towards the wilderness. He gazed upon Israel abiding according to their tents in due order, with the tabernacle in the midst. He becomes the unwilling witness of the fathomless depths of grace in the heart of the blessed God.

The riverside gardens, the valley, the cedar and the lign aloe are just so many expressions which express his delight in His people, which speak of the beauty He has put upon them, their acceptability to Himself.

The perfume of the lign aloe, the verdure of the well-watered valley, the magnificence of the towering cedar, all proclaim that they are an

ACCEPTED

people. In Ephesians the believer is said to be

“accepted in the beloved.” This word describes the delight of God’s heart in His people. Just as in Psalm xlv. the lign aloe is used to express the excellency of Jesus, the perfume of His person, so in Numbers xxiv. 6 the simile is applied to the redeemed ones. How precious to find that the blessed God has so associated the Redeemer and the redeemed, the Head and the body, that the same language is used to express their delight to His heart.

In the Old Testament Jesus is spoken of as “mine elect in whom my soul delighteth,” my “holy one,” my “well-beloved.” In the New Testament (Col. iii.), the believer is spoken of as the “elect of God, holy and beloved.” In I Thessalonians i. again they are addressed as the “beloved of God.” What a place His grace has set us in ! Well may we adore the riches of it as we learn how precious we are to His bosom, how suited to His holy being.

The sight of this greatly provoked the enemy. How much more when he heard that this present grace was the pledge of future glory. That the wilderness was to be exchanged for the land, that the God who had brought His people out of Egypt had fixed purposes of blessing for them. Universal dominion was in store for His king, and they had only to await His coming to be the head and not the tail, the honoured and exalted, instead of the poor and despised.

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The closing scene leaves them a

WAITING

people. A star would arise out of Jacob and a sceptre out of Israel. This was now their hope, their prospect. The pledge of ultimate triumph over the enemy was the "coming one." Everything was to be in subjection to Him. The heathen his inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth His possession, but all this was to be made good as the light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel.

Thus the vision of the Almighty closes, leaving a separated, justified, and accepted people waiting and looking for the final accomplishment of these glorious promises of future blessing.

In like manner the New Testament book of visions closes. The star and the sceptre are still the object of hope in Revelation xxii. The downfall of the enemy is seen. Satan, bruised and bound, and the church waiting. But *we* have a fresh link with Himself. The Spirit not only depicts His glories as King of kings and Lord of lords (glories connected with the sceptre), but portrays the one whose bosom beats with bridal affections for His bride. She is the object of His love, and He of her desire. Very fully had her blessing as the accepted and justified one been set forth by that chosen vessel, Paul, and now the beloved John closes with the Spirit

A WORD TO THE SERVANT. 189

and the bride saying "Come," in response to His word, "Behold I come quickly."

Would that we were all morally in company with this response, and truly the waiters of God's Son from heaven in the consciousness of our separated, justified, and accepted place!

H. N.



A WORD TO THE SERVANT OF
THE LORD.

"SURELY, it is as much *of GOD* that our lot is cast in these days, as that Paul's lot was cast in his days. And the works prepared for *us* to do are as much prepared of God, as were the works prepared for Paul. Let us take heart, strengthen ourselves in God, and do His present will."

When the children of Israel will not go up in faith into the promised land, Jehovah sends them a long way round the desert. Two things accompany this: one the result of it, the other pure grace.

If they have to march round the desert Jehovah cannot leave them alone. He must go round with them, guiding them by His pillar of fire and of cloud all the way. His grace abounds over sin. Secondly, Caleb and Joshua must go the long way round too. They had not gone with the people in their evil; but as to the pain and trial of the march

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which the unbelief of the others had caused, they are obliged to go along with the people and to bear a part of it. This is what we must make up our minds to. If the church has failed, we must make up our minds to accompany it in its course of sorrow, though not in its course of sin.

“The faithful, though they have the consciousness that God is with them, are obliged to accompany the unfaithful in their course of sorrow, arising from the position into which they have brought themselves.

“This is our place. In the spirit of love, of patience, and of humiliation, we have always to take the place of those who have sinned. (Dan. ix.) The sin and evil should be confessed by the faithful, who, though not partakers of the sin, must yet be partakers of the consequences of it, suffering in true sympathy and fellowship.”

But is not this a blessed portion, and part of the honour with which the Father honours those who serve His Son? Doubtless, nature seeks an easier path, and perplexities, trials, sorrows in connection with the saints are not the things we naturally like.

But let us remember afresh what our calling is (Phil. i. 29), and remember too that walking with God involves what is solemn and searching for every heart, and exercises of soul in His presence all the way.

Let us not be surprised at difficulties, but rather look upon them as what we must encounter in our walk with God.

There is grace and help for all the very details of that path. R.



THE POPULAR GOSPEL.

MY attention was directed a few days past to some words on this subject which I venture here to transcribe, as a solemn and timely warning at this moment.

“A carnal evangelism produces a scoffing worldliness, which refuses henceforth to listen to the solid gospel of the grace of God. To popularise the gospel is to take away from it every element of divine power which it possesses. Allow of human methods or ingredients, and immediately the flesh breathes freely and listens pleasantly, but bring in Christ crucified as doing away with man in the flesh altogether, and going on with the second Man, who is risen and gone into heaven, and the flesh is choked by the heaviness of the atmosphere, and makes its escape.

“This modern popularising of the gospel has given even evangelical society its itching ears, and has turned away the thoughtful from listening to the word as a divine thing. Thus the evangelical conspired with the rationalistic to

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ruin the whole crop and reduce the field to barrenness. 'The land was as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness.' A rationalised college, and a popularised gospel, have made the name of Christ odious, and the holy scriptures a suspected and distrusted book."

What is here set forth very forcibly and aptly, is assuredly worthy of solemn consideration at this moment when the tide is rapidly flowing in the direction indicated, and when there seems spread abroad on every hand, as the morning upon the mountains, a mist of earth and deep delusion of the devil, so insidious and ensnaring, that but few have the power to discern the counterfeit coin, which a deeply designed *imitation* hides from them ; and when the great mass of people are carried away by the blasphemous buffoonery and burlesque of modern evangelism. May the Lord open the eyes of His saints to the workings of the enemy in this "last hour," of His great patience and forbearance.

W. T. T.



THE EVENNESS OF THE PERFECT MAN.

THIS meat offering of God, taken from the fruit of the earth, was of the finest wheat ; that which

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was pure, separate, and lovely in human nature, was in Jesus under all its sorrows, but in all its excellence, and excellent in its sorrows. There was no unevenness in Jesus, no predominant quality to produce the aspect of giving Him a distinctive character. He was, though despised and rejected of men, the perfection of human nature. The sensibilities, firmness, decision (though this attached itself to the principle of obedience), elevation, and calm meekness, which belong to human nature, all found their perfect place in Him. In a Paul I find energy and zeal ; in a Peter, ardent affection ; in a John, tender sensibilities and abstraction of thought united to a desire to vindicate what he loved, which scarce knew limit. But the quality we have observed in Peter predominates, and characterises him. In a Paul, blessed servant though he was, he does not repent though he had repented. He had no rest in his spirit when he found not Titus his brother. He goes off to Macedonia, though a door was opened in Troas. He wist not that it was the high priest. He is compelled to glory of himself. In him, in whom God was mighty towards the circumcision, we find the fear of man break through the faithfulness of his zeal. He who would have vindicated Jesus in his zeal, knew not what manner of spirit he was of, and would have forbidden the glory of God, if man walked not with them. Such were Paul, and Peter, and

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John. But in Jesus, even as a man, there was none of this unevenness. There was nothing salient in His character, because all was in perfect submission to God in His humanity, and had its place, and did exactly its service, and then disappeared. The hand that struck the chord found all in tune: all answered to the mind of Him whose thoughts of grace and holiness, of goodness, yet of judgment of evil, whose fulness of blessing in goodness were sounds of sweetness to every weary ear, and found in Christ their only expression. Every element, every faculty in His humanity, responded to the impulse which the divine will gave it, and then ceased in a tranquillity in which self had no place.

J. N. D.



THE INCARNATION.

“PERHAPS none of you know from experience what it is to live without the knowledge of the Incarnation, what it is to endeavour to realise the incomprehensible, infinite God, without the light and comfort of the Mediator. . . . I was brought up in my childhood in the synagogue, and was taught that there was one God, infinite, incomprehensible, the holy—spirit; high above us, and omnipresent. Much stress was laid on the unity and unicity of God. . . . There was another and better current which then influenced

me. It was the national history, as recorded in the books of Moses, the Psalms, and the prophets, and commemorated in the festivals. . . . When I thought of the friendly, kind, concrete, and human way in which the Lord God then appeared unto His people, and dwelt with them, I wondered why He was not with us now, known, loved, and followed. One day I was looking at some books, and the title of one arrested my eye. It was 'Die Menschwerdung Gottes' (God becoming man). The thought went through my mind like a flash of lightning: 'Ah,' I said, 'this would be the most beautiful thing, if God were to become man and visit us.' Not many years after, I heard about Jesus and read the gospels. I felt here the same presence, the same loving, condescending, and redeeming, and sanctifying God that appeared unto the fathers. I felt that here was Jehovah; only that all darkness had disappeared, and that the grand but inconceivable glory here shone upon us in the perfect, peaceful, and holy countenance of the Man, Christ Jesus."

(THE LATE DR. ADOLPH SAPHIR.)



“THE LORD OF GLORY.”

O JESUS LORD, 'tis joy to gaze
Upon Thine unveiled glory,
Thou Peerless One, the Eternal Son,
We worship and adore Thee.

The Father's heart in Thee doth find
His full delight, His treasure,
His Object Thou, *our* Object now,
What grace beyond all measure !

With wonder and with rapture filled,
Fresh glories we discover,
E'en while on earth, of Thy blest worth,
Our souls' Eternal Lover.

Oh Thou art fairest of the fair,
Our hearts are bowed before Thee,
While on Thy face we love to trace
All God's surpassing glory.

Forth from our ivory palaces,
Sweet spices we'd be bringing,
And thus confess Thy worthiness
Whose praise all heaven is singing.

Oh blessed Lord what *can* we do
But prostrate fall before Thee ;
Pour at Thy feet our spices sweet,
And own Thee Lord of glory.

L. W.



GRACE AND GLORY.

TITUS II.

EVEN in the common things of life, the motives that govern us are what give character to the things we do. The apostle turns at once to the motive, which is Christ; and the moment he touches that spring ("that they may adorn the doctrine of God, our Saviour, in all things"), all wakes up in his soul. That is the motive; and then he goes on with the whole history of Christianity till Christ's coming again.

It is a blessed thing in our common every-day life, that we can get Christ as our motive. If a man is fond of money or pleasure, it is the motive he has; that is what he is. If he is full of Christ, *that* is what he is. You may get two men doing exactly the same thing, only with different motives. With the Christian, Christ is his only motive, or ought to be. There may be a thousand things he has to do, common duties of life, but he can serve Christ in them, and there I get a motive powerful enough. Perhaps you have a froward master; well, you can glorify Christ in that. It is everything that the Christian should understand that he has no motive but Christ; many a thing to do, but no other motive but this. The common things of life do

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not unspiritualise a person ; I must attend to them, and do them properly ; but if my motive in doing them is Christ, it is a mistake to think that they hinder my soul in spirituality. Supposing I was making anything for Christ, do you think I should not make it as well as I possibly could? Well, then, we ought to do everything for Christ. It is every-day walk that characterises the Christian : "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus," because, if I cannot do it in His name, I ought not to do it at all. If I can do it in His name, there is the motive.

To be guided, this is the thing : "They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way." There is no way in this world. How did the Israelites get any way—the way which the vulture's eye hath not seen? Why, the cloud went before them. The fact that we have to find a way in which to walk, is a proof that we are all away from God. It is a world contrary to God, and I have to find my way. "When he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them." I get a way then, but it is a divine way, and I am following Christ in it. I get it by having Him going before me ; and all I look for is the way here, because I am a pilgrim and a stranger. Christ has given Himself for our sins, to deliver us from this present evil world ; but He has left me in it, and He has left me His own spiritual

pathway on my way to rejoin Him up there. If I have a single eye, it will be a bright path ; and Paul said, I count all dross and dung, that I may win Christ. If we have not made up our minds to follow Christ, then it is not an easy path. In following Christ, of course there are difficulties ; but a man with one object, it has been remarked, always has energy.

“God our Saviour,” is the particular character of God in the epistles to Timothy and Titus. It is the blessed name He has taken, that He is God our Saviour ; it implies that we needed to be saved. Why did I need to be saved ? Because I was lost : not only that I had done some wrong things, but that I was lost ; and it is just in understanding that, that we get the full, blessed, clear apprehension that we are saved. I find that God has interfered, and done a work entirely His own ; and the question then is, what is the value of that work ? Well, I say, it is finished, and Christ is in glory in consequence.

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” (Ver. 13.) Grace has appeared (ver. 11), teaching us to look for the appearing of the glory, and teaching us how to walk in this present world. There I get the Christian between these two points : the grace that brings salvation has appeared ; but the glory

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has not. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." This appearing of grace teaches us how to walk, whilst we are waiting for the appearing of the glory. The Christian stands between the first coming of Christ (who revealed God the Father, and accomplished the work for our salvation) and His coming again, when He will take us into the full result in glory—we receive the Holy Ghost meanwhile. First, I get what this grace is, and what its character is. It has appeared—a full manifestation of it in the gospel. It is God's sovereign goodness to His people, when they were sinners, it is the love of God, when there was nothing loveable. "For a good man some would even dare to die: but God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." That is, for what is vile and hateful, I find God giving the best thing possible that heaven could give, and that is, His own Son. I get to know God; and it is a blessed thing to say I know God. If I believe in the coming of Christ, I ask, what put that into God's heart? It came from His heart, and that is the way I know God. "Who by him do believe in God—that your faith and hope might be in God." I know really what God is, in His unsought love; it is simply and entirely the spring of God's own heart that has done all this, and this is the grace of God. I know God, for I know His love. He is a

judge, and a righteous and holy One, too ; but, still, I get this blessed truth, that, when I was a mere sinner, I have got to the spring in this perfect love (in its nature sovereign above all evil), which has brought Christ into the world—that is what I have learned in the gospel. The gospel is that blessed truth, that He did not wait, and say, You behave yourselves, and *then* come up to me ; but He came down into this world where we were. Oh what a blessed thought it is (though it may be humbling, too), that the Son of God has been down in this world in the midst of evil ; it was nothing but love that brought Him, and that is how we begin to know God.

Then, I get what it brought me. Help to a man *as he is* ? No—how can you help a man who is lost already ? He came to sinners in their sins, and brought “salvation” to them, because they were lost.

Let us see what that character of “lost” is. There were the two things ; I was guilty before God (not merely lost, though “lost” goes a great deal further), and besides that, there was the *state* I was in. “Guilty” refers to judgment ; but when I say “I am lost,” I speak of my present state. My carnal mind is enmity against God, so “they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” I am “guilty” by reason of what I have done ; but I am “lost” by reason of the state I

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am in. I am not in the earthly paradise in which Adam was, nor am I in the heavenly paradise where God is. Where am I? Totally away from God. It is not in the first moment of that awakening we learn the extent of this—that it is all over with me (not that God cannot take me out of that place). You must make the tree good, as well as its fruit. It is not merely that I have *done* wrong—the fruit—by which I am “guilty”—but the *tree* is bad. God is holy, and I am unholy; so I never can be with Him—though, of course, grace comes in—but that was our condition.

Christ came into the world, after men were sinners, and after they had broken the law, when it had been given them. He did not wait till the judgment. But men would not have Him, and proved more completely that “the carnal mind is enmity against God.” Christ proved that a divine Person was in the world, for every power of evil fled before Him. He was there winning the confidence of men’s hearts, but when He had shown all this, they crucified Him. You never see a person ashamed of a false religion: but the moment it is the true God, he is ashamed—even the disciples were ashamed to confess Christ. What a deal that tells of man’s heart! God’s light, as well as love, and that brought out things in their true light, and “men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds

were evil." Christ has come in love—not to judge the world, but to save it—and however bad a person was shewn to be, if he cannot have confidence in a human being, he may have confidence in God. He came to win back the confidence of man's heart to God. He came to where man was. Take the cross as the expression of it all; there I get man's hatred, and God's love in His Son, in the same act. God is not covering over my sins, they are all shewn out in the light; and there I am in the presence of One who loves me perfectly, when they are all there—that is salvation. God is the spring of His own heart, and He deals with my state of sin, not hiding it from me: and He manifests that He has sent Christ for me. God has dealt with my sins already; He has not waited till the day of judgment. What did Christ die for, if it was not for our sins? Did not God deal with Him at the cross about them? And what has He done with them? He bore them in His own body on the tree. But has He got them now? No; they are all gone; and Christ is "sitting" *now*, because He has nothing to do. I am not speaking as to our walk now, because we need Him every moment, but as regards the work—it is all done. Seeing the Lord Jesus sitting at the right hand of God, shews me that God dealt with my sins when Christ bore them. The Person who is going to be the judge, is the One

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who has put away my sins. I have this blessed, true, infinite love, that did not even spare His own Son, and Christ took all my sins upon Himself and put them away. I am "in Christ" before God; not according to what I have done, but according to what Christ has done. I am not in my Adam-standing before God. Where are you then? I am in Christ. I have an entirely new place, condition, and standing before God. Just as Israel, not only had the blood on the door-posts, so that God did not touch them, but they were brought out of Egypt—brought to God: so we have been redeemed out of the condition in which we were in Adam, and brought to God: as it says in Romans viii., "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

Verse 12 is grosser sins; by which the world ensnares us. I am to live "soberly" with regard to what is within myself; "righteously," because I have to do with other people; and "godly," because I have to do with God. I walk subduedly before God, instead of in my own will and lusts. Look at the standard given us—to "walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory." But I must know God, or how can I walk worthy of Him? Are you going to commit sin with that which is a temple of the Holy Ghost? We are to walk worthy of

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God, because we are to manifest Christ. You are dear children; well then, go and walk like your Father. It raises the standard, because it raises the motive. We get the standard of walk in association with these things.

Well, the Christian has salvation; and the Holy Ghost, who makes him know it; and he cries, "Abba, Father," for he knows he is a son of God, and thus he gets his place consciously, all founded on the unutterable love of God: Christ being his life, he reckons himself dead, as regards the flesh. There we have the past and present sins put away—all that the flesh produced, done with—and I am loved as Jesus is loved; "that the world may know that thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." It is all flowing from this blessed unthought-of and unsought love of God.

Then, where is our future? It is not merely dying and going to Christ, but the heart is set upon Christ, and I am "looking" now "for that blessed hope." What blessed hope? Why, Christ Himself. Christ has become precious to me. He has loved me beyond all my thoughts—"to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." Ah, I say, I want Christ Himself, when shall I get Him? We are not "looking for" death, but it is a profitable thing to look it in the face, and see that it is pure gain. We belonged to death in the first Adam, and in the

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second Adam death belongs to us. For the Christian, the only thing that death is, is that he has done with temptation, sin, and sorrow, and he has begun with Christ; but death is not what we are looking for, for scripture says we are "predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son." The worth of what Christ has done, in putting away sins and glorifying God, is such, that it puts us into God's glory. Christ has entered as my forerunner—the witness that I am to be there too: "where I am, there shall also my servant be." When He comes, it will close this scene of grace that is going on now; therefore "He is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long suffering." As long as He sees a soul to be gathered in, He does not come, but the promise is, I will come Myself. He is not content to send for us, but He must come Himself. "Our conversation is in heaven"—that is our present condition. We look to be with Him—and to be like Him too—but the best of all is to be with Him. The thing by which He comforts the hearts of the disciples is, that He was coming again to have them in the same glory as Himself—it is the first thing that will happen. It may be happier to die, and so wait in heaven; but whether we are there or here, we shall then altogether be perfectly conformed to the image of Christ. He has accomplished the work

needed for it in His first coming in grace ; and what He does now by the Holy Ghost, is to make us wait for Him, which is the original calling of the church of God. "And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord." Have people been doing this? No, they have not ; they went out to meet the bridegroom, but the wise virgins slept as well as the foolish.

Supposing I know salvation, what am I waiting for? For mortality to be swallowed up of life—to be changed into the same glory as Christ—to be raised, if I am dead—I am looking to be like Him in the glory. I need two things to be able to call it a "blessed hope:" first, the grace that bringeth salvation—that He has redeemed, purified, and saved me, and I have the certainty of His love. The second thing is, that He is the object of my delight. We must know the perfect salvation, but we must have the love of Christ in our hearts, to care about it.

Only one other thing I would desire should rest on our hearts, and that is the full, thorough, complete interest He takes in us. What satisfies Him? He is waiting in perfect, earnest love to us, but His heart will never be satisfied till He has us in the same glory with Himself and His Father. I know, poor unworthy creature as I am, that He will not be satisfied till He has me in the same glory as Himself,

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because He loves me. "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you." How is it that He does not give like the world? If I give away a thing I no longer possess it—is that the way Christ gives? *Never!* The way He gives is to bring us into the enjoyment of all He has Himself. Everything that Christ has (except His divinity) He brings us into, and then He is satisfied.

And now, beloved, is that the way you think about the Lord Jesus Christ? What made Him give it all to us—did any one ask Him? It was the perfect love. And is that unrevealed? It is not; He has loved us and given Himself for us, and it is revealed from Christ in the glory and we have the Holy Ghost. If I am thinking of the things in the world, of course I cannot see the thing up there, for the eye is dimmed and cannot see afar off. Are you content to have such a place as that with Christ in glory? Are you content to be purified to Himself—to give up the world? Are you content to have Christ your one and only object and motive? Of course it tests the flesh and heart of man, and God means it to be tested. Are you content to follow Christ? The apostle says that that is the whole bent of his mind, "That I may win Christ"—and to know Him better. The secret of all that is the constant sense of dependence. "My strength is made perfect in weakness." We are redeemed from this present evil

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world. It is a world that has rejected the Son of God already. Man is a judged being, but there is salvation for him. Christ's work entitles me to the glory; and now, says Christ, I am come to have you for Myself, like Myself, and with Myself in glory. Beloved, are our hearts there? Have we tasted the love of Christ in all His life and death down here? And it is not wearied, or exhausted, or cooled, for He loves and cherishes us as His own flesh.

The Lord give us only to remember that the fashion of this world passeth away; but there is one thing that abides for ever, and that is the word of God—that through His grace, we may follow hard after Him. Oh, it is a wonderful thing that the Son of God became a man, on purpose to win us back to God. J. N. D.



OUT OF MAN AND OUT OF EARTH.

IT is impossible to overrate the importance of the great subject which I propose to consider; it lies at the basis of all true practical Christianity. It is equally important to understand the relation of it to others; indeed, so essential is such apprehension, that it may be safely affirmed that where the first is not known, the others do not follow. With regard to our *place*, it is first of all to be understood that it is the exact

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contrast to all that belongs to us in *nature*. As born into the world, we are *lost*, and in that state we have contracted *guilt*, and we are moreover in a world into which death has entered, and where death is rampant. By nature then our *condition* is miserable, and this world, where we find ourselves, is both blasted and blighted, and, from the standpoint of "under the sun," the testimony must be, "all is vanity and vexation of spirit." Now out of this wretchedness and misery, God in mercy purposed to deliver us, and *has* accomplished all that was in His heart, in and through His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. But deliverance out of our misery, most full and blessed as it is, was not *all* His purpose, but introduction into all the blessedness of an open heaven through deliverance, and union by the Holy Ghost with Him who died and rose again and ascended up on high. It is very wonderful how apt we are to *limit* what was in God's heart for us, and what has been accomplished and secured by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus—and it is this very limit, beyond which so many never get, which is productive of the very painful and low type of practical walk to be seen all around us. It may perhaps startle the reader at first, to be told that forgiveness of sins is not of itself power, nor can forgiveness of *itself* enable a man, that is, give him *power*, to walk so as to please God. Forgiveness

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is relief, and blessed and needed relief too ; but power relates to my place in Christ, and the portion I have in Him. For example, when we read in Colossians iii. 5: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth," &c., it is an exhortation flowing out of the place we are in, and that place, as expounded in Colossians ii. and iii. is, *dead* and *risen* with Christ. It is all important and blessed to see that I get both *relief* and *power* from Christ. The first relates to *how* He meets me in my deep need ; the second has to do with the new place in Himself, into which He has brought me. Both are most blessedly expounded in the parable of the good Samaritan, namely, "bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast," &c. It is amazing how few there are who have laid hold by faith of the fact that the Christian has been transferred to an entirely new *condition* and *place*, in and by Christ ; that a Christian is a man after another order of being altogether, sprung from the Second Adam now, as surely as, by nature, he was of the first Adam. Oh, what a reality to the soul is the deep blessedness of the fact that, as a Christian, I am now part of Him who said, "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.) Who can overrate the magnitude of the fact that, as a Christian, I am *sprung from*

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Him!—part of that fruit which His death has brought forth.

Then another truth, akin to this, and closely allied with it, is, that a man *in Christ* no more belongs to this world than he does to the man who, upon it, fell. The same precious death which severed his connection with the one, has equally severed it with the other. This world, this ordered system, which Satan is heading up against God and His Christ, is no more *my place*: by the cross it has been crucified to me, and I to it, by a double death, as it were, a judicial sentence passed upon it, and me. I am for ever liberated from the slavery of being its friend. Blessed, wonderful emancipation! reaching up to the full tide of blessedness, when it is stated that His place, where He is, Who has risen from the dead, has become, in sovereign grace, and by union with Him there, ours, who are quickened together with Christ, raised up together, and seated together in heavenly places *in Christ*—there remaineth nothing more for us to desire, save to see Him face to face, and in a body of glory like His own, to be with Him for ever. In the presence of such manifested purpose and favour, so wonderfully accomplished by Him, and bestowed upon us, the soul bows down in adoring wonder, worship, and praise.

These two great kindred truths, of which I have spoken, are very blessedly expounded in

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Ephesians ii. There the Christian is looked at as *out of man*, and *out of earth*. In the closing verses of chapter i. Christ, viewed as the glorious Man, is set forth as the subject of the working of the mighty power of God, who "raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come ; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Oh, the amazing brightness of the glory which shines in every line of this magnificent declaration ! If God had a man to turn out of Eden for disobedience, He has also had a Man to reward, Who glorified Him on the earth, even to death, the death of the cross. He it was, and none else, Who was raised and glorified, and all things set under His feet, and He, constituted Head over all things to the Church, His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

Then in chapter ii. we are introduced to the *same power* in operation, quickening the heirs, to give them a part and a place, in and with Him, so glorified and exalted : and, in order to set forth the blessed *reach* of this power, the position in which they are found is unfolded, namely, dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to

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the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit working in the children of disobedience: out of this state of death and distance from God, His power quickened them, so that they have been also raised up together, and seated together in heavenly places *in Christ Jesus*. And in the ages to come, God will display the exceeding riches of His grace; in His kindness towards them through Christ Jesus. Then in verse 11, He contrasts the two states; "at that time," referring to their old condition, "ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but *now*;" referring to their new condition, "in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off (that is, dispensationally, for, morally, a Jew was no nearer than a Gentile), are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Blessed contrast, and still more blessed Person, *in Whom*, and by Whom, it has been all made good and secured.

There are some consequences which follow from our being consciously in this place, which I will note here. There is *superiority* to circumstances, as we pass along through this world, and there is *rest* amid the turmoils and troubles to which we are ever subjected in a region like this. Nothing can carry the soul into the atmosphere of superiority and rest, but the divine conscious-

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ness, by the Holy Ghost, of our place in Christ, and our union with Him in glory. When these are so *possessed, known, and enjoyed*, rest and superiority follow as *divine* consequences. No amount of *effort* can secure either ; they are not to be acquired by any artificial struggle ; effort always betrays weakness, and carries restlessness with it. There is nothing more distressing to witness, than the morbid and oppressed strivings of real and earnest souls after that which they make as truly a matter of *attainment*, as the sincere legalist does eternal life. The truth is, if a man is a Christian, he is in Christ, where Christ is, and the Holy Ghost dwells in him. He is out of man, and out of earth. Is there no sanctifying power in this, where it is really and divinely apprehended and known? I do not speak now of the mere assent of the understanding, but of the soul truly operated upon by these divine verities. The question has often been suggested, whether there is not a danger of displacing the truth of God, by making *us* less the *subjects* of the Holy Ghost's power by means of the truth, and more the active party in the matter. I believe there is a tendency in many of us in this direction, and I cannot conceive any result that can follow save failure of a serious nature. I do not for a moment deny that there is to be on our part dependence and subjection, and that, too, kept alive constantly in the soul.

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All this most surely must be found in connection with what I have already spoken of, as well as "bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body," *i.e.* the practical application of the death of Christ to ourselves ; but this in no sense traverses the truth we have been considering, but, on the contrary, coincides and unites with it. Self-occupation and "bearing about in our body the dying of Jesus" are as distinct as midnight and noon-day ; the latter, known, would strike at the root of the former. Self-occupation is an indigenous plant ; it is not only, in one of its aspects, the obnoxious weed which grows rank in many a field, and which is branded and shunned, as such, by almost all ; but it is also, in another of its aspects, the apparently beautiful flower which fain would blossom, and give forth its refreshing sweetness, and invite the passer-by to pluck and regale himself with its ripe perfume. Another consequence which follows from knowing our place in Christ, is, practical separation from all around us. In proportion to the sense we have of being at home in heaven, do we practically walk, as from home, here on the earth. No one can make himself a pilgrim ; no one can acquire strangership on the earth. The spirit and mind of Christ, as well as familiarity with the place where He is, as our home, alone can impart the tone and character of pilgrims to us.

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Another consequence of our place, known and possessed in power of the Holy Ghost, is the manner in which *everything* connected with us, over which we have authority, is shaped and formed, so as to suit the truth which has suited us to itself. Our home relationships, our families, are not to be, and will not be exceptions in any wise, if the truth lays hold in power on ourselves. How deplorable the failure amongst us in this respect; the world, sought for the families of those who had surrendered it for themselves; prosperity, in respect of it, gloried in, even where this very success was Satan's blindfold to delude and destroy. After this fashion, many a testimony has been ruined, many a one, alas, has the sorrowful confession to make, viz., "they made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept." Alas, the children, and families, and households of the saints, are a great reproach to the testimony. Other instances I could bring forward, but enough; it is self-evident that, if this heavenly position is maintained, neither pride, nor love of the world, nor love of money, will be tolerated; it will operate upon us in every direction and on every side; it will permeate everything; it will be seen in everything; both forming and maturing that which is of Christ in each of His beloved people. The Lord give us to know this truth in reality in these last days.

W. T. T.

COMMUNION.

IN the Old Testament we find a lovely picture of fellowship, or communion, in the offering termed the "peace-offering." (Lev. iii., iv.)

Jehovah has His part as typified in the fat burnt upon the altar. The breast is the portion of Aaron and his sons. In addition to the common enjoyment of the love expressed in the breast—the seat of the affections—a special portion is assigned to the one among the sons of Aaron, that offered the blood of the peace offerings, and the fat. He has the right shoulder for his part. The rest was the portion of the offerer. We have thus Jehovah, the high priest, the priestly family, the offering priest, and the worshipper partaking in common of the "sacrifice of prosperity." When we turn to the New Testament, what precious associations the word communion is linked with! How it connects believers with each other, and with the varied interests of the Father and the Son! It tells us that it is our privilege to share and partake in the thoughts and feelings common to both. In the first Epistle of John we are cleansed by the blood of Christ; introduced into the light, and brought into the family circle. Each believer is in the light, every believer belongs to the family. We are brought where we can have communion with the Father and the Son. This relationship

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of the Father and the Son denotes the character of our fellowship. Before the veil was rent Jehovah and His people enjoyed communion according to the revelation God had made of Himself. Now, the veil being rent, and we inside, whatever the Father and the Son are occupied with and interested in becomes the proper portion of the one who is in the light and cleansed by the blood.

We will trace elsewhere a few of the instances where the Spirit of God uses the word, and thus seek to gather the scriptural meaning of the term fellowship or communion. Acts ii. 42, Peter preached, many believing. It is said, "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship. Having embraced the common faith, the common feelings, affections and desires flowed in the divinely formed channel. The doctrine was received, the fellowship was the outcome. It expressed itself in various ways, such as breaking of bread, prayer, and distribution to others. They shared and participated in that which was a common privilege and a common responsibility. This same idea of mutual interest and identification is seen later on in Galatians, where they gave to Paul and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship. (Chap. ii. 9.) How cheering it was to be servants that not only was their undertaking sanctioned by the saints, but that in the signifi-

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cant act of laying on of hands they shewed their communion with the work and the workers.

Paul also recalls the interest of the beloved Philippians in his work as he speaks of their "fellowship in the gospel" from the first day until now. Their communion assumed a very practical character. They not only identified themselves in desire and affection, but contributed of their means and ministered to him of their substance.

This practical fellowship is enjoined by the writer to the Hebrews, who exhorts them to share what they have with others, when he says, "to communicate, forget not." God is a giving God, who cares for others; His people are to have fellowship with Him.* We have briefly traced a few places where this word is used, and in no instance does it convey the idea of abstraction or the monkish notion of isolation. It is invariably employed by the Spirit of God to denote association with others, and signifies to hold in common, in the sense of sharing, taking part, partners, or participators. It is not the same thing as joy, though often confounded with it. It is interesting also to notice that the word itself is never used of the Lord in His pathway

* The other places where the word is used are as follows:—Romans xv. 26; 1 Corinthians i. 9; x. 16; 2 Corinthians vi. 14; viii. 4; ix. 13; xiii. 14; Ephesians iii. 9; Philippians ii. 1; iii. 10; Philemon 6; 1 John i. 3, 6, 7.

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here. The thing itself is expressed in other language, but the actual word never used. Joy or rejoicing is used of Him. We cannot conceive the blessed Lord as ever being anything else but in the fullest and most perfect way sharing and participating in all the delights, desires, thoughts and feelings of the Father's bosom. He dwelt there when here, never left it, and we never get a hint that His fellowship was broken or interrupted, save the cross, in any way. Perfect man as He was, the joys and sorrows of His pathway, and that which was set before Him, filled and stirred His soul, for He was a real man, but His fellowship with the Father was always equally, unchangeably, absolutely and divinely perfect. It knew no variation, no change. Whether alone on the mountain tops in prayer, or a Man amongst men, He ever lived on account of the Father. The sorrows He tasted, and the joys He anticipated never touched the communion of the One who *lived* on account of the Father. We see it in all its perfection in Him. He Has given to us His place before the Father, and a nature to enable us to enter into it, in the power of the Spirit. We have eternal life, and are associated with the Father and the Son, but scripture does not speak of the communion of eternal life, but of communion with the Father and the Son, though we cannot know it without possessing the life.

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May we be enabled to enter into the deep and precious interests of the Father and the Son, and thus learn what true fellowship is both with divine Persons and each believer, and practically enter into the meaning of the word, truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. H. N.



“A NEW LIFE COMMUNICATED.”

I HAVE nothing very especial on the points you speak of, save holding fast the great foundation, that it is a new life communicated. “He that hath the Son hath life ; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life ;” only 2 Peter i. 4 is more conformity to the divine nature, as you say, though not merely attainment.

The word is the instrument, as it is said, “faith cometh by hearing (*ἀκοή*, report), and hearing (*ἀκοή*) by the word of God.” It is hard to say how the word merely works, save that it is God’s method of the revelation of Christ, and where accompanied by the quickening power of the Spirit, it becomes the means of life ; what is spoken as the word communicated to the soul by the Spirit becomes life. In Paul’s case it was sight yet revealing His Son in him : indeed the words of Christ too came to his ear. The Holy Ghost gave reality in his soul to that which his senses told him of. The written or spoken word,

if true, is a revelation of that which is true of Christ, and of Christ Himself, so that while it is the divine power of the Spirit by which we are quickened, it is the revelation of Christ to the soul (which) is objectively that which quickens me, what the Spirit brings to my soul ; so that it is faith, faith in the report, which is the outward means, while it is the thing contained in the word which is life, Christ. The word in itself is merely the outward means or instrument, and by itself, though all truth be in it, produces nothing (unless to leave us without excuse).

The "incorruptible" seed is clearly in contrast with corruptible or nature. But as the Living word was the carpenter's son, without the work of God in the soul, so the revelation of truth, and Christ, and grace in the written word too. His Words were the expression of Himself, and the Spirit of God has given us what is needed for salvation and blessing, and also revealed Him as in glory. Each makes us responsible to receive them ; but to have life-giving power, the Holy Ghost must reveal what is in them. It is a comparison or allusion to natural birth, but there is a divine nature communicated—a new life, Christ our life, brought spiritually into the soul by the operation of the Holy Ghost, with the word which reveals them. God reveals His Son in us, and so we have life, Christ our life, and so morally and intelligently, by the word which reveals Him, God begets us ; though it be by the

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word, we are born of the Spirit, the Son quickens us, the Spirit is the immediate power as in all God's works, but He is pleased to do it by the revelation of Christ by the word. By the word in James, and in 1 Peter, is either meant "by" as an instrument, or what is called the instrumental dative. It is of all importance to see that a new life is communicated, that Christ becomes our life, just as we had the life of Adam in the old man, the flesh."

Letters of J. N. D., Vol. ii. pp. 485, 486.



"THIS MAN SHALL BE THE PEACE."

MICAH V. 5.

"HE is our peace"—I gaze, my Lord, on Thee ;
I see Thee glorified, once dead upon the tree ;
To Thee I look, Thou stricken One for me—
He is my peace.

"He is our peace"—Thy face I soon shall see ;
The hour draws nigh, dark though the night may be,
Thou Morning Star how bright, I only wait for Thee—
He is my peace.

"He is our peace"—my heart within me thrills
At this blest hope ; it lifts beyond the ills
Of ruined earth ; its light the darkness gilds—
He is my peace.

"He is our peace"—'t is but a little while
Of watching here : may Satan's craftiest wile
Ne'er lure me from the sunshine of Thy smile—
He is my peace.

"He is our peace"—the changeless One is He ;
Lord grant me grace still to abide in Thee,
Till that blest day, when with Thee I shall be.
He is my peace. W. T. T.

THE WILDERNESS.

Numbers xx. and Deuteronomy xxxiv. 1-7.

NO. 1.

I GREATLY desire to call earnest attention to these two chapters, not only because they have a very intimate bearing one upon the other, but also because you could not find in the whole of the blessed word of God, two chapters which give you more perfect wilderness experience.

I do not know whether you have ever been struck with it, but it is very remarkable that Numbers xx. begins with death and ends with death, and it is more remarkable still, that in both beginning and end it is death in the same family: Miriam, the sister of Aaron, closes her eyes in death at the commencement of it; and Aaron, the priest, the brother of Miriam, lays aside his official garments and closes his eyes upon the scene, in the end of it. It is a perfect chapter of wilderness history; it is in very deed the beginning and end of the wilderness; it began with death, it ends with death. The brightest day that ever dawned upon the wilderness is tinged by the dark clouds of death; it separates the musician from her timbrel, for Miriam was the one who led the song in the palmy days of Israel's triumph on the shores of the Red Sea, and the loudest above all the notes

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of praise that were sung in commemoration of Jehovah's victory was Miriam's voice, "Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." She led the song on that occasion, and now her lips are sealed never to be opened again; and when you come to the end of the chapter you find a man who stood as the priest, laying aside his priestly robes and bowing to death.

It is well to remember that priesthood always supposes a people in a certain relation with God, as Israel was outwardly; priesthood always comes in as sustainment or succour for a people who are brought into relation with God, during their journey through the wilderness. I would only allude to this in passing, for I think it important, and useful, and instructive. The atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, though the act of one who is a priest, is not in itself a priestly act, and the reason I mention that is, because in Numbers xix. you will find it was *another* person who was to kill the heifer before the eyes of Eleazar the priest; the priest himself did not slay the victim, it was slain by another in his presence. The Lord Jesus Christ did not enter upon His priestly functions until He had passed through death and resurrection, and gone into the heavens. He was no priest on earth, "If He were on earth He should not be a priest;" but after He has gone

into the heavens, we have Him in the exercise of His everlasting priesthood, founded too upon His death and resurrection. We find a picture of it in Aaron's rod that budded, which was God's way of silencing the murmurings of rebellious Israel, and hushing the rising complaints of their hearts. He caused the rod to be laid up before Him in the tabernacle, and the dead rod on the morrow budded and brought forth almonds, &c. ; it was typical of priesthood, founded upon death and resurrection, which is the only principle upon which God could bring the people through the wilderness. Moses' rod would never do, because it was symbolical of judicial authority, and hence when God was about to turn the rivers of Egypt into blood, His direction to Moses was, to strike *his* rod over the river ; but when we come to Numbers xx. what we find is this, though the blessed God is manifesting, in His dealing with Israel, that they are a rebellious people, still He does not recognize any other rod but one. "Take *the* rod." What rod? Aaron's rod which budded and blossomed ; that was *the* rod, the rod of priestly grace, the only power by which God could lead a rebellious people through the wilderness ; if He used the rod of Moses, it would have been destruction after destruction.

What we have in the end of this chapter is Aaron, the man who stood between an outwardly reconciled people and God—God's priest, the

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man who stood also between the living and the dead, now yielding to the power of death himself. The priest *must* put off his priestly garments, the sweet singer of Israel must lay aside her timbrel, and must go into that great silence that nothing can break : these are the things that go to make up the wilderness ; in *it* you ever find the dark cloud, disappointment and death. Israel murmured that they had no water, and even that but reveals the interest, and care, and love, and provision, of Jehovah, who said Himself that He had looked after their clothes and feet forty years in the wilderness : let no one turn away and say we do not act like them, because that is the tendency of all our hearts every moment. The thing that tests us is the wilderness ; the circumstances of the way are the very things that bring out what is in us. If our eyes are on the living God, we can stand the pressure of wilderness circumstances ; if not, we break down. We are all sooner or later tested—God knows what will test each in their wilderness experience, and He suits the testing to the condition and state of His people, but we are all tested ; you will find it so in Israel, they wanted bread and they murmured ; every circumstance in their history brought out what little confidence or repose of heart they really had in God, and thus the reality of their state comes out. “The people chode with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we

had died when our brethren died before the Lord! And why have ye brought up the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die, and wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt to bring us in unto this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink." What a picture! dissatisfaction, discontent, complaint, and rebellion upon the part of Israel, death in their circumstances, and death in their families; death in their circumstances, for there was no water; and death in their families, for Miriam and Aaron had fallen on sleep; in fact, death on everything. But now observe there is a beautiful contrast here; for if there be in very deed change on everything, yet there are two things in this very chapter that do not change. What are they? The *Rock* and the *Rod*. There you get no change. Aaron may die, Miriam may die, Israel may murmur, the waters may fail, there is nothing, as to earth, that the eye can rest on; but the Rock and the Rod are the same. It is a blessed thing to learn that; if Miriam, the sweet singer of Israel, fades like a leaf, if Aaron the priest puts his priestly garments upon another and dies under the righteous government of God like the great Moses himself, who has to go up Mount Pisgah, gaze at the goodly land, and then fall on sleep, all liable to

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death, I look at the Rock, it is the same, and at the Rod, it is the same.

The Rock is Christ, as the One who was bruised as an atonement for sin, because you remember, on the first occasion when Moses smote the rock, it was a type of Christ lifted up on the cross; I allude to Exodus xvii. "Smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink,"—yes, you can have nothing, no good, no blessing, neither salvation nor sustenance, that does not spring out of a smitten Christ—if there is water to come forth from the rock to satisfy the thirst of Israel, typically Christ must be smitten. When I speak of the rock, I speak of Christ as the One who was an atonement for sin. He is the One out of whom everything comes, by Him sin is removed, by His precious death the barrier is removed, and now everything fully comes out; it is not that God had it not in His heart, He had, but righteousness barred the way, and the moment sin is removed all comes out righteously; refreshment, pardon, liberty, in fact, everything. If you trace everything up to its source, you will find all in heaven or on earth, all flows from Christ crucified; He is the Rock, and in another sense the One on whom the heart builds for eternal security. But now *the* Rod is Christ, though in another aspect of His glory, even Christ in the exercise of His priestly grace as the One who is

in the heavens ; because He is a priest in heaven, not on earth, and He is exercising the functions of His priesthood in heaven. “ He is a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec ;” that is His order, the functions are Aaronic. The Rod then is typical of priesthood founded upon death and resurrection ; and so these are the two things that remain amid all the vicissitudes in Israel’s journey, the Rock and the Rod. What a blessed thing it is to know that no one will ever go up Mount Hor and see Christ strip Himself of His priestly robes and put them upon another ! No eyes will ever look upon such a sight as that. Moses himself afterwards must toil up the steep incline of Mount Pisgah to die in the mount, having first feasted his eyes upon that which death shut him out of. What a blessed thing it is that we shall never do that ! Christ never commits His office to another. He holds it eternally. That is the great and blessed fact in this chapter. As we go through the wilderness, what God would lead us into is, the *sufficiency* of Christ. He *is* enough—we constantly say He is enough, but then all the way we are proved as to that. The Rock and the Rod are not enough for Israel, and they are ready to malign God who had brought them through, up to that moment. Have our hearts known the sufficiency of Christ ? Is all the fullness and the blessedness in Him our competency, so that when we are tested, it may be by the

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passing away of some creature mercy, it may be by the withering of some gourd, it may be by being stripped like a tree, Christ is enough for us? That *is* the test ; it is in the complete death and desolation of everything here ; am I *then* able to say Christ is enough? He is sufficient, all fulness is in Him ; it is not a question of having our needs met, or getting relief. I do not deny that He ministers relief, I know He does ; but that is what Israel's heart was always upon, they were hungry or thirsty, and they wanted relief, they were in that sense always on relief. I don't deny that God gives relief, but I do say there is a higher thing than that ; there is the exercise of the heart that it may know, before the relief comes, the need of continued dependence which the hunger and thirst were designed to promote. If Christ is our resource, then we can endure until relief comes ; and do you think the relief is less sweet when it comes if I have been proving the sufficiency of the One whose hand is stretched out to give it me? On the contrary, it enhances the gift, and in place of measuring His heart by your need, you measure it by His own heart. Christ's own heart is the only measure of itself. If it were otherwise, supposing your necessities are not very great, then on that ground the proportion of what is in His heart would be very small ; and am I not to know Him beyond the mere extent of my necessities

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and needs? Am I not to know Him on His own side? I am speaking now of what is individual, of what is to be known in the wilderness—such a resource, as that if death and decay be on everything around us, we can turn to all and say, “Thank God, there is the Rock and the Rod, and nothing can touch them.” W. T. T.



“THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER.”

WE read in the first chapter of the Acts, that the Lord Jesus, when risen from the dead, commanded *through the Holy Spirit* the apostles whom He had chosen—not to depart from Jerusalem, but to “wait for the promise of the Father (which ye have heard of me)” for “ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come [or, “of the Holy Spirit coming”] upon you.”

He then was seen to ascend, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. (Acts i. 2–10.)

The coming down of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost is traced by Peter (Acts ii. 33) up to its source. His taking up His abode in and among the company which the Lord Jesus had gathered was altogether a new thing, never known before. It made them and those of their company to become the habitation of God (through the Holy Spirit there, Eph. ii. 22), and was power for witnessing unto the Lord

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Jesus, from whom it came—*unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

Observe, it was the Holy Spirit Himself—a person in the Godhead, who came down (John xiv. 16) to earth from the Father and the Son in heaven, and took up His abode on earth (not in a tent, however ornamented, made of skins and curtains—nor in a temple built of stone with hands of men—but) in and among living men on earth, whom the Lord Jesus loved and who loved Him; and He came to be the Paraclete (or Guardian, translated verses 16 and 26 “*Comforter*”) down here when Christ became the Paraclete in heaven with the Father, 1 John ii. 1 (here translated “*Advocate*”).

This company is looked upon, in after parts of scripture, in different aspects. 1st, as *the habitation of God*; 2ndly, as *the family adopted of the Father* and committed by Him to the Son to bring to glory; and 3rdly, as the spiritual body of Christ—one Spirit, and so one with Himself—the Bride. But in each of these blessed aspects, the Holy Spirit has His own full and distinctively peculiar place. Quite true is it that men have been entrusted with a new revelation [in that called the New Testament] and a new place of obedient dependence upon the Holy Spirit in a new position, and men have failed in the responsibility again, as ever—forgotten both the Holy Spirit and the truth which He came as witness

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of. But He has no more failed than God can fail ; no more failed than the Father on high has failed in His counsels and plans about the Son of His love ; and thus there is to faith a habitation of God down here still, and there is for hope the New Jerusalem to come. There are those who say I am a “*son* [*vios, huios*] of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal. iii. 26), and into whose hearts “God has sent the Spirit of His Son, crying Abba, Father” (iv. 6) ; and if Abba’s heart be our present blessing, Abba’s house is our hope (John xiv. 2, 3), where Abba’s self and Abba’s Son will be, together, for our joy in the Spirit. So there are those now that *hold the Head* and know themselves, members in particular, cared for by Him, to whom eternity is as time, and who nourishes and cherishes His body (Eph. v. 28–30 ; see also i. 22 to ii. 10), and means to present it to Himself as a glorious bride, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Remark in chapter i. how the Lord Himself, through the Spirit, gave commands (ver. 2) ; we, too, now, ought to know—and in the glory to come we shall know what “by the Spirit all-pervading” means ; He was promised by the Father, as the Son Himself had told them He was come in an all-covering baptism (v. 5) ; as power for testimony to Jesus unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Ver. 8.)

As the taking possession of the tabernacle

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and of the temple was in either case attended with most signal marks, so in chapter ii. the Holy Spirit's taking possession of the new sort of habitation (the old sort of temple itself was left standing with its rent veil) had its indications too: suddenly there came a sound *from heaven* as of a rushing mighty wind—the house where they were sitting filled with it; cloven tongues as of fire upon each of them; all of them filled with the Holy Spirit; each spake in tongues as The Spirit gave them utterance. (Ver. 4.) When this got noised abroad, the multitude were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. (Read vers. 5–11.) Eighteen localities are named whence they came. The confounding of the tongues at Babel's tower to stop wickedness found its contrast here when the wonderful works of God in Christ had to be proclaimed.

Then, again, this was not the result of drunkenness—but of a promised pouring out of “my Spirit upon *all* flesh” (vers. 17, 18); connected with what went beyond Israel and set it aside in its then state. “*Whosoever* shall call” &c., went beyond Israel, as “whosoever *shall* call on the name of the Lord” did not describe Israel's then state. Peter's testimony is contained in one sermon of twenty-six verses. (Vers. 14–40.) One sermon gained three thousand souls. Verses 42–47 describe the favoured

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company. Its marks were peculiar, but very beautiful before God and man.

And the Holy Spirit, who had come down, took into His own hands the reins of government and administration; the arrangement, settling, and carrying out of every part of what He meant to be done. The will was and is in God, not in man, though voluntarily did those that knew the Blessor go along with Him taking the lead, and Himself working out what He would. In chapter iv. 8, Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit, and has a bold and wise testimony to give. (Vers. 10-12 and 19, 20.) They return to their own company—prayer ascends—the place is shaken, and all, filled with the Holy Spirit, spake the word of God with boldness (vers. 23-31); and then follows another beautiful account of the company. If any one will take the trouble to read through the Acts, and mark in the margin with an S all the verses in which the Spirit is named, such an one will be astonished to see how the presence of God the Holy Spirit, and His using men and working by men, is marked upon every part of it.

It seems to me that the redemption of Israel out of Egypt was so arranged by Jehovah, that every part of it threw out His presence into light. If there was an exodus, it proved that He was there; if there was no being locked up at Pihahiroth, it was because He was there,

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whose word the Red Sea heard and obeyed. The pillar of fire and cloud marked the presence of Him who had water and manna to give. He present, and a way into Canaan was patent and made good by Israel. If He was dishonoured, forgotten, disobeyed, there was no possible tenure of blessings given. And afterwards His temple could not stand without Himself. God is all and in all, to faith—and man is nothing. If in true subjection, dependent and obedient, then blessed. If unbelievingly out of subjection, independent and disobedient—where and what is he? What could the twelve apostles have done, or do, without a living Lord to look after them. If subject—dependent and obedient—they were as John—in the bosom; if true but self-complacent and not self-judged, then they were as Peter; if not real, but self-honouring, as Judas. But as to the good, the Lord was alone, and the all in all was in Him. And what can I do, if I forget the Holy Spirit come down from the Father and the Son in heaven, that I may have power to look up and, taught of God, see Jesus Lord of all at the right hand of God and the Father in heaven; Himself first-born among many brethren, Himself head over all things to His company down here; Himself, who made and upholds all things, making the throne on high to be the mercy-seat, and all His springs of life to be known as His people's, and

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the light of the blessing resting *upon all them that believe.* (Rom. iii. 22.) Let Paul plant, let Apollos water; 'tis God alone that gives the increase to His own seed.

Has the Father given us another Paraclete “*that he may abide with us for ever;*” even the Spirit of truth, whom we know, and who is in us? (John xiv. 16, 17.) Is this a blessing now enjoyed by us (xv. 26, 27):—“But when the Paraclete is come, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me?” Most surely it is a blessing now existent. Does the Spirit of God dwell in us—even the Spirit of Christ; then let us, the body being dead because of sin, mortify its deeds. Led by the Spirit of God—we are sons of God, have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father. We have the testimony of the Spirit with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and then follows the blessed verse 17, and that other, 21, Romans viii. And note it, in 1 Corinthians iii. 16, 17, believers collectively are the temple in which the (compare 2 Cor. vi. 16) Spirit of God abides. And in chapter vi. 19 the individual is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit wrought in creation, providence, government, also in eternal redemption (Luke ii. 35; Acts x. 38; Heb. ix. 14, &c.), and in eternal salvation as applied to us.

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All our knowledge of God and of the things of God is through the Spirit. (1 Cor. ii. 9-14.)

The Bible, too, He wrote it. (2 Pet. i. 21.)

He is the Spirit of truth, and testifies of Christ. (John xv. 26.)

We received Him by the hearing of faith. (Gal. iii. 2, 5.)

Our access to the Father is by the Spirit. (Eph. ii. 18.)

Our union with the Lord is by Him. (1 Cor. vi. 17 ; xii. 13, 14.)

We may be filled with the Spirit ; Paul speaks (Phil. i. 12) of a supply of the Spirit, of standing fast in one Spirit (ver. 27), of common fellowship of the Spirit (chap. ii. 1), of worship in the Spirit. (Chap. iii. 3.) See also Ephesians i. 17, He is wisdom and revelation, and as strength in the inner man to those who seek Him. (Chap. iii. 16.) He warns us, too, not to quench Him (1 Thess. v. 19), nor grieve Him (Eph. iv. 30), and speaks of some having done despite to Him. (Heb. x. 29.)

It is a great thing (without being wise above what is written) to be wise according to what is written, and to have a solemn sense of the dignity of Him who ministers Christ to us, and can enable us through faith to do all things.

If the dignity of Him, the promise of the Father, who has come down to earth and ministers (as the Spirit of truth) Christ to us individu-

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ally and collectively, and is the One charged with the administration of God's house down here, were more thought of—there would be more reverent awe, perhaps, in our assemblies—more sense of our own nothingness in ourselves, and more courageous confidence of Christ's strength being made perfect in our weakness.

One habitation—*one* heavenly family of God—*one* body (called also the Espoused, 2 Cor. xi. 2, and the Bride, Rev. xxii. 17, and the Wife, Rev. xix. 7, of the Lamb) until the Lord comes. *One* and but *one*, till all is finished and perfected.

Who could know the counsel, and the plan, and the way, and the energy, needful to form a company which would meet all this? None but God, and those to whom He reveals it. Who could undertake and be entrusted with the work of atonement (making the throne of God to be the mercy-seat) and of being, in that throne, the giver and sustainer of eternal life? None (says scripture) but the Son, Jesus the Lord and Christ. And who (in spite of the world, and the flesh, and Satan) is in administration down here for God, even the Father—and for the Christ, Son of His love? God Himself, even the Holy Spirit. He who came down at Pentecost, and will be in sole administration until the Lord Jesus takes to Himself that which is His and the Father's.

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Would to God that we might all see this—
and owning Him, might be true and real—
dependent and obedient in all things and times.

G. V. W.

IN THE LAND.

“And it shall be, when thou art come in unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein ; that thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name there.” (Deut. xxvi. 1, 2.)

FOUR points come out in these verses, full of instruction for our souls. The chapter sets forth certain privileges of an Israelite when he should come into the land of promise. He was to bring of the first of all the fruits of the earth in a basket, and present them to the Lord through a priest. But before doing so he must of necessity dwell there, and it is evident that to dwell he must first take possession. But how could he take possession before coming into the land ?

This divine order is of the utmost importance. The land typifies *heaven*, and every Christian should have an offering to present to God. But, like the Israelites, he must first *come into, possess, and dwell* in the land. Then follows the sacri-

fice of praise to God, acceptable through Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. ii. 5.) Let us seek to gather the spiritual meaning of these things from His word.

Firstly, what do we learn from "coming into the land." By nature we are sinners, guilty and lost, in danger of eternal judgment. But the grace of God has brought salvation to us. And in this great salvation there is not only present, complete, and eternal deliverance from all that we had done and were ; but we are brought into a new position of privilege, and a new place before God for ever. All believers are saved by the finished work of Christ, and stand in all the favour in which He, as the exalted Man, "the Beloved" (who did that work), is now before God and the Father.

In Romans we learn that we are pardoned, justified, and reconciled to God, &c. ; and that having died with Christ in His death, we are *now* delivered from the mastery of sin, and the curse of a broken law, and are alive from the dead in Christ, with all condemnation now and for ever completely gone, &c., &c. (Rom. viii. 1.) In Colossians we learn further that we are risen with Christ, &c. (Col. iii. 1.) And in Ephesians we are blessed with all spiritual blessings *in heavenly places* in Christ, and made to sit down together *in heavenly places* in Him. (Eph. i. 3 ; ii. 6.) This is *the land* ; our blessing is in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. This is where

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the eye of God sees the believer *now*. Mark well, "*in him*;" not "*with him*," for that can only be when we are in glory. We are not only delivered out of Egypt (to use the type) but brought into Canaan. He *brought us out*, like Israel of old, that He might *bring us in*. (Deut. vi. 23.) We are not only alive from the dead in a risen Christ, but risen with Him, and seated in heavenly places *in Him*. He is in heaven—in the land—*we are there in Him*. "*In whom* we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. i. 7.) "*In whom* also, after that ye [or, having] believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance," &c. (Eph. i. 13.)

The Lord God gave the land to Israel for an inheritance. He has given a heavenly portion to us. Our place is there for ever. Believers have come into it *in Christ*, and have life and the Holy Ghost. And not only so, but we are viewed as in heaven in Him. As a well-known hymn puts it, "*in spirit there already*." Fellow believer, have you accepted this blessed truth? Many, sheltered by the precious blood of Christ, have never even known redemption by power, as typified by the Red Sea. As to crossing the Jordan *now*, and coming into the land, it has never even dawned upon their minds that such

a thing could be until they leave this world. But all this arises, more or less, from neglect of the word of God, and occupation with self and one's own unworthiness. Now God ministers blessing to us, in the riches of His grace, according to His own estimate of the work and Person of His Son. Hence it is, that Christ having gone into heaven, we are there in Him; *we have come into the land*. It is according to His eternal counsels. *Faith takes Him at His word*.

Secondly, when Israel should come into the land, they were to *possess it*. To employ a figure, it is one thing to enter the door of your house, another to take possession of it practically, especially if there are occupants there beforehand who dispute it. So with Israel, it was one thing for Jehovah to bring them into the land of promise, but another for them to possess it practically by dispossessing the seven nations who already dwelt there. "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses." (Josh. i. 3.) And so also it is one thing for a believer to accept the precious truth of God that he is across the Jordan now in Christ, and that his proper portion now and for ever is in heaven; but it is quite another thing for him to overcome the wicked spirits (typified by the Canaanites) and to take practical possession of it.

We need faith not only to come into the land,

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but also to plant our feet upon every portion of it, whilst sustaining the severest of conflicts with the unseen powers of darkness. Satan brings all his power to bear against those who are diligent in soul in laying hold and taking possession of all the heavenly blessings and privileges that are ours in Christ. The sixth chapter of Ephesians brings out the terrible character of the conflict that we are called to sustain, when we are resolved by grace to enter into and enjoy them. We need the whole panoply of God, as there detailed, to withstand, to overcome, and still to stand ; for it is a very evil day. (Eph. vi. 13.) May each believer who reads these lines be satisfied with nothing short of possessing the land, as well as coming into it, of taking practical possession in our own souls, in the power of the Holy Ghost, of the unseen and heavenly blessings which God has given us in Christ.

Thirdly, Israel having taken possession, were *to dwell* in the land. Here many of them came short. Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh would not obey. (Num. xxxii.) They were willing to fight the Lord's battles, and to help their brethren in the conflict in the land, but chose the land of Gilead, where there was abundance of grass for their cattle, to dwell with their families and herds. So now there are many believers who accept the truth of being

in the heavenlies in Christ, and who, in some measure take possession of the land, and share in the conflicts against the power of Satan, but yet dwell practically both themselves and their families on this side of Jordan. Heavenly truths are accepted, more or less, and contested for; but how about heavenly living? Is not the green grass of Gilead—earthly prosperity—like the enchanted ground in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" to many of the dear children of God? On all hands we may see those who dwell on this side Jordan, who fail to enjoy the heavenly place that God has brought us into in Christ. All saints are *there* in the eye and thoughts of God, and according to His eternal counsel in Christ; but, alas! how many of us fail to overcome the foe, and are overcome, and dwell morally in our own souls, and in our associations, in an atmosphere that is manifestly the opposite of heavenly.

It was only as Israel took possession that they could dwell in the land and enjoy it. And, though every blessing is ours, it is only that which we take possession of in power that we can enter into and enjoy. It is noteworthy, too, that it was those very tribes that stopped short of dwelling in the land that were first led captive. (1 Chron. v. 26.) And it is the same with souls to-day. Those who, accepting a heavenly position and heavenly privileges, but instead of

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dwelling in the enjoyment of them, settle down more or less in fleshly ease, are often among the first to be carried away by the enemy into one of his many snares, when a moment of testing comes. May we, then, not only be found amongst those who in simple faith have come into the land, but daily taking possession increasingly in our souls of our glorious heavenly portion, and dwelling in communion with God, in the power of the Spirit, in full enjoyment of it.

Fourthly, the Israelite who had *come into, possessed, and dwelt* in the land, was to bring his basket of firstfruits before the Lord. And the Christian who has entered into and enjoyed the blessed portion thereby typified, as we have seen, is also privileged to come before God as a worshipper with a sacrifice of praise. (Heb. xiii. 15.) The Israelite was to bring of the first of all the fruit of the land, put it in a basket, and go to the place that the Lord his God should choose to place His name there. He was to tell of the Lord's goodness, &c., and the priest was to take the basket out of his hand, and set it down before the altar of the Lord his God. The Christian, in communion with God, his soul occupied with Christ, is privileged to draw near to God without a humanly set apart priest (being himself one of God's holy priesthood), to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God, acceptable to Him through

Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. ii. 5.) And the chosen place is, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name" (Matt. xviii. 20), "There," says Jesus, "am I in the midst of them." Each is a worshipper, and one of a company of true worshippers, brought into this wondrous blessing in the pure grace of God, whose heart and lips are led out by the Spirit in worship in spirit and in truth to God, the Father and the Son. (John iv. 23, 24.)

But if we are stopping short of our privileges, and allowing our hearts to dwell at ease in a forbidden place, instead of abiding in a heavenly sphere in communion with God, how can we have confidence before Him? And although we may still keep up the outward form, of what value is that in the sight of the heart-knowing God? Jesus complained of some, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but *their heart* is far from me." (Matt. xv. 8.) It is only a company of believers whose hearts are happy and free, and who, in communion with God, find their joy in Him and the things which He has given them in Christ, that can render to Him, in the power of that ungrieved Spirit, that worship and praise that are His due.

How deeply important, then, for each reader of these lines to apprehend the order in which God has presented these things in His word,

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and to see that we have entered into them in our souls in the power of the Holy Ghost, that each may both *come into, possess, and dwell* in heavenly places, and *render to Him the first-fruits* of worship, adoration, and praise, whose love it was that gave His Son to bring us into them, and whose joy it is to receive the first-fruits of our hearts and lips in return.

E. H. C.



“BOUGHT WITH A PRICE.”

WE are bought with a price,—we are not our own. In consequence of this—this perfect salvation—this finished work, I am no longer my own at all. Whatever I do, I should “do *all* in the name of the Lord Jesus.” I am in a new place altogether, into which I have been brought by perfect love in divine righteousness. I am in the presence of God Himself, in the full light and favour of God. We have power now, the power of the Holy Ghost; and the Christian is set in this world to shew what Christ was. “He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk even as he walked,”—“Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our body.” . . .

There are thousands of things we do from habit, and we say we must do them. There is

no "must" for me but *Christ's will*. I have to learn what His will is ; for we are made epistles of Christ, and the path we are to walk in is to manifest the life of Jesus in our bodies. *Everything* I do should be the expression of the allegiance of my heart to Christ, and the manifestation of Him to others. The standard of walk is, what is "worthy of *the Lord*," not of a man. Sometimes it is very difficult to be peaceful, patient, gentle, when a man wrongs and insults me. But were you not an enemy of God, and did not God forgive you when you were His enemy? Well, you forgive your enemy. I quite understand the difficulties, but we have the blessed privilege of walking "as he walked." If you want to do this, go and *study Christ*, learn what His path was down here, after you have learned your place in Him on high. It is a great comfort that in looking at Christ, I not only see the thing I ought to be, but I *get* the thing I ought to be,—*"grace for grace."* "We all, with open face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory." There is real growth there, not in fitness and acceptance, but in likeness to Christ, and it ought to be growth every instant. We are in this place of Christ then before God, and what I would press upon you is to *study Christ*, so that we may be like Him here. There is nothing that so fills the soul with blessing and

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encouragement, or that so sanctifies; nothing which so gives the living sense of divine love; that gives us courage. The Lord give us this courage, and enable us to *study Him*. "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me."

J. N. D.



"TEACH ME TO DO THY WILL."

(PSALM CXLIII. 10.)

How good, how perfect, is Thy sovereign will,
 Father of mercies, Thou each cup doth fill;
 Yea, to overflowing with Thy precious love,
 Blest anticipation of Thy rest above.

Thy Father's will, O Christ, my Lord, my God,
 Was the one motive in Thy path once trod
 In meekness, patience, subject, suffering here,
 No earth-born light, all darkness else, to cheer.

Perfect in Thee, blest Saviour, Son of God,
 His will was seen unclouded on the road,
 E'en where in agony Thy sorrow knew no bound,
 And bloody sweat was poured upon the ground.

Formed in us, though feeble, that blest will,
 Yes, e'en where heavenly hopes the heart doth fill,
 Those who as fallen Adam's seed and race,
 Can only boast in free and sovereign grace.

Thy will alone be done, Father and God,
 This be my longing as I walk the path He trod,
 My rest and gain to lose my will in Thine,
 My loss Thy triumph, Thy blest will, not mine!

W. T. T.



THE WILDERNESS.

(NUMBERS XX, AND DEUTERONOMY XXXIV. 1-7.)

NO. 2.

I WOULD glance a moment at that wherein Moses's failure consisted at this time. It was this—in giving a false representation of God to Israel—that was his solemn sin, he misrepresented God to a rebellious people. Jehovah had said to him, "Take the rod," that is, Aaron's rod, symbolical, as I have pointed out already, of priestly grace—"Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes." Now observe how different that is to Jehovah's word to Moses in Exodus xvii. 5, "And *thy* rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thy hand and go." That was the first occasion; here he was to take "*the* rod," and speak to the rock. That is, God was acting in reference to Israel in the unbounded grace of His own heart; it was grace, and priestly grace too, because it is only priestly grace that can bring a murmuring people through the wilderness; whereas Moses, instead of taking *the* rod, takes his own rod, the rod of judgment and government—thus he misrepresented God in every way, he denied in type the one sacrifice of Christ by smiting

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the rock and that twice, and he misrepresented the voice of God in speaking to Israel as he did ; he stood before the people the very contrast to that character in which God was dealing with them. It is a solemn reality for us at this present moment, in our actings, conversation, and ways down here in this world, that we *give a true representation of Christ* ; because that is what we are left here for. Are we really exercised as to this manifestation of Christ to men ?

The only way the world can see Christ is in His people, who are in the world, for He is gone away ; Christ is no longer on this earth, but His people are left here in order that others may both learn and see Christ in them. Are we sufficiently near Him and in communion with His mind to weigh the importance of this ? Are we walking in the quietness of His own presence so that we can catch and thus be moulded by His mind, and thus naturally and easily express Him ? Is it that which now is forming us ? Think of Moses, he speaks unadvisedly with his lips ; and if we speak unadvisedly with our lips we give, in our way, as far as we can give, a false representation of Christ, and if we are in circumstances where Christ would not be, we so far misrepresent Him. How careful it ought to make us ! But a person may say, how can I give a true representation

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of Christ? You *must* know Himself in heaven, and His mind as well, in order to represent Him. The man who represents another's interests knows what those interests are, and is acquainted with everything about them. Herein is our chief deficiency; there is so little nearness to, and intimacy with Christ, hence we so little represent Him faithfully in this world. The Lord give us to be near to Christ every moment—it is as you are near to Him that His moral features are in measure reproduced in you. He is the producing power, and, as you are near Him, He produces certain qualities in you, and that is likeness to Christ in our ways. Now here Moses is not the true delineator of God in that sense; and hence he lost Canaan. Two things run all through the word of God, namely, *Grace* and *Government*, and they never interfere the one with the other—both are here; hence it is Moses died. Aaron likewise goes up Mount Hor, and dies, as we have already seen. This is government. Government and grace are going on still; this is government, viz., “Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.” That is as true of a Christian as of a man of the world. It was government that shut Moses out of Canaan, but grace gave him a sight of the goodly land ere he died. Before Moses fell asleep, Jehovah led him up to the top of Pisgah, and traced out with His own hand, as it were, all the land of

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promise. What a sight that must have been ; think of the blessed God leading His poor servant up the mountain top, and pointing out to the eyes, so soon to close in death, that goodly land. Is that not grace? Was the blessed God in any sense bound to do so? By no means. Yet I am emboldened to say that it gave the Lord far more pleasure to give His servant that sight than it did even Moses to gaze on it. But Aaron too had failed, and hence it is precisely the same here with him, because he was associated with Moses. No doubt, he was the lesser of the two, yet he must die. The *grace* of God is exhibited in the one who was the leader. No doubt, if we look at it *dispensationally*, Moses could not bring the people in, the "law" could not bring the people into the land, it made nothing perfect ; we do not get that until we come to Joshua ; that is another thing, but what I now treat of is *grace* and *government* exhibited in God's ways with Moses and Aaron. Both die in the *government* of God.

One thing in order to shew the contrast that is here ; Moses standing on Mount Pisgah, and *looking on the land into which he was not to enter with Israel*, is not the sort of view the Christian now gets of the glories of Christ and the heavenly land ; through grace we have title to look at heaven and glory, not as at a

distance, but as *in them*. If the Spirit of God dwells in us He unites us to Christ in glory ; not like Moses, who saw a better thing than he possessed ; it must have been in some sense a tantalizing thing to him, and that is why people are in a sense often tormented by looking at the glory. When you speak of a place where everything is in perfection, you must be tantalized by it if you do not know that it is yours, if you have no sense of possession of it ; but if you are a Christian, all is yours. A Christian is a person in whom the Holy Ghost dwells, and hence one with Christ in the place where Christ is. Why should people, then, be tantalized ? Why should the blessedness of union with Christ in heaven make any soul think it is not possible to know it ? The blessed Lord Himself, looking on to the day of the presence of the Holy Ghost on the earth says, "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." (John xiv. 20.) No doubt it is all wonderful, yet, if Christians, we are one with Christ, and it is not looking at the thing as from a distance, but looking at that into which we have been brought ; and be assured the difference is great as to whether we are looking at the things of Christ as Moses looked at Canaan from Mount Pisgah, or as being brought into the very centre of it ; because if the Holy Ghost dwells in us, He unites us to Christ where He is, and I therefore

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say we are brought into it. Then besides all this, we have here what is peculiar to the wilderness—"the Rock" and "the Rod"—the Rock on which we may build for eternal security, even as the scripture expresses it—"The man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." (Isa. xxxii. 2.) That all belongs to the wilderness, because there will not be any heat or want of water in heaven. Thus then this weary desert is the very place to elicit the hidden virtues of the mystic Rock and Rod, the Rod that blossomed and budded (type of the resurrection of Christ), to carry a poor feeble one along, our murmurings all quieted and silenced, and taken away, and we led so blessedly step by step, until we shall have changed the dry and parching sand of the deserts for the blessedness of Christ's own presence.

The Lord give us to know the reality of this Rock and Rod, when Miriam the prophetess and Aaron the priest die—because this is real wilderness life; Israel murmur, Miriam and Aaron die, the waters fail, but the Rock and the Rod remain the same, and that which is wanting in everything else, namely, sameness, is the glory of this. The absence of this stamps everything here in the wilderness as faulty and deficient, but when we come to Christ, what do

we find? "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

The Lord by His Spirit give our hearts to prove Him the same day by day, for His own name's sake!

W. T. T.



THREE IMPOTENT MEN.

(JOHN V. ; ACTS III., XIV. ; JOHN X.)

I WOULD call attention to these records by way of suggestion rather than exposition ; making a few remarks as to the teaching which God the Spirit has in giving them as presented to my mind.

Firstly, there is one thing common to all three, each is impotent and each is the subject of the same temporal benefit, but the details given in each account differ in a most striking way, especially so in that which follows the benefit received.

The man of John v. is one of a multitude, and describes a state of helplessness true of all (no doubt Israel then), but does not portray that condition for which there is no remedy, and which necessitates a wholly new condition like unto that which the blessed Lord Jesus goes on in His teaching to shew in this same chapter, when He says, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life but is passed from death

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unto life." We read of this man that he had been a "long time in that case," "thirty and eight years." This does not cover in our minds the whole of the man's history; we are not carried back to the root of the complaint; it is not the picture of one irremediably bad (for there is hope of a man if his disease be not hereditary); but he is a picture of many souls who have never discovered that the root as well as the branches are bad (corrupt), and that God has put the axe to the root of the tree. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit."

So like him, they have a certain knowledge about the Lord through whom the benefit is received, but they are not prepared to follow Him, but are still linked with a system which would none of Him, and like this man on the side of betrayal rather than confession—sad picture of the natural heart selfishly carrying and clinging to a *resting-place* here, but no confession of the One who effected this great change! No praise going back to Him, as we shall find took place in the two others mentioned in the Acts.

The points of contrast in the man of Acts iii. are worthy of consideration: two facts are related of this man—that he was born so, and that he was over forty years old. These two points are important; in the first that he inherited it, in

the other is demonstrated the impossibility to repair this condition. There must be a new power, a power not of the natural man or of his order. And the One who had this power, as witnessed in John v., is no longer on earth. He has passed out of it through death, for man had crucified and buried Jesus, but God has raised and glorified Him. God has also sent down the Holy Ghost because of this glory of Jesus in heaven, and now the power is in the *name* of this Jesus, now glorified, and exercised in His servants by the Holy Ghost sent down from that glory. This is richly illustrated in the case we have before us. Peter and John, with neither silver nor gold, are now the vessels which the Holy Ghost uses to speak the word which would quicken this poor cripple. "In the NAME of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." Peter "took him by the right hand and lifted him up; and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength, and he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God."

Peter confesses the source of this power and blessing when before the council. (Acts iv. 1-12.) There are three things which follow in beautiful order the healing of this impotent man—he walks, he leaps, and he praises God. A greater result is seen to follow the servant's work than did the Master's. And why? Had not the

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Master told them "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father"? (John xiv. 12.)

And is not this all beautiful and in perfect order? The Father is testifying to the Son, greater works are being done because of His position in the glory of the Father, and in answer to the great work done upon the cross, where Jesus laid the foundation upon which all God's counsels of grace and glory could be established, and fallen man delivered from the oppression and all the effects of the fall. God in delivering man is making manifest the worthiness of Jesus and His infinite satisfaction in Him. The apostles are in the mind of God the Father, they are what Jesus said they should be. (John xv. 27.) They ascribe all praise to Him whom God had exalted (Acts. iii. 14-16), "And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know; yea, the *faith* which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all." How the apostles retire into the background that the Master may shine forth where he was so insulted! They are richly feeding upon the old corn of the land, and are able to stand, having on the whole armour of God, &c., and their enemies fall before the sword of the Lord, Jesus is exalted. Why marvel? Thrill-

ing question, searching and also animating to the soul. Why marvel? See where Jesus is; He occupies the highest place in the glory of God. When the eyes of our understanding are enlightened to this great fact, no wonder is made when a man once lame, walks, leaps, and praises God—the wonder is that there are not more who catch the same spirit as this man; but this is impossible unless the vision is clear into the glory of God. And why there is not the effect now, we may gather, by considering a little the detail of the case before us; getting the positive we may soon discover the negative. This man was not one of a multitude. I must learn the lesson of my lost condition individually, and unless this deep and solemn lesson be known to the soul, it will be constantly falling back upon self in search for something in it, and the lesson of Romans vii. is repeated; there is no good there, nor is there strength, and the soul is miserable, and there is no walking, leaping, nor praising God. Forty years (full testing of the flesh), had passed away in this man's history, and he is left without strength.

The first effect in this man is that he leaps up, he is quickened, the second he stood, there is uprightness, and third he walks, he has delivering power. (Rom viii. 4.) He praises God, he has joy in the Holy Ghost. How great a change is wrought in this man

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once carried to Solomon's porch (the seat of man's glory) where once the true Son of David walked and said, "I give unto my sheep eternal life," to seek help from thence, now the recipient of lasting blessing and joy from the throne in heaven, the seat of God's glory; all praise to God for such riches of grace and glory, and triumphs over the enemy's power. One more thing remains to be noticed in this man—is the place he fills in Acts iv. 14; he is seen holding on as silent witness with the apostles; beautiful picture and decided contrast to the man of John v. Which place does my reader occupy?

As to the man of Acts xiv. another state of soul I think is pictured. Though he heard and had faith to be healed, he was powerless for walk, there was something lacking in his faith which the apostle could discern. (Compare Rom. i. 11; 1 Thess. iii. 10.) I think the point or great lesson here is, for the servant to have spiritual discernment as to the condition of soul. Paul speaks the word which effects the great change in this man.

Let us gather up the points which have been before us. Firstly, a ruined helpless condition in all; secondly, power to meet that condition in Jesus dead and risen and also glorified. These two truths known in the soul give us the secret of true liberty, but I cannot know the liberty unless the ruin has been felt and

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accepted. Thirdly, the servant's faith in exercise with regard to these points. May the Lord help us in a fuller acquaintance with these things. E. H.



“THE WORD BECAME FLESH.”

(JOHN I. 1-34.)

WHAT characterizes the Gospel of John, is the bringing forward, at the beginning, of the personal glory of the Lord Jesus; and then, at the end, the gift of the Spirit, the Comforter, whom He promised to send when gone.

In this part there are three distinct subjects. In the first place we have the divine nature of the Lord—what He is in Himself. Secondly, what He is in incarnation—the Word made flesh, as come into this world: and then, in the third place, you have the work that He does in this world. The first part is a little abstract. “In the beginning was the Word.” What gives its value to all is, that He was *God*. It is the divine nature of the Lord, though still looking at Christ as the One who is revealed to us. This chapter begins before Genesis, for the third verse is the beginning of Genesis. When everything else began, He was there already: He never had a beginning: He made everything: all that had beginning of existence He was there to create. Nothing more distinctly marks the

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eternity of the Word than that He was there before everything. Then you get His personality, "The Word was with God;" and thirdly, not only was *with* God, but "*was* God;" and lest we should have any confusion about it (ver. 2), He *always* was God. The eternity of His existence, the distinctness of His nature, and divinity of His Person—all just in that one word. When we are brought into the same glory as He is, His Person is always maintained safely—personally distinct. When Moses and Elias were in the same glory as Christ, the Father's voice comes out, and says, "*This* is my beloved Son." If you take Stephen, heaven is opened to him just the same—he is a son of God too; but Christ was not looking up into heaven at some object that was to make Him like it. Stephen was looking up to become like something—Christ was an object to heaven.

Having stated His divine Person, we get Him in His connection with us. (Ver. 4.) "The life was the light of men." He was not the light of angels, but specifically and definitely the light of men. The delight of Christ being with the sons of men, He becomes a man. It was the Son Himself come down here—the power of divine life walking through this world, and specially for man, as He became a man. This One in whom life was, was the light of men in a special way. Here He is speaking of what He is,

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The thoughts and counsels of God were just this, to have us conformed to the image of His Son, before ever the world was. Of course it is not so yet, but “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” We shall be perfectly like Him in glory. “And he that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure.” The thought of God is this blessed thought, that Christ having taken us up, He is never satisfied until He sees the fruit of the travail of His soul, in having us in the glory perfectly like and with Himself. We have got into the relationship, though we have not all the fruits of it—we are sons, though we have not yet a bit of the inheritance.

The light was perfectly adapted to man, but as regards this unbelieving world, “The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.” *Now* you cannot have light shining in darkness, for it is light and no darkness; but then it was God in the world, and they would not own Him. That is where I get what man is. They who found out this, “to them gave he authority to become the sons of God;” no one could be that before. It is not that we have power, but the moment the Son comes into this world, this blessed relationship of son is brought out and revealed. He says this is what He has given us. We are brought

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into the same place as Christ. He has, in His own Person on the earth, shewn the place of a Son—a Man, too, who would not go out of the place of a servant—there He shewed the perfect pattern of our place upon earth, and He has given us the title to take this place as sons. The blessed Lord is in Himself the expression and pattern of this place. We are all the sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus; we have the consciousness of it, and are really born too. “The darkness comprehended it not”—but as many as received Him, to them He gave the title to take their place as sons. Just think what a place that is, when the world is passing away; that He who was from the beginning, comes in to shew us light and life. Here is a Man who is in this place as Son (not like the law, which says you *ought* to do this and that), and who can bring us into the same place.

When the poor leper said, “Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean,” He put forth His hand and touched him. He says: “I will not put you out of the camp; I will come to where all the defilement is.” He touched him *as man*, His divine authority sends away the leprosy.

Then it goes on, “And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth *came* by Jesus Christ.” In this latter clause we get not merely what He was in His nature, but the

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fact that the Word was made flesh. It is put in contrast with "The law was given by Moses;" "grace and truth *came* by Jesus Christ," not only were there. We get this wonderful truth, that the Word was made flesh and *dwelt* among us. He was here *as really a man as any of us, only sinless.*

The law did not tell man what God *was*, or what man *was*; but it came and told man what he *ought* to be. That was all the law did. It was a perfect rule of life as it came. What was the God they were to love with all their heart? You might take Him as the Israelites did, the One who brought them out of the land of Egypt; but there was no other revelation of God except terror. If you are going to have righteousness, law detects your sin and says, you have done it—opens your eyes. When I come to what I get here, it is altogether opposite. It is God come as a man into the world of sinners. He comes *veiled in humiliation.* He so comes into the world of sinners in grace, that instead of saying, "You must behave yourself rightly," He comes Himself, not to judge, but to save. If I take the law, God never came out, and man could not get in. Now, what I get in the Person of Christ is that God *did* come out, and man *is* gone in. When I know Christ I know man has gone into the holiest of all in virtue of Christ's work. Grace comes abounding over all the sin,

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and truth comes too ; not telling us what we ought to be, but what we are ; and man does not like that. When I come and tell a man that *truth* came by Jesus Christ, he does not like it, for truth says, man is lost already. There was a Man down here after God's own heart—perfect holiness and perfect love, and when He came, every one was the opposite. No men are like Him. You never saw selfishness or self-seeking in Christ. I see perfect grace come out to poor sinners because they could not go in ; and, on the other hand, perfect truth told about them and about Him too. It was no sending out a message to them, but He *came* to them. Here He was, walking up and down in this ruined world, seeking the confidence of man.

I believe the first thing that ruined Eve was that she lost confidence in God and trusted the devil. Then she goes her own way, and the lusts come in—self-will and sin. Christ comes into the world that we might be like Him, and more than that, God comes in and walks through this world in perfect holiness, that men might have confidence in Him. “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself”—not judging it. For example : the woman that was a sinner, in Luke vii., and the woman of Samaria. If they were wretched and miserable, afraid to trust any one, here is a heart that they could trust, when they could trust no other, and that

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was the heart of God. He says to poor wretched creatures, “You may trust *Me*.”

“No man hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” People say, “*was* in the bosom of the Father ;” but the fact is, He never left it in His divine nature. “*Is* in the bosom of the Father ;”—that is, that He who is the centre and sole object of the Father’s delight, comes, that *we* may understand what a Father’s delight in a Son is. I say, Where can I learn what God is—what His thoughts and feelings are? *There* in the One who is the perfect concentration of all God’s thoughts. The Son tells what the Father is to Him. It is the only way of knowing it. Therefore, He says, in John xvii., “That the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.” Then, “I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.” He brings us into it: not as the world gives, for it gives away only what it can spare. The way that Christ gives is bringing us into what He enjoys Himself. “Peace I leave with you. *My* peace I give unto you.” “That they might have *my* joy fulfilled in themselves.” “The glory which thou gavest *me* I have given them.” “I have given unto them the words that thou gavest *me* ;” and then,

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“That the love wherewith thou hast loved *me* may be in them.” He makes us sons, and is Himself the expression and model of what a son is. He declares what the Father is to Him, and brings us into the enjoyment of it. He has revealed God in grace to *sinners*, and the Father in love to *sons*. He tells His Father’s name, as He is enjoying it then. He says He is not going to leave us to ourselves; He leads us now in our weakness by His Spirit. How can I know what God is? If you are a poor sinner, the way you can know what He is, is by looking at Christ, seeing how He received poor sinners. Then, on the other hand, having the title of sons, what is He to a son? I say, you look at Christ, the only begotten Son. He will make you know what a father is to a son who is thus loved.

The true character of repentance is not like Judas going and hanging himself. Love having come in, with the abhorrence of sin, there is perfect confidence in Christ, like the poor woman putting her tears upon Him. The conscience must be reached, to know God. If grace comes, truth comes as well, and the conscience is reached. Not one without the other; but there must be confidence. People say, “If I perish I will perish at the foot of the cross!” Is *that* what you call confidence? There must be the light of God coming into the conscience, and then confidence is produced. There is never full

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confidence though, till we come to the "best robe," and then there is no more about *us*.

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." There are the two parts of Christ's work (the full result will never be, till the new heavens and new earth); "Behold the Lamb of God," the Person and work. God provides Himself with a Lamb, God's Lamb, for us no doubt. He who knows what righteousness is, and consequently what sin is, He provides a Lamb and a Victim for Himself. "The Lamb of God"—He came to be made sin, the One without spot before God. It is not merely that my sins are put away, but I get One, who having been made sin, has perfectly glorified God about it all. "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him . . . shall straightway glorify him." He does not wait for the glory of the kingdom. Sin has been dealt with once and for ever. It is the end of the world as regards man's history. "Now is the judgment of this world," God's work was done in it. The very wickedness that rejected Christ was the very thing that brought about man's salvation: it was the means for saving even the people who did it! The only part we had in the work that saves us was our sins. Man's history was over; then God's Lamb comes in—was made sin: and the whole righteousness of God, and His hatred of sin,

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comes out against One perfectly able to bear it, and all God's love to the poor sinner. There I get the work of the blessed Lamb of God.

I had a world of innocence ; I have a world of sin, but a sacrifice ; then I get a world of righteousness, that never can change. My rest is upon the work on the cross. "Behold the Lamb of God" runs on to the new heavens and earth. It is perpetual, and never can change. The work of His Lamb is always there ; in fact there is no time with Him. "He will convince the *world* of sin," not wicked people in it. The Spirit of God comes down and says from God, "Where is my Son?" And the answer is, "We spat in his face and crucified him." There I have the work of Christ. The second thing is that He baptises with the Holy Ghost ; and there I have the present consciousness and effect of what He has done, though as yet I have not all the fruits of it. It is a ministry of righteousness, because Christ is my righteousness in the presence of God : and a ministry of grace, because the Comforter is come down. He is the earnest of the inheritance, not the earnest of love, for the love of God *is* shed abroad in my heart.

Duties always flow from a relationship we are already in. Are you a child of God? Then conduct yourself as a child of God. We have the distinct source of this—we have the Object—

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we have the bread of God come down from heaven. The law never gave an object: the gospel does; it is Christ, and as I look at Him, I am changed into the same image.

And now is that where our hearts are? Has your eye been so occupied with that blessed One, that He is your Object? And then I add, is your conscience all clear? He appears in the presence of God for those who believe, but He has not got your sins up there. Have you the consciousness of that, setting to your seal that God is true? If it be so, are your hearts able to say with Paul—not “I have attained,” but “This one thing I do?” Is that what fills your heart? We shall be sure to find out our weakness; but “My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Is Christ the One that feeds your heart and that leads your heart?

God has come down that we might know the whole story for ourselves in Christ. Love coming to us, and righteousness going to God. What we have to seek in everything is to glorify God—a thousand circumstances in life, but only one Object. The question is, whether we are living Christ in the ordinary circumstances of life—in honest toil and labour, in the calling in which we are (though if we cannot abide in the calling with God, we must leave it). Is it the one object of our lives to shew forth Christ, to manifest Him in our mortal

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bodies, to realise more of Him by the power of the Spirit of God—is that where we are? And with thankfulness of heart that He became that Lamb of God, and has given us the Spirit to dwell in us.

The Lord give us to know the grace that has sought us, the love that has bought us, and the glory that awaits us! J. N. D.



CHRIST OR THE MAHATMAS,
WHICH?

(JOHN III. 25-36.)

THE true test of every one and everything is Christ. It was so when He lived and walked on the earth: it is so now, though the world seeth Him no more.

It is wonderful how latent principles and concealed thoughts are all elicited, and brought to the surface, before this test. Every man on earth is posted in his true place morally, when tested by Christ, and the importance or the contrary of everything is detected when its relation to Christ is found out. This world, with its motives and principles, its greatness and its littleness, is eminently favourable to questions. Many and varied have been the topics which, from time to time, men have suggested and debated; the din and strife of party clamour have again and again been heard, and when the fury of the fight

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has subsided, and the battle is over, the question which raised it is still without solution, and is left unanswered.

The present age delights in questions, reasonings, and uncertainties on all subjects, but specially in the region where *revelation claims exclusively to be heard*. The delight and highest pleasure of philosophy and science, with its occultist principles, and esoteric teaching at the present moment, is to tear to fragments every little shred of faith or confidence in God's revelation which has escaped the malignity of Satan's rage against God and His Christ. In truth, man is never so little as in his greatness, and never appears so insignificant or dwarfish as in his puny efforts to be wise. Then it is most of all that man himself, with his own lips, proclaims his folly; then is it that God makes foolish the wisdom of this world. "Where is the wise, where is the scribe, where is the disputer of this world?" The truth is, the great answer to every question is, "Christ"—"Christ the wisdom of God and the power of God;" and the heart that knows His Person, and loves His voice, delights to bear its record to what a final, conclusive, satisfactory answer He, and He alone, is. Christ is God's resource in every crisis, and God's reply to every question. There have been times in the history of God's testimony and people on earth when human in-

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genuity and ken might do their utmost, to issue only in despair ; then it is that God displays the fulness of His resource ; with Him the demand is no measure of the supply. In human circumstances, as a rule, the result of a crisis is a panic ; but with God difficulties are delighted in, to shew how entirely He is above them.

Now it is this which marks what I would call "John's dying note." He had spoken much and often ere this ; he had testified, too, in earnest and to purpose ; there were around him those who loved and valued him ; and in this sense the greatest of women born was not alone. Questions between John's followers and the Jews were raised by the latter ; and an attempt to make John and Christ the leaders of opposite factions and parties was an occasion for John to shew where his heart was, and how entirely Christ had settled all questions for him. Observe how blessedly he hides himself behind the Christ of God, and how he makes little of himself in order to make much of Jesus. What was John but a poor creature of the earth ? His words, too, what were they but the language of one who was "of the earth earthy" ? It was to the bridegroom the bride belonged, but the friend of the bridegroom, who stood and heard Him, as John did Christ, rejoiced greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. How blessed to see a man himself so captivated by Christ,

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bound with chains of love—embracing as it were his conqueror's feet—that he is ready to break every vessel, and himself first of all among them, if he may but set forth His excellency and His glory, who coming from above, is above all!

But he will not even rest here: he will go beyond his own thoughts of who and what this blessed One is, and hence the Father's thoughts about His Son must form "John's dying note:" he will sing, even on earth, a nobler, sweeter strain; and how simple, yet impressive it is, as the revelation of God in his heart, giving him heaven-born thoughts concerning the beloved Son—"The Father loveth the Son" "He giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him" "He hath given all things into his hand." It is all Christ from first to last; man, Israel, bride, John, are all eclipsed and distanced; the tiny stars all diminish, yea, retire, before the rising Sun, and we are left to sit down, and rest our weary hearts beneath His rays, and find our satisfaction in the fact of Jesus being all!

"Hark, the thrilling symphonies,
Seem within to seize us;
Add we to their holy lays,
Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!
Sweetest name on mortal tongue,
Sweetest note in angels' song,
Sweetest anthem ever known,
Jesus, Jesus reign alone!"

W. T. T.

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“HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED
WONDERFUL.”

(ISAIAH IX.)

WONDERFUL Saviour! we worship before Thee,
Jehovah Almighty, Eternal “I am”—
This we confess, while our hearts still adore Thee,
As washed in Thy blood we cry, “Worthy the Lamb.”
Wonderful Jesus! the Babe in the manger,
Though born of the virgin, Thy nature all clean;
Thine was the kingdom, yet, counted a stranger,
Thy welcome how cold, and Thy lodging how mean!
Wonderful Person! The Son of the Father,
Known only to Him can this mystery be;
We may not fathom its meaning, but rather,
Our faces we veil, as we think upon Thee.
Wonderful, too, in Thy manifestation,
Revealing the Father, declaring His name;
Who but Thyself to procure our salvation,
God’s justice could meet, and His love could proclaim.
Wonderful price of eternal redemption,
Oh! marvellous work! with which none can compare!
Precious the blood, that has bought our exemption
From judgment which else we for ever must bear.
Wonderful Object of worship in heaven!
Unspeakable gift from the heart of our God!
Freely, too, all things to us hath He given,
As in Thee, made nigh to Himself by Thy blood.
Wonderful Saviour! we love to adore Thee,
And “blessed” the hope that ere long Thou wilt come,
Then we shall see all Thy beauty and glory,
And praise Thee up there in Thy wonderful Home!

C. G.

“THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT.”

(2 COR. I.)

THERE is a very close connection, and yet a striking contrast, between the circumstances in which the apostle is found, in chapters i. and xii. of this epistle. In chapter i. he is, we may say, altogether in human circumstances, surrounded by straits, difficulties, and trials, which came upon him no doubt in his service; he was in circumstances in no way peculiar to him, but which might be ours at any time. But in chapter xii. he was altogether in God's circumstances, taken up into the third heaven, and then sent back into this world to go through it as a crippled man. He gets a thorn in his flesh, because God would have Paul entirely in His strength. At some time or other we might be called to go through, in our measure, what we find in chapter i. Chapter xii., save the expression, “a man in Christ,” is to a great extent an exceptional case; God having a distinct purpose towards His servant in connection with His ministry; still, although we may not be caught up into Paradise as he was, we do get a thorn in the flesh.

“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Chap. i. 3.) What strikes one here is, the apostle begins the opposite way

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from that in which most would begin. If *we* had anything to relate as he had, we should have started with our troubles and pressures, and gone on perhaps to tell of the comfort and consolation ministered by God to us ; but the apostle begins with the source of all comfort, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies." Thus he begins at the fountain head, and not at the stream ; he comes down to the stream, "that we may be able to comfort ;" he did not go up to God from that, but from God Himself he came down, to the comfort he ministered. It makes an immense difference at what end we begin. We find broken hearts in this world, it is the very scene to meet them in ; who can bind them up but God Himself ? But we must take care not to make our need the measure of His comfort ; if you make your troubles, or sorrows, or difficulties, the measure of anything that is in God, you limit what He is to that.

There was One who had *unmeasured* trouble and sorrow here, and only One—the blessed Lord ; to *us*, all is measured out, either God-given, or God-permitted, sorrow. He puts on us only what He sees needful for us. There is no temptation, but that which is common to man. God will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able. He knows exactly what the vessel is able to bear. He puts the

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right amount on it, and then places His own blessed strength, as it were, under it, and so helps us to carry it. *All* goes on under His hand, no amount of God-given consolation, in the midst of the troubles we pass through, could ever be the measure of what is in God's heart, so the apostle breaks out with “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” who is the source of it all. Then we find the expression, “Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”—this defines the relationship we are in to Him, and then adds, “the Father of mercies.” He is the spring and source of every mercy—it is *all* mercy, mercy every step of the way; every trouble is mercy, *all* His way with us is *mercy*. Paul begins with God; he starts from the holy, glorious Person of the blessed God Himself—all in Him is perfect fulness, divine sufficiency; and then the apostle comes down to what He does, “who comforteth us,” etc. The apostle is passed through all he speaks of here in order that he might be able to minister it to others. The servant is passed through many an exercise and difficulty, many a pressure and trial, often not so much for himself as for those he would serve under Christ. He produces in the servant that character which it is His object to develope by means of his service. He puts the servant in the stocks, as it were, that he may be able to come forth and say,

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“Oh, I have tasted the mercy of God as ‘the God of all comfort.’”

We never can get sympathy from others while they themselves are in the same circumstances; when they have passed through them, they are fitted to help and comfort us. Some say, “You cannot sympathise with me, because you are not in the same circumstances;” but if it were so, they could not sympathise, because they would be engrossed with their own trouble. How often in trouble, people claim to be shut up to themselves; they think none can understand, but after any one has passed through it, he can draw near to those in sorrow, and tell them of the comfort wherewith he has been comforted.

There must be school-time in God’s family, and everything must be fully tested and proved. If walking with God, are we not conscious of how little we are able to help one another? Painful it is to see how well able we appear to be to find the weak points in one another. To tell a man he is at the bottom of a deep ditch is one thing, but it is quite another to be able through grace to take him out of it. We must know the hand and heart of God, and His sustaining power for ourselves, and then we can meet others in their varied circumstances, and like a skilful physician, we shall know the relative value of each medicine, as it were, and

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be apt to apply them. We must go to school in order to learn, and so we must, as it were, walk this great hospital of suffering, that is, this present world, and taste the balm of consolation ourselves, ere we can commend it to others.

God was thinking of the Corinthians, *they* were in His mind, and therefore He says, as it were, I will take my servant and pass him through the heights and depths, through every variety of circumstance. (2 Cor. xi.) For what purpose? In order that I may display *in him* the power of the heavenly Christ, and in order that the same power may go out through him and reach the Corinthians. Paul is afflicted for the sake of the Corinthians; this makes the position of the servant of Christ very solemn—the servant ought to be ready for everything. Some act as if they thought they could carry the world before them; they are applauded, made much of. This is the world's notion—the thought in scripture of a servant is, one who *suffers*, not one who reigns, who goes through pressure and difficulty, evil report and good report. (2 Cor. vi.) He ought to be one who has such a hold upon God, and who has God so before him, that he can say, 'Here am I, send me,' content to be placed in the furnace, that out of a broken heart, he may be able to minister the consolations of God. Was it said to Paul, "I will shew him how great

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things he must do?" No; but what great things he must *suffer* for My name's sake. It is not only a man's gift, or his words, but God takes up a man's person, and puts him into every sort of up and down, that he may stand by the afflicted ones, and say, "This was my comfort in my sorrow." It is a lonely, quiet, unnoticed, and unknown path, but one of most precious blessing. When a person has lost his reputation, his good name, if ever he had one, not only in the world, but even among the saints, when a person is in the shade, in the deeps with Christ, it is an opportunity to see how near He can come to him. "At my first answer, no man stood with me," he was absolutely alone, and he had not a hard thought about one of them. "I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge." "The Lord stood with me." Paul proved what God was. The time to learn the power, and the comforts, and the consolations of Christ is the time when they are wanted, so "out of the eater comes forth meat," &c.

Verse 8. There is another thing, God has a reason in it all—a reason on *our* side for all the difficulties and trouble, and a reason on *His own side*.

First, on our side.—Take Adam, innocent in the garden of Eden, he did not know what exercise was—if we had no will against God, we should not have exercise; the stronger our

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will, the greater the needs be for exercise. If a person says, "I never go through exercise," I should much fear he is led by his own natural will, because we have two natures in us, and "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." Though you may not be conscious of it, your will may have gained the upper hand; the amount of exercise then is proportionate to the amount of will; Adam, innocent, had no exercise, for a time he does God's will; but we *spring from* Adam fallen, *though now we are in Christ*, and our only power is by the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. Thus God puts His servant through death and resurrection; "we had the sentence of death in ourselves." He puts us into death that we may trust Him who is *the resurrection*, and know Him who is *the life*; this exercise keeps us on the watch, and subjugates us in many ways. Trouble is intended to subdue and quiet us, otherwise there is ever the danger that our will may be active. God has no cure for it but death; our part is to bear about in our "body the dying of Jesus." *God's* part is to deliver us to death, and *we* apply the death of Christ to ourselves. Whatever He died to is the measure of what we renounce, God hands us over to death that we should not trust in ourselves: a man drowning needs a saviour and a deliverer—rescue and help must

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come from outside. Never is the bright morning of resurrection known in the soul, except as we have passed through the gloomy night of death; then what awaits us is the bright resurrection morn. The disciples met Jesus on the shore; in this case He had gone through death *for* them, and they found He had everything prepared for them as delivered from death. *We* must go through the gloomy night, and the darkness of the grave; we must, as it were, be invested with the shroud, and go into the tomb, but only that we may come forth and bloom in resurrection beauty. I should be sorry to make any one gloomy or depressed. We have nothing to do but to be passive in His hand and not in anywise to be analysing the death we must pass through. May God keep each eye on the resurrection morning. He is the God of the living; *resurrection* and glory is God's great thought, both for our *bodies* in future, as well as for our spirits now. He does for us morally in our history now what He will do literally in our bodies by-and-by; hence we go into death, in order that through it we may come out into the bright morning of resurrection. But there is *God's side* as well as ours; I say it with all reverence, these things are God's opportunity; His heart of love never overlooks the wants and woes of His own; there are no broken hearts, or weeping eyes, in heaven; and

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if there were no trouble here, we should be debarred the knowledge of how God Himself can draw near to the broken-hearted one, and bind up his wounds. He says, as it were, "See how I can comfort you!" as He said of Israel whom He has never given up, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." It is evident enough how on our side there is necessity that we should have trials and sorrows, but if we think of the wilderness, its difficulties, exercises and griefs, we can also blessedly understand how they afford Him an occasion of displaying *His* tenderness amid them all to us while in them, that He may prove to us how equal to every occasion His grace is, and how entirely He can go through everything with us. "I have surely *seen* the affliction of my people have *heard* their cry I *know* their sorrows." He is all eye, all ear, and all knowledge, when His people are afflicted, cry, or are sorrowful.

There will be no occasion to display *this* grace in heaven; there, the absence of sorrow, suffering, and death will mark that scene, just as their presence here marks this poor world. What a sight to faith! God turning the sorrows and afflictions of this poor world to His own account, and displaying in them a tenderness and compassion that overlook none. He delights to shew how He can heal a broken heart, as well as

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sustain a weak body. The first is not beyond Him, the second is not beneath Him.

You remember how Joseph felt when his brethren doubted him, and gave him no credit for the affection of his heart; his brethren reasoned thus, "Now Jacob our father is dead, Joseph will hate us, and requite us all the evil we have done to him;" they thought of him as they themselves would have acted; and he wept. Did he reprove them, or speak harshly to them? He spake kindly, or, as in the margin, "he spake to their heart." We read in Hosea ii. 14, "I will *allure* her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her, and I will give her her vineyards from thence."

Thus we see how that, *literally*, death will be Jehovah's way of dealing with Israel in the future, as it is the way of the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ with His people, *morally*, now.

May the Lord graciously incline our hearts by His Spirit to accept His own blessed perfect ways with each one of us, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake!

W. T. T.



THE WAY OF CAIN AND THE WAY OF GOD,

MAN, as a respectable citizen of the world, may be as separated from God as a murderer. "The remnant of them," as the parable speaks, "took his servants and slew them." The remnant! a word which lets us know that the refusers of the supper were of *one* class with those who shed the blood of the innocent. The ease and indifference with which Cain could turn his back upon the Lord, and upon the recollection of his brother's blood, is dreadful. He got a promise of security, and that was all he cared for. And quickly, under his hand, accommodations and delights of all sorts fill the scene. In some sense this is still more shocking; this exceeds. But is not this "the course of the world?" Was it not man that slew Jesus? Does not the guilt of that deed lie at every man's door? And what is the course of the world but the ease and indifference of Cain in this highest state of guilt?

The earth has borne the cross of Christ; and yet man can busy himself with garnishing and furnishing it, and making life in it convenient and pleasurable. This is shocking when we look at it in full divine light. A respectable citizen of the world Cain was, but all the while a heartless forgetter of the sorrows of Abel. His ease and respectability is the blackest feature of

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his history. He went away as soon as he got a promise of security ; and that promise he uses, not to soften his heart and overwhelm him with convictions of all that had happened, but as giving him full occasion to indulge and magnify himself. We read in the New Testament of “ the way of Cain.” It may be, nay, it is, run by others. (Jude II.) And what a way does this chapter shew it to be ! He was an infidel, or a man of his own religion, not obedient in faith to God’s revelation. He practised the works of the liar and the murderer. He hated the light. He was proof against God’s word in mercy and in warning. He cares nothing for the presence of God which his sin had forfeited, or for the sorrow of his brother which his hand had inflicted. And, as such an one, he can take pains to make himself happy and honourable in the very place which thus witnessed against him. Is this “ the way of Cain ? ” Is this man still ? Yes ; and nature outlives a thousand restraints and improvements. For at the end of Christendom’s career, it will even then be said of a generation, “ They have gone in the way of Cain.” This is deeply solemn, beloved, had we but hearts to feel it. There is, however, a rescued, separated people. *Seth’s family are after another order altogether.* They are not seen in cities furnished with accommodations and pleasures, apart, like Cain, “ from the presence of the Lord ; ” but as

the household of God, separated from the world that lay in the wicked one, to the faith and worship of His name. There is much, I believe, in their standing and testimony which has instruction for our souls. Like all else in these chapters, it is but short notices we get, but great things are to be found in them.

This family of Seth may generally be thus spoken of: they are strikingly opposed to the way of Cain, and remarkably apprehensive of the way of God. I speak not here again of their *faith*, but of their *standing* and *testimony*. The Lord had set a mark on Cain that no one finding him should slay him. He would not have the blood of Abel avenged. This we have already seen. The family of Seth are strikingly observant of this. No attempt, or anything like it, is made by them to answer the cry of innocent blood. They know that it is heard in the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth; but, under this word of God, they are deaf to it themselves. Vengeance does not belong to them. The harvest had not come. They were not reapers. In obedience they heard, not the cry of blood, but the voice of the Lord countermanding vengeance. And they suffer it. They take the wrong done to their brother, and are acceptable with God. The innocent blood is to remain unavenged. Its cry from the earth is not to be answered, at least for the present. *That* is enough to teach the saint

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his pilgrim heavenly calling. The family of Seth are therefore as pilgrims and strangers here, and all their habits are those of heavenly citizens. If the earth be not to be cleansed, the elect are to be strangers in it with a heavenly calling. Beautifully true to the mind of God this is. For this is the way of God ; and it was apprehended by these saints, more in the light and knowledge of His most perfect and beautiful ways than by many of us, beloved, who, in the fuller revelations of this present age, have been so much nourished and instructed. But it is not the much schooling we get, but the capacity which sits at the lesson. David wanted capacity for this same lesson, when he talked of building a house of cedars, a fixed habitation, for the Lord, while the land was still defiled with blood. But the Lord (may I say) would be, like the antediluvian saints, a stranger on the earth, a dweller in tents, while blood was staining it ; and that very night rebuked the purpose of the King of Israel. (1 Chron. xvii.) We have many exhibitions of this way of God in different forms of it. The Lord, for instance, would have no altar in Egypt, uncircumcised as that land was. He would not have a throne in the land (in the full glory of it) till the day of Solomon, when all was sanctified for His royal presence. Afterwards the glory was grieved away by the abominations which were done in the temple.

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The captives, in like spirit, hung their harps on the willows of the Euphrates; for how could they sing in a strange land, or let the songs of Zion be heard in Babylon? Separation was the rule of the divine mind. Separation was holiness. Pollution demanded it, and faith rose at the bidding. And with all this, the Seth family, the household of God in earliest days—days before the flood—are in company. They are one in spirit with Jehovah Himself in Egypt, with the glory of the defiled temple, with the harps of the captives in Babylon, and with the church of God in “this present evil world.”

J. G. B.



“NOW MY EYE RESTS ON JESUS.”

(LUKE III. 21, 22.)

ONE may have looked and listened mournfully, as one reads of John Baptist and his testimony. We might have asked, as the dying record of men passed before us, what is *man*? But now my eye rests on Jesus. *I find the Lord from heaven a man.* All is to begin again. Do I ask again, what is man? At once Christ comes out. Do I look at myself? At all around? What do I see? Enough to break my heart, if there is a heart to be broken. The only thing which prevents people being utterly broken

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down is that they have not a heart to feel things as they are. But a rest is *here!* I have got a Man who now satisfied God, this blessed Man on earth in the presence of God, looking to God, and an object to God! Not Messiah purging His floor, but Him in whom God's thoughts and purposes are all folded up—not man perishing before the moth, but Jesus the Son of man, not merely coming down from Abraham and David, but traced up, “which was the Son of Adam, which was the Son of God”—the second Man, the last Adam, the quickening Spirit. What a relief; for what *is* man? What one's self when the heart's sin is known—giving up God for an apple hitherto? But now a Man, a blessed Man, appears, “and praying.” We are not told this elsewhere; and why here? Because Luke presents man in his perfection—the *dependent man*: for dependence is the essence of a perfect man. Truly we see God shining all through, but yet in Jesus the dependent Man, in the place and condition of perfectness as Man. The root of sin in us is selfwill, independence. Here my heart has rest! A dependent man in the midst of sorrow, but perfectly with God in all. See Luke's account of the transfiguration also: in humiliation or in glory it makes no difference as to this; the perfect is ever the dependent one. And when that blessed heart thus expressed its dependence, did He get no answer? “The heaven

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was opened.” Does heaven open thus on me? It is open to me, indeed, no doubt, but I pray because it is open ; it opened because *He* prayed. I come and look up because the heavens are opened *on Him*. It is indeed a lovely picture of grace, and we may be bold to say, the Father loved to look on—to look down, in the midst of all sin, on His beloved Son. Nothing but what was divine could thus awaken God’s heart ; and yet it was the lowly perfect Man. He takes not the place of His eternal glory, as the Creator, the Son of God. He stoops and is baptised. (Psalm xvi.) He says, “in thee do I trust.” He says to Jehovah, Thou art my Lord ; my goodness extendeth not to thee ; He says to the godly remnant in Israel (that is, to the saints that are in the earth and to the excellent), all my delight is in them. He needed no repentance, yet is He baptised with them ; just as when, later on, He puts forth His sheep, He goes before them. He identifies Himself in grace with Israel, even with such as are of a clean heart. And the Holy Ghost descends like a dove on Him—fit emblem of that spotless Man!—fit resting place for the Spirit in the deluge of this world. And how sweet too, that Jesus is pointed out to *us* as God’s object. I know the way the Father feels about Him. I am made His intimate, and admitted to hear Him expressing His affection for His Son, to see the links re-formed between

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God and man. Heaven is opened, not on something above, but upon a Man upon the earth. Thus I get rest, and my heart finds communion with God in His beloved Son. It is only the believer who enjoys it, but the link is there. And if I have that in and about me which distresses the soul, I have that in Him which is unfailing joy and comfort.

J. N. D.



“RAISED AND SEATED TOGETHER.”

(EPH. II.)

THERE are two subjects in this chapter, one of which I have specially in view. The first is that God has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Still He has a habitation down here through the Spirit, which is the second thing. There is a house built in which God through the Holy Ghost dwells down here. It is the first part I have on my mind.

There are two great points in God's ways and dealings with man ; one is the responsibility of the first Adam, and the second is His purpose in the last Adam. God purposes certain things about us. We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, and, again, predestinated unto the adoption of children.

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God had in view certain things, which He was going to accomplish in the second Adam. It was all before the foundation of the world, and the cross is the meeting-place of these two things. The cross proved that we were ruined and lost, and it also laid the foundation for putting us into the same glory as the Son of God. The epistle to the Romans takes up the first of these points, except two or three verses at the end of chapter viii., while that to the Ephesians is entirely taken up with the second. It looks at sinners first ; but it looks at them in an entirely different way to Romans. It is a different thing to look at me as a sinner and responsible for my sins, with Christ Himself answering for them, to God putting me into the same glory as His Son. This last is treated of in Ephesians. We get also a different dealing with the condition of man. In Romans we are looked at as *alive* in sins, and there is a long account of the wickedness of Jews and Gentiles, and the whole world is proved to be guilty before God, and then it deals with our condition and state. The second part of Romans takes up the tree as being bad, not only the fruit it produces. The cross has met all that. Not only has He died for my sins, but I died with Christ, for faith. Death is the only end of the flesh or the evil nature. Romans takes up man as a sinner ; first, as to his conduct, and secondly

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as to his state ; for one, justification, and for the other, deliverance, and that is by death. " For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." It has been condemned in the cross of the Lord Jesus, and reckoning myself dead is a positive gain. Colossians treats of both. I reckon myself dead now, because Christ has died. It is the same figure as the Jordan, and the Red Sea, too, in a certain aspect.

When I come to Ephesians I am looked at as dead in sins, not alive in them. There is nothing to do with responsibility or justification—it is a *new* creation. Before the death of Christ it was God not merely saying that man was a sinner, but there were dealings of God with man—the flood, the law, the prophets, and lastly His Son ; and the end of it was, not that God turned man out of Paradise, but that man turned the Son of God out of this world. Man is lost ; but Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. That is what Christianity came in with. The world is thinking of meeting the day of judgment, but I do not think of that, for I am a poor lost sinner, and I get salvation. When people want to make something of man, it is important to get hold of this—what the testimony of the word of God is. We often find foundations in-

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securely laid in a man's soul, and that comes from the want of a thorough conviction of sin. They have no sense of the impossibility of God and sin coming together.

Well, God had gone all through this process, and at last said, “I have one Son, I will send Him.” But when He came they said, “This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.” It was in the end of the world that He appeared—in the consummation of the ages. We are not come to the end of the world yet, but God has tested and tried man thoroughly and completely, and as the Lord Jesus says, “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.” It is not yet executed, but God has tested man thoroughly. The thing in which the enmity of man's heart was manifested against God was the very thing in which God wrought the redemption which saves a man. The cross was the meeting-point of the sin of man with the perfect love of God. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The world said, “We will not have God at any terms,” and they cast Him out and slew Him. *That* is what we all are. Man has to find out what he has *done* and what he *is*.

When that blessed and glorious work was done upon the cross, then God could bring out

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all His purposes and thoughts, not merely the church, but if you look at 2 Timothy i. 9, it is perfectly stated there. "Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began." God brought in the first Adam and tested him, and when all that was gone through, and Christ was rejected and died, God was glorified in that, and the foundation was laid for bringing man into glory ; and then it comes out that the purpose was before the foundation of the world—so also in Titus. The soul goes through it individually, but we have the whole historical truth of it at the death of Christ. What I learn now is, that it is not whether I can meet the day of judgment, but that I am lost already. I prefer any vanity of dress or money to Christ. The world we live in has rejected God come in grace.

Then I come to the second point, what the purpose of God about us is—that we should be in the same glory as His Son. I was "alive" in sins if I look at my side of it, but "dead" in my sins if I look towards God. In this epistle, where it is "dead in sins" (I speak now of the operation that brings us into a new condition), Christ is looked at as dead. "What is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty

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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.” Here Christ is looked at as a man, in order to bring us with Him according to the mighty power which God wrought in Christ. “And *you* hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;” the blessed truth of that is, that where we were lying in sin and disobedience, Christ came in love and obedience, so He gives Himself up to death where I was lying, having put away my sins. Well, then, God takes this One who had gone down into this place for us, and raises Him from the dead and sets Him in the glory of God. We do not see ourselves yet gathered to Him in the glory, “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.” And now that very same power has wrought in bringing us into His place, by faith. Christ was actually dead, and I was dead in my sins, and God comes and raises us both up together. How came *He* to be down there in death? Ah! He came there about my sins. In virtue of what Christ has done, God takes a man that was dead in his sins, and puts him in Christ—in the very same place where Christ is, and by the same power that raised up Christ from the dead.

We “were by nature the children of wrath,

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even as others"—that is the condition we were all in, Jews and Gentiles. We naturally belonged to it. Then he goes on, "But God, who is rich in mercy," &c. I see this poor, wretched child of wrath, and I find God above all this, and rich in mercy. I am taken from myself and cast upon God's doings, and that is where we get real peace. The prodigal son thought he would say to his father, "Make me as one of thy hired servants;" but he had not met his father then, for if he had, he would have known how his father would have treated him. It was all shewing what the father was for the son: he must have the best robe, and the shoes, and the ring. The whole condition of the son was the effect of what the father was for him.

When I was by nature a child of wrath, He "hath quickened us together with Christ." Christ having done what made it righteous for God to do it, God comes and takes us up there, "And hath raised us up together and hath made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." He put Christ as a man at the right hand of God, and by the same power He puts me into Christ. My place now is the effect of the sovereign goodness and mercy of God, who took me when I was dead in trespasses and sins, and put me right into Christ where He is—wonderful place surely! Then the angels say, "Well, that *is* grace. That in the ages to come he might shew the

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exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us through Jesus Christ.” Whether it is the thief upon the cross, Mary Magdalene, or one of us, we are put in the same place as He is. We are not in the heavenly places *with* Christ yet, but we are *in* Christ. The power that raised Christ, from death, into the glory of God, has put me in Christ in the same place.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.” You get the works afterwards. “We are his workmanship, created in Jesus Christ *unto* good works.” Created in Christ Jesus, not in Adam now, I am created over again. The same power that wrought to put Christ into glory, has now wrought to put me into Christ. The Holy Ghost dwelling in me, gives me the knowledge that I am in Christ. God dwelling with us never was true of man, except in virtue of redemption—it never was true of Adam or Abraham, but the instant that Israel was redeemed out of Egypt, then He dwelt among them—there by the cloud over the tabernacle. Now in virtue of redemption God can come and dwell. The Christian is sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and individually he is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Being livingly united to Christ by the Holy Ghost, gives me the knowledge that I am in heavenly places in

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Christ, and therefore our citizenship is in heaven. Christ as Son of man has perfectly glorified God ; and what is the just reward of glorifying God ? That He is set at the right hand of God. *We* “rejoice in the hope of the glory of God ;” what could make poor worms such as we are, think of that ? It is because of what Christ has done. Just as we were like the first Adam, so shall we be like Christ in glory. He became a man on purpose to bring us, through His death, into the same glory with Himself.

Do you believe that, beloved friends, as regards yourselves ? Do you believe that God is going to shew to angels, in the ages to come, the riches of His grace in the place He has given you ? It is important for us to see that, as regards title to the place and having the Holy Ghost who gives us the knowledge of being in Christ, it is a *present* thing. The glory is not a present thing, but we *are* to know that we are in Christ, and that as He is, so are we in this world. That is our place with God, so that we have boldness for the day of judgment, delight in the day of Christ. I could not dream of works of mine to get there—of my works giving me a place in the glory of God ! Man is in the glory of God in virtue of what *He* has done who has entered as my forerunner. We are called there in justice to the worth of Christ’s work.

Now see where the works are ; they come in

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as the fruits of this. God has works which fit this place. “Good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” The works are ordained as much as the place. What does the apostle say when he exhorts them? “Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children.” You are made partakers of the divine nature, and now go and walk in the way suited to that. Do not let me see anything but Christ in you. Christ appears in the presence of God for us, so that there is perfect acceptance for us according to the value of His work, and now you appear before the world for Christ. I am the epistle of Christ known and read of all men—entire association with Christ, in the power of the Holy Ghost. It is not that we have to get a place, but, as put into that place, my business is to shew forth Christ in everything. “Whether therefore ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” If we have no oil in our vessels it will not do to meet Him. There is nothing more important than the thought of the expectation of the Lord’s coming; it is the character of the Christian. Are you really waiting for Christ, as men that wait for their lord? It is the condition I am to be found in. How far can we really say, I know my place in Christ, who is a Man in the glory of God, and therefore I am waiting for Him to come and take me actually there?

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Supposing I am in heavenly places in Christ, then our conversation is in heaven, earthly objects are gone. It is where we are set as God's workmanship. He has set us there in His sovereign grace, and what I most earnestly desire is, that our hearts should have the consciousness of it, and, in having this purpose of God set before us, that we should be living in a christian state or place. The place that God has given us is a place in Christ Himself. And now the life of Jesus is to be manifested in our bodies.

It is important that we should get hold of what is Christianity, in these perilous times. "As the truth is in Jesus," is, that I have done with Adam, and am *in Christ*. I have put off the old man and put on the new. Man tries to improve the old, it cannot be done. You cannot set about and make the old man do for God, because God has supplanted him. He has judged the old man at the cross, and He has brought in Christ.

J. N. D.

(Notes of a Lecture.)



THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS.

(1 TIM. III. 16 ; IV. 1--8 ; VI. 3-9.)

THIS mystery of godliness, while on the one hand it lies at the very centre of the truth maintained by the assembly before the world, on the other, is the only power that can sanctify and separate the saint to God.

It is striking the way in which it is brought in here. In chapter iii. 16 we find what the testimony was, committed to responsibility and to be maintained by the assembly before the world. The assembly, let us remember, is *the pillar and support of the truth*. This is a truth of the first moment ; it is well said, "that on earth Christ was the Truth. He is so always, but He was so on the earth. The assembly is not the truth : the word of God is the truth. His word is truth. Truth exists before the assembly ; it is faith in the truth which gathers the assembly together. But the assembly is that which maintains the truth on earth. But the assembly does not teach. Teachers teach the assembly ; but by faithfulness in holding fast the truth taught, it sustains it in the world."

Now, in connection with all this we are warned by the Holy Ghost, through the apostle, as to that which Satan would introduce and set up in opposition to it, and we find one part of this

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scheme in chapter iv. and another character of it in chapter vi. The enemy seeks to set aside the testimony by what we find in both these chapters.

Next, in order that we may see clearly what the great mystery of piety is, let us state it as given by God here.

“And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” Here, then, we have set before us both God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Then we have Satan’s counterfeit in verses 1–3 of chapter iv.—there would be those who would depart from the knowledge of the one Creator and Saviour-God, He who had not only *created the world*, but who also *had revealed Himself in Christ*. The first great element in this counterfeit is a denial of the end of the first man’s history at the cross. The great object of the devil is in every way to deny this in fact, or set it aside in practice. It is one of the solemn realities of this present time that the judicial end of man’s history in the cross is not accepted, but denied; and hence there is no divine conception of what *the new man* is—“the new man, which, according to God, is created in righteousness and holiness of truth.” Alas! with many their conception of the new man is

little better than changed conduct. The new man is a *new creation*, and the moral characteristic of this new creation is that which is according to God, created in truthful righteousness and holiness.

Now observe in the scripture before us the revival of the first man, in the denial of its judicial end in the cross; the exactions spoken of here are the proof of this revival by the enemy: "forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats." These are the *exactions* which the devil would put upon man; these impositions recognise the existence of man in the flesh before God, and the wile is to produce a sanctity pretending to superior holiness, but in reality a false sanctity which denied the *authority of God*, in forbidding that which He had ordained from the beginning, as well as reviving the history of man in the flesh, which had been judicially condemned and put out of God's sight in the cross.

Now in chapter vi. we find the further work of Satan; here it is an attempt in the direction of the elevation of man as he is, taking the favours, the mercies surrounding him in this world, as indicative of the goodness of God to man as allowed in his standing in the flesh before Him, "supposing that gain is godliness." How specious these various attempts of Satan to set aside the truth; we see the first in full bloom in

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popery, and the second in human philanthropy. The truth thus attempted to be set aside is itself our great security. What a marvellous truth in fact that God had been manifested in the flesh! How blessed to think that God Himself was manifested in the centre of weakness and evil, that where sin was, there was love above the sin; yet in Him, who became flesh, the absence of all sin was made evident by the power of the Holy Ghost during His whole life: He was seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world: it was not the display or manifestation of visible power demanding His rights and glory, but the tender grace that sought the weary and the undone for their perfect, richest blessing.

Lastly, we read, "received up into glory"—thus He takes His place on high as Man, in that glory whence He had descended.

This, then, is the great truth to be maintained before the world by the assembly, the vessel for testimony; but there is another aspect in which we may look at it, namely, this mystery of piety is the true and only producing power of all true godliness in the saints, as well as the ability to fill their varied relationships according to the mind of God. God has, in His own blessed grace, come down, and has cleared, as it were, the scene for Himself that He may now occupy it; it is as we are engrossed with Him who

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is received up into glory, we are transformed into the same image from glory to glory. I do not deny there are *claims*, but how earnestly do I desire to press the *charms* of the heavenly Man now in glory on the affections and hearts of His own !

W. T. T.



“WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?”

(PSALM XXII.)

WE can answer the question, “Why hast thou forsaken me?” We shall answer it, who believe in Jesus with everlasting adoration. But it is of the last importance for us, not only to know that Christ has by Himself purged our sins, having drunk the cup of wrath, but to know Christ as suffering personally under the forsaking of God. His own entrance as man into the sense as regards Himself of His forsaking—His own personal sorrow in it ; because, though He were wholly alone in it, it leads us to that joy which He felt in entering, again and more than ever, into the full, unclouded light of His Father’s countenance—consequent on, and according to, the value of redemption, and the full resting of the necessary delight of God in Him and His acceptance, as having perfectly glorified Him when sin had put all in confusion.

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So that all that God was, as brought out by sin (for sin brought out sovereign love, righteousness, truth, vindicated majesty), was perfectly revealed and glorified. His own sufferings, I say, lead us to that joy into which Christ entered with His God and Father as Man; and which, as all this was accomplished in a work wrought for our sins, He communicates to us, introducing us into the full blessedness into which He is entered as Man. In the work He was alone; but it was for us, while for the divine glory; and He introduces us into the blessedness, as that which He enjoys in consequence of it.

This is the second part of the psalm, as to which I will only refer to the sentiments of Christ. He has been heard from the horns of the unicorn, transpierced by the power of death, God's judgment against sin being executed and passed. I have remarked elsewhere the very instructive fact, that Christ never speaks in the gospels, during His life, of God as His God, but always as the Father. This was the impression of His own personal relationship, the name too that He revealed to His disciples. He never directly calls Himself the Christ in the gospel history; not that He was not presented as such to Israel, for He was, but it is not the place and name He takes Himself with God and His Father, which is the way we have to know Him. When the Jews say to Him, "If thou be the

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Christ, tell us plainly,” He says, “I have told you already ;” but as revealed to us, He is Emmanuel, the Prophet that should come, the Son of man, the Son of God. The word He uses with and of God, is ever Father and My Father ; with His disciples, Son of man.

In the psalm we are studying we read, “My God, my God.” He is a man with whom God deals in judgment, but man, even if forsaken, perfect in His own relationship with God in faith ; He says, “My God.”

Now He declares the name of God to His brethren, and employs both these titles—man gone to the extreme of trial with God, standing as regards all that God is in righteousness, truth, majesty, love. My God, all that God is in His own perfection and majesty and claim, He is necessarily and obligedly, though in the delight of His love for us as in Christ, doubtless according to His own counsels, but righteously, and thus necessarily, and unalterably for us. What He is as God, He is as our God, for through Christ—Christ proved on the cross—He is for us, and that, sin being put away by Christ’s sacrifice of Himself, the cloudless perfection of God shines out on us in His own proper blessedness, as on Christ, in virtue of His having glorified Him, in the perfection in which He thus shines out.

His name (that is, the true reality of His

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relationship) is declared to us. The gracious name and nature of God was declared on earth by Christ, who was the only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father. But with *that* sinful man, at enmity with God, could have no part or association. The light shines in darkness; the darkness comprehended it not. Yea, man saw and hated Him, and His Father. But Christ was made sin for us, stood as Man responsible before God, with God in all these attributes in which He dealt with sin, but was perfect there; that love might righteously have its free course. Hence He says, "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." For He was that love—God in Christ reconciling, till it could flow out according to the perfection of God in righteousness; but it could not flow out freely where sin was. This, through the cross, through Christ's perfection, when He was made sin for us, it could; yea, love was exalted, and the very character of God made good in and by it, His name (the very name which was to be revealed) made good by it. Hence Christ could say, "*Therefore* doth my Father love me." But then Christ entered in a still more supreme degree into the joy of His Father's love, and all this as Man. He does so when heard. It was publicly made good and evident in resurrection. He was raised by the glory of the Father. Then He declares this

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name to His brethren. For now sin being man's only place with God out of Christ, he who believed had in Christ Christ's place as raised from the dead, in the relationship in which He stands with the Father; and, death having come in, no other. “Go and tell my brethren,” said the Lord, “I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.” Now, He employs both titles, and applies them both to us; both because all that God is He is in righteousness for Him as Man in glory, and He is re-entered into the joy of His Father's communion, and places us, in virtue of this work wrought for us, in the position in which He is as His brethren, partakers through grace of the favour and heritage which is His.

I have entered more into the doctrine connected with the psalm than I intended, though it has been practically: for the feelings and affections of Christ are my object now. Remark that the first thought of Christ, when heard from the horns of the unicorn, is to declare the name of God and His Father to His brethren—now glorious, but not ashamed to call us brethren. Perfect in love, attached to these excellent of the earth, He turns (when once He entered into the position of joy and blessing through a work which gave them the title to enter) to reveal to them what placed them in the same position with Himself. Thus He

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gathered them ; and then, having awakened their voices to the same praise as that which He was to offer, He raises the blessed note as Man, and sings praise in the midst of the assembly. Oh with what loud voices and ready hearts we ought to follow Him ! And note, he who is not clear in acceptance and the joy of sonship with God, in virtue of redemption, cannot sing with Christ. He sings praises in the midst of the assembly. Who sings with Him ? He who has learnt to sing as come out of judgment into the full light and joy of acceptance. Ephesians i. 3, 4, shews us this place. Here we have the saints led by Jesus in praise according to His own joy. The grace of this position is perfect. The further results of the work I do *not* enter on here, save to remark that all is grace, no judgment (it is founded on it), and that nothing goes beyond earth here.

J. N. D.



“NO MORE.”

THIS is a sad expression by itself. It speaks of the end of life down here, as in Psalm xxxix. 13 ; or it sets forth the termination of things in this world, as for instance when we say we have no more means, or no more opportunity, or no more strength ; but it is a very blessed ex-

pression when used in connection with three great realities set forth in the blessed word of God.

Now in Hebrews x. 2, 17, 18, we read of three wonderful and blessed *no mores*, namely :—

1. No more offering for sin,
2. No more remembrance of sins,
3. No more conscience of sins.

Let us observe in the first place how it is said that the remission of sins proves that there is *no more offering for sin*. That is, the full and blessed efficacy of the one offering of our Lord Jesus Christ is clearly set forth and manifested in its *not being repeated*; it was *once*, because all was accomplished by it. Now under the law the sacrifices were *many* and *often*. Why? Because they were not effectual for the taking away of sins. Each fresh sacrifice proved that those which had been previously offered, were ineffectual. The truth is that in those sacrifices, and under the law, *sins were brought to remembrance, not put away*. By Christ's one offering there is full remission and forgiveness of sins. Is not this abundant comfort to all who simply trust in our Lord Jesus Christ, whose sacrifice it was? Reader, are you trusting in Him? Have you any other hope? May God open the eyes of all who read this paper, to see what sure and perfect ground the atoning death of God's

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dear Son supplies to every sinner who simply trusts in Him.

Second. But next it is said in virtue of this sacrifice God will remember the sins and iniquities of His people no more. He did remember all their sins and iniquities to Jesus on the cross, where He, the spotless One, was their Substitute. It was not they who laid their sins on Jesus ; it was God—that God who knew them all, against whom, too, they had been committed ; He it was who laid them all on His spotless Lamb, the Substitute of His people.

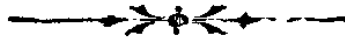
Hence it is that in righteousness God can now say, He will no more remember His people's sins. Christ on the cross "made sin," and bearing God's righteous judgment due to sin and against sin, has so perfectly glorified God about sin, and so entirely and fully exhausted all the holy judgment of God due to sin, and so fully borne His people's sins in His own body on the tree, that God can say as in this precious verse : "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

Third. Now the word of God declares that for those who have their sins forgiven there is "no more conscience of sins"—observe well, the scripture does not say, "*no more consciousness of sin,*" but no more conscience of sins ; and the difference is solemn and very important ; if it had been no more consciousness of sin, the

scripture would have then stated that the Christian is to be without the consciousness of indwelling sin, which it never does state, but the opposite; thus there is no ground whatever for the many delusions abroad on this subject. What God does say in His word is, that the purged worshipper has "*no more conscience of sins*;" that is, the conscience of such an one is uncondemning in the presence of God, in virtue of the eternal value of Christ's precious blood shed.

How blessed, then, to be rejoicing in no more offering for sin—no more remembrance of sins—no more conscience of sins.

W. T. T.



"THE MAN OF GOD," OR "THE GOD OF MAN." WHICH?

WHAT makes the vision of the Apocalyptic future so blessed is, that God and man are to spend eternity together. No words of the banished seer, writing his "book" in the lonely isle of Patmos, are more sweet to the christian ear than these, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God." How the heart delights to dwell in the midst of this scene of

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tears and death, and sorrow and pain, on the *consequences* of God thus dwelling. What are they? "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."

But how inclined are we to exclaim, like Nicodemus of old, "How can these things be?" And our comfort shall be that He who answered *him*, has also answered *us* in His word.

If God and man are to be thus together, *something* must be done. All will admit this. But who is to be the doer, for this makes the difference between the "man of God" and the "God of man." In the first, the work of the cross is the foundation. The blessed God is the workman. He has set His hand (in spite of all that the devil has done), to make man all that He would have him to be for His own glory. In the second, man is the workman. Conscious of unlikeness in every detail to God, man is seen busily engaged in forming a God for himself—a God according to his own notions and imaginations, or passions and refinements, as the case may be. For there is one great, grand problem, which conscience has raised, and continually stirs in the human breast, and we see it everywhere: it is, "How are a Supreme Being and man to be brought together?"

The need of this is confessed everywhere, for I do not count an atheist worthy of consideration. If I go to the dark, uncultivated African, to the Chinaman, to the North and South American Indian, or to the South Sea Islander, the idea of the existence of a Supreme Being is everywhere. I turn to the refinement and intellect of civilised Europe, and it is the same. Wherever man is found it is seen that he is alike in this matter. But what is he doing? He is framing doctrines and accommodating a God to himself, which God *is not the God of the Bible*. The "God of man" is not the God who has been revealed there and declared on earth. "The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

We must write "Babel" across all these doctrines of men, for there is a confusion of tongues. What God *is*, in the view of an Englishman trying without divine light to find out, is different from what God is to an equally earnest and devoted African, and the multitude of opinions widens and extends into a number as great as that of the whole thus occupied human family, taken singly.

We turn away from the sad picture. Relief for the burdened and distressed heart cannot be found there.

Let us consider

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I. "THE MAN OF GOD."

We may read this expression in forty-five different places in scripture, but it is the New Testament use of it which presents it to us in its perfection, and to which I draw attention here. The shadows of the past have given place to the reality and substance of the present; the "first man" has been displaced by "the second Man;" the "old" by the "new." I refer to 1 Timothy vi. 11 and 2 Timothy iii. 17. In the first Timothy is addressed by the apostle as a "man of God," in the second he is told of the sufficiency of scripture, in order to the perfection of the same one thus addressed.

The words then, "the man of God," convey that God, not man, is the active agent. God will have man for His own glory. Think of this—one in whom God can *boast*. If so, surely God must do all the work from beginning to end. And so it is. When God formed this present natural creation, placing at its finish *man* at the head of it all, there was no defect. God pronounced this His own work to be "very good." And now, when God works again that which issues from His hand is perfect, spite of the effort of Satan again to mar it, for we see what Timothy is to be in Satan's world as subject to scripture, and as a vessel for the display of God on earth. He is to manifest God because he was a "man

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of God." "Be ye imitators of God as dear children." Not only is there the work of the cross, without which there can be nothing, but the Holy Ghost has come down and dwells in the believer, forming him by the word. Such was Timothy: God's work from beginning to end. Such a soul is not trying to *make himself somewhat better*, and that more suitable; he is under the control of the word, and learning by the Spirit of God, who only can unfold it, what he IS, as a "new creation" in Christ Jesus. The man of God is the living expression of the mind of God on earth. What a great and mighty truth! He "walks with God" as Enoch and Noah did. He walks "by faith and not by sight."

If this is not the case, then is not the other side true of me? I am following a God of my own creation, with whom I must one day dwell for eternity.

2. "THE GOD OF MAN."

It takes such various forms that we cannot fully dwell on such a topic as this. We know what we followed in the day of our own darkness. "Divers lust and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." What is the God of man? The answer is himself—self in one form or another, though the forms may be as various as the grains of sand on the sea

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shore. But if so he is *without God*. Yes, it is so. Intellect, morality, pleasure, philosophy, science—all lend their aid to further the delusion, while on the side of religion we are told of a God whose “*love*” is said to shut out His “*righteousness*” and His “*holiness*.” Can God have made beings to destroy them? the unbeliever boastingly inquires. God is not known. All is dark and confused, while man, shrouding himself in the darkness which his own mind has created, piously erects his altar to the “unknown God,” and thus Athens confesses openly that “the wisest cannot know in this world.” And the same altar stands in the Athens of this day. And if not the wisest, then who?

We know the answer. “The babes,” not the wise and prudent. But some one may possibly be reading these lines who is not a “man of God.” I pray you, if such be your case, to reflect on what *you* are doing, and on what *God* can do in *your* case. You want light, and scripture gives it, not your own dark mind. Your case is not hopeless. But do not seek to hide from yourself that you are not at rest. You can never rest until you see that God is satisfied, and about *you*. When you know this you will seek to understand the ground of it, and this desire will send you to scripture as it sent Timothy.

You are working to make God suit *you*, if you

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do not see that God has made you in Christ all that suits *Him*, and you will never succeed so as to quiet your conscience.

Of some we read "whose God is their belly." Of others we read, "this is the true God and eternal life," and to *such* the word is yet applicable—"Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

Reader, be honest! Which describes *your* case, "the man of God" or "the God of man"?

H. C. A.



FRAGMENT.

"VERY often when we have received truth from God, we must be content without being able to satisfy others that it is truth, and if others cannot *understand*, so neither can we *explain*. We must go on patiently, though we have to act in a way unintelligible to many. We must expect to be depised."

J. N. D.



THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

(HEB. I. II.)

THE close of another year reminds us of the rapid flight of time, and brings before the heart in various ways its changing scenes ; all, even the best here, fades as a leaf and vanishes away. How blessed to have found a *new home* in a *new scene*, outside and beyond ; and to have found it in connection *with Him who is there*, thus *the Person* and *the place where He is* become everything to us, and we only await His return who shall change our body of humiliation and fashion it like unto His body of glory : until then we *move on with Him* ; how different that is from being borne along in the throng of the passing panorama around us. The scripture at the head of the page is suggested by the dying year—all here on earth is under death and dying ; thank God, the Christian has passed *out of death into life*. What a rest and solace to have to do with Him, of whom it is said : “Thou *remainest*,” “Thou art *the same*.”

The reflection is valuable to us in a two-fold way, namely :

First, it is well to see things as *they are* ; the tendency is in an entirely opposite direction, as a rule, among men down here in this world, things are not what they seem.

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It is well for us to remember that God did once invest a man with the *ability* and *resources* necessary to test the value of all here in itself. Solomon had everything that the heart of man could desire, and, moreover, his wisdom remained with him. What is his testimony when *in possession of all*? “All is vanity and vexation of spirit.” Solomon found that nothing here could fill and satisfy the heart, and that death lay as a cankerworm at the root of all under the sun. Do we not find it so in changing years and times? If Solomon the king found it so in his affluent circumstances, how much more those whose lot is of a very different kind?

But the reflection is also valuable in bringing out the contrast set before us in those precious words spoken of the Saviour, “Thou remainest,” “Thou art the same.” How blessed for the heart that has found its all in such an One as that! Beloved reader, have you? And as the passing year and fleeting seasons are but part of what other words found here describe, namely, “They shall perish . . . and they shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed,” can you, in the rest of possession in and with Him where He is, say—

“The Saviour lives and cannot die,
And with Him lives our joy”?

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May God in His great grace and mercy grant that as years fail and pass, our *hearts* may be found to have already left the scene, to have, as it were, ascended with Him to where He is, and there continually to dwell.

W. T. T.



A CALL FOR WINE.

“WINE on the lees.” This, perhaps, alludes to such a custom as still prevails in some parts of Western Asia, where new wine is poured into vessels that have been kept for several generations upon the lees of old wines of former years.

When finally drawn off for use, the strength and quality of the wine are considered to have been greatly improved by this process ; and it is often mentioned as a reason for recommending a particular wine to one who purchases or drinks. (Is. xxv. 6.)

Wine for the Well-beloved ! New wine !
 It God and man doth cheer ;
 A welcome cup of Judah's vine ! *
 The Bridegroom draweth near.
 Our “ eyes are doves ” that lone abide,
 And many are at ease ;
 Shall wine run down the mountain side
 To settle on the lees ?

* The famous vineyards of Engedi and of Sorek (S.J. Song i. 14) were in this tribe, as was also the brook Eshcol, near which the spies obtained the extraordinary clusters of grapes mentioned in Numbers xii. 23, 24. (Gen. xlix. 11.)

“ *Pictorial Bible,*” by John Ki to, D.D., F.S.A.

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Wine for the Well-beloved, the Lord ;
 We leave the night behind ;
 From vessel unto vessel poured,
 It shall be " well refined."
 Let slumb'ers murmur through the land ;
 Let fear the timid seize ;
 But, bless we still the Mighty Hand
 That poureth from the lees.

* * * * *

Saviour, as oft as we below
 Recall Gethsemane,
 So oft our chastened hearts shall glow--
 Abrim with wine for *Thee* ;
 Before the singing time advance
 And coo the turtle-dove—
 The cup, beneath Thy countenance,
 Reflecting light and love.

Watchman, is there as yet no streak
 Across the silent sky ?
 That lips awhile asleep may speak,—
 A remnant-song rise high.
 " I SURELY COME." Anoint thy sight,—
 The morning watch begun,—
 Echo His whisper of the night
 To ev'ry ling'ring one.

Sparkleth, *ye simple ones*, to you
 A vintage of renown ?
 Look not thereon ; but, *taste* the " new ;"
 It " goeth smoothly down."
 Its daybreak chorus, power divine—
 The pleasure that could please

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To bring out new-creation wine
From old-creation lees ?

* * * * *

Wine upon earth in fragrant might
Will redden in the sun ;
At last will move itself " aright "
Before the reigning One.
E'en now the city streets resound
With wine salvation drawn—

But ready let *His* cup be found ;
He waketh up the dawn !

G. E. B.



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