

THE
PRESENT TESTIMONY,
AND
Original Christian Witness Revived.
IN WHICH
THE CHURCH'S PORTION
AND
THE HOPE OF THE KINGDOM,
ETC.
ARE SOUGHT TO BE DEVELOPED FROM SCRIPTURE.

לֹא בַחִיל וְלֹא בִכְחַי אִם-בְּרוּחִי

Zechariah iv. 6.

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THE PRESENT TESTIMONY.

ETC., ETC.

Nº. I.

FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST.

PART IV.

IN the three articles which preceded this,^a we have looked at that which the Holy Ghost teaches us, in Scripture, as to the provision, made by God, for meeting all the evil of our old former selves; of ourselves looked at in fallen nature, and according to our descent from Adam. In Christ there was Life, and Christ's work was such, that by it God could meet (meet and set aside) all the consequences of that which He finds to be in us by nature. *Crucified together with Christ; dead together with Christ; buried together with Christ*, are three most precious benefits to us of the humiliation of the Lord. What an epitaph, worthy for the God of all grace to put over Saul the persecutor, and such like, when, through grace, they believe, "Crucified, dead and buried together with Christ." Other remedy, other refuge — was, is, can there be none for a lost son or daughter of Adam than is here presented. But God thought not to meet us in our evil only, and to deliver us from its awful consequences and results; — the love that looked upon us when we were in our sins (and when we were children of wrath looked upon us and thought to interpose between us and the fruits of our sins, by the work of Christ), that love had a length and a breadth about it which could not measure itself out fully in the limits of our misery, — but having loved us, in spite of what we were, and fully met all the evil at its own cost, that

^a See Vol. IX.

love has taken an arena for itself which is vast enough for it to show its full measure in. The Son of God associated Himself, as Son of Man, with all the circumstances of our misery, was put to shame in our stead upon the cross; died in our stead thereon and was buried. This was His downward path; obedient unto death, the death of the cross. "He died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and — He was buried" (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4). But He also "rose again from the dead," etc., and, as we shall see, has associated us with Him in all the stages of His upward course of honour and blessing. He, associating Himself with us, had to suffer *for* us: He, associating us with Himself, in that which followed His suffering for us (as substituted for us), — how rich are the blessings which are ours *in* Him! These we will now turn to consider.

I.—*Quickened together with Christ.*^b

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ" (Eph. ii. 4, 5).

"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with Christ" (Col. ii. 13).

Observe, first, what we were, as set forth in these two contexts. Dead in trespasses and sins; — having walked in time past according to the course of this world, — which is characterised thus; as being according to the prince of the power of the air, — the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, — among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. Observe it. Death in trespasses and sins; a walk according to the age of this world (at enmity with God and the Father); an age energised by Satan, whose sway is over rebels; the habitual bearing characterised by lusts of the flesh, desires of the flesh and of the mind; children of wrath: — these were our spots where grace found us, if we can credit Paul's letter to the Ephe-

^b Eph. ii. 5, and Col. ii. 13.

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sians. And the picture is not more favourably drawn when he writes to the Colossians, whether Jew or Gentile be looked at. But, where no answer could be found in such a state of things, when it was looked at in the presence of God, — there God showed an answer in Himself: He was rich in mercy and in power too. If the object which He looked upon was the very contrast of all that He loved and delighted in in Christ Jesus, He could yet show compassion and mercy, — mercy and compassion — to what was in contrast with Himself and with His own moral beauty as expressed in Christ Jesus. He could save the sinner; yet, in the very act which justified Him in doing so, He would give the perfect expression of His own power, and of His mercy toward the sinner, and yet of His hatred against the sin. His Son, His only begotten Son, as Son of Man, should take the place penally due to the sinner, and bear the perfect judgment due to sin in His own body on the tree. Substituted for the sinner, — He (the just one in place and instead of the many unjust) bore sin in His own body on the tree. His doing so was the expression of His perfect sympathy with the divine and heavenly counsel of His Father's mercy, — He became obedient unto death, the death of the cross. The judgment is past; gone right through by Him, all alone — all that God thought, felt, knew, to be due to sin in His presence. He who passed through those sorrows (which were justly due to us, but would have sunk us into hell for eternity), is now alive again. For, if Divine justice perfectly expressed its bearings against me and my sin and sinfulness when Christ stood to be judged in my stead,^c—Divine

^c The judgment was perfect, even to this extent, that it was shown on the cross that sin could not come into the light of God's presence. The sins of man, who is but of yesterday, whose breath is in His nostrils, could not be borne, by imputation even, by the perfect servant of God, the Son of Man, — and He enjoy the light of God's countenance: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" proves the eternal impossibility of God and sin, as it were, meeting. But that Infinite One that was there, drank the cup of wrath due to us; and the very wrath that came, through grace, on Him, only gave the occasion for His perfectness to display itself. Forsaken of God He would not — did not

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justice had *also* to express itself, if it would be clear, as to both the personal and the essential glory of Him who could do such a work — God raised Him up from the dead and gave Him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God. He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in 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 (Eph. i. 20—23); God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. ii. 9—11).

The head of all principality and power (Col. ii. 10). Yes, so it is: He who was the Man of sorrows is now seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, crowned with honor and glory; and, as Lord of all and appointed Judge of quick and dead, He knows how to call a poor sinner, a Saul of Tarsus, or, a John of Bedford, and to set before him and in him the contrast between—

As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after that the judgment.

So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many: and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.

He knows, right well, how to set His own wondrous

— forsake God: but, as Psalm xxii. shows us, He vindicated God's dealings with Him; saying that they were all justified, the place He had in grace taken being considered. When the Infinite God's wrath against the finite creature's sin had been fully told out, how should God but express His thoughts as to Him (Jehovah's fellow) who for mercy's sake had stood and borne the wrath, — and, in vindicating God's righteousness and mercy, had been obedient unto death, even the death upon the cross — and given His life a ransom for us?

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death and sufferings before the soul of a poor sinner who deserves eternal judgment, and, Himself the appointed judge to point out how grace provided Himself as a victim, that whosoever believeth might, accepting the judgment He bore to have been in place of their own, escape the judgment themselves. And what will the poor sinner say? Is God indeed willing to reckon that the Judge has borne the prisoner's penalty; is He, the Judge, waiting, as in an acceptable time, to see what effect such a message has upon the wretched lost one's heart? O the news is but too good! though, blessed be his name! not more good than true. It is finished! I bow to the blessed word of God's grace, through Christ, proclaimed to the chiefest of sinners. Through grace it has reached me; through grace it has bowed down my soul. Be it so: let God be just and the justifier of me a sinner. Let Him have the honour of having reckoned all my sins to Jesus; let Him have the glory of having found the way, through that Son, of reckoning me crucified together with Him, dead together with Him, buried together with Him. God thus sets honour upon the work of His Son, done for us: the work by which He meets and through which He moves out of the way all that belonged to us as in fallen human nature.

The work of Christ while upon earth was *for* us,—and is *reckoned to* us. He, the Son of Man, the Lamb of God was crucified, died and was buried. God *reckons* that the all that a Saul of Tarsus, a John of Bedford, and such like, had and were, meets its answer in the crucifixion, death and burial of the Lord Jesus; that is, when they, chiefest of sinners, come to believe. Yet it is *reckoned* so. But those parts of the blessing which follow are not *merely* reckoned, but have a real, essential portion in them. Quickened together with Christ, is more than what is *reckoned* merely. Christ, in all His perfectness, was crucified, died and was buried. God *reckons* to me in all my imperfectness and positive evil, the full benefit of this. He, Christ, the Just One, endured all that, according to God's good pleasure, *for and instead of* me, an unjust one. God so far counts it to me, that it is His epitaph for me, according to what I

was. But this epitaph, or inscription on the tomb and final resting-place of the old man in me, is still a perfect Christ,—perfect though He bear (display of His perfectness) the marks of the judgment which He received once for me. He, in the richest grace, was stigmatized *in my stead*. Yet the I, that deserved to be stigmatized of God, am not actually in Him. What God *reckons*, faith *reckons* also; and so, reckoning ourselves to be penally dead to sin, we reckon that we have ceased from (and not only have to cease from), acting in sin. Now in some sense there is a contrast to this in what follows; for “LIFE” is a very positive, actual thing. And life is not merely *reckoned* to us, but has been absolutely given to us that believe and is positively possessed in Christ, and enjoyed by us in ourselves. A clear view of this difference is important. Let us pause upon it for a moment.

To Christ all that was due to us, as sinners, has been *reckoned*; and He has borne the punishment of it, and still retains the marks of the judgment so borne. Now just as we see on the walls of chapels and churches, sometimes, a tablet erected in memory of some one that fell in a foreign land, and whose body still rests in that foreign land; even so, in one point of view, may the tokens of the passion which still remain, and may be seen by faith in the person of the Lord, be looked at. My wicked self is not in Him. The memory of all my guilt, all that God had against me, did once find its final resting-place in the person of Christ when He drank the cup of wrath upon the cross. And when I now, by faith, look up to Him, I see in Him the record, the remembrances of what He bore in my stead. This, while the question is of *how* I, a guilty creature in myself can find peace with God, is of all importance. The Just One, who is to judge all, bore on the cross the judgment due to me the unjust. I do not fear or doubt, whether He will or will not remember His own sufferings, whereon He has made my soul to rest. But this is not all. Not only is the penalty and power and being of the old man thus met, but another, a new man, having a being, and power, and liberty, is introduced to supplant the old

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man. And this is a positive thing, and a new thing altogether. Adam, as set in the Garden of Eden, had not that which the weakest believer in Christ now has: "Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. i. 23), "The word of the Lord . . . the word which by the Gospel is preached" (ver. 25), is the instrumental means of communicating this, but the thing communicated is *a new* thing itself. Christ is the Giver — "the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" — such a portion is not *of* human nature, but of God. Well now, when we come to the Scriptures what do we find as to this Life? First: If Adam was a living soul, Christ is a life-giving Spirit: "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam a quickening Spirit" (1 Cor. xv. 45). Then, again, not only is His glory thus described: "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made," but also another glory is His: "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John i. 1—4). "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 3, 4). "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (1 John v. 11). I cite these passages as showing that "Life" is, to us that believe, not merely moral order restored in the elements of the old man, but that it points to something which not only fallen but, which unfallen humanity, as first set in the Garden of Eden, did not possess; to something which fits us, not only for heaven, *its* native place, but for "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. Such a fellowship is ours" (1 John i. 4). But many are the lessons Scripture gives us in details connected with the subject.

Our attention is called to much, if we can taste and see it, in these words, "Quickened together with Christ." I have heard expositions of this expression (which while

they contained much truth in them, and blessed truth too), were not expositions of what our text contains. For instance, "Quickened together with Christ," does not mean that *as* He was quickened who lay dead and buried in the grave, in the garden, *so* our souls which were morally dead become morally alive if we have believed. That, if we substituted "spiritually, as well as morally, alive," for "morally alive," would be true; but it clearly would give no stress to the words *together with*. And such a truth would have been better expressed by, "have been quickened in soul, as Christ was in body." The text really leads back to the hour in which Christ was quickened, and points out a special glory as attaching to him when so quickened, and a glory which connects itself now with the believer. Having laid down His life as a substitute for sinners, He took it again as the second Adam, life-giving Spirit, Head of a race. In redemption nothing is before God, or will be found to abide, save what comes forth from Christ. He is the Rock. He alone. He was smitten in death. In life — after death — a life which was in itself beyond death, and was shown to be so by His passing through death — the life-giving waters flowed forth, token of the Life which was in Him, which He was. It was necessary for Divine glory and for the conscience of the sinner, that the insults to God offered by sin, and the sin itself should be fully met by Him who alone could meet it. This he did by His death. But everything as to sin, past, present or to come, having had provision made for it in His death, — His life anew was with the avowal of Headship. No life ever flowed save from Him. Whence else could it flow? Quickened *together with* Christ! Then I am to go back in thought, as to this life which I know I have in the Son, to Him in whom is life; and to go back to Him, not only as one of whom this was true as the Word of God, — but as the one of whom this is declared by Scripture to be shown out as true — *in the very hour* when he was quickened as Son of Man, who was dead but could see no corruption. A simple view of this changes everything to a soul that believes; because it brings the mind down upon the very

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point of time and circumstances in time which God had arranged as the testimony to man. He knew who His Son was, and what His Son was and would do: He needed not, in His infiniteness, in order that He might see what He could know and understand, the developed accomplishment of His plans and counsels. But, in grace, He has presented, in time and in circumstances which are suited to man, great overt facts, such as appeal to man as man, and such as man, when under grace and in the light, can understand. The crucifixion, the death, the burial of the Christ were awful overt acts. Wrought by man and in grace and mercy's sake permitted by God, and endured by the Christ for our sakes, they, first, told out man's wickedness, and the end thereof to the believer through God's grace. The quickening, raising up, elevation and glorification of Christ are great overt facts also, acts wrought by God to the confusion of sinful man, and for the salvation of the believer. And they tell out (oh how blessedly) the wellspring of God's providing, full of every blessing.

Have I eternal life? Yes: in the Son. How do I know it? 1st. Because God identifies faith and life together inseparably; and, 2ndly, I through faith, know those things which the word declares cannot be known save where there is life — Divine life. In the Son and from the Son is this life. But to what point, to what circumstances does the word of God point me as the birth-place, as the scene of the coming forth into light, first, of this my life? To the quickening and raising from the dead of the God-honoured, though man-rejected, Christ of God. He was quickened, and He was quickened as a Head. Directly I believe and understand the word, — the tomb of Christ, bursts into light, not now closed and dark as the resting-place of Him that was buried, but open and full of light (for the Son of God, the Word, and the Jesus of Nazareth were there, just proved to be but one and the same) — that — that is the scene to which the word leads me back. I fear few of us go back simply enough to that scene, as the scene from which our new life has its date and the manifestation of its origin. Man (we ourselves according to what

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we were) would not have Him on any terms. God would have Him, and would have Him as the second Adam — with Headship and relationship to man found upon Him both for Heaven and for earth. I need not say my old man was not quickened — it was crucified, dead and buried together with Him. No, but God communicates a new nature to me, the Divine nature; and gave with it, power to become a son of God, power to enter, not only into the enjoyment of the things and circumstances of God, but into His own thoughts and affections, and to enter into them, according to the mode of the revelation of them, as displayed by God manifest in the flesh — by the Son of Man; by Him who, though God over all blessed for ever and Jehovah's fellow was once, in deed and in truth, the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief — crucified through weakness.

Quickened together with Christ — gives me three vivid truths. 1st. The source of life, presented, according to the form and circumstances in which there was to be communication of life. 2ndly. That the prominent leading feature in the scene is the quickening of Christ Jesus from the grave. In time, in weight of importance, in every respect, when God speaks, Christ must have the pre-eminence, the first place — it must be so. 3rdly. That there was a unity, a something which God and the Spirit of God would not break into two things, in the life so communicated, in the communication of life — 1st., to the Christ as Son of Man awaking from the grave into which He had gone in order to clear us from guilt; and, 2ndly, to the believer cleared from guilt; a life in us unto God.

The Son of Man was to be three days in the heart of the earth. See corruption He could not — to know any moral change in Him also was impossible likewise. But He had power to lay down His life (and He did so) and power to take it again (and He did so); for such commandment He had received of the Father. He laid down His life in our stead. He took it up again and made us partakers of it.

That the old man and the new man are not merely different states of one and the same being at different

times, is clear; for, 1st, they co-exist — the old man and the new are both in me a believer; and, 2ndly, they are in contrast; the old has no power to know and love God; — the new nature, given us of God, loves God; — the former can never rise higher than the living soul, — the second has been brought into existence in us by Christ.

The expressions, “being in the flesh,” and “being in the Spirit” (Rom. viii. 9), refer to *standing*. We are not in the flesh [our standing is not according to the flesh] but in the Spirit [our standing is according to Spirit], if so be that the Spirit of Christ dwell in us. But, then, though our standing be before God, according to Spirit, this, from the context, clearly does not put the flesh, the old man, etc., out of us. It is still in us, but, our standing being before God, according to a relationship formed with Christ by faith, through the Spirit, we are not under guilt, and we are debtors to act against the old nature, from which we received no benefit, and, according to the new nature which has given us, through faith, relationship to, and standing with, Christ. The doctrine of Scripture is very simple, and clear, and plain, though we, from want of simplicity in ourselves, often find it very difficult.

With God there is no difficulty in the perfect Son of God and the Son of Man (in all His perfectness) being one; — for God was manifest in the flesh. With Him also there is no difficulty in that blessed One, as Son of Man, life-giving Spirit, communicating a new nature, the Divine nature, under certain conditions to a poor sinner; no difficulty to Him to provide that which enables both that nature as an incorruptible seed remaining in a poor sinner, or the Spirit of God ministering to it — while sin remains in the body of the sinner. The cross of Christ met the difficulty in one form; the intercession and ministry of the high priest does so in another, and the power of Christ will in a third. But that nature, introduced into us by Christ risen from the grave, through faith, by the Word, can and will supplant, supplant with all its own superiority of nature and character, the old nature; and in the end, finally, when we have seen the

Christ, it will leave no trace behind in us of the old nature at all. If, by a constant change, through the acting of natural life, etc., in my natural body, it is, as is said, gradually changed in all its particles; yet *I* remain ever the same: I see no difficulty, even to my own mind, to comprehend that a new nature, of a higher order, may have been given to me,—a nature introducing other objects, motives, affections and desires; and that this co-existing for a time in me may produce conflict for a time: and yet, in the issue, when I shall have seen Christ, may be so perfected, as to its sole possession of me, in body as well as soul and spirit, as that no element of the old nature, in its former state, should remain; and yet identity and individuality shall be fully preserved. I do not say this as having any theory to establish, but as an answer to questions and difficulties which have been raised by some who (purposing to remain, and to retain their position as merely good men), have refused the testimony of the Word about the Divine nature, with a—How can these things be? I receive what Scripture says, *because* God says it; but, of a truth, I cannot see any greater difficulties in these things than those difficulties which are found in truths which are in the field of nature and providence; nor so great as human sense and pride would find in the higher subjects of revelation;—such as the incarnation, the atonement, redemption, etc.

According to 1 John i.1—3, eternal life which was with the Father, was manifested in Christ. But the Son of Man had power to lay down His life and power to take it again (John x.18). It is important to note the difference between eternal life in the Son of God (as in 1 John v.11, together with, John i.4, in Him [the Word] was life)—and the Son of Man having power to lay down His life, to give His life a ransom for many, and power to take His life again for their blessing. The Son of God (the only begotten Son) was given of God;—but the Son of Man was lifted up on the cross. Eternal life was in the Son, in the Word; and was manifested to us in the Son of Man; the life of this man Jesus could be laid down—it was laid down as a ransom for our sins: it could be taken again—it was taken again—and,

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moreover, the having life and the circumstances of it were different to the Son of Man before death and after resurrection. His birth, as a babe, was, as seed of the woman, by the overshadowing of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Ghost. Such was the Son of Man, the seed of the woman as the Man of sorrows. Therefore that Holy Thing that was born of her, was called Son of the Highest—thus did He become a man, the Son of man, the Seed of the woman, the Man of sorrows. But having laid down His life, Himself giving it up when man with wicked hands was crucifying and slaying Him—His taking life anew was without any such intervention as was found in His birth. It was an act that lay outside of the precincts of the life of Adam the first, who, had he been obedient, would never have died, could never have been in a position to experience resurrection. Not so with Christ—Christ had power to lay down His life and power to take His life again; He was quickened of God: but in taking a life beyond the precincts and sphere of Adam the first He took it, as to form and circumstances, according to the precincts and sphere in which He took it; that is in the precincts and sphere of eternal redemption.

Revealing Himself to Saul, He revealed a glory in Himself, who is Son of God and Son of Man and upon the throne of the Father,—a glory which communicates an incorruptible seed to every one into whom it shines. Now this blessing is from Him as Son of Man risen from among the dead, and gone up to the throne of the Father; but seated and owned there as Son of Man. Many lose themselves in thought here, by not seeing that the glory of the Son to usward is to act as “the Second Adam the life-giving Spirit.” Now the incorruptible seed which I receive, is received from the Son Himself—it is fitted, in the order in which it is given (as given from Him who bore my judgment before He took the formal place of being Quickener, and is now waiting at God’s right hand until the time come for Him to be displayed as the Power of God), to meet every difficulty connected with me as a mere man in ruin and in ruined circumstances; to meet, I say, all the questions arising from

the form and mode of life of ruined man. It is a life which is in itself as fitted to enter into God's things and man's, as is the life of the Son of Man, who is now glorified upon the throne of the Father with the glory which as Son of God He had with God before the world was. It is His life in me, even as He Himself is my life. He as my life and His life in me, is both according to Himself, and not according to my fallen ruined self, and it is according to Him, according to what He *now* is risen from the dead among whom He lay by reason of what I was and, in my ruined nature, still am. This new nature is in us in contrast with the old. The former will supplant the latter. There may, there must, be conflict now between the two. I, a creature, upon the ground and under the condition of creatureship, having to do with God as Creator in a ruined world, where Satan knows how to use the flesh against God; and the new nature, put into me by the Spirit of Christ through faith, having a world of its own, and motives and objects peculiar to itself, cannot but be in conflict. But the former may be *reckoned* by us dead, because God reckons it so as to them that believe, and we may walk in newness of life. The old is not turned into the new; nor does the new (like leaven) work out to fill the old. The old has yet to be changed. Mercy and grace would not suffice, that is, without Divine *power*, and that wisdom which knows how to change this body of humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto His (Christ's) body of glory.

There are two errors to be guarded against on this subject at the present time, if we would hold the truth with soundness. For the truth of Scripture seems to lie on this subject between two extremes which error has marked for itself.

On the one hand, the religion of the schools has worn down the statements of Scripture — so that the blessed truth of being quickened together with Christ, is reduced to a mere humanising of fallen nature. In this theory, the new birth is but a putting right of the old nature; and the most that is aimed at, or thought of, is to recover in heart, mind and life, that which Adam possessed in

Eden. According to it, redemption may be redemption from sin and hell, but it is not redemption unto fellowship with God through the Divine nature given to us of God by faith.

On the other hand, there is another error, most fearful, which, if it breaks through the trammels of system, breaks out into the wildest fanaticism. According to it the redeemed are to be omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent: and instead of one God (Father, Son and Holy Ghost) there are to be Gods many. For each of the redeemed is to be God; Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent. Alas! what is man? Corruptor of everything he touches. Our privilege, our portion, our blessing, as redeemed, is neither according to the Eden that is passed, nor according to the glory proper to and sustainable only by God. The Son of God, He is God, essentially and eternally God, and is as such Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent. But He has wrought a salvation as *Son of Man*, and, according to the glory of that name, as the Second Adam, the Lord from heaven, He has opened a place, and a sphere, and a glory fitted for the nature which as such He has communicated to us — a nature which, while able to taste the things, thoughts, feelings of God Himself, ever owns Him from whom it has flowed to us, as God over all blessed for ever, and ourselves the recipients and partakers of His grace as, however near to Himself, absolutely and eternally dependent upon Him as worshippers and servants. If we have life, eternal life, it is according to its avowed, displayed source, viz., the quickening of the Christ, Son of Man from heaven — from the grave: and the saint has this word for his shelter — Quickened together with Christ.

EXTRACT.

God who gave the blood to screen us,
 God looks down in perfect love;
 Clouds may seem to pass between us,
 There's no change in Him above.

No. II.

COMMENTS UPON TEXTS.

I.

EPHESIANS II. 4, 5.

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace are ye saved).”

THE first word, here, is “*but*”; a little word which shews that what follows it is disconnected from what goes before: in this case, it is in contrast with it. *Man* had just been spoken of,—but now God is brought in, in contrast to man. It was man, according to what God saw of his ways, when dead in trespasses and sins; thus (ver. 1), dead in trespasses and sins — this was their state; and the marks of this state, as found in man’s ways, are thus described in ver. 2:—“A walk according to the course of this world” (which is at enmity against God), and, therefore, a walk according to the god of this world, who is the prince of the power of the air; the spirit who now worketh in the children of disobedience; and the habitual walk, the turn of such, was in the lusts of the flesh and of the mind, for they were children of wrath, even as others.

That was on one side; and an awful view it gave of man. “But,” on the other side, in contrast with all this, there was God, and God according to His nature and ways; “God who is rich in mercy, for His great love, wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.” Here is God and His wondrous ways in contrast with man and his ways. First, *God* in contrast with *man* — then His characteristic trait, *who is rich in mercy* — and then a particular proof of it in His love to us. Mark, here, that mercy, in its very nature, excludes every thought of worthiness,

merit, or claim, being in the party to whom it comes; it supposes unworthiness, demerit, want, and misery, in the party benefited; and that all the benefit conferred flows forth from the party that confers it, upon the sole ground that He can compassionate and feel pity for the party in need, although He distinctly recognises, at the very time of doing so, that the said party is in a state other than He counts happy or desirable. We could *not* say, God was merciful to Christ. If any one used such an expression to us, we should be obliged to point out the impropriety of the expression; it would be a most injurious and wrong word to use in such a connection. For Christ Jesus could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father also"; and the Father could say of Him, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Christ Jesus came to do God's will, and did it perfectly in all things; and had worthiness and claims before God, which God delights to honour. He was not the object of mercy, nor could be so, because there was nothing in Him to move the compassion or pity of God, but everything calculated to give God delight — everything that pleased God. To use such an expression would be (however unconsciously it might be done) to speak disparagingly and injuriously of the Lord. For in Christ was life, and the life was the light of men. But when God looked on us, we were dead in trespasses and sins; and God's bearing toward us was a bearing of mercy. Death in trespasses and sins He did not delight in; it might have turned him away offended; but He pitied, compassionated us; had mercy upon us, and He who condemned the sins, desired to save the sinner.

Thus we have man, his condition, and ways; and God, his compassion and ways, set in contrast. I say His compassion and ways, because "who is rich in mercy" gives a trait or mark in His character, and "for the great love wherewith He loved us," gives an acting of that characteristic trait in the salvation which grace has set before us and made ours.

"*For His great love wherewith He loved us.*" What a word is this! To know, with certainty, that, notwithstanding all that we have done and were by nature, yet that there

is one bosom in which there is love toward us; and that bosom the very one in which we should have supposed there would have been displeasure and wrath; for, if we look at ourselves merely as creatures standing before a Creator whom we have dishonoured, what else but indignation and wrath had we to expect? Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, would have been our just reward for our evil deeds and fallen nature. But it is not so. Vile as we were, and vilely as we acted, God, acting as Redeemer, and not merely in the character of Creator, has loved us freely; has given His Son for us; and we that believe can say, "He loves us and loves us with a great love."

Ver. 5. "*Even when we were dead in sins.*" Here we have our state in nature again brought before us, and brought before us in the most concise way possible. The acorn has an oak tree folded up in it; many a little spring of water is the mother of a river; and a soul that has death in sins in it has all the big tree of sin and all its fruits folded up in it, and is the mother source of all the swollen river of man's wickednesses. Now, if I was such, what had I to expect as such from God? What, if God had acted according to my state and my deserts, would have been my lot? Nothing but the second death. And what motive could God draw from anything which I, who was altogether dead, could give Him. I thought myself to be as God himself; and had no notion that the Lord He is God *alone*; and had altogether a wrong notion about Himself. No; He could find, He did find, nothing good in *me*. But where all was death in sins, there He was pleased to act from Himself, to draw forth motives from within Himself; and He could find reasons why He should quicken us together with Christ. If I consider what I was, I can find no reason why God should bless me, and not rather curse; and if I consider that God was the blessing, for His own name's sake, and what the way is in which He has blessed, I say, "It is clear, merit and deserving in the creature is quite shut out of the question." God was the source, the spring of the blessing; why should He have done it? He is rich in mercy. Ay, He has a character of His own! and 'tis a blessed

one too. Fallen man does not like Him alone to be God. But God He is still. Fallen man draws his picture of God according to his own fallen imagination and corrupt lusts and passions. But God has a character of His own. He has no thought of ceasing to be — or of ceasing to be God alone — or of changing His character because man has become a wreck and a ruin. He is God, and He is rich in mercy. He has loved us when we were dead in sins. And *the how* and *the why* of the blessing, which He has bestowed upon us, both alike declare that it was not according to our thoughts, nor for our sakes, as the end of His acting, that He blessed us thus.

Mark the *why* of His blessing: "That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." What could be plainer? "*That He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace.*" Yes; God will not give His glory to another. If He, whose very existence and being, fallen man hates, despises, and rebels against, does act in a way to make such happy, He does it for His own glory's sake as an end; does it on the ground of what He God is. In nature and character He is rich in mercy. And this shuts out all thought of its being done because of any deserving in us.

But as the party blessing, His motives for blessing, and His end in blessing, each and all, bid us think of Him, and cease from thinking of ourselves; just so does also His *way* of blessing. What is His way of blessing? Is it a way that lies, so to speak, in the field of fallen human nature (as the putting forth of our power to stop sin, and to work good works in ourselves does); or is it a way such as fallen man never thought of, never knew anything about? Yes; it is a way quite above man, quite outside the field of human nature, fallen or unfallen.

"*Quickened us together with Christ,*" is His first word when setting forth that way. What could Adam in the Garden have understood about being quickened together with Christ? What does a sinner know about God's quickening together with Christ? The way is God's way; and as the heavens are high above the earth, so are God's

ways high above man's ways: "His ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts."

God had an only begotten Son. Him He gave, that He might become Son of man, the anointed of God. Man! did he bring in that Christ into the world? No: men, with wicked hands, crucified and slew Him. They did what they could to send Him out of the world, when He had come into it without their leave, and had stayed in it a good bit longer than they liked. And, mark it, this matter whereof He speaks had no place in Eden, did not lie, was not found, in that field which was given to man. Man ought not to have touched the forbidden tree, then would he not have died. But death was the end of all that man could see, so as to reap it by disobedience.

Having a new life, resurrection and glory were not fruits that grew in nature's barren soil. But God, to please Himself, introduced the seed of the woman, this Christ of whom we speak, as the One by whom and for whom He could go on with the earth, after Adam and Eve had altogether failed in the Garden of Eden; saying: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." And that He, the Christ, might, as Son of man and the Woman's Seed, not be alone in His glory, He had to die. For, "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." Well! death, the wage due to our sin, He freely took, in obedience to the thoughts of God. He was crucified, died, and was buried, that God might be able to be just while justifying us poor sinners; and He has said, that He reckons us crucified, dead, and buried, as to our old man, together with Christ; and that we are to reckon ourselves so likewise. But His taking of His life again, His rising from the grave, His going up into heaven, His being blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, was part of what pertained to the second Adam, and had no place in the portion of the first. Now, no man can go beyond what is human in thought. And it was God, and not man, from whom that thought and that way came forth of believers being quickened together with Christ.

Christ was buried in the sepulchre in the garden. But He could see no corruption. And He who had power to

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lay down His life, had power also to take it again; for this commandment had He received of the Father. Well, on the first day of the week, He awoke, was quickened while in the grave; and, therefore, all that ado outside, of earthquake, of sepulchre door-stone rolled away, etc.; He was quickened—and, says our text, “we were quickened together with Him.”

The act and fact and moment of the Lord Jesus Christ's taking His life again, is not sufficiently thought of by us. It ought to be looked at in and by itself. The Roman Catholic religion (religion of fallen human nature) pictures to us a Christ a-crucifying, and gives us images of wood, stone, and ivory out of all number of a human figure on the cross. Of eternal moment to us is the fact, that the Christ of God was crucified, has been crucified, because He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. But, as Paul tells us 1 Cor. xv., His death was nought, if He did not rise from the dead; we are yet in our sins. But Christ is risen from the dead; and He left the grave empty, save of those grave-clothes which have since, as has His cross on which He was hung, and our sins also, passed away; never more to be found. God honours the Christ who was crucified, the Christ who was buried, but is alive again.—Now, if I had to prove, as saith Paul, 1 Cor. xv., the forgiveness of sins, I point to the One that is risen: and might, in a figure, say, “Turn to the grave; it is empty. He left there nought but the grave-clothes.” But this is not enough when the question comes as to God's *way* of blessing us—“quickened together with Christ.” Then I have to turn neither to the guarded, imprisoning tomb where the body of the Lord lay; nor to the empty tomb, He being gone up on high; but I turn in thought to the tomb burst open now, for He is just alive from among the dead; and because He is therein, and because God gives testimony in the scene; the guards are fled, and the disciples are being drawn, by various means, thereunto. Oh, it is a blessed thought! that blessed One taking His life again; that One, who was all God's joy, and God's delight, quickening into life afresh, as Son of man, in the tomb. Blessed in itself! and blessed to us, because it is written of us—“quickened together with Him.”

The life He took, is that of which He has communicated to us, as He did to Paul and to these Ephesians: and, therefore, as that life which He gives to us believers is of that life which He took when He awoke from death, it can be said, and it is said, "quickened together with Him." Saul! where was he when Christ awoke in the grave? These wicked Ephesians! where were they at that time? Both were dead in sins. Well, when Christ had called them, and given them of that life which He took, they were no longer looked upon by God according to the old man, but according to the new man. By reason of the old man in us, Christ has been crucified, dead, and buried. But He took life anew, and has given to us of that life, of a life which the old man had not; and God looks upon us as vessels in which it dwells,—a life inseparable from the source whence it flows; a life in us which enables Him to say to us, enables us to say of ourselves that believe, "Quickened together with Christ." The root, the germ, the incorruptible seed of all blessing is in this life. And I pray you, reader, to mark, that the moment the Spirit, through Paul, has said, 'Quickened together with Christ,' He makes a pause,—marks a bar,—so as to shut this off from all the consequences of it. For, however blessed and important these consequences of life possessed are, they are not the life itself, but consequences of it. Therefore, the moment He has said, "quickened together with Christ," He makes a pause,—introduces a parenthesis,—which seems to be a mark, to mark off what He has just said from that which follows after it: "quickened together with Christ (*by grace ye are saved*)."
Ay! if quickened together with Christ, then we are saved in, and inseparably from, Him. And that is the best part of what God has to give us.

Truly, this salvation is of the Lord God alone. And as man never dared to say to God, "I have sinned, and Thou must bear the penalty," so he never hit upon such a thought as this, "if God quickened in the grave His Son whom we had crucified, we will share all that is His!" But what man never thought of, what, if he had said, it would have been awful blasphemy on his part, both in the one case and the other,—that was God's

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thought and plan. Man had sinned; God manifest in the flesh should bear the penalty; and the reward and glory which He should win for this service, He would freely share with all His disciples: For they should be quickened together with Him.

 II.

COLOSSIANS II. 13.

“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”

The Epistle to the Ephesians presents us with the doctrine of “ye in Me” (John xiv. 20), if I may so say; that is, the doctrine of the believer’s being blessed *in* Christ Jesus — as being hidden by God *in* Christ. The privileges which go along with being *in* Christ being the special object of that epistle — when it speaks of the quickening of a believer together with Christ — the mind has that subject brought before it, as connected with the character and date of the first blessing of having association with Christ in His life, as taken anew after He had borne our sins in His own body on the tree. The Epistle to the Colossians gives us rather, “I in the Father” (John xiv. 20); and accordingly, as it seems to me, when we have the quickening together with Christ spoken of in it, it is more in that connection. Ordinances and man’s doings were being plied by Satan on the Colossians, as things necessary to make their salvation complete, to make their blessing perfect and secure. Such a thought was worthy of Satan; to Paul and the Spirit of God it seemed to be nothing short of calling into question the Sonship of Jesus, and all the counsels, plans, and thoughts of God the Father about that Son. The present day is a day in which the busy energy of man’s flesh lends itself, in many places, to Satan in this way; and in Romanism, Puseyism, and a good many other “isms,” which are but the expression of the workings of the flesh, it is held and taught that there is an “unless ye *do*” this or that (in addition to having Christ for sal-

vation), ye cannot be saved.^a This evil may have two phases of it; the one (as in Colossians), the being subject to ordinances; and the other (as in Galatians), the subjecting of the flesh to rites and ceremonies; but, in both cases, it is, in essence, the same thing. The flesh in us is accredited, man honoured, and worldliness sanctioned; and so the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost dishonoured, discredited, and condemned.

Satan is very crafty; he hates Christ with a perfect hatred; and hates those who stand upon Christ as the foundation for His sake. If he cannot injure Christ in His own person, he is glad in any way to show his own hatred against Him, and to mar His honour in His people. He will attack them, and Christ's honour in them, in foundation and superstructure. Is a soul brought into peace, and at rest, to the praise of God's grace and mercy, upon Christ? Satan sees it, and his spite is kindled. He knows the self-righteousness of our flesh, he knows the love of man for having something to do; he does not like that hanging, that dependance of ours, upon what is above in Christ; he would like to have us occupied for rest with something round us in that world which is enmity against God. Some one comes to the place where such are, no one may know whence or why, and sets forth most beautifully the great work which God has done in Christ, and all the wondrous benefits connected with it; and that all man has to do to get the benefit, is to observe a rite (as circumcision, etc.), or some ordinance, a sabbath-day or a moon. O how little a

^a The Epistle to the Romans gives a sketch of all God's dealings with man, from the creation of the world down to the end. In chapter vi. we have very much the same doctrine as in Ephesians ii. and in Colossians ii. In Romans vi. the same doctrine is handled as displaying *one* part of God's ways among many others. In Ephesians ii. this way is taken up separately (in connection with the aim of the whole of the epistle in which it is here found), as showing *the privileges of the believer in Christ*. In Colossians, it is the same doctrine, with this addition: that the person, glory, and position of Christ, in whom the blessing is, being considered, it is clear that every element of the world, the flesh, and the devil, is shut out from having any place in the salvation; because they could have none in Christ as He now is, and He is our salvation.

thing to give for so great a benefit! Only just suffer yourself to be dipped, only just do this or that little thing! What heart will refuse? And oft he so succeeds, and draws the very hearts which were full of mercy and grace, in their folly and simplicity, to allow all the impulse which mercy and grace had to their hearts to be turned round against the Giver. Such a little thing! such a nothing! Yes: but it is man's little thing,—it is a nothing of this world which is at enmity with God. God will not give His glory to another; and if you substitute anything for mercy as the fountain, if you give anything in exchange for Christ, man, and not God, is glorified. The energy that raises my foot to go into the water; or leads me to forbear touching a dog, is quite as bad in this place, little as it be, as the energy which would compass sea and land to make one proselyte. The gift to God of a prayer, even, would be as great an insult, if it were in exchange for Christ, as a bag of gold. The Spirit's severity in meeting both cases is awfully stern: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. i. 8, 9).

And though the rebuke be couched in softer words in Colossians, yet is the judgment of the apostle quite as clear. Such things are tantamount to "not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (Col. ii. 19).

See who and what the Christ is, in whom we are complete; and then, as a man, say whether we can add anything to Him, and whether it is not worse than madness to think of doing so. "The Father hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light;—hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Such is our blessing; and who is He in whom it is?

He is, 1st, the Son of God's love (Col. i. 13); and He is, 2ndly, the image of the invisible God; 3rdly, born pre-eminent to every creature; (necessarily so, because) 4thly, all things were created by and for Him; who is, 5thly, the one by whom all is upheld; 6thly, He is the Head of the body, the church; the beginning; the first-born from the dead; and in Him, too, it was pleasing that all fulness should dwell — Redeemer, for heaven and for earth. He being such, and the one in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and we complete in Him, who is the Head of all principality and power, how can we add to or take from him as foundation? If *quickened together with Him*, no ordinance, no rite, can possibly be necessary in order that we be blessed; for we are blessed in Him. And to say otherwise was, according to Paul, to give up Christ as the Head, and to compromise the faith.

There is this difference in the two contexts, Ephesians ii. and Colossians ii. In the first, the quickening comes in as the starting-point of all the vast range of blessing attendant upon faith. In Colossians, it comes in as showing that law and ordinance had no hold of a Christian, because they had no hold upon Christ when He took His life anew — we were quickened together with Him. And the life so communicated is given without ordinances or rites; and it leads us to walk as they could not give us power to do.

Note.—If any have, or make, any difficulty as to the meaning of *quicken* in Scripture, the following texts will serve them:—

“That which thou sowest is not *quicken*, except it die; . . . the last Adam was made a *quicken* [or life-giving] spirit” (1 Cor. xv. 36, 45).

“If there had been a law which could have *given life*” (Gal. iii. 21).

No. III.

EPHESIANS.

THE Epistle to the Ephesians gives us the richest exposition of the blessings of the Church, and of the saints who compose it, setting forth at the same time the counsels of God with regard to the glory of Christ; Christ Himself is viewed as holding all things united in one under His hand, as Head of the Church. We see the Church placed in the most intimate relationship with Him, as those who compose it are with the Father Himself, and in the heavenly position dispensed to her by the sovereign grace of God. Now these ways of grace to her, reveal God Himself, and in two distinct characters; as well in connection with Christ as with Christians. He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the God of Christ, when Christ is looked at as the glorious man; the Father of Christ, when Christ is looked at as the Son of His love. In the first character, the nature of God is revealed; in the second, we see the intimate relationship which we enjoy to Him who bears this character of Father, and that, according to the excellence of Christ's own relationship to Him. It is this relationship to the Father, as well as that in which we stand to Christ as His Bride, that is the source of blessing to the Church of God, of which grace has made us members. The form even of the Epistle, shows how much the Apostle's mind was filled with the sense of the blessing that belongs to the Church. After having wished grace and peace to the saints and the faithful^a

^a The word translated "faithful," might be rendered, "believers." It is used as a term of superscription both here and in the Epistle to the Colossians. We must remember that the Apostle was now in prison, and that Christianity had been established for some years, and was exposed to all kinds of attack. To say that one was a believer as at the beginning, was to say

them take in having tidings of him, and that which he himself felt in ascertaining their welfare, and spiritual state in Christ. It is a touching expression of his confidence in their affection—an affection which his own devoted heart led him to expect in others.

He presents the Ephesians as enjoying the highest privileges in Christ, and as being able to appreciate them. He blames them in nothing. The armour of God, by which to repel the assaults of the enemy, and to grow up in peace unto the Head in all things, the preservative armour of God, was naturally the last thing that he had to set before them. It is to be noticed that he does not speak to them in this epistle of the Lord's coming. He supposes believers in the heavenly places, in Christ; and not as on earth, going through the world, waiting till He should come to take them to Himself, and restore happiness to the world. That which is waited for in this epistle, is the gathering together of all things under Christ, their true Head, according to the counsels of God. The blessings are in the heavens, the testimony is in the heavens, the Church is sitting in the heavens, the warfare is in the heavens.

The apostle repeats his desire for them, of peace, love, and faith; and concludes his epistle with the usual salutation by his own hand.

This epistle sets forth the position and the privileges of the Church, in its union with Christ.

EXTRACT.

"The skies have been wondrously grand of late; such a magnificent array of stars thrown out on that dark back-ground. This evening, however, I was walking by the sea, it was cold, windy, and cloudy; not a star to be seen. It suddenly struck me: there they are though, all those shining myriads, and that lovely milky way, as bright as ever; though unseen, no change in *them*, however clouds may fill these lower heavens. The thought was cheering, *So is God*: no change in Him, or in His love, however dark and cloudy our poor hearts may be. Oft am I thrown on such thoughts as these: without them what and where, in this dark and lonely world, should we be! The only relief is to look right into *the very heart of God*, and there to find out *love*.

"I have been out again—the clouds are partly gone—and there (as I said) are still those beautiful constant stars—as bright and lovely as ever."—*Wetton*.

N^o. IV.

HEADS OF PSALMS.

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BOOK I.

IN the first place we get, in Psalm I., the righteous man; and, in Psalm II., the counsels of God as to Messiah. Then, in general, Psalms III.—VII., the sufferings of Christ in the remnant, whether from enemies or from a sense of their own state; and in result, VIII., the Son of Man set over all the works of God's hands.

In IX. and X., we get particulars of God's executing judgment against the heathen in Zion, in favour of the needy; and, in particular, the ways of the wicked one.

In XI.—XV., the sentiments and spirit of the remnant,—the moral movements of their heart in this time of trial.

XVI. The place Christ Himself takes in His dependence, in trusting in the time of humiliation; ending in His joy in God's presence in resurrection. XVII. His appeal to right, which ends in His being displayed in glory, as man of course; a lower kind of thing, but still a part of His glory.

In XVIII., the sufferings of Christ are made the centre of all God's ways in Israel, from Egypt to the manifestation of the glory of Messiah.

XIX. The testimony of creation, and of the law; according to the letter of which the remnant presents itself in conscience before God.

In XX., the remnant prophetically sees Christ in His day of trouble, and in His sufferings from man,—in which God hears Him in order to His establishment in His royal rights. XXI. He is answered with length of days for ever and ever, and excellent majesty; and judges His enemies. XXII. He is in sorrow, in which no remnant can enter; in which, through all the concentration of

CX. 6. "He shall wound the head over a great country." (Rosh al eretz rabba).

CXVI. 10. In the presence of death, He goes in and speaks. So Paul 2 Cor. iv.

CXXX. In this psalm, they get into the depths, not from circumstances, but from sin. Instead of speaking of enemies as in CXXIV. ("when man rose up against us"), it is between him and God. It is after the new moon they have the day of atonement.

CXXXIX. The searchings of God throw you back on the thoughts that God had in meeting you in grace; and therefore you can ask God to "search," &c. We are the creatures of His thoughts, as well as the subject of them.

CXLIV. is different from XVIII., in not having the death of Christ as a centre; and, moreover, the heathen are not brought in.

FRAGMENTS.

What loss the gain is when, in collecting, or enlarging *knowledge*, we lose *simplicity* and *affection*. I should like to see them [at—] in their simplicity, and be refreshed by their faith. May we only the more long for the time of perfection. The fragments *will surely* be gathered up at last. Not one shall be lost—not a fragment of the joy of the Spirit shall be lost; but the bright spots of the soul shall be fixed there in their full beauty for ever, though now they seem at times to disappear.

The Lord's relationship to the world was perfect in moral dignity. He was a *Conqueror*, a *Sufferer*, and a *Benefactor* in it. Such a combination is wonderful and excellent indeed.

He was ever serving that world, the course and pollution of which made Him a Conqueror; the iniquity and contradiction of which made Him a Sufferer. He was never overcome of evil, but ever overcame evil with good.

No. V.

ROMANS XVI. 25, 26; EPHESIANS III. 1—10;
COLOSSIANS I. 24—27.

Now to Him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the Prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for the obedience of faith. To God only wise be glory, through Christ Jesus for ever. Amen.

There should a little criticism enter here; the words translated "writings of the Prophets," is in the original *γραφῶν προφητικῶν*, i.e. prophetic writings. The Hebrew idiom is to put the genitive of a substantive for the adjective, it often translated adjectively in the common translation does not apply here; the case is reversed, and there is no warrant for the word "Prophets," nor would it be true, because the Prophets of the Old Testament did not give a hint of the mystery here spoken of.* The earth is the object of their prophecy. Judah, Israel, the nations, judgments, blessings, the glory of the Son of Man. There has also arisen an interesting question as to the admission of the word "and" (τε), which, I believe is justly retained, and makes, therefore, the prophetic writings more as but one of the methods in the Divine counsels; and the revelation of which, *by which means*, was according to the commandment of the everlasting God. The word "Prophets," therefore, being inapplicable, where shall we look for the prophetic writings which relate to the mystery. The ancient Scriptures were written for our instruction, and there are many prophecies not exactly contained in the body called the Prophets. Moses was a prophet, David

* The church, the body of Christ, was not anticipated, yet the call of the Gentiles on Israel's rejection of the Messiah is. Deut. xxxii.; Isaiah lxi. 1, xlix.

104 *Rom. xvi. 25, 26. Ephes. i. 1—10. Col. iii. 24—27.*

was a prophet, but not in the sense of the prophets of the Old Testament. Moses, and the Psalms, and the Prophets are distinguished by the Lord; and we shall find the mystery hid in the writings of Moses and other books, and which became known by the reflection of the Holy Ghost, upon them, but which had remained till such was cast on them. To no Jew was it granted to read in Adam and Eve the type of the mystery revealed to Paul, and such can be traced in writings thereby, even prophetic at the time appointed of God. "This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and His church." There are other types* of the same, but it is enough to show that from the first God was pointing out a counsel in His mind before all ages. Thus darkly intimated, and known only when the reflection of the Spirit at the time of the revelation of it was to make it manifest, the *glory* of the church (the ministration of the Spirit) was told of in the New Testament. It was no prophecy of the mystery which it revealed but of the glory of the church. There are many treatises happily, I believe, familiar to many on the truth of the church, but it is the exegesis of the places separately that have engaged the attention of the writer.

The second place is as follows: "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which is given me to you-ward, how, that by revelation, He made known to me the mystery (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which, in other ages, was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body, and partakers of His promise by the Gospel, whereof I am made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God, given unto me by the effectual working of His power—unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see (*φωτισταὶ πάντας*) what is the fellowship (*οικονομία*) of the mystery, which, from the beginning of the

* An assembling of the types on this point would be most profitable.

Rom. xvi. 25, 26. Ephes. i. 1—10. Col. i. 24—27. 105

world, hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that now unto principalities and powers, in heavenly places, might be known by the Church the manifold (*πολυποικίλος*) wisdom of God."

There appear three parts to this: that which was not in other ages revealed unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, that the Gentiles, etc. Here then, first, we have that which was not revealed in particular to Paul, but to the apostles and prophets, and to him, as one of them, it was not revealed as it is now revealed. There was more revealed in the Old Testament, than that the Gentiles should be called in in the day of Christ [see preceding note], but whatever was given came first to the Jew, even to the highest; and the Gentiles, when they trusted in Christ, came in on a perfect level with them in the one new man—fellow-heirs, of the same body, and partakers of promise. This is very general, and does not amount to all given to Paul. Secondly,—It was union with Christ and the unsearchable riches to the soul of His indwelling (in Coloss. Christ in you) that he was given to *preach* (and the first is only said to be *revealed*.) To himself, the least of all saints, is *this* grace given. Thirdly,—That which was yet more special, it was to *enlighten all men*—apostles and prophets—on the order of the rule and feeding of the house, its manner of holding together, its joints and bands, its gifts, and their service. We find *προεστωτας*, &c. &c., to the assembly and eldership in other places, but not these as in the Church, being the *πολυποικίλος*, wisdom of God; intimating variety in the wisdom of God in the frame of the mystery, a wonder of beauty and symmetry and variety, working and fulfilling unity (how different from uniformity the forced work of the enemy in denial of the Church and the Spirit), and the object of the wonder of the principalities and powers in heaven.

Oh! how the heart sighs amidst this desolation! But still is the "*grace given*" that Christ should dwell (*κατα*, deeply) in the heart by faith, that the saints being rooted and grounded in love, they should know the love of Christ, and be filled with all the fulness of God. The Church, and the blessing above, essentially remain and never cease.

106 *Rom. xvi. 25, 26. Ephes. iii. 1—10. Col. i. 24—27.*

The next place is Col. i. 24. The church, whereof I am made minister, according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you, to fulfil (*πληρῶσαι*) the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to (*ἐν*) His saints; to whom God would make known what is the *riches of the glory* of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ “in you, the hope of glory whom we preach, warning every man,” &c. This is more confined to a special object, the mystery, generally, being mentioned to introduce it. Great, beyond all thought, is the nature of the glory that the saints reap by Christ; but the riches of it, is Christ Himself in them—“The unsearchable riches of Christ.” How we may bless God that FAITH is the way of possession; the object effecting, to faith, all that it is in such kind to receive.

This is the second point; that is, the purpose of the Spirit in the Epistle to the Colossians, which Epistle is an introduction of the Church to Christ, as Lord, to Christ the head of the Church (and is a sequel to the Epistle to the Ephesians), as Lord over all, and over the Church, as here in the kingdom; and as the relationship was in the Ephesians of the saints in Christ: here it is Christ in them; and we have, it strikes me, the obedience in the different relationships to Christ, as Lord, and Christ as indwelling; so wondrous are the depths still open to our study and use: and we have to bless the grace that keeps them so; and how confident we ought to be in the Lord, being still with His people, that nothing shall be wanting, even in an evil day, to perfect them in the stature of Christ. How it ought to rejoice, while it humbles the heart, to find God so busy about our salvation, as to reveal, in His “wisdom and prudence,” all that may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

No. VI.

COLOSSIANS II. 15.

“HE was crucified in weakness, but He arose by the power of God.” There never was such an exhibition of *weakness* as the cross. All was set against the Lord. God was withdrawn; man had proved his full enmity; disciples were faithless; and hell had its hour of power. But it was succeeded by a time of the *most glorious, magnificent strength* that was ever displayed. As soon as the life was surrendered, heaven, earth, and hell, God even, and Satan, all bore their several witness that the strength of that moment was felt and understood by them. The veil of the temple was rent, the rocks of the earth were split asunder, and the graves were burst wide open. Glorious, victorious strength thus touched the most entire, and absolute, and unrelieved weakness, joining together, I may say, the point on which the divine and counselled history of eternity was to turn.

The death was the victory of the living Son of God; resurrection and ascension were His triumph, or the public celebration of the victory. But the victory could not altogether wait for the third day—it *must publish itself at once*. And so it did, as we see, by the rending of the vail, the rocks, and the graves; and whether it were by those earlier results of the victorious death, or by the more orderly and material fruit of that victory, in the resurrection and ascension, still, in each way, “a show” has been made of all the powers of darkness, and that “openly,” or in the way of “triumph.” The Church takes companionship with the Lord in His rejection, in *the eye of the world*; but finds companionship with Him in His victorious death and triumphant resurrection, as far as conscience and *personal, hidden peace with God goes*—a calling of wondrous moral beauty!

JACOB.

THE BLESSING : WHEN WAS IT GIVEN TO HIM.

I WOULD call attention to a fact, little noticed in general, in Jacob's history. Isaac blessed him *twice*, and not only once. When Jacob sought, by deceit, to get the blessing, Gen. xxvii., Isaac did give him *a* blessing, then and there, but it was not *the* blessing. *The* blessing came out, afterwards, just when he was reaping the sorrowful fruits of his deceit, as above ; viz., in chap. xxviii.

This will be clear if we compare Isaac's first blessing of Jacob and of Esau, in Gen. xxvii., and Isaac's second, and God's first, blessings of Jacob, in chap. xxviii. Thus :—

Isaac blessed Jacob.

"See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed: therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee" (Gen. xxvii. 27—29).

Isaac blessed Jacob.

"And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham" (Gen. xxviii. 3, 4).

Isaac blessed Esau.

"Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and the dew of heaven from above; and by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck" (Gen. xxvii. 39, 40).

God blessed Jacob.

"I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" (Gen. xxviii. 13—15).

N^o. VII.

PHILIPPIANS.

IN the Epistle to the Philippians, we find much more of Christian experience and the development of the exercise of the heart than in the generality of the epistles. Doctrine and practice are found in them all, but with the exception of the 2nd to Timothy, which is of another nature, there is none that contains, like this, the expression of the Christian's experience in this toilsome life, and the resources which are open to him in passing through it, and the motives which ought to govern him. We may even say that this epistle gives us the experience of Christian life in its highest and most perfect expression. God has condescended to furnish us with this beautiful picture of it, as well as with the truths that enlighten us, and the rules that direct our walk. The occasion for it was quite natural. Paul was in prison, and the Philippians, who were very dear to him, and who, at the commencement of his labours, had testified their affection for him by similar gifts, had just sent assistance to the apostle by the hand of Epaphroditus; at a moment when, as it appears, he had been for some time in need. A prison, need, the consciousness that the Church was deprived of his watchful care, this expression on the part of the Philippians, of the love that thought of him in his necessities, although at a distance — what could be more adapted to open the apostle's heart, and lead to his expressing the confidence in God that animated him, as well as that which he felt with regard to the Church, now unsupported by his apostolic care, and having to trust in God himself without any intermediate help. And it was most natural that he should pour out his feelings into the bosom of these beloved Philippians, who had just given him this proof of their affection. The apostle,

all circumstances, and thus to depend on no one. He knew how to be abased; he knew how to abound; in every way he was instructed both to be full, and to be hungry; to be in abundance, and to suffer want. He could do all things through Christ who strengthened him. Sweet and precious experience: not only because it gives ability to meet all circumstances which is of great price, but because the Lord is known the constant, faithful, mighty friend of the heart. It is not "I can do all things," but "I can do all through Christ who strengthens me." It is a strength which continually flows from a relationship with Christ; a connection with Him maintained in the heart. Neither is it only, "one can do all things." This is true; but Paul had learnt it practically. He knew what he could be assured of and reckon on what ground he stood on. Christ had always been faithful to him; had brought him through so many difficulties, and through so many seasons of prosperity, that he had learnt to trust in Him, and not in circumstances. And Christ was the same ever. Still the Philippians had done well, and it was not forgotten. From the first, God had bestowed this grace upon them, and they had supplied his need, even when he was not with them. He remembered it with affection, not that he desired a gift, but fruit to their own account. "But," he says, "I have all;" his heart turning back to the simple expression of its love. He was in abundance, having received by Epaphroditus that which they had sent him, an acceptable sacrifice of sweet odour, well-pleasing to God.

His heart rested in God: his assurance with regard to the Philippians expresses it. My God, he says, shall richly supply all your need. He does not express a *wish* that God may do so. He had learnt what his God was, by his own experience. My God, he says, He whom I have learnt to know in all the circumstances through which I have passed, shall fill you with all good things. And here he returns to His character as he had known Him. God would do it according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. There he had learnt to know Him at the beginning; and such he had known Him all along

his varied path, so full of trials here, and of joys from above. Accordingly he thus concludes: "Now unto our God and Father"—for such he was to the Philippians also—"be glory for ever and ever." He applies his own experience of that which God was to him, and his experience of the faithfulness of Christ to the Philippians. This satisfied his love, and gave him rest with regard to them. It is a comfort when we think of the Church.

He sends the greeting of the brethren who were with him, and of the saints in general, especially those of Cæsar's household; for even there God had found some who, through grace, had listened to His voice of love.

He ends with the salutation which was a token in all his epistles, that they were from himself.

The present state of the Church, of the children of God, dispersed anew, and often as sheep without a shepherd, is a very different condition of ruin from that in which the apostle wrote; but this only adds more value to the experience of the apostle which God has been pleased to give us; the experience of a heart which trusted in God alone, and which applies this experience to the condition of those who are deprived of the natural resources that belonged to the organized body, to the body of Christ as God had formed it on earth.

SCRAPS.

THE TURN OF TIME.—"WHEN things come to the worst, then they begin to mend. And now at the worst they assuredly were; so this was the turning-point—the cold hour before the dawn."

HOME.—"I wonder shall I ever see you all again! In my thoughts I dwell with you; in my dreams I tread the green fields of *home*, and pluck those flowers that too soon wither in my grasp;—for I wake and find myself in a foreign land."

N^o. VIII.

ON FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST.

PART V.

ON "LIFE WITH HIM."

IN the last article on this subject (p. 1), we looked at some of the testimony, given by the Holy Ghost in Scripture, as to the believer having been *quickened together with Christ*. By the passages then cited we found ourselves more especially led to consider the act and moment of the Christ's taking His life again as the act and moment in the which *the birth-place* (as it were) of that life which we, believers, have, in and from Christ, is marked out for us. Indeed, the wording of those passages does, in measure, limit the thoughts of the mind to *the taking-up* of the life. But there are other passages which refer to that same life, passages in which there is no limitation of thought to *the taking-up* of the life, — passages in which reference is made rather to *the possession* of the life itself, than to the taking of it up.

What I mean will appear, at once, to the most simple minds, if the difference of the two verbs in Greek, *συνωπτοiew* and *συνζαω*, which are correctly rendered in English by their equivalents "to quicken (or *make* alive) together with," and "to live together with," be considered.

God quickened us (or made us alive) together with Christ, is what we saw in Eph. ii. 3 and Col. ii. 13: God was the gracious actor; His Christ, the one in whom it was formally wrought for us, when He took His life again. Such was the teaching of our last article. *We* do possess life already in Christ—and shall shortly be manifested as ourselves possessing that life when He is manifested in life; such is the teaching of the passages to which we now turn. Not only quickened together

with Him, but also so manifestly partakers of His life now, that we know that when He is made manifest in life to all, and when He reigns over all, then we also shall be made *manifest in life* together with Him (for we do already partake His life, and know that we do) and shall reign with Him. To these passages, less restricted than those of our last article, we now turn, viz.:—

Rom. vi. 8. "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also *live with Him*." And,

2 Tim. ii. 11. "It is a faithful saying: for if we be dead with Him, we shall also *live with Him*."

Rom. vi. 8. "*Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.*"

The doctrine of baptism, Christian baptism, is that God has provided a burial-place for the old man in us; He can reckon *the old man* of them that believe, to be crucified, dead and buried together with Christ. The act of Christian baptism is the individual believer's setting to his own seal to the truth of this divine doctrine,—his declaration, that he reckons, through grace, that the sepulture which God proposes altogether suffices. For the believer can trust God, who, having raised His Son from the dead, gave Him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God. He, therefore, counts or reckons upon that being buried together with Christ, by baptism, into His death (Rom. vi. 1—14). But if faith can reckon that the old man died together with Christ, because God says, that He so reckons it, faith is occupied also with another life,—“We believe that we shall also live together with Him.” The *first* great point to mark is, that there is another life besides the life of Adam the first. If all that we were, or had of our own, from the first Adam, is reckoned to have died with Christ—we are not without life—for, *secondly*, Christ's life, taken by Him in resurrection, is given, freely given, to us, as the whole chapter (Rom. vi.) shews. Observe, the question is not merely about our future existence in another world than this,—that is true, indeed,—but that is not the great point here; but rather our present possession of a

life, now together with Christ—the life which He took when He arose from the grave, a life upon the certainty of our present possession of which the apostle could rest our obligation to live to God; that is his subject. And, let the reader mark here, 3rdly, some of the essential characteristics of it, as named in this context. It is “eternal life” (chap. v. 21); it is that by means of which we can “walk in newness of life” (chap. vi. 4); it secures to us “the likeness of his resurrection” (ver. 5); it is life “together with Christ” (ver. 8); a life over which “death hath no dominion” (ver. 9); a life by the which we are “alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord” (ver. 11); “alive from the dead,” and our “members instruments of righteousness unto God” (ver. 13); “under grace” (ver. 14).

We see, then, 1st., that if grace puts its sentence upon the life of nature in us, upon the life of Adam the first, it gives us, at once, another spring. 2ndly, that this new life in us is the life of Christ, the Christ that rose from the grave; and, 3rdly, that it is to be judged of and thought of according to its fountain-head and source,—the Christ who is in God. It is eternal life—has a new path for itself—according to the glory of the risen One—for it is a life of fellowship with Him—a life beyond the power of death—a life unto God—from amid the dead; a life of practical godliness under grace.

Let it be observed that there are three distinct statements as to the life. 1st. In the Son of God, as the Word was life (John i. 4). 2ndly. the Prince of Life, who was killed (Acts iii. 15) had eternal life (compare John v. 26, 27); and, 3rdly, the eternal life is given to us in the Son (1 John v. 11, 12).

The first of these passages refers the glory of the life which is to be given to us, to the Son as the Word; and its context refers every other glory of God which has ever been displayed to the Son, as the Word of God; the second asserts, that this life was in the man Jesus, who was crucified; the third presents us with a risen and ascended Christ, Son of Man and Son of God, now in glory, as the one in whom this life is now presented to us. It is important to mark this distinction on

many accounts. For instance, by the observing it, we are guarded, on the one hand, from supposing that our fellowship is association with the Son of God in His character of the Word; from the folly of expecting to sit upon the throne of God; to be clothed with Deity; to be omniscient, omnipresent, and such like absurdities; and, secondly, we are kept from the thought that our association with Him is according to what He was while He was upon Jewish grounds, and had not as yet made atonement, which leads into bondage and legality of spirit; and, thirdly, we are shut up by it to the truth of association with a risen and ascended man *in heaven*, who is in heaven and not upon earth, sits as Son of Man upon the Father's throne, and sits there as the one who is past the judgment which he bore for our sakes, and is not only Head of His body the Church, but, also, is the One in whom our life is. Unless this point be clearly apprehended, I do not think the Christian will be free from what he ought to be free from, or free for and to that, to and for which he ought to be free. I shall, therefore, rest upon this a little, and call attention to it by citing a few verses which show what is the position and what the placing of our Lord Jesus Christ, when He is spoken of, in Scripture, as *our life*.

1st. The doctrine as taught by the Lord:

John xiv. 19, 20. "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more, but ye see me: because I live ye shall live also, at that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me *and I in you*."

2ndly. The realization of this by the apostles and early Christians:

Col. iii. 1—4. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 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. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory."

The whole Epistle to the Ephesians, also, looks at the Church as being in Christ, and having its life there, in Him, in heaven (read chaps. i., ii., iii.).

3rdly. We may remark the same thing, where the Spirit of God is arguing out God's way of blessing to be only in and through Christ, in Romans v. and vi. Take, for instance, these verses:

Chap v. 10. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we *shall be saved by His life*;"—and (ver. 17) "shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."

Chap. vi. 4. "We are buried with Him (Christ) by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Ver. 23. "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Chap. viii. 2, 6, 10, bears the same testimony. Here the topic is what the life of the Christian here below should be, a life flowing out of a salvation which had just been shown to be union in life with the Christ who had passed through death.

Take, again, the *very* form of the gospel as made known to Saul — of Christ, as the Saviour and salvation of Paul.

We can truly cite "I was found of them that sought me not. I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me" (Rom. x. 20). It was the ascended and the glorified Christ, who said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me," etc. (Acts ix.) And one end of this we find named in 1 Tim. i. 16, "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting."

Take, again, the gospel as formally stated by Paul. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost. In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 3—6).

With this position of Christ clearly, 2 Tim. i. 1 and 10 must be connected, and also 1 Joh i. 2; v. 11, 12; and not with Him when on the earth previous to His suffering.

I now turn to my second text.

2 Tim. ii. 11. "*It is a faithful saying : for if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him.*"

Some of the essential characteristics of the life we have from, and with, the Christ, were noticed above, as found in Rom. v. and vi. That it is "eternal;" gives power "to walk with God;" secures to us the similitude of Christ's resurrection; is a life over which death has no dominion, is life together with Christ; a life unto God from among the dead, etc. In the portion in which it is found in the Epistle to the Romans *the how* we are saved, is the subject under consideration. In Paul's Epistle to Timothy, the walk here below, which becomes such a life is rather the topic; and accordingly the force of this context seems to me to be just this: you must make up your mind, if the life of Christ is indeed your portion, to have experiences here below, similar to those which He had. Paul's effort was to tighten the girdle of Timothy a little unto patience in suffering: so it seems to me. "Be strong in the grace that is in Jesus Christ" (ver. 1); "Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (ver. 3); "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life;" "be a soldier" (ver 4); "Strive for masteries . . . lawfully" (ver. 5); are all of them expressions which mark the *servant's* position and portion. And then he adds, "Consider what I say: and the Lord give thee understanding in all things. Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my Gospel. Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying: for if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us. If

we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself" (ver. 7—13).

If Christ was raised *from the dead*; if Paul also preached the Gospel of Christ *raised FROM THE DEAD* (that is, of a Christ who had suffered unto death) what had Timothy, what have we to expect, here below, if made one with Christ (He the Head, and we members, and hereafter to be displayed as such, alive and reigning with Him), what have we to expect, in and from this world, save suffering?

Such, I take it, is the thought of the apostle. Clearly we who, through grace, died together with Him, have *already* a life in and from Him. Its manifestation, hereafter, will be in glory; for in heaven, and before God, what, but that which is Christ's will shine, and how brightly will every expression of His life then shine! But now that same life which, hereafter, in God's presence, will tell itself out in bright glory; now, in the presence of a godless world, and before the flesh and Satan tells itself out, as did Christ's, in suffering.

I speak not of his sufferings on the cross, when making atonement for us, but of His sufferings as the Son and servant of God in His life on earth. Conflict with Satan; opposition to the world; a course of holy walk; testimony for God; sympathy with His disciples, and compassion towards a world dead in trespasses and sins, could give but sorrow and suffering to such a One as the Christ of God. We have life in and from Him; and, therefore, in whatever measure His life be developed and manifested in us, that life which is to be fully displayed in us when we reign with Him, in that same measure will there be, without an effort on our parts, approximation to, and a tasting of, His portion, who was the "Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" all His life through, from the cradle to the cross; that cross where He was altogether alone, and none with Him; sorrow was His portion—perfect sorrow—sorrow to a degree, such as there is none to be likened to it. In our measure (oh how small a one it is, yet, in our measure, because we have His life, and are in the same world He was, a world, too, now *declared* to be enmity against God) we have

sorrow and suffering. May we gird up the loins of our minds and be sober, enduring unto the end.

Life in the Son as the word; a life lived by Him upon the very earth we are upon; a life given as a ransom for us, and now taken by Him again, and displaying itself in Him to faith; made ours for entire liberty, privilege, and service, now and as the power of fellowship, with Him in all His sufferings (save that of atonement, in which He alone suffered, and we are freely make partakers of what He did for us) have just been briefly looked at. May the saints ponder these things. That life we shall hereafter have to look at, as it is to be displayed in glory; but the two thoughts which have here been more particularly rested upon, are the essential qualities of His life, as His and (through grace) ours, and the necessary consequence of this, while we are on the earth, of suffering.

The importance which attaches to *this* part of our subject, will unfold as we proceed. But, clearly, if our *gospel* is the gospel of life, eternal life in the Son, the life of which we have been speaking is of all-absorbing interest: and so, also, in handling the subject of "*Fellowship with Christ*," what immense place must *the life* in which we participate have! the life which is, in us, the power of fellowship with Himself first, and then with Him in the portion into which, through grace, He brings us. To a simple mind, this would suffice; but (so little simple are we when we are occupied with the things of God and of heaven, and not with the things of ourselves and earth, that) I shall venture to present a thought, or two, which may help some minds.

First, look back into the times which Gen. i. 1 reveals to us, and see the infinite God in action, calling into existence what He wills, with almighty power and wisdom and goodness; look, now, into Eden, as revealed in Gen. ii.: the circumstances—the Being, and attributes and Actions of the infinite God. How different is this from the circumstances—the being, attributes and actions of the finite creature in chap. ii. Fitness for the enjoyment of the possession of Eden, supposed the possession of a being, heart and mind similar to Adam's. So that when

he first looked around Eden, he saw there was no help meet for him. Eve was the complement of Adam in this respect; complement to himself for himself, and for the then scene of blessing: and mark, too, how infinite the distance was between the infinite God and His creatures. From the highest created angel, down to the lowest creature, there may be gradational steps, for all I know. From man, lord of creation, down to the lowest creature, there seems to have been a string of creatures gradually decreasing in power; and no break so mighty in the many-linked chain, as that between human reason, with its power to own God as the giver, and the very lowest instinct, or (lower still) lowest proof of life in any sense. But that break is not infinite. But the distance between infinite and finite, is infinite; or the infinite God would not be infinite, and man finite. Now mark the strange prospect which is before us: the Son of God is heir of all things, but He is to take the inheritance as Son of man (Heb. i. 2, and ii. 8). Now, if I think of the Son of man possessing, at God's hand, heaven and earth, and see Him in the new Jerusalem above, in heaven, with the Church His bride, I can see somewhat of the sort of *life*, mind, heart, habits, those must have who are really to enjoy such a position, and such a scene, with Him, and for Him, and for His glory. The life of God would not have done for Adam in the garden of Eden; he had been made to fill a scene fitted for a living soul; the life of Adam would not do for the new Jerusalem. Fitness for fellowship with Christ, there to be His joy, as well as to find all our joy in God and the Lamb there, supposes participation by us, fellowship with Him, according to *the life* which He will then and there display in glory; and (mark it) it is not creation- but redemption-glory; and in heaven, not upon earth. The infinitely blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; heaven (as well as earth) re-arranged and arranged according to a new order; and the Son of God, *as son of man*, the centre of the whole scene of glory, the Church with Him, object of His love, sharer of the glory then, as she even already is of the life of her exalted Head; and, therefore, now of His suffering.

The living-soul life of Creation's fairest scene would not do for participation in The Almighty Quickener's higher scene, divine and heavenly as it is, of His redemption-glory. The second Adam, therefore, is a life-giving spirit; and we have eternal life in Him, and derived from Him, that we may be able to taste, and share, and enjoy, and do honour to heavenly courts above.^a

^a "Ye are in our hearts, to die and live with you" (2 Cor. vii. 3). Such were the forcible words of Paul, when he communicated to the Corinthians his readiness to count himself altogether their servant. If they lived, he would live with them; if they died, he would die with them. For, if they were one spirit with the Lord, so was he also; and thus, also, was he one spirit with them; and ready, therefore, to count the life of his body, or the death of it, to be entirely at their service. United to them by the highest tie, viz. that which was of and in God, he could count his living or dying as to the body, nothing in comparison of his association with them. Grace had wrought this in Paul. Peter, and the twelve had lived with Christ, and declared that they were ready to die with Him; but, in the hour of trial, when the shepherd was smitten, the sheep were scattered.

"Skin for skin; yea, all that a man hath, will he give for his life" (Job ii. 4), was the estimate which Satan formed of man; yea, and that if thou "but put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, he will curse thee to thy face." Man, in his own power, cannot stand—human purpose will go but a little way in following Christ. "Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice" (John xiii. 38). But Paul's strength was not in the flesh, but in the spirit; and the power on which he counted, when he thus wrote, was that of which our Lord spake to Peter. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. This spake He, signifying by what death He should glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He saith unto him, Follow me" (John xxi. 18, 19).

The point, however, which I more especially wished to notice, was the difference between Paul's willingness to die and to live with the Corinthians, according to the life of his own body, and his being dead with Christ, and living together with Him in the spirit. In the former case, he had a life which he was willing and ready to lay down, to pour out, to make a libation of to God, if the life which the disciples had, needed it in any way. He would that his life should be preserved or sacrificed, according as the preservation or the sacrifice of life seemed most expedient. In the second case, Christ had penally died, because he, Paul, was

Napoleon (the first) spent his life in efforts to throw down all that belonged not to him, and to gather it up again for himself. Wellington's public course, as soldier, was not marked thus, by selfish lawlessness, but as a servant of the king, under whom God's providence had cast his lot. He laboured, as a servant, to counterwork the enemies of his king and country. In their service his mortal life was carried in his hand, ever ready, for their benefit, to be laid down. Paul, in the power of a new eternal life given to him, held his mortal life as ever ready to be laid down, if the Christ, whom he served, could be served thereby, even in the needs and wants of His feeblest members here below. But the new life was the medium through which his object was seen and sought after. Jesus, in heaven above, the Lord of all, Himself the centre and end of all the divine counsels, was He in whom the Spirit had revealed to Paul, what the fountain-spring of his new life was. Christian! you have to live here below, as being yourself, already, an integral part of that glory, which has yet to be revealed to mortal eyes, though known now to faith: as being yourself, already, one connected with, and knowing yourself to be connected with, that same Jesus, Lord of all, who sits in heaven, centre and end of all God's counsels, thoughts, desires, and plans. Have you realized this? Are you living in the power of such a life at this present time? The eternal life, which will be displayed in glory hereafter, is now connected, now connects itself, has now (properly) no connection with anything looked at as apart from, and not a subject of interest to, Jesus, sitting as Lord, at the right hand of the Father.

morally dead; he was counted dead; counted himself so: but He had life in common with Christ, who was risen from the grave; and this life was eternal life; a life which he, Paul, never could lay aside, which never could see death; the power and worth of which would only come out the more, if he had to lay down his bodily life, and to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord.

No. IX.

COMMENTS UPON TEXTS.

III.

LIVING TOGETHER WITH CHRIST.

No. 1.—THIRD TEXT.

"Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that *we shall also live with Him*" (Rom. vi. 8).

THIS statement might be taken into its component parts, thus:—There is, first, "*death together with Christ*;" which is put forward, not in a form which declares it attaches to this or to that one, to those or to these persons, but put with an hypothesis, which is the second point to notice—an if:—"If death together with Christ is true of us"—then there follows, thirdly, the certain consequence thereof, "*that we shall reign together with Him.*"

Or, if you please, you may state it thus:—This is faith's assured statement, "We shall live together with Christ, IF we be dead together with Him."

So far all is clear, I think. But some pass over the *mode* in which *the consequence* (of being dead together with Christ) is put, viz., "*we shall also live together with Him*;" "for," say they, "we know, and assuredly believe, that we *do already live together* with Him; why, then, is a future tense (we *shall* live) used, and not a present tense, we *do* live."

It is quite true, we that believe have life already, and know that we have it together with Christ; for it is written, as of that which is a truth, and true at the present time to the believer. "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me; because I live, ye shall live also. At that time ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (John xiv. 19, 20). Now this is a truth, which we that believe

realize the blessing of *now*—because He lives, we live also; and the same, also, may be said of vers. 16—18. For the Father has given to us a guardian to supply the place of Christ—and He abides with us evermore, even the Spirit of truth—who is in us. And, again, we are not comfortless (ver. 18), for Christ manifests Himself to us (ver. 21—29). And, again, “God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son, hath life” (not *shall* have it, but *hath* it).

First, then, we remark, they are quite right who say, “The believer hath life already, and knows he hath it.” Texts might be multiplied to prove the truth of this, but the context of the verse which is under examination suffices, for the whole of chaps. vi., vii., and viii. suppose life to be already in the believers, and to be known by themselves to be there; though they needed instruction from the apostle as to, 1st, many things in connection with it, if they were to understand their privileges, and, 2ndly, as to many other things in connection with themselves, if they were to be workers that needed not to be ashamed; able to walk in liberty, and to keep themselves apart from the world and the flesh and the devil.

Yes, the believer hath life already, and knows he hath it. But remark the difference of taking up a fragment of truth, thus (as the difficulty-finder does) judging of it according to his own blessed and happy experience in faith, and the apostle’s handling the same item of truth in connection with God’s mode, in theory and practice, of interposing His Christ—1st, in what He suffered vicariously, between the believer and his sins and their just consequences; and, 2ndly, in what He is as the fountain and source of new and, till then, unheard-of blessings.

Let the verse itself be weighed in the scales of reason and of mere human intelligence, and the vast fulness of the subject will be better felt. “If we be dead with Christ, we believe also that we shall live together with Him.” “Too much learning hath made thee mad,” would be *nature’s* first comment; her second, perhaps, “Why, how

can a dead man be talking of what is to be?" Alas! To-day has its own class of corrupters of the word, whose senseless insubjection to Scripture shows that the flesh profiteth not. Familiarity with a subject is not the same thing as knowledge of it. But it would be vain and thankless work to attempt, even, to show how the human mind, when in the place of light and under the responsibility of having God's written Word, has corrupted the doctrines of grace as to Christ's substitution for sinners, and His being the source of new blessings to the believer. I turn to the text.

The following points may be noticed as having been brought by Paul before the mind, previously, in the epistle. First, that man, left to himself on account of sin, had made gods many, after his own corrupt lust (chap. i.); 2ndly, that those who had knowledge (as the Jew) through a law, or standard of right and wrong, having been given to them to see and judge this, did just as badly themselves, and caused, by their conduct, the first-named class to blaspheme (chap. ii.) 3rdly, that the law, requiring perfectness in the party it blessed, had pronounced all mere men, without exception, under the curse (chap. iii. 1—20). 4thly, that this only tended to make manifest that free-gift righteousness of God, which was by faith in Jesus Christ—not of works, and open equally to Jew and to Gentile (chap. iii. 20—31). That this was borne witness to by Abraham, and by David, each in his own way (chap. iv. 1—16). But these four points might be looked at (not only thus, as to what they show of man, but, on the other side also) as to what they show of God. Thus, 1st, when man had sinned, and would not seek unto God, God showed Himself a God of patience and goodness toward the Gentile; and, 2ndly, while he waited till the due time was come for him to act fully, He dealt with the Jew, allowing him to use a standard of right and wrong, put into his hand to be a means of showing what it really was which fallen man had in him. 3rdly, was shown where man really was and to what reduced as a creature; and, 4thly, what it was which He, the living God, thought man wanted, if he was to be blessed; and how He knew

Himself alone to be sufficient as the Source of such blessing, and His Son the alone able Accomplisher of it.

Observe, the law does not go further than to enumerate what a man, under given circumstances, ought to do; and what the reward, if he does as he should, is to be, and what the curse is if he fails in any one point.

The gospel was God's remedy for the confessedly failed ones—His plan and His way of getting to Himself honour in undertaking the cure and the blessing of those whom the law had justly cursed. This brings me to the fifth point. If God had left man to try what he could do,—had God any plan of His own? He clearly had, and it was this—to introduce Himself into the scene of ruin as the God of resurrection, who could raise from the dead, the Redeemer-God, who could say to the strongest enemy, "Give up," and could take back to Himself in a higher and better scene what elements He thus took from the fall. And, observe the time He chose for this was when man, left to himself, had corrupted the very notion of Deity, and when man, placed under light, had used that light to puff up his own heart with before God.

And, mark here, sixthly, what the wants were according to God's thoughts.

1st. There was a righteousness wanted; for all were under condemnation (chap. iii. 21, 22).

2ndly. This must be in a way which supposed no *power* to be in the party blessed—it was, therefore, by faith^a (ver. 22).

3rdly. It must be "by free grace" (ver. 24).

Now this, 4thly, supposes the introduction of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (ver. 22—26). Who else, indeed, but He, the Son, could clear the honour and glory of God in working out salvation.

5thly. That it was of *promise* (chap. iii. 13, 14), given long before the accomplishment of the blessing (Rom. iii.

^a The law supposes there is strength, for directly a man can say "*that* I cannot do"—the commandment only serves to condemn him. Salvation by faith supposes that God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, can shine into our dark hearts the light of His own grace and glory.

3, 17—21), showed how God would have His counsel recognized, and how He meant to make it approve itself and show forth his faithfulness and power, too, by allowing all the waters of the stream of time, and its circumstances, to roll in, and prove their powerlessness to change His promise. And, 6thly, this *promise* supposed certain things to be in Him, the living God, which were needful if ruined man was to get a blessing. He must needs be God, who, 1st, *quickeneth the dead*; and, 2ndly, who calleth those things which be not as though they were. And with these thoughts, God separated persons to Himself in time—He gave promises—they believed he was able to perform them—“and therefore it was imputed to them for righteousness” (ver. 22).

This brings us back to the great point of difficulty.

“Now it was not written for His sake alone, that it was imputed to Him. But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Rom. iv. 23—25).

Observe, Paul is here speaking, not as you and I might speak, experimentally of his own enjoyed portion, but of God’s way (theory and practice) of salvation. There is a certain Jesus—the benefits of whose death and resurrection belong to those who believe in Him who raised Him from the dead.

There is a certain abstract manner of putting it here which is just the difference between the handling of the way as the truth of God and the speaking of it as a matter of enjoyment.

It is just so, I conceive, in our text. “Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live together with him” (Rom. vi. 8). But there is another thing to remark, as connected with this, and that is the real difficulty when one comes to ponder the remedy in Christ for man, and the fulness of the salvation which is in Christ, which will be found, as we pass on, to justify fully the *future* tense, instead of the present.

If any one will weigh up what Saul was ere Christ called him; what Christ’s call to him was; what the

change in spirit, in heart, and in mind, and in outward life of Paul was; what that conflict with himself, with Satan, and with all his circumstances, while he was in the body; what the moral education of his soul by Christ; what his state from the time of his decease till the time of Christ's raising his body in glory—if, I say, any one can, however inadequately, run through these things, he will see the magnitude of the subject; and how, too, *eternal life in heavenly glory* being that for which Paul was called—there is, evidently, great propriety in the life being spoken of, in its fullest *future* display (“We shall live together with Him”), and not according to its present in-dwelling in us. In us it is a fountain of living waters, springing up to everlasting life, most surely. It and its true eternal character are known to us now, and they are the basis of our actions and of an entirely new life; but the eternal life is to be looked at in its *future* bright and unhindered display in heaven, if the real privilege of its possession is to be seen.

The truth of God acts upon us, through faith, and by the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But this liberty in the Spirit is a most real and true thing, and is, in one sense, higher than affection and understanding, for it is divine—the Spirit of God witnessing with our (renewed) spirits. But redemption is not merely divine, as to its source, and divine in itself as God's remedy, but is meant *for man*;—man is to be redeemed; and, therefore, God gives not only His Spirit and spiritual instincts, but He also both divinely forms affections in our hearts, as men, to Himself and His Son, and also gives us an understanding that we may *know* and be able to comprehend and understand the why and the wherefore of the truth, and His ways with us.

The testimony of the Spirit Himself, the spiritual instincts, the trained affections of the heart, the detailed knowledge of the understanding, can *often* be separated the one from the other.^b But as they are all found

^b For instance, in Rom. viii. we get the Spirit of God dwelling in—possessed of—a man (ver. 9—11), guiding and leading persons (ver. 14); witnessing (ver. 16), hereafter to quicken mortal

necessarily in the common salvation of each soul and in the Church, they cannot always be nicely distinguished the one from the other by us, who are the subjects of that salvation. We shall see this, and the amazing scope, too (its breadth and width), of the salvation which our God has made ours in Christ, if we turn to Rom. v.

“Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (ver. 1).

[Not only is the Lord the one who is peace, in whom alone there is peace, but *we HAVE peace*; He is *OUR Lord*].

“By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God (ver. 2).

[What an immeasurably blessed position and prospect! Yet the Spirit, the new nature, the heart and the mind here also, each and all, have their place].

Then “not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience. And patience, experience; and experience, hope. And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Rom. v. 3—5).

Observe it, not only peace within (ver. 1), and a standing place of grace (ver. 2), where we can rejoice, and hope for the glory of God—but here we get two other things marked; 1st, power of voluntary hearty concurrence with God in His training of ourselves, though by sorrow and patience; and, 2ndly, God’s love shed abroad in the heart, as ointment, by the Holy Ghost given to us. What a blessed people we are!

Next we have that which shows what God saw of our state, and what He did. Oh, how unlike the law of

bodies (ver. 11); so we have the spiritual instinct of the spirit of adoption, which cries Abba (ver. 15), our spirit (ver. 16); so we have the heart, with its affections, the love of God shed abroad in it (named in chap. v. 5), but found here as in ver. 18, 19, 39, and also the “we know,” as in ver. 22, 26, 28. “WE KNOW” is so distinctive of the religion of Christ, that it might pass as the motto of a divinely taught heavenly man: only this knowledge is divine and heavenly.

Moses! "When we were without strength—ungodly—Christ died for us" (ver. 6).

The law said to us, as creatures, Do the will of God, and live in it; or be cursed, "but God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (ver. 8).

And, then, see what follows—this divine arguing out of things—the blood stayed all the claims of justice against us—the death of Christ was in substitution for us—but, if saving us from the wrath to come, it has reconciled us, there is yet *more* for us; we shall be *saved by His life*. "Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled we shall be saved by His life" (vers. 9, 10).

This (as ver. 11 shews us) sets us free to rejoice in God Himself. Not only to rejoice in hope of his glory (as ver. 2), nor to glory in tribulation (as ver. 3), but in God Himself. For the believer is brought unto God to find his joy in Himself. "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (ver. 11).

Then (and mark it well) Paul contrasts the two Adams and their works and fruits.

ADAM THE FIRST.

By him sin entered the world;—and death by sin;—a death which passed over all, for all were sinners.

The offence of one, led by judgment unto a condemnation, reigning over all, which, alas, harmonized with the sinner-ship of all.

HIM THAT WAS TO COME.

By Him came God's grace, and the free gift of grace, even through Jesus Christ.

Righteousness led, by free grace unto a justification of life which was toward all, but *upon* them that believe; and abounded unto them that believed, that so grace might reign through righteousness, unto *eternal* life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is wondrous how the Saviour and the Redeemer-God does, in this portion, show how He has stooped to measure out a blessing in contrast with all the ruin of creature-work as introduced by man.

And, notice here, that, the blessing is (not merely

justification unto life, but is) grace reigning, through righteousness, unto ETERNAL life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Now, if we are to see what that is, in its full meaning, we must get past the present enjoyment of it in this our time state,^c into that time and state in which the eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, will be shown and seen in its own proper sphere and scenes hereafter. Thus we see a “why” and a “wherefore” of its being said, in our text, not “Now if we be dead together with Christ, we know that we do also live together with Him,” but “Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we *shall* also live with Him.”

We have thus far looked at the antecedents of the chapter in which our verse is; and we have seen, on the one hand, tiny man, in the least of all his littleness when in sin; and, on the other hand, God in all the greatness of His patience and long-suffering, and in the grandeur of His mercy. Man was shown out as in progress on the earth,—Gentile and Jew (chaps. i., ii., iii.), and, after that, man, as a head, originating the ruin in which his family had been found (chap. v.); and God was seen first in His greatness as Creator, and as the long-suffering God in patience, and then in all that greater greatness, immeasurable, in which He displayed Himself when acting against, and in contrast to, the ruin which man had brought in. His counsel, His plans, His ways, confess Him always and everywhere to be God alone; not one requirement of His own infinite glory has been forgotten; and so fully is it all poured forth in the gift of His Son, and the presence of the Spirit, that the all-pervading testimony of grace and mercy leaves every soul without excuse; they can only be lost through neglect of the mercy. God has not only done a work by which to glorify Himself in the salvation of them that believe, but it is a work which leaves man, guilty unbelieving man, more condemned than even did

^c In which, with all its blessedness, it is necessarily attended with, yea, leads us into combat and conflict, according to what we and our circumstances are; as much, and as surely, as it leads us into joy, and rejoicing according to what God and His plans, ways, and counsels as to us are.

the broken law. For who will not say that the guilty condemned culprit is without excuse, self-condemned, and condemnable by every one,—the culprit who, having forfeited life to violated law, despises the free forgiveness and mercy of a sin-pardoning God.^a

Toward the close of the portion already considered—man having been uncovered in all his pitiful state, and God's estimate of what was needed, if he was to be blessed after a divine fashion—we get the grand thought presented to us of “Grace reigning through righteousness, unto *eternal life*, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

There are, so to speak, five chapters upon this subject. 1st. Chap. vi., in which the connection of a poor sinner with the Christ, by God, but through faith in the sinner, is shown—and shown in the various parts of the subject; 2ndly (chap. vii.) certain things which to man might seem insuperable difficulties in the making good of some parts of the plan are explained; 3rdly (chap. viii.), the entire and realized association of the believer thus and *now* with God;—all difficulties notwithstanding, no condemnation can reach to that which is in Christ, and no separation from God. 4thly. The connection of this, tasted now only in individual experience, perhaps, with the drift of all the dealings of God upon earth, through all his dispensations which wend onward till mercy fills the heavenlies and fills the earthlies (chap. ix.—xi); and, 5thly (chap. xi.), to the end of the epistle, the entire association in walk and character *now*, of God's people with Christ—earth-rejected and heaven-honoured.

Their present experience may be, as His was, from the earth—and the taste of it may reach them in blows and sorrows, which only draw forth His sympathies [for blessed be God, He is safely housed, and personally is above all the billows and waves of the wicked world we

^a What a wide expanse does divine grace throw open to us; how contrasted with the narrow limits of the law! And how different the atmosphere and climate of the two! And yet man prefers “law” to “gospel;” and not only does man, as man, do so, but how many of God's dear children prefer turning back to law and its prison-house and spirit of bondage again, to following on into the full liberty of that grace and Father's heart of love, and spirit of sonship and liberty which leads to obedience.

are in], but we hold His position as earth-rejected, which He was in fully, until His cross—He had a mission from God to the Jews, and was a healer upon earth of sickness, etc.

Blessed as the meditating upon each of these five chapters might be, I must confine myself more particularly, now, to the first of them, viz., chap. vi. In which chapter, I conceive, we get an explanation fuller in detail than usual of the salvation in Christ, so far as its application by God to the believer is concerned.

The complexity of the circumstances of the party to whom the salvation has to be applied, as well as the complexity of the evil which is internal, will soon be evident. The born thrall of Satan, man, is in a world^e of Satan's arranging, and has a body ready in every way to identify itself with all the evil around. Then as to how it is with "the patient," when grace finds him, the disease is very complex; 1st, there is thorough ignorance of God as He really is, and a thorough accrediting of the false picture of God, which the sinner, in his delusion, has of Him. 2ndly, there is an overweening good opinion of himself—by which, in self-complacency, man takes it for granted that he cannot have a lie in his right hand, and, as a result, a self-sufficiency, as though by his own wisdom and power he would be able to settle everything for God and for himself too, in a way better than the best;—a heart, made to be satisfied with God alone, but gone astray from Him, ever filling itself with vanity and discontentment, blowing its own bubbles of lust; there is, too, a will fickle as the weather-cock, but obstinate and unbending as sinews of brass. Now, how is such a one to be fitted to be happy and at home in the Father's house in heaven, to be a channel, through which the river of

^e Satan has *usurped* power on the earth, as well as in the heavenly places,—but the world, as I speak of it here, is a system ordered by man under Satan's direction (as in Gen. iv. 16—22). It is upon earth, indeed, and largely made up of the materials connected with the earth—yet it is not the earth—but a system of evil upon earth. In it man can find the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season, and the gratification of his lusts and passions; it is outside of the presence of the Lord.

divine goodness can flow forth in unselfish heavenly and divine blessing. God will do it by His own application of the rich salvation found in Christ Jesus, through faith and by the Spirit. But then, and here enters what is an enlargement of the difficulty to man's mind; while God's whole mind and heart are pledged to each solitary believer, to make all His full salvation to be that of the individual—individual salvation is part of a present testimony, and of a future glory which shall pervade every field in which redeeming love is known. State it, in a rough way, thus, and the difficulty will be seen: I am to be saved,—but my salvation has connection with God's dealings through the last 5000 and odd years, and more especially with His testimony through the last 1857 years, and issues in a glory which is to fill the heavens and fill the earth in the resurrection-morn. This, while it gives that comparative increase of importance to my salvation which a brick built into a wall has, as part of a house, above a brick by the wayside, at the same time reduces me to my just proportion. The temple would not be a perfect temple without that stone; it is an integral part of the Lord's temple now—little as it was and is if looked at in itself.

The sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, opens with a proposition which is common enough among men of perverse and ignorant mind, when they handle God's truth. Only that which they lay down as, according to their logical reasonings—a self-evident axiom of certain result—Paul, or the Spirit of God by Paul, holds up as an absurd and foolish thing, to be denounced at once. The doctrine of free forgiveness of sins, is to man synonymous with, and inseparable from, liberty to go on^f

^f What a confession of his own folly, and of man's wickedness, however, does the gospel-opposer make, when he so says. Taking man upon his own ground, I have sometimes answered such: "Then, I suppose, you would consider that all forgiving love toward children, towards old friends, would be calculated to cultivate rebellion in their hearts: and the more that my wife, my child, know that I love them, the more certain I am not to be loved and honoured." What stupid ignorance of human nature: but, at the same time, what an admission of man's horrid selfishness and self-will, does the gospel-opposer's view contain in it.

sinning. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in "sin, that grace may abound?" [Paul says, once and again, "I speak as a man;" but note that he does not stoop to say so *here*.] He puts the question. His answer is double. First, an expression of revulsion. God forbid [or, away with it (such a thought)]. Then, an expression of the folly of the idea. "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (ver. 2). Three things were true of me individually; 1st, I had sin in me; 2ndly, this made me necessarily to be under the penalty of the judgment of God against sin; 1st, in death, and after that, 2ndly, in judgment to come. Sin, death, and judgment, were mine. I was morally dead in sins; and as such my prospect was death, and then judgment. Christ, who was holy, harmless, separate from sinners, in whom Satan had nothing—and who was not of this world—died, as Son of man, under the judgment of the wrath of God due to me. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" was his cry. For me, morally dead, He bore the penalty. God has revealed His own grace and mercy in providing such a way for poor sinners. If others do not admit the death of Christ as a substitute through grace, I do. It is an eternal reality, and I know it exists as such, independent of my faith in it, or my want of faith in it. This faith God has given to me, and His Spirit, that I might receive His truth, and, by act of my own, set to my seal to His truth. "I do," would be my answer to Paul's, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death" (ver. 3). Yes; blessed be God for His grace! I can say, and add, "Therefore we are buried^s with Him by baptism into death."

I, morally dead, had a future death and judgment

^s A sound human heart would certainly argue (as the gospel-rejector denies), that such a benefit as this will surely draw the coldest and most indifferent heart towards God. *It ought* (but that is law in another form): but there is no power in man, as a mere creature, when once fallen, to do what he *ought*. Grace gives him a new nature—a nature that loves God, and delights as it must, if divine, more in God's love to us, than in ours to Him.

before me. Christ has borne that judgment in His own death. God's Christ did that: He was sent of God to settle that matter. Certainly God does not think that His Christ failed, or that His work failed in this matter. *They* are the parties most competent; yea, alone competent, to pronounce a judgment herein: such a judgment they have pronounced, that "it is finished." Through grace, my Amen has been put in, where God's Amen was long before mine. My Amen has little value, in comparison with His; but it is not without its value; for it is, 1st, the proof of a fresh and present act of His grace—even that He has caused His thought about Christ to be light and brightness to my soul—and this, 2ndly, marks a new and present action of the Holy Ghost, who not only gave the testimony to Christ at first, and wrote the epistles of old, but has now, of recent date, brought home that testimony to my soul. Grace, too, in God, sets a high price in heaven upon a poor sinner's Amen upon earth, to the worthiness of mercy, through Christ, by the Spirit. To the poor sinner's self, the worth is past measure—'tis a measure of eternal, heavenly, divine love. But then, what, if I had done with my Adamic ruined inheritance, and had nought else? Adam's inheritance in Eden is forfeited, I cannot return there—might a poor sinner say, who, having discovered that sin, death, and judgment, were his portion, as a descendant of Adam's, had just learnt that God looked upon him as dead and buried in Christ. Well, but this dead and buried together with Christ, is only the *first* blessing. The *second* is this,—

"That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified together with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him. Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no dominion over Him. "For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God, Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin

therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin : but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Rom. vi. 4—13).

Mark it well, we are those that *are alive from the dead*; nothing can be clearer. And, indeed, no one can read the portion down, without seeing how this is quietly assumed throughout the whole of it. It is assumed, that since my identification with Christ, through faith, I have complete power over myself: this certainly was not the case when I was in sin. So far from being greater than myself and my members, I was led captive by them, and they were dragged hither and thither, through lust, by chance influences from without, in what was around me, guided by Satan. It is not, note it, a man trying to overcome himself and his evil, that he may get associated with God, or that God may honour him, but a man recognizing that he is, in grace, associated with Christ by God, and so associated, that Christ's penal death rolls in upon his soul, at once a moral judgment upon all that he, the sinner, was, and at the same moment a complete deliverance from all its consequences; not only from its just judgment—that cloud has passed from the sinner, and is seen to have hurtled once for all over Jesus when upon the cross, having no power to descend ever again upon the believer, but also the power of the law of sin is broken. With a new life given to us in Christ, there is the certainty given, that when He is displayed in life, we shall be displayed in the same life with Him. When He has changed these vile bodies, and fashioned them like unto the body of His glory, then will there be indeed a perfect *walk in newness of life*; then *shall we be also in the likeness of His resurrection* fully; we shall never serve sin, but be free from it for ever; *we shall also live with Him*; with Him who dieth no more, over whom death hath no dominion; but while this is blessed truth, the Christian antedates, in his conduct here, through faith, the fulfilment of these blessed hopes. This is the *third* truth Paul is pressing here, viz., this: if, **FIRST**, you have been cleared out from Adam's standing with its sin, death and

judgment, by God's reckoning you through grace one with the Christ that died and was buried; and if you have, **SECONDLY**, been associated *in life* with the Christ who dies no more, over whom death has no dominion, who lives unto God; why then, **THIRDLY**, there is a present acting by you upon this being reckoned of God free from sin and this life together with Christ communicated to you, viz. a life here below, according to the life of Christ Himself—as Paul said to me *to live is Christ*—and according to the life now hidden with Christ in God; which, when it shall appear, shall alone, without let or hindrance, shine in us, and shine fully. Having already gone elsewhere into the force of this reckoning of ourselves to be dead unto sin, I do not rest upon it now: my subject being, “If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him” (ver. 8).

I would, however, just notice a few things:—

1st. The positive unqualified statement of ver. 13: the hands of the clock are to give the true time; a Christian life is to be manifest to all; not merely right affections, happy thoughts, but a life, outside life, which will speak for God.

2ndly. The positive declaration of ver. 14: “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” With the fair deduction that the soul under grace is more cut off from sin and shut up to good works than a soul under law.

We do not serve Adam	But we serve Christ with
with law,	His grace,
sin, and	obedience, and
death,	righteousness.

Holiness and fruit-bearing, and eternal life are ours; “Who boast that though the wages of sin is death—the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” I cannot here enter upon the chapters vii. and viii.; they hardly fall within my subject, though they are deeply interesting, and throw immense light upon what this life of Christ in us is *not* connected with, and what it *is* connected with; and how it works amid all the difficulties found in us and around; difficulties of Satan, and of the world in God's past and present dealings dis-

pensationally on earth; and how, too, this life has its own proper range and sphere in Christ, who sits on a throne, under which all the counsels of God for eternity, and heaven, and all the plans and covenants of God for earth and time, roll. Yes; our life is in Him, who is in God; and all God's counsels and plans roll around, and are subject to Him in whom our life is, who Himself is our life (happy, blessed people that we are!). He is the object of them all. Oh that the Lord our God would open wide our hearts, to understand his praise, and to taste the sweetness of that place of *Confidante* which He has assigned to the Church.

In conclusion, I would remark, there is something unutterably blessed, but withal solemn, in the thought of being a vessel, a member, in which *the life of Christ is displayed*. Is this my present call and work, to display, here below, the life which is in Christ, as to which Christ is the fountain-source, myself but a channel? And what, if Satan and the world oppose, and if the body has to be reckoned dead? Shall I only comfort myself with the thoughts that soon, in the Father's house on high (the Spirit all pervading), this life shall (in how little a while) have free, and full, and perfect course? No. I have more than this; I can joy and rejoice, not only in what the life will be in courts above, but, in one sense, more purely and more unselfishly, and in the most divine and Christ-like way; I can rejoice, I say, in all these wilderness sorrows and conflicts, which the life brings to me with it. It is fellowship with Christ's own self; it is the realization of the best part of the blessing, apart from the circumstances of joy.

No. 2.

FOURTH TEXT.

"It is a faithful saying: for if we be dead with Him (Christ Jesus), we shall also live with Him" (2 Tim. ii. 11).

So much of what has just been said upon the third text applies to this, that little remains to be added. In Romans, the apostle was laying down the theory, the foun-

dations of the doctrine of the Christian faith. In writing to Timothy, he takes up the practice, the superstructure of a life so built; and, as the times were difficult, stirs him up to enduring hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. His life we have; with Him we expect to live and to reign when we come *home* to Him—till then, the world under Satan, and heavenly places preoccupied with foes—assure us of suffering if we walk as He, whose life we have, walked here below.

Συ οὖν κακοπαθήσον thou, therefore, endure hardness, is almost the key-note of this letter, chap. i. 8, 12, chap. ii. 3, 9, chap. iv. 5; and this flows out of the life of Christ, possessed now in circumstances, and amid power strangely contrasted with, and opposed to, itself. The circumstances and the powers around, are adverse to the life; but the life of Jesus Christ is already in us; and he that has it can say, in the power of it, I choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God and of Christ, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. May we, then, endure hardness, as the good soldiers of Jesus Christ, for the little of that, “yet a little while,” which remains. Even so. Come, Lord Jesus.

If, what the Spirit states by Paul is, that “we were *quickened TOGETHER WITH Christ*” (Eph. ii. 3, Col. ii. 13), then, clearly, we have one life in common with Him. *Not*, He possessed of one kind of life, held in one kind of way, and we of another kind of life, held in another kind of way; *but* one life possessed in one and the same way; for we were *quickened together with Himself*.

It was a life taken by Himself—upon earth, in the grave—taken by, with, and in perfect divine power. A life not subject to death (Rom. vi. 9, Rev. i. 15), nor in us to corruption (1 Pet. i. 23). That it has been, as yet, comparatively little displayed by and in Himself upon earth, since His taking of it, is true; in Him its chief display has been in heaven. Yet this matters not: in Him it has been seen in action among His disciples, He being upon earth (John xx and xxi., Acts i., &c.).

Now that He has left the earth and abides “the little while” in heaven, He is there as Son of man, and in-

terested in what passes down here. He showed it in Stephen's martyrdom, often in connexion with Paul, and does so constantly, as we see at the close of Heb. iv., to the feeblest of His disciples. He will return to earth to show it forth again here, in narrower circumstances, which are to be more limited than those of His present position—more restricted to earth.

In us, it never is separated from Himself. It acts in us down here, but turns us to the heaven where He is; acts in us to make us know ourselves as members of a body, the Head of which is in heaven; acts in us, poor channels of blessing, which it fills as itself ever flowing ceaselessly down from Himself, the alone Fountain-Head. That He is *God over all blessed for ever*, must never be forgotten: yet we have a life in common with Him as Son of Man, He having taken His life again as man, in other circumstances, and in other connections, than He had it at first.

And what is most peculiar of all to us is, not that the liberty from all condemnation which is His should be ours; not that we should be graced in Him the beloved; not that we should have experiences and prospects in common with Him, but that the objects and motives which influenced Him in His highest acts, are the objects and motives which influence this life in us. As Paul most abundantly shows in Phil. ii. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," &c. "For it is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do of His good pleasure," &c.

FRAGMENT.

"You tell me I am dying, and urge me to say whether or not I think that I am going to heaven. — What is the heaven you mean?"—"To be with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; and to be with Him — for ever and ever — is what I mean by heaven."

N^o. X.

TEMPTATION.

IT has been much the fashion, of late, to extol and set forth the peculiar advantages of our day and generation. It has been advanced, that the spirit of inquiry is generally diffused, that objects of utility engross attention, that the industrial classes are advancing in the scale of social improvement, and, in fact, that the world is decidedly and steadily marching onward to a pitch of civilization never yet attained in the former ages of its history.

There are those who seek to counteract this movement, and set up old-fashioned prejudices as a sort of break-water against them. Men of one idea, which, if threatened with destruction, have no other to replace it with. There are again others who are seeking to combine the old and new together. Men of a past age, who were fast when the world was slow, now find themselves out of breath in the efforts to keep pace with the present. And again, there are others who are going with the stream, and think they are progressing, because they are going fast, and that they are making good speed, because they are rushing onwards.

That we live in exciting times no one can for a moment doubt; that we live in eventful times will be readily granted, and that there is a fast spirit abroad, and a hurry and excitement in everything is apparent; but we need the word of caution not to allow the times, nor the events either, to be so uppermost in our thoughts as to displace the due consideration of our own conduct in them. A man in a house which was on fire, would be well occupied in seeking his own safety and getting out of it. A man on a plain, threatened with inundation, would do well to make for rising ground. To be occupied with the progress of the flames or the rapid increase

Temptation.

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of the waters, to the neglect of his own safety, would be surely suicidal. However circumstances may change and the pursuits of any age be more or less stirring, yet man as man in his nature, remains the same. Antecedent to the Deluge the wickedness of man was great in the earth; so great as to call for Divine interference in judgment. The building of the Tower of Babel was another manifestation of what man would dare to do, and other events in sacred as well as profane history, bear witness to the unchangeable energy of man in evil. Circumstances might moderate or excite; but the nature was there to be acted upon and was affected by them.

In the history of this country, different epochs gave rise to different phases in the development of character, national and individual. When long journeys were performed on horseback, over dangerous and ill-conditioned roads, and internal communications were but little enjoyed; when travelling from London to Chester occupied a week, and the man who courageously ventured upon it, did well to set his house in order before undertaking it, such times, contrasted with our present accelerated means of intercourse, so that the opposite extremes of the United Kingdom can be approached in few hours, and a network of railways embraces the whole country, and the magnetic wire conveys instantaneous intelligence, we need not wonder if such different associations give rise to development of character in man, or rather the manifestation of it, somewhat novel in its aspect though one in its nature; nor are these modern innovations in locomotion to be regarded as having arisen from attention to that science alone: far from it. They owe their development to the increase of knowledge in every department of science, elementary and practical. The application to purposes of utility is the phase of our day, and we do but cursorily allude to it, as being part of a grand chain of circumstances upon which man's mind has been first brought to bear, in order to their manifestation, and which, being manifested, bear back again upon man's mind, and bring out what is in him, giving birth to ideas with galvanic rapidity, which again are as speedily called forth into action.

Everywhere the world is in motion. That command from God to Adam and his race "to replenish the earth and subdue it," seems as if at this epoch only to be comprehended. We live in a busy and active era, not evil because it is active and busy, but because of the end of its activities, the exaltation of man, the "Go to now" spirit of the associated masses at Babel, and the daring impiety which is a growing characteristic. Sober men of the world are not indifferent or unmoved spectators of what is passing around them. Dismal forebodings occupy many minds; others indulge cheering anticipations. "We shall see what all this will come to by and bye," is the ominous language of some; "We shall see what man is capable of," the exulting conclusion of others.

Now the child of God, in the midst of it all, is encompassed by snares on every hand. The Bible is his book emphatically, yet has become of common appeal to others, who have not the token of brotherhood or family marks. Modern Christianity has taken its form from modern characteristics. The age has features of its own, and would fashion a religion of its own. Revelation leaves no field for invention; its authenticity invulnerable, the ingenuity of man is occupied in its perversion. God deals in His Word with men as they are. Man would begin with men as they ought to be. Hypocrisy was the first-born of sin. Man's fallen nature, ignorant of God's remedy, seeks refuge in disguise. The Grace of God apprehended, brings the sinner into His presence about the very sins thus discovered. Where everything is to be gained by confession, concealment is wanton folly. In communion, where the basis of all intercourse is founded on the fact of necessity and the acknowledged need of everything, the best recommendation to obtain grace to meet it, it follows, as an obvious truism, that our greatest wisdom is to seek whatever would encourage confidence in the God of all Grace, and whatever would convince of the absolute necessity of dependence upon this Grace.

Confidence in God, known as the God of all Grace, "who spared not His only Son," to forgive all our sins, and confidence in God as the God of all Grace, to sustain and help us to struggle against sin.

Sin is itself absolutely evil; but that evil is known only by the judgment of it upon Christ's person. God's Holy abhorrence of it brought fully before us in the fact, that when Christ was, through grace, numbered amongst the transgressors, he could not escape until he had paid the utmost farthing. Though the fact of his having paid it, proved by His resurrection, is the assurance to the believer that he will never be called in question about it.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life;" "This is life eternal to know God and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent."

Now it is just because the Believer has this Divine life, is a partaker of the Divine nature, has his life hid with Christ in God, that he is called upon to put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, and that ye put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. As He that hath called you is Holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation and Godliness.

There is present happiness in practical holiness; "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness." There is positive misery in a sinful course; "There is a way which seemeth right in a man's eyes, but the end thereof is bitter as death."

To help to the one, if God permit, and warn off the other, is the object of the writer in considering the various temptations to which we are by nature exposed; and the very positive provocation of our nature in the novel and exciting circumstances of our day and generation. And as we have before remarked, the truest wisdom is to seek whatever would encourage confidence in the God of all Grace, and whatever would convince of the absolute necessity of dependence upon that Grace.

The power of Jehovah was made known to Israel in their redemption out of Egypt. Their necessities in the Wilderness gave occasion for the display of his resources, to supply them. In relationship with the Holy Lord God, and with the revelation of His will, as to the conduct which became His people, they learned themselves in the light of it.

What they should do was laid down for them; what they did is on record. "These things are written for our learning" (1 Cor. x. 11).

They were not redeemed because they knew God, but that they might know Him. We are not redeemed because we are what we ought to be, but to become so. As with them, so with us. We have the standard of conduct. "He left us an example, that we should follow in His steps." In "the Light of His Life," we learn the darkness of our own. Beholding what is spiritual, we detect what is carnal; but it is because we are redeemed.

Nothing answers for us before God but what Christ is; "as He is so are we in this world." "Our life is hid with Christ in God." We have (because we believe in Him) passed from Death unto Life. We have waded through the Red Sea, and are out of Egypt in the Wilderness, to learn, as Israel of old, what resources we have in Christ, and what need we have of Him. "That which is flesh, is flesh," and remains so. Saints were sinners; as sinners, were led by the Spirit of God to rely on the work of the Lord Jesus for them, and became saints. Their seed remaineth in them. God planted it. It is eternal life to know Him and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. Yet because saints, they enter into conflict. "Then came Amalek and fought against Israel in Rephidim."

Moses, for the people, found out his weakness. "As long as his hands were held up, Israel prevailed." Aaron and Hur sustained them, even as the Intercession of the High Priest and His kingly power, support his feeble saints.

Doctrinally, we apprehend it; in conflict we forget it. Our hearts grow much discouraged because of the way. Things that happen to us in the way divert us from it. Circumstances arise to make manifest what is in ourselves, and when we see it at home, we are taken by surprise. We could condemn the act in another, judge the sin in the action, and so far it is right; but to judge ourselves as having the seed of that sin in us, and to use the occasion of its manifestation in another, for the bewailing our own liability to it, is a moral safeguard

against falling into it, and puts the soul right before the God of all Grace, in pleading with Him, on behalf of any who have gone astray. "Ye have not rather mourned," was the apostolic rebuke to the Church at Corinth. "Rivers of waters ran down mine eyes because they kept not Thy law," (is the language of David).

The science of Chemistry resolves itself into very few, simple, and primary elements. However compounded or mixed, yet the analysis separates it into comparatively few divisions. And much the same may be advanced of "Temptations." However diversified in their aspect, or different in development, affected by climate, or coloured by circumstances, yet they too are resolved into primary elements; and the triple classification of Scripture, "the world, the flesh, and the devil, embraces them all."

FRAGMENT.

Is there, anywhere upon earth, anything to which we can turn and say, according to the truth of God, and with certainty in our own minds as we point to it, "The Father worketh herein and the Son also"? Most assuredly, Yes. The Church of the living God is still upon earth, and that Church is the workmanship of God — is the subject and field of the operations of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Yes! God is working a work upon the earth; a work, too, which was counselled from everlasting, which is for God's own eternity, and for Himself and His Son, in that eternity. Let this be once seen as to the Church, and man (the renewed, saved man) will see how near he is to the work of God. Questions will, then, surely follow to each one — questions, such as, "How far do I understand God's thoughts in the Church?"—"How far am I *practically* working together with God in this matter," or "How far is my life, here below, practically inconsistent with the present aim and the present object of God in this His work?"

It is not merely eternal life to one's own soul, but eternal life connected, through the Spirit of God, dwelling in a body which is seen in the Church, upon earth; a body which is made responsible for the honor and the glory of the Lord; a body, in which God not only forms by faith the souls of His own for eternity, but which He has placed as a pattern to show forth that which is to come.

Eternal salvation to each soul individually is through faith in the Lord Jesus; — but the individuals so saved were to be gathered together, in each place, under the present guidance, corporately, of the Holy Ghost; — and be the body which is responsible for the truth and the honor of the Lord.

DEUTERONOMY VIII.

THIS chapter gives us an outline of the resources by means of which God supplied the need of His people, while passing through the wilderness; they were resources unknown to the flesh, and such as the flesh could not picture to itself. God often puts his children in positions where every human resource fails: His object is two-fold — 1st., that they may *know themselves*; 2ndly, that they may *learn God's ways towards them*.

God never varies in His government; that is to say, He never acts on a different principle in one case from that which guides Him in another—*e.g.*, He hates sin, and always acts consistently. Thus, a spiritual Christian may often know beforehand, what line of conduct God will take in a given case. It is most important for us to remember this truth — that God changes not. His *ways* may change: thus; He had put His people under the Law; now, He has put the Church under grace, and hereafter He will place her in glory. Yet there are principles which never change; and therefore the prophets could say that it was not for themselves but for us that they ministered those things (1 Pet. i. 12).

Circumstances may vary: Israel may have been driven out of their land, etc.; but, after all, God does not change; and if the means vary, the end (that is, His own glory) is ever the same. As to salvation, for instance; God has always saved upon one principle. For Abraham and every saint, to the most distant ages, is only saved, as we, by blood.

God takes knowledge of everything, and judges us according to the light we have received. He says to His people, "Ye shall surely perish, as the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face" (Deut. viii. 19, 20). This is God's principle of government: when sin has come to its height, then He punishes it. It was thus He had dealt with the Amorites and other nations; and it was thus He would deal with His own people. Thus we see that God acts evenly in His government here below; He cares for His own glory, and acts so as to shew it forth. Not one action is unimportant; for the most insignificant may deprive us of blessing, on account of the government of God which is at all times in action. It is true, that often one who walks unfaithfully receives many blessings, because God loves to shew forth His mercy; nevertheless, everything bears its fruit, either inwardly in the soul, or outwardly in chastisements.

That which strikes me as most precious in this chapter, is God's desire that Israel should not forget their wilderness-position, which was a state of entire dependance, for Israel had no resources in itself, and received the supply of every need by means of a miracle. We are saved, and led into the wilderness; and there we are surrounded with blessings, as, for instance, *the enjoyment of brotherly communion*, instead of being in a position of isolation. But, as with Israel, God's blessings might lead to two-fold evil, in separating them from Him, and making them forget their dependance upon Him (ver. 17); so we have to take care lest the blessings we enjoy should produce the same effects on us. This world must needs be to the Christian a land of drought—a thirsty land, where no water is—and he should seek all his enjoyment in heavenly places; if he find any here below, it is because his flesh is not mortified; he is in a bad state, and ought not to remain in it. Surely God has given us enough spiritual blessings to satisfy our hearts! We may rejoice in that word of God which opens out to the spiritual man the thoughts and counsels of God towards us. If only we draw from this treasure, our souls will have enjoyment enough, and will be able to do without that which the world offers. Let Christ become our all, and let us strip ourselves of all that is not Christ, that He may reign alone in our hearts. This is real progress, and here is true enjoyment for the Christian.

Ver. 11—15. Israel was not to stop short in the enjoyment of the gifts of God, nor to take occasion from them to forget God himself. The Christian, too, must watch, lest, in the enjoyment of the blessing, he should forget Him who has given it, and lose sight of his own dependance upon God. The heart may depart from God, long before God's blessings are withdrawn; and we may still enjoy them when far from Him. But if we ask ourselves, "Have I the enjoyment of such and such blessings? But is my heart really in communion with Jesus? Is it in Him I find my joy? Do I realize my own weakness? etc., etc." How often would the soul answer, "No!" Let my outward circumstances be as favorable as they may, if my heart is not in communion with God, I shall be unable to meet temptation. This is an important truth, for the consequences are immense.

We see, in the history of Israel, the proof that the heart may backslide from God, long before He withdraws His blessings. How long it was, after Israel had forgotten the Lord, ere God came in in judgment, to show what was their state! How often do we enjoy brotherly communion, and the word of God, long after we have forgotten our own weakness and dependance! It is by walking in communion with God, that we can be preserved. This is what Moses expresses to the people (ver. 11—19); it is—"Take heed!"

How often have we been made to feel that the object of our daily journeyings is to humble us! How much that is painful have we learned of ourselves! And how often have we dis-

covered our unbelief when brought into trial! *God has led us through the wilderness, to humble us, prove us, and to know what is in our hearts, whether we would keep his commandments, or no.*

See ver. 3. Manna was a thing unknown to Israel, when they went into the wilderness; neither had their fathers known it, and they themselves could do nothing towards producing it.—They were *dependant*. Had God omitted to send it, even for one or two mornings, they must have perished. The water from the rock was equally miraculous. There was no water in the desert, and God gave it by a miracle. There was no path marked out in the wilderness, and they might have wandered from the way; but God performs another miracle, for a cloudy pillar is their leader. But it was not only in *great* things that God took care of them, or that He does so of us in the wilderness; we have to admire His precious care in the smallest things, and in our tiniest wants. There is a particular, as well as a general providence (ver. 4). “Thy raiment waxed not old.” It may be that the Israelites had taken but little notice of the fact, and so it is with us. How many details of God’s care for us pass unobserved by us!

We find in Isaiah xl., immediately after the description of the greatness of God, and the wonderful effects of his power, the expression of this care in small things. “Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?” (ver. 27). God does not forget us, and that we might know how dear we are to him, the Lord Jesus said—“Ye are of more value than many sparrows” (Matt. vi. 26). The Lord would have us remember these two things in the wilderness;—first, that it is He who has redeemed us from the world, as He did His people out of Egypt; secondly, that it is He who sustains, moment by moment, in the wilderness. It is when we realize this direct dependance upon God, that we are strong to resist the devil; but when we lose sight of it, we feel less the necessity of communion with God; we neglect it, and soon attribute our blessings to ourselves. “Lest thou say in thy heart, My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth” (ver. 17).

Ver. 11. “Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping His commandments.” When in the presence of God, the conscience keeps His commandments, for in His presence they are neither hard nor forgotten. *How can we forget the desires of one who is dear to us, when with that person?* Let us remember, that apart from communion with God, even His blessings become a snare to pride. We are in the desert, but we are there under the care of a tender Father.

N^o. XI.

COLOSSIANS.

IN the Epistle to the Colossians, we have a proof of that which other Epistles demonstrate, namely, the blessed way in which our God in His grace turns everything to the good of those that love Him.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, the Holy Ghost had developed the counsels of God with regard to the Church — its privileges. The Christians of Ephesus had nothing to be reproached with,^a therefore the Holy Ghost could use the occasion furnished by that faithful flock, to unfold all the privileges which God had ordained for the Church at large, by virtue of its union with Jesus Christ its Head; as well as the individual privileges of the children of God. It was not so with the Colossians. They had in some measure slipped away from this blessed position, and lost the sense of their union with the Head of the body. This union itself, thank God! cannot be lost; but, as a matter of faith, the consciousness of it may. We know this but too well, in the Church of the day we live in. This grievous fault in the Colossians gives occasion, however, to the Spirit of God to develop all the riches and all the perfection which are found in the Head, and in His work; in order to recover the members of the body from their spiritual feebleness, and set them again in the full practical enjoyment of their union with Christ, and in the power of the position gained for them by that union. For us this is abiding instruction with regard to the riches that are in the Head. If the Epistle to the Ephesians delineates the privileges of the body, that to

^a How painful it is to see this beloved Church taken afterwards as an example of the first love being lost. But all tends to the end.

were to receive from that assembly, written by Paul, and by which the saints at Colosse were to profit; possibly the Epistle to the Ephesians, which he may have communicated to the Laodiceans. Be this as it may, all that is said, is, that it was one of which the assembly at Laodicea were in possession, and by no means that it was directly addressed to them: rather the contrary. It is very possible that a letter, or a hundred letters, may have been written by Paul to others, which it was not in the purposes of God to preserve for the universal Church; but here there is no proof that a letter had been written to the Laodiceans. Tychicus was the bearer of two, he *may* have been the bearer of three, one of which differed only in some details of application which might serve to confirm the Colossians without being in the main another divine communication for other days; but, I repeat, it does not appear to be so from that which is said here. It might be said a letter "from Laodicea," because it was there, instead of a letter *to* Laodicea, but it is not the usual mode of expression. We have seen that the letter to the Ephesians is another communication of the Spirit of God. It has been preserved for us. We do not know whether that from Laodicea was the same, communicated by them to the Christians of that city; or another, which they were to send to the Colossians (a Church in their vicinity) and which — adding nothing to the divine revelations — has not been preserved for us.

It appears that Christians were not very numerous at Laodicea. The apostle salutes the brethren there. There were some who assembled in the house of one Nymphas; they were not in a case to have a letter addressed to them in particular; still the apostle does not forget them. But that which he says here is an almost certain proof that the apostle had not addressed any epistle to them. He would not have sent greetings through the Colossians to the brethren in Laodicea, if, at the same time, he had written a special epistle to the latter. The case is plain enough; there were brethren at Laodicea, but not in great numbers, and not in that distinct position which gave rise to an epistle. But this little assembly in the

house of Nymphas was not to be forgotten; it should profit by the epistles addressed to other assemblies more considerable than itself, and whose condition required an epistle, or gave occasion to write one, which epistles were transmitted to Laodicea, according to the apostle's order.

With regard to the epistle to the Colossians, it is not a supposition. The apostle commands them expressly to have it read in the assembly at Laodicea. The latter had also received another epistle from some other assembly, and the Colossians were to profit by it in the same manner. The two assemblies, which were near each other, were mutually to enjoy the spiritual favours that were granted them.

The apostle does not forget individuals even. Archippus receives a solemn exhortation to take heed to the ministry which the Lord had committed to him, and to fulfil His service.

The apostle had not seen these assemblies (ii. 1).

THE CONFESSION OF A VERY AGED PILGRIM.

"I have been weaker ever since that illness. You remember the long long deep slumber into which I sank, out of which none could rouse me; out of which none thought I ever should rouse—until you came: that was a wonderful sleep! As I lay there, I saw the vast bundle of my sins; too large for me to lay hold of, or to carry. I was troubled and uneasy; but One said to me 'Never fear! the scape-goat with his strong, broad back, has carried them all away into a land not inhabited.' This calmed me. The Lord Jesus Christ is the scape-goat, is He not?"

N^o. XII.

THE ANOINTED ONE.

Prov. viii. 22—31.

THE Divine Counsels were all laid in Christ, before the foundation of the world. The Son of the bosom was brought out in counsel then; and all the purposes of God had their foundation in Him, in the person He was pre-ordained to be, and the place He was pre-appointed to fill.¹

We read this in Proverbs, viii.

“The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth, when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, was I brought forth, while as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens I was there, when He set a compass upon the face of the depth, when he established the clouds above, when He strengthened the fountains of the deep, when He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment, when He appointed the foundations of the earth, then I was by Him (as) One brought up (with Him), and I was daily (His) delight, rejoicing always before Him, rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth, and My delights were with the sons of men.”

What a message does this Scripture bring to us from the eternal ages! It tells us of those infinite ages which were before creation, in ways most wondrous and excellent. How exact and special is Wisdom's account of herself in that passage! The chief part of the dust of the world

¹ When the fulness of time came, as we know, the Son assumed flesh: perfect God and perfect man, without confusion of the natures, yet in the unity of the one Person—and as the Christ, He went through His blessed wondrous, history in life, death, resurrection and glory.

was not then made, when all was planned and settled in Christ. No work of His hand had God to survey then. No evening or morning had then given Him succeeding periods for delight and refreshment, as the good and holy work advanced to its perfection. But He had Christ in counsel before him, His first thought, and the foundation of all His thoughts. The things of creation and redemption, the things of Providence and grace, heavenly purposes and earthly purposes, things nearer at hand or further off, all had respect to Him. "The Lord possessed me," says Wisdom, "in the beginning of His way."

But in this beautiful mysterious passage, there are two things which specially engage my mind at this time—that Christ was, "by Him, as One brought up with Him," and again, that He was also "His delight." That is, He was ever *at hand*, so to speak, and ever *a joy*. He was God's *resource* and God's *object*.

These two things are strongly marked here; and as we pass down the current of Scripture, we find this to be so. Let what may arise, Christ is ever *by* God, ready to be used by Him *at once*, and then used by Him with *delight*. In Eden or at creation, among the Patriarchs, under the law, in the days of the kings, and by the voices of the prophets, as well as after His manifestation in flesh, and then in the light of the Holy Ghost through the Apostles, that is, from the opening to the close of the volume, this is seen. Let man be in innocency or sold under sin, whether the elect be in simple family order, or in the organized system of a nation, or in the unity of a mystic body, whether they be ruled or instructed, under government or under revelation, Christ is God's great ordinance. It may be, that we, through unbelief and blindness of heart, get but a dim sight of Him at times, God sees Him clearly and at all times, under all changes and conditions. And this is what I would now contemplate for a little while, in some of the leading instances of it.

We know that, at the Creation, without Him was not anything made that was made.

As soon as sin enters, He comes forth *at once*. He is

the burden of the first promise which was made immediately upon the entrance and conviction of sin. He is, as we know, the bruised, victorious seed of the woman. The Lord God brings him forth at once, as One already provided in counsel, or, as our Scripture speaks, "As One brought up with him," as One that was "by Him." Sin, the great occasion for the manifestation of God and His grace, and His secrets, had come in, and Christ at once comes forth. Faith in Adam receives Him—with what measure of light we may not be able to say,—but as soon as believing Adam comes out from his guilty covert at the bidding of the seed of the woman now revealed to him, the Lord God uses Christ for him with *delight*. The action of clothing him with the coat of skins tell us this. There was freedom and fervency in that action. It was done without reserve, and by the Lord's own hand. The coat of skins was first made by Him, and then by Him put on the naked Adam—all this bespeaking His delight in Christ, using Him, and using Him with readiness of heart, for "the sons of men"—as our Scripture speaks. The Lord God wrought in a ruined world now, as He had lately wrought for six days in an unstained creation. And, if the eternal purpose respecting Christ, the counsel of grace laid in Him ere worlds began, had been the delight of God, so also was the manifestation of this purpose now—this earliest use and application of it. This delight fed itself in action and service, when the need arose, as surely as it had fed itself in thought and counsel in eternity.

So again, shortly after this first case of Adam, Abel's altar and lamb speak the same truth. The sacrifice was to God a witness of Christ, and God had *immediate* respect to it. He answered that sacrifice *at once*, and evidently with *delight*. He had respect to Abel and to his offering. He pleads with Cain on the warrant and value of it, and would fain have had him, another sinner like Abel, serve at the same altar—all this still telling of the same purpose and joy, that His anointed was "by Him, as One brought up with Him," and "daily His delight," His equal and full delight one day as well as another, in the behalf of one sinner as well as of another, for Abel as well as for Adam.

Noah's ark was just the same. Another ruin had broken forth. The end of all flesh was again before God. It was the wreck of a world a second time. But Christ was "by Him" still. "Make thee an ark of gopher-wood," said the Lord to Noah, and that ark was Christ. And when Noah pleaded Christ, in other words prepared an ark to the saving of his house, "The Lord God shut him in," and then "the ark went upon the face of the waters." His own hand, which before had made the coat for Adam, now sheltered "the sons of men" in that sanctuary which grace had provided—and this action, this shutting of all the ransomed in that sure place by the hand of God Himself, again tells of the "delight" with which He used His Anointed for us, which He tasted when His Christ was thus trusted and pleaded by sinners.

And Noah's altar afterwards was just what his ark had, thus, already been. That altar and the victim upon it was Christ. Noah took of every clean beast and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. I say not how far he discovered the Christ of God in all this. In his measure I surely believe he did. The woman's seed promised to Adam, bruised yet victorious, was, I judge, before him, and so was Abel's lamb. But be this so, whether dimly or brightly as to Noah, as to the Lord God Himself, the One whom "He had possessed in the beginning of His way, before His works of old," was assuredly before Him; and in the virtue of His name, and of the preciousness of His blood, He said in His heart, "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake." The Lord God "said in His heart." What words! What a witness of the profound and perfect satisfaction God was taking in Christ, the counselled, covenanted foundation of all His purposes about "the sons of men," the treasury of all His riches and secrets of eternal saving mercies!

And the Bow in the Cloud speaks the same language. In the fine glowing style of that beautiful token, God seems, as with His whole heart and His whole soul, to pledge security to the creation. But this was all in His anointed, for it was the blood of Noah's altar which pre-

veiled thus to keep the token of the covenant, the pledge of the earth's security, ever under the eye of the Lord. That precious blood had drawn forth the deep delighted utterance of His heart, as we saw, and now this token shall draw His eye in its own direction continually. The cloud big with judgment may come, but the bow shall ride upon it, and control it, and give it an appointed measure—"here shall thy proud waves be stayed." The eye of Him who sits above all water-floods shall look upon the bow—and another witness is given, that time makes no change, successive seed times and harvests shall go on while the earth remains, for Christ is still "by Him," and always "His delight," His predestined salvation and gift of grace, in behalf of "the sons of men."

But as we still pursue our way through Scripture, or along the path of God, we still find the same mystery; we still find Christ "by Him" and also "His delight."

In the day of the call of Abram, the world was in the darkness and abomination of idols. The family of Terah served them (Josh. xxiv. 2). Another mighty moral ruin was spreading itself every where. As disobedience had defiled the garden of Eden, and self-will and violence had corrupted all in the world before the Flood, so now, these idol abominations marked the apostasy of even the family of Shem—for Terah was of that line. But Abram is separated. Like Noah, he found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He was a chosen one, a vessel of mercy. Great promises are made to him; but of them all, Christ is the ground and title. "In thee," says the God of glory to him, when He called him out, "in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed"—and his blessing, as we know from the divine teaching of Gal. iii., is through faith in Christ Jesus. In that word to Abram, the Gospel was preached to Abram, the Gospel of Christ, in whom is all our blessing.

How simple this is! Christ and Christ only is still before God, at His hand or "by Him" for use in the behalf of "the sons of men," produced without delay or effort, and given to their rising and recurring necessities. And the Lord God calling out Abram to look on the

stars and see if he could number them, when Christ was about to be revealed to him, was an action which bespoke the delight which God took in using His Anointed for him. There was fervency in the action — a style about it that tells of secret joy, well marking or accompanying that moment when God was revealing Christ to the faith of His elect.

And thus, in this other and later day, this same mystery re-appears. In the day of the fall of Adam, in the apostasy and doom of the antediluvian world, and now in the hour of the call of Abram from amid the overspreading of abominations, Christ known in eternal counsels, is brought forth, and that with delight for the sons of men.

But as we go on with the Book of God, we find the Christ still. See this in the day of the Exodus. It was a time of judgment, as the time of Noah had been. But another Ark is prepared, and that Ark, like the former, in the day of the Flood, is Christ. "They shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side-posts and on the upper door-posts of the houses wherein they shall eat it, for I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment; I am the Lord; and the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses wherein ye are, and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt." The blood was upon the Jewish lintel, and that blood was Christ sheltering the house in the day of judgment and death.

His Anointed, after this manner, was again "by Him," for the use of "the sons of men" in the day of their necessity. And, as a people thus redeemed by Christ, and standing before God in the value of Christ, God takes them up as with His whole heart and His whole soul. In the cloud of His Presence He joins them on the road, as soon as they are freed from the place of judgment; He takes counsel with Himself about them; then He acts for them; He raises a wall of partition

between them and their pursuers; feeds them with bread from heaven and with water from the Rock; and conducts them in strength and triumph, till He sets them in the place of glory at his own holy hill — and all this (with the song which He put into their lips on the banks of the Red Sea) tells us of the full “delight” with which He had brought forth His anointed for them (Exod. xii.—xviii.).

This is surely a great and magnificent scene, and all is unchanged. The Christ of God “set up” from everlasting, is still with God for us, though our need arise again and again. He is at hand as One prepared and provided for “the sons of men,” and brought forth in their behalf with “the delight” of God, according to this beautiful word in Prov. viii.

And I may here pause to say, prophets and oracles have also told this, and His own lips have uttered it. “Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth,” says Jehovah of His Anointed by Isaiah: “This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,” was heard over Him again and again in the days of His flesh here. “Therefore doth my Father love me,” says Jesus Himself, “because I lay down my life that I might take it again;” such words and like words telling, like the whole current of divine history, the joy which is known in our God over the manifestation and work of His Anointed in the behalf of us sinners.

But now, in still following that current of divine or scriptural history, we reach Ex. xix., and there we see God in a character in which we had not seen Him since the day of Gen. ii. He is now a lawgiver a second time. He who had been in a burning bush, has now taken His seat on a burning mount. The God of the Fathers, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of Grace, now appears as the God of destructive righteousness and judgment. Through the self-confidence of Israel, their God is now rather a Lawgiver than a Redeemer; a character, again we say, in which He had not appeared since the time of Adam, and the Garden of Eden. (See Rom. v. 13, 14).

This was a change indeed. The people had procured it for themselves ; and however ruinous it may prove, they have to accept it all at *their own hands*.

But then, we read — “ the covenant confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, could not disannul.” And so, the eternal purpose, which had been taken ere the world was, and not merely four hundred and thirty years before, could not be disturbed by all this. No, indeed ! The Anointed One, “ brought forth” and “ set up,” possessed of God “ in the beginning of His ways, before His works of old,” no after-works could displace. This we have already seen, at different successive seasons from the beginning ; and now again we are to see the same in this day of man’s self-confidence, leading the God of grace to the hill of judgment. Quickly again is Christ “ by Him, as one brought up with Him,” ready at hand to be used, and used with “ delight,” for “ the sons of men”—all this changing, shifting scenery, which sin, and judgment, and law, and human assumption induce ; only sealing and verifying, and settling for ever, the unchanging purpose of God, and his grace in the person, and work, and value of His Anointed.

This new condition into which Israel had now brought themselves, would work ruin as surely as sin had wrought it in Eden. Fallen man can no more answer law, than innocent man had resented temptation. But God’s Anointed is still “ by Him.” We see this now in Ex. xxv., as we saw it then in Gen. iii.’ The shadows of good things to come, now shown to Moses, tell us this now, as the promise to Adam had told it then. Moses is called up to a region above and beyond that of darkness and thunder and tempest ; and there, in figure, Christ is shewn to him — Christ in the sanctuary of peace. The people had not yet broken the law ; when this is done at least they had not been convicted. The national or conditional covenant is sealed in chap. xxiv., and this exhibition of the Anointed One is made to Moses in chaps. xxv.—xxx., that is, *immediately* afterwards. No delay takes place, for Christ was “ by Him.” The thing is done suddenly. No counsel or preparation

was needed — for counsel had been taken “in the beginning, before His works of old.” Just as in the day when sin entered, God’s resource was in Him that had been “set up from everlasting,” and thus was at hand for immediate use ; so that He now left the fiery mount, the place of judgment for the higher regions, the place of grace and of His Anointed One, not to say with all *convenient*, but with all *immediate* speed.

And “delight” again waits on this action, as it had done in earlier days, as we have already seen. For when the congregation, in the obedience of faith, prepare the Tabernacle, and all is finished, the glory enters and takes its place there, and takes it with most evident and full joy. It will have the whole of it to itself, so that even Moses could not follow (Ex. xl.) — all this again bespeaking the delight of the Lord God in seating Himself where Christ was seen. It was not after this manner He had taken His place on Mount Sinai. He had gone there with evident reserve. See this in chap. xix. But now, it is not with reserve He fills the sanctuary, but with readiness and fervency, and manifest enjoyment, occupying the whole of it, courts and holy places and all. As we sing betimes —

“ His wakened wrath doth slowly move,
His willing mercy flies apace.”

And all this was but the *expression* of that “delight” which our Scripture (Prov. viii.) tells us was known in counsel before the world was. For this delight is a “daily” delight — as fresh after ages as at the beginning — *in action* repeated again and again, as it was, *in counsel*, ere the world was.

There might be other witnesses to prove, that Christ, the Anointed One, is God’s resource in the day of the need of “the sons of men,” and is still called forth for them. But I would pass on only to one other illustration of this.

The nation of Israel are set in the land, and there they are proved again, as they had been under the law in the wilderness. But they violate the very first article of their commission, as they had broken already the very

first commandment of their law. They strike *confederacy* with the peoples of the land, the nations of Canaan, whose *destruction* had been enjoined upon them, and the angel of the covenant weeps at Bochim over the insulted covenant (Judg. i.).

All, therefore, is wreck and ruin again. Adam in the Garden, man under law, Israel with their covenant in the land, alike witness this wreck and ruin. And as it thus began, so it goes on, with the nation set in their inheritance. This unfaithfulness, beginning in Judg. i. with the tribes, is found again in their own King Saul, the son of Cis, in 1 Samuel. Like people, like prince, as Judg. i. and 1 Sam. xv. tell us. But God is the same in grace, if man be the same in unfaithfulness and apostasy. For upon all this we quickly read, "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul?" (says the Lord to Samuel, who was weeping over the fall of the king, as the angel had wept over the fall of the nation at Bochim) "how long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel; fill thine horn with oil and go, I will send thee to Jesse, the Bethlehemite, for I have provided me a king among his sons." (1 Sam. xvi.). This son of Jesse was unknown to men, but in secret God had provided him for Himself. David, the beloved, was known to God in counsel now, and David, the beloved, was the witness or the type of the Anointed One. Bethlehem carried the witness now, as it did, in due time, the Christ Himself. In the ear of faith, "good tidings of great joy" were now, in their measure, heard in the fields of that town of Judah. "Out of thee shall shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel," began to be said to her now. David was an arrow in the Lord's quiver, and he was the arrow of the Lord for deliverance to Israel, in this terrible day of Israel's calamity. He was the Bethlehemite, the anointed, the beloved, the pledge of Him who has since appeared for redemption and salvation — the type of Him who in purpose was the Anointed One ere worlds began.

Thus, in these various but consistent forms, was this mystery again and again told out, that Christ was provided for "the sons of men" in their time of need. On

the entrance of sin—in the day of the doom of the world, before the flood—in the call of Abraham forth from the overspreading of abominations—in the hour of the judgment of Egypt—in the ruin of Israel under the law—and again, in the day of their ruin under their own national covenant, Christ is at hand, “set up” and “brought forth” for sinners—the One whom God has “by Him” for immediate use, and that, too, at all times, and with “delight” for “the sons of men.”

I might, of course, have gone further down, even to the end of the volume, with this story of God's grace in His Anointed One—nay, with a more vivid witness of it, as we got to the New Testament. But I stop here. The promise, the first promise, that of the seed of the woman, began to tell this story; and, after many other witnesses to it, as we have now seen, David, the shepherd-boy of Bethlehem, of the stem of Jesse, repeats it in our hearing, after so long a time—

“Jesus Christ! the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.”

ERE God had built the mountains,
Or raised the fruitful hills;
Before He fill'd the fountains,
That feed the running rills;
In Thee, from everlasting,
The wonderful I AM
Found pleasures never wasting,
And Wisdom is Thy name.

When, like a tent to dwell in,
He spread the skies abroad,
And swathed about the swelling
Of ocean's mighty flood:
He wrought by weight and measure;
And Thou wast with Him then:
Thyself the Father's pleasure,
And Thine, the sons of men.

Thus Wisdom's words discover
Thy glory and Thy grace,
Thou everlasting Lover
Of our unworthy race!
Thy gracious eye survey'd us
Ere stars were seen above;
In wisdom Thou hast made us,
And died for us in love.

And could'st Thou be delighted
With creatures such as we,
Who, when we saw Thee, slighted
And nail'd Thee to a tree!
Unfathomable wonder!
And mystery divine!
The voice that speaks in thunder
Says, “Sinner, I am thine!”

No. XIII.

ON FELLOWSHIP WITH THE CHRIST.

PART VI.

RAISED UP TOGETHER WITH HIM.

Eph. ii. 6. Col. ii. 12; iii. 1.

THE English verb, "to raise up" [like the Greek verb, *ἐγείρω*], does not *necessarily* give the idea of resurrection. The first idea which the word suggests is that of *causing to rise*; and the word would, in its own self, very well suit itself in to a vast variety of circumstances. For instance, we find classical Greeks using the word when they want to say "*rouse up* the sleepers"; "*arouse* the mind"; "*stir up* the fight"; "*wake up* — the flame, the song," etc.; "*raise* from a sick bed," "*raise* a building," etc.; and in passive, "*awake* from sleep"; "*wake*," (be awake so as to) "*watch*."

Resurrection is so essentially a Bible and a Gospel idea and truth, that we should never think of finding it among the writings of the Greek historians and poets. On the other hand, it (resurrection) is so fundamentally a doctrine of the Gospel, that we are not surprised to find that the hearts of Christians (as those who know that the Lord is risen, and that all their good is with Him and in resurrection) are unconsciously apt to twist every passage which can be so twisted, and make it refer to resurrection. Some of the passages in which this word occurs have, I judge, been thus twisted; for while the word is used, in the New Testament, for resurrection, that is not its primary sense. We find it translated variously; thus in —

Mat. 2:13. *Arise* and take the young child.

3: 9. *to raise up* children unto Abraham.

8:15. she *arose* (from sickness), and ministered unto them.

25. *awoke* him, saying, Lord, save us.

Mat. 11:11. there hath not *risen* a greater than John.

12:11. lay hold on it and *lift it out*?

24: 7. nation shall *rise* against nation.

11. many false prophets shall *rise*.

Luke 1:69. hath *raised up* an horn of salvation.*

Three passages which appear to me to have been wrongly pressed into the service of resurrection, are Acts v. 30, and xiii. 23, and Col. iii. 1. Acts v. 30: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins" (ver. 31).

The expression *raised up*, here refers, I believe, to the Lord's appearance in humiliation, and thus presents what the sin of the Jews was. Jesus was raised up "a horn of salvation" (Luke i. 69^b); you murdered Him; God raised Him from the dead. A concise but expressive statement of the outline of the facts; and, as a statement, much more natural, as well as much more full, than to suppose that the raising up, instead of referring to God's causing the Lord to appear, means merely His resurrection.

Acts xiii. 23, I read as having the same sense as the preceding verse (viz., 22): "He raised up unto them David to be their king" (ver. 23) "Of this man's seed hath God, according to His promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus. When John had first preached, before His coming," etc. And, I think, any one reading

* I know of no instance, save in the New Testament, of this word being used in reference to the final resurrection of the body. In the Septuagint, it may be found connected with the restoration to this life of one dead [as in 2 Kings iv. 31, and (in a figure) Isaiah xxvi. 19]. It may occur in all about 143 times in the New Testament, of which about 70 occurrences refer to the resurrection of the body.

What a change takes place in *every* thing that becomes in any way connected with God! What a change, even, in the Greek language, when it was adopted for that in which the New Testament was to be written. The Greek philosophers did not know *Resurrection*. When Paul spake about Jesus and it, they thought "Jesus" and "Resurrection" were two new gods (Acts xvii.).

^b Here, evidently, the incarnation is looked at (*i. e.*, in Luke i. 69), and not the *resurrection*.

carefully the verses 24—30, will see the reasonableness of this. First, a Saviour *raised up*; then John's preaching and course; then the conduct of the dwellers at Jerusalem referred to; then the Lord's death and burial (ver. 29); and then (ver. 30) His resurrection — "But God raised Him from the dead."

Col. iii. 1, refers neither to the Lord's being *raised up* "a horn of salvation," nor to His being *raised up* "from the dead," but to our being raised up from earth to heaven with Him — "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." This we shall look at more in detail presently. But, and let it be remarked, the term *raised up* suits the Lord as a Saviour, whether displayed in incarnation, in resurrection, or in ascension.^c

Attention may here, well enough, be called to the difference between the various displays of Resurrection-power. Some have been raised again from the dead to the same life which they had previously to their death, as Lazarus,^d the widow of Nain's son; then there is the first resurrection (at the commencement of, or just preceding the setting up of the millennium), of those that live and reign with Christ a thousand years; and, again, there is the *general* resurrection, when all who have not been previously raised from the dead will be raised. But all these displays of Resurrection-power^e connect them-

^c If this seem to some like digression from my subject, I am sorry for it. A text redeemed from a defective interpretation of it to its true sense is always important to the bible reader.

^d We only find three accounts of three persons restored to life by our Lord: one damsel (Mat. ix. 25), the widow of Nain's son (Luke vii. 14), and Lazarus (John xi.). Yet His commission to His disciples (Mat. x. 8), "raise the dead," and His word to John's disciples (xi. 5), "the dead are raised up," would lead one to suppose that there were other instances not a few.

^e It is often said, The season of spring is the season of resurrection in the kingdom of vegetation. This is one of those misstatements by which the power of truth is neutralised among men. A tree, a plant, which has life, clothes itself afresh with leaves when the turn of the spring comes, and becomes thus an expression of God's power, according to a law in creation. Resurrection is quite another thing. God alone can raise the dead; and the display of His power, in such an act as the bringing

selves with the Lord Jesus as the alone one that could say, "I am the Resurrection" (John xi.). It being written that the wages of sin is death, and again, that he that hath the power of death is the devil (Heb. ii.), it is plain that none but God—who fixed the wages of sin as death, and who is stronger and mightier than he who has, as executioner, the power of death—can reverse the power^f of death; and the power to do so rests in Christ as "the Resurrection." But, blessed be God! there is another glory which is connected, in the same context, with that title of the Resurrection! even this glory of being "*the Life*"—"I am the Resurrection and the Life." By Resurrection-power we are brought up out of the grave according to what we were, essentially and before God, when we went down into it. And they who go down into it, never having been made partakers of the blessing of being quickened together with Christ, will be raised in the same state as they were in when they went down into the grave. In this way, there is an evident connection between the personal glory of the Son of God, because He is Son of man, and all men.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." This (in John xi.) gives the blessed connection between Resurrection and Life in Him for the believer [it was spoken to Martha, a true disciple] and the believer; but it leaves the unbeliever unnoticed. When, on the other hand, He was speaking to the opposing Jews (in chap. v. 19—30), He states it thus—"As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Observe it: the Father raiseth up the dead

back of the soul with Him, to be clothed upon with a body in glorious assimilation to the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, though that body may have been scattered in its dust to the four winds, is quite another thing than vegetation returning with spring-time.

^f I believe this to be a point of moment with the saints in many a conflict yet to come.

and quickeneth them, and so the Son quickeneth whom He will; and *all judgment* is committed into *His* hand. This *judgment* He seems to exercise variously; as thus, first, He tests men by His word, and where that word's quickening power is made manifest, the creature's ruin is judged and set aside; thus — "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and *now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself" (ver. 24—26). When God will bless any man, He must needs make nothing of what the man is; He makes him over, in the most thorough way possible, to Christ, for an integral part of His glory. A man's *rights* are met in hell, if a man be a slave of Satan; God's rights and Christ's worthiness can alone account for *my* being in heaven. In going to his own place, a Judas will awfully find the just sentence of God against his own cherishing of fellowship with Satan! He will find out *himself* there sure enough, and his own just recognition. For man has lost his own inheritance through sin: the lake of fire and brimstone was prepared — not for man, but for the devil and his angels (Matt. xxv. 41). On the other hand, glory in the heavens is prepared for the Christ of God. In either place, we must be parties of *secondary* importance. But how much more so in the heavens than in hell, I need not say. But what I wanted to press was the fact, that redemption, as having been communicated to us, is found, by us, to be not only the expression of God's estimate of the worthiness and power of Christ, but the most thorough judgment of all that *we* were; so much so, that a soul will never really get separate from itself, able to judge itself, to loathe itself, save by the knowledge of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. I would that we all knew a little more of this self-loathing.*

* The prayer of one, now with the Lord, used to be, "Lord, give us patience with ourselves"; so deeply did he feel the inward evil

And then our Lord went on, after thus showing how all the poor lost sinner's springs were in Him the Saviour, to speak of the wicked. He hath "authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which ALL that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." Who shall stand on his own works for foundation and be saved? And, let it be remarked, this is one result of His being *Son of man*. All men shall, *therefore*, rise from the grave. Some, first, to speak of *quickenings* virtues found in Him the Son, and, through grace, tasted by themselves—themselves made subject to them:—raised to speak and to declare that they had known what it was to be quickened together with Him from the grave; and the works of such will bear witness, and get a reward, too, in the resurrection. Then, lastly, all shall be raised; and they, too, shall reap the reward of the root they grew upon, and of their separation from the alone Giver of new life (God's life) to the soul; but their works shall not stand in judgment. The root, the tree, and fruit go together; whether Christ or Adam be in question. May *we* remember it well.

There is one matter to notice here briefly, the transmutation of those saints who are alive when the Lord comes; their change at His coming without seeing death. It may be seen in 1 Thess. iv. 15—17 and Phil. iii. 20, 21. "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." The thought is unutterably precious, that the moment we that remain see Him Himself, virtue will come out of Himself to change these bodies of humiliation, and to fashion them like unto His own body in glory.

I need hardly say that the perfect difference between the Raiser and the raised (or the changed) must never be forgotten. All the virtue and the power are His, and His alone, though they may display themselves, through

grace, upon us. Nevertheless, it is too sweet to the heart for me to pass by recalling it, that there is *but ONE* (our Lord and our God) of whom it can be said, He is "the Resurrection and the Life"; *but ONE* that had power Himself to lay down His life, and Himself to take it again; *but ONE* of whom it could be said, He was declared to be the Son of God, with power by the resurrection of the dead (ones); *but ONE* who can quicken now whom He will, and at whose voice all that are in the graves shall hereafter come forth. His glory and His honour are our highest blessing; and sweet is it to those that have known Him as their Eternal Lover, to think of the glory that awaits them—not as that which will fully and perfectly minister to their own enjoyment, but as that which *His* love will work in them:—expression at once of His own innate glory, of God's choice of them, and of His desire to have them perfectly fitted for companionship with Him and for the presence of God. Oh, how little do our poor—yet blessed, richly blessed—souls think of Christ and His Love! And yet we are loved by Him, notwithstanding all, and made to know the divine character of His love, which rejoices in giving, giving freely, to those on whom it rests.

I turn now to my texts.

Eph. ii. 6. "Hath raised *us* up together." First let us read the context. We "were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (ver. 3—6).

Some have noticed, as though it were the reason of the word *together* ("*raised up together*"), the union in the Church of those who had been separated upon earth into Jews and Gentiles. That the heavenly body, the Church, contains those who were once Gentiles, as well as those who were once Jews, is a fact. But this is NOT at all the scope of the apostle's meaning. And, let it be remarked, that men are not together, *in the Church*, as Jews and Gentiles; as such they were separated, by God

Himself, the one from the other; but they who were such are together, in the Church, as members of the body of Christ. But surely, my fellowship with a Paul in heaven is not *the* wonder (though, truly, to be there at all, and to be seen to be there, and that, too, in happy association with other men, is most blessed); but *the* wonder, in this context, is that which lies at the entrance of each soul into the place and position of this fellowship one with the other, namely, individual fellowship with Christ the Head.^b I am a member of Christ; He put off all that rested in nature in and upon me when it was reckoned to Him. Therefore He was crucified, dead, and was buried; and I am reckoned, and reckon myself, through faith, clear from it all, as reckoned of God, crucified, dead, and buried together with Him. But He has also made me one spirit with Himself; and, through a divine grace, which is boundlessly great, I shareⁱ certain things *together with* Himself. The word leads me back to His taking of His life again, as the Son of man in the grave, that I may understand how, having been quickened—made alive—together with Him, I am free among the dead. And the life which I have is a life together with Him. He the Head, and I but a member. It is true that the blessing which I have in Him, I have in common with all the other members of His body; but the power which enables me, even, to have heart-room for a Paul is found in my known conscious possession of blessings together with Christ. Yea; and it is because He finds His interest in all His members that ours too can flow out freely to them. For the consciousness of community of blessing among the members does not suffice as power to any individual member to act consistently therewith;

^b It must not be forgotten that there will be other classes in heaven besides the Church, classes to which Christ will not stand in the relationship of Head to a body which has members.

ⁱ Share not only His glory *given* to Him, and many of the most blessed positions in it, but do so as a consequence (oh, wondrous grace!) of partaking of His life. So indissolubly one with Him, as to life, is a believer [Christ is our Life], that even God Himself could not make me more one with Christ than He has done already. One spirit with the Lord—not of this world, even as He is not of this world.

he needs the love of Christ shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given to him, and communion with the heart of the Lord Jesus.

I fully admit, first, that God's dealings for the earth had divided (since the days of Abraham, if not even before, viz., from the days of the sons of Noah) the Jew from the Gentile; and, secondly, that this is an order of things which not only *existed*, while things were left in the hand of man to try and to prove him, as from Noah to Christ, but which will exist when the Son of man comes forth out of heaven to bless man, and to take the government of the earth into His own hands; for the Jews and the Gentiles and the extern nations will then still each have blessings distinctive to itself; and, thirdly, that the Church, as being not for the earth but for the heavens—not a part of God's governmental ways for earth, but part of His counsel of grace and for heaven—sets (as other counsels for heaven do also) *this* separation of classes aside, though it may sanction other classification. I say I admit all this; but I deny that this is *the* great wonder of the “together with” in the passage before us. To the unconverted Jew, it was scandal to think even of a Gentile dog being associated with him; to the unconverted Gentile, the narrow bigotry of the Jew was contemptible folly; to the converted man, whether Jew or Gentile, a new and a wonderful scene was opened—Heaven. And a truth, marvellous beyond all others, was propounded; that God has made him that believeth to be vitally one with the earth-rejected, man-despised, but heaven-owned and God-honoured Jesus of Nazareth. Separation of Jew from Gentile was, is, and will be for the earth; but heaven neither Jew nor Gentile looked for. The wonder to a Paul was not that one, once a worshipper of Diana, the great goddess of the Ephesians, should be counted fit company for him, a Pharisee, who had thought he did God's service (not only in trying to blot out the name of Jesus of Nazareth from the earth, but also) in trying to destroy the Church, the counsel of God most dear to Him about Christ; but the wonder was this, that vital union, fellowship of life, should be to him with the same Christ Jesus whom he had persecuted,

and this, too, in heaven, where Christ sits at the right hand of the Majesty in the highest. A tenure of blessing and a place of blessing, as open to Gentile as to Jew; and a blessing, too, so entirely divine and unhuman, so entirely heavenly and unearthly, that none could communicate even a right thought about it save God the Holy Ghost.^k

May the believer in Christ never forget that heaven is his home, his native place; and that this is the case just because he is one spirit with the Lord Jesus the Christ, partaker of the divine nature, as made one with the Heavenly Christ, and, therefore, to count upon sharing all things together with Him as the Christ.

But to proceed. We have already looked, 1st, at *the being made alive together with the Christ* (in IV.). He that had laid down His life as a ransom and for an atonement, took His life as Son of man again in the grave. And the apostle's subject of prayer is still a good subject of prayer; that we may know "what is the exceeding greatness of His [*His* refers here to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ] power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places" (Eph. i. 19, 20). All things put under Him, and He given to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

And 2ndly, at the life as so given being the life of the Christ Himself—a life which, if it now identifies us consciously with God, and brings us here below into conflict with everything within us and around us which is in conflict with God, will yet, in a little while, be

^k I have seen many papers upon the Epistle to the Ephesians, which expatiate so immoderately upon the wonderfulness of the Jew and the Gentile being united in one, as to leave one to suppose that the religion of the writers is one purely for earth; and that they do not see the wonders of heaven being opened, and of vital union with Christ being now preached. I grant the truth of the wonders of the contrast between God's counsels for heaven and his ways for earth; they merely look at the matter as among men, and the vital union they entirely pass by.

openly displayed in its own proper sphere, in us in heaven, and be the power of our association with Him then in glory. We have now to consider what the force of the expression in Eph. ii. 6, of our *being raised up together with Christ*, is. 1st. It refers clearly to something which naturally comes in, so far as the Christ is concerned, between His taking of His life again, while His body was still in the grave, and His sitting down in heavenly places. Two acts of His necessarily come in, perhaps, in this place: the one, His leaving the tomb, as in the act of manifesting His resurrection from among the dead; the other, His ascension. Indeed, I need not say *perhaps*, for so much stress is laid upon His resurrection, apart from His ascension, and such entirely different scriptures and truths are connected with these two acts of the Lord, that it is quite clear God meant us to mark the difference of the two. For instance, it was said—“Must one be ordained *to be a witness with us of His resurrection?*” so says Peter (Acts i. 22). And this is confirmed by Paul, where he says (1 Cor. xv. 3—7)—“I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures; and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, He was seen of James; then of all the apostles.” The importance of this evidence as to the resurrection of the Lord follows afterward—“If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith also is vain. . . . And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins” (ver. 14, 17). The very doctrine of the forgiveness of sins—of forgiveness of sins to anyone, anywhere—hangs upon the reality of Christ’s resurrection. To us also righteousness “shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Rom. iv. 24, 25). “The answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus

Christ" (1 Pet. iii. 22). Without this, it is clear there could not be blessing in the presence of God for anyone, nor such a thing as a good conscience. Whether the question be about conscience in a Christian; in the remnants from among the Jews and the Gentiles who get into heaven, though they yet form not there parts of the Church; or in the Jew or the Gentile, or the outside worshipper. The death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ was God's way, both of being just while justifying a sinner of any class, and of making a good conscience in every believer. Sin was against God. If God appointed that the consequences of man's sin should come upon His Son as Son of man — He must die. He died, and rose and revived. God's way was, thenceforth, open to meet man where and how He pleased, but so (as He counted) alone, and so, as each accepted sinner — wherever his assigned place of meeting God, whatever the distinctive feature of blessing which grace may assign to him when he does so meet God — so, I say, will each accepted sinner find. An arisen Christ alone can be God's channel to the conscience of a sinner, or a true answer of the conscience; and this simply because in this One alone, so regarded, does the conscience find, as God's answer to it, the very answer which God has provided for the claims of His own character. That which has satisfied God may well satisfy me.

But I left out, intentionally, Paul's reference to himself as one of the witnesses of the resurrection.

"And last of all was he seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." Now when Christ was seen by Paul, it was not merely in resurrection. Arisen from the grave, His gospel was to begin at Jerusalem. When Jerusalem would not have it, it sounded out through Judea and Samaria. And, when Stephen was stoned, heaven opened upon him, and there was a blessed intercourse between Jesus standing on the right hand of God and the martyr. But Saul, ringleader of the persecution against the Church, saw, then, nought; heard and understood nought. But a little further on in the history, the arisen and ascended Jesus calls him by name. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" etc. That the ascen-

sion-glory took a most distinctive place in Paul's mind, and held a most peculiar place in his ministry, is plain. See, for instance, as to the place it had in his mind, the stress he lays upon it, in chap. xxii. 6—11, when he spake to the people in the Hebrew tongue; and again, in chap. xxvi. 12—18, when he spake in the presence of Agrippa. These portions, compared with the account of his conversion in chap. ix. 3—9, are very interesting. And to see the place which the ascension had in his doctrine, one has only to turn to his statement of his gospel in 2 Cor. iv. 3—6, to the opening of his letter to the Galatians, chap. i. 11—16, to the tenor and contents of his letters to the Ephesians and Colossians, to be fully persuaded of it.

But, further, the whole of the distinctive position of the Church, the whole of the doctrine which is distinctively directive to each individual believer now, is found in this ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. Mercy in God may be thought of by a poor sinner now (after a fashion which would have been correct enough in patriarchal days; that is, mercy without its way of flowing forth being explained); but God's mercy shown before us is the mercy and compassion of God, which, having substituted the Christ, the Just One, in place of the many unjust, declares that it delights to flow forth with all its blessings through a Christ that is now upon the throne of the Majesty in the highest. We can only meet God in the place where Christ is presented as meeting us; to us that meeting-place is in the holiest within the veil; to the Jew it will be in the land; and the character of conscience is according to the place of meeting: the light is fuller within the veil, and the conscience is of a higher temper, even as the truth presented to us is the more overt in its expression, and even as the power given is of the highest order. For conscience needs, in order to meet God, that which God needs in order to meet it, and conscience needs a power accordingly. There is but one blood of atonement; there is but one Spirit to apply it: that's clear. But if any would argue thence that because, as regarding himself, relatively to himself, every man that is saved is saved by

the Spirit and through the blood alone—that, therefore, as regarding God, relatively to God, each saved sinner must be equally near as another, they utterly mistake. Mercy and compassion were native to God alone; they flow forth as He will; they apply themselves to whom He will; they form classes, too, and put a soul in one class or a soul in another, as God saw meet from before the foundation of the world. A saint to be in the New Jerusalem, to form part of the Bride of Christ, needs a conscience and a spiritual power more than a saint would who had to be part of the kingdom of Israel—to form part of the people of the Lord on earth. Now, escape from the ruin round about us will never be made good to a soul which does not know an *ascended* Lord. Such a soul is without that form of truth which is distinctive to the economy, and must be without that intelligence and that power which a man needs who has to walk as one risen together with Christ; and, therefore, his citizenship being in heaven, having to seek and to mind things which are in heaven. But of this more in detail hereafter.

To which, then, of the two things which intervened between Christ's quickening in the grave and His sitting down in the heavenly places (viz., His coming forth out of the grave and His ascending up into heaven) does this expression, "raised us up together" (Eph. ii. 6), apply?

I may say in reply, that, 1st, in point of *truth*, I do not see that it matters much, if at all, which way it be rendered; for rendered either way, it is one step of two between the "being quickened together with Christ," and the "being seated together with Him in heavenly places." 2ndly. The more common, and, therefore, perhaps, the more natural way to render it, is as referring to the first of the two steps. Observe it. Between the communication of life and the being seated in heaven, two things are supposed: 1st, a coming out of the grave (wherein life was received) up among men—to the region of man, so to speak; and 2ndly, a going up from among men into heaven.

I admit that the first of these, in reality, attaches itself

to the preceding step; and, if you please, that resurrection involves two things: the communication of life anew; and the manifestation of life, if just dead and not buried, or the bringing up of the person from the grave, if he be buried as well as dead. Still they are not really one and the same thing; and, in the case of the blessed Lord, very distinguishable are His taking His life in the grave, with all the truth that it involves as to God, and Himself and the Spirit and the spiritual world too,—and His being seen and known among men as risen, and tarrying among His disciples for a season ere He went up. In dealing with individual souls, in a cloudy and dark day, the distinction may be helpful; 'tis one that the account in Acts ix. of Paul's conversion warrants, and it may be traced dispensationally (according to the analogy of the faith) in the Church's entrance into glory and the earth's future blessing. Paul was quickened before he took his place with disciples—before he could show that which they could accredit that he lived unto God.

I do not press the analogy of the faith, though, to my own mind, it is always confirmatory and important (if any one has ability from God to trace analogies); but the Church will be in glory ere manifested in glory, the Jewish and the Gentile remnants will each have life ere it is seen by man to be in life; so the Jewish nation will have life ere that life has become so outwardly manifested as for them to get the fruits of it in outward blessing.

On the individual believer, however, I would here press the thought, that "the life of God" (as Paul speaks in Eph. iv. 18), if it belongs to those that have known (or rather been known of) Christ, shows itself in those that have heard Him and been taught by Him, "as the truth is in Jesus." Is our gospel, wherein we glory, the gospel of life—eternal life, in and through Jesus Christ our Lord; so then is our testimony the testimony of life—eternal life. If we are hidden in Christ in God, He is to be displayed in us in the world. Paul not only knew Christ as Life—his life, and that he, Paul, had eternal life in Christ, but he walked also here below so as that he could say, "We are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences"

(2 Cor. v. 11). And the manner and mode of this manifestation he sets forth. It was,—not only in appearance, but in heart; but then it was not only in heart, but in appearance also. His life had motives, ends, and objects: a peculiar view, too, proper to it, which gave it its character before God, and led to a testimony such as the Corinthians could read. Self was neither his end, nor his starting-point, nor his spring of energy, as, alas! it so often is with professing Christians now-a-days. I, I, I, I, I, I,—a perfect number in egotism,—is a sorrowful thing in a Christian. Paul's Christian life was not such. "For whether we be beside ourselves, it is *to God*; or whether we be sober, it is *for your cause*" (ver. 13). God alone was the one *to* whom he lived; but God had objects of His affection down here; and so the divinely led man had to seek the interests of those whose interests the God, that led him captive in His cords of love, sought. Then follows the account of what it was that told so much on his own heart and mind (happy man that he was). "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (ver. 14, 15, etc.). What a contrast between this *mode* of life and the mode of life of so many: "do this and do that"; "do not do this, and do not do that." The man of the world's actions are the index of that which rules within; and if the Christian man's actions are the index of what rules within, then the life of the worldly man and the life of the Christian will be very unlike the one to the other.

Myself, this life, earth, circumstances and Satan, are in the inside of the worldling's life; Christ, eternity, heaven, redeeming love, and Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are all that the Christian's inward life knows. Do Christians, real Christians, sufficiently feel this? What are good works in a clock, if it have no hands whereby to indicate the good time it keeps. Reader! What art thou left down here upon earth for? Eternal redemption and a perfect salvation are thine; and such a seal is set upon

thee for security, that none can take thy blessing from thee. Why, then, art thou left here? Surely, to be a witness, in the power of thy life as well as of thy lips, for the Lord Jesus; if so be we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

It is touching to see how to the Christ, alive again from the dead (there not only descended angels from above to greet Him, but), there flowed to His own heart and mind thoughts of the needs-be of His presenting Himself before His Father as Son of man, and thoughts of each one of His people. To each of them He might have taken a different way of introducing Himself—His way did vary much in the many cases which we read of; but the disciples He had left as sheep that were scattered (because He, the Shepherd, was smitten) must be gathered together again—they were His Father's sheep; and then He goes on high, Himself to become the subject, in a new position, of the testimony of His disciples to the world;—Himself gone on high at once to secure His disciples' best interests, to send them down, also, the Holy Ghost; and, while remaining there and caring for His own which are in the world, forming them, and directing and aiding them in their service;—Himself the subject of their preaching, as well as the joy of their hearts. Oh, how little do we live in the power of the heavenly calling and fellowship of the mystery of Christ and the Church! The Lord look upon us to renew the power of these things in us, and may we mark it well, that Christ, alive again from the grave, had things to do proper to the life, as so taken up by Him anew; and may we go and do likewise.

2. Our next verse is Col. ii. 12, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Many expressions in this context, as well as the general drift of it, conduce to prove that resurrection is the simple meaning of it. For instance, the last clause is conclusive proof hereof; "God, who hath raised him (Christ) from the dead." The grand subject is—not the Christ going up into heaven, from the earth, or Christ seen displayed in heaven—but—the

resurrection of Christ from among the dead. "God raised Him from the dead." It is His rising from the grave where He was buried when He had died for our sins; His coming forth from that grave to be seen of His disciples, to be preached of to His enemies; and this is not only the grand subject of the verse, but it is the one that rules the whole verse, for that which is declared in the last clause, to have been made good in Him, in that He was as a man in overt action raised from the dead, is declared to be true of us that believe in Him; God looking upon us and judging according to the spirit of Christ which He has given to us, judges of us that we being one spirit with the Lord, are risen together with Him. This is true to all those that believe in Him that raised Christ from the dead, who was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification.

The bodies of those that believe, if they have been laid in the dust, will rise as His body rose; rise at His coming, and be raised by the power of Himself then present to do so; but those bodies will rise because they belong to souls that have been quickened, who, if absent from the body, are present with the Lord. The spirit of Stephen, of Paul, of Peter, are with the Lord; their bodies are in the dust. God does, in counsel and thought, connect the dust of those bodies—of those earthen vessels, with the souls which His Son quickened, and, hereafter, the bodies shall rise in proof thereof. But when these men—Stephen, Paul, Peter, etc., were alive upon earth, they, having believed in Christ, had been quickened by Him as the One that rose from the grave and were looked upon by God as vitally one with His Christ, and He could say to them (not as yet of their bodies, but of *themselves*)—Ye are risen together with Him whom I raised from among the dead. That Christ was arisen from among the dead was an overt fact when Paul wrote to the Colossians; so was it an overt fact, at that self-same time, that Paul and these Colossians had received the Spirit of Christ, and were judged of God (not as if their standing was according to the flesh and nature, as derived from Adam the first, to clear them of *that*—all its consequences had been reckoned to Christ,

and He had, therefore, been crucified, had died, and been buried; they were to reckon these things true of themselves — for God did so of a truth, but as having a standing before Him according to the Spirit and grace. This Spirit had freely flowed down from Christ when He had taken His life again — had freely been given to them. Its starting point was the Christ Jesus taking life again in the grave; but it was life, eternal life, life divine though in man; and was looked upon by God, as it was found in them, not as something that would lie still in the tomb, though not of it, but as something that would prove itself as that which was arisen from out of the grave and from among the dead. And we may remark here, that, in unison with this thought, is the verse just before it. We “are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh” (ver. 11); which circumcision (it is the only circumcision we know as being Christ for us), is thus explained (Phil. iii. 3), “For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”

The context of the verse before us seems to me to contain two parts; 1st. The doctrine of the clearing out of the new man from the shell and husks of the old; and 2ndly. The building up of the new man; the two together making up the being “complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power,” spoken of in verse 10.

On the first part, I would just notice, further, the pointed and distinct way in which our deliverance, the Christ penally dead but arisen, and ourselves once morally dead are brought together in verses 12 and 13.

“We risen with Him”—“whom God hath raised from the dead”: ye who “were dead in your sins . . . quickened together with him, having forgiven you all your trespasses”; and then he adds, as bearing upon the Jew, and all the ordinances nailed “to his cross” (ver. 14).

How far do we test our lives and walk here below by the question: Are they in harmony with the life we have in common with the Christ arisen from the dead. He

is the same before death and after; but His position is different. When on earth He was the servant of God among Israel upon earth — a people owned of God, and to be blessed upon earth; and His outward life flowed forth, not only in zeal for God, but in zeal for His House upon earth, and for His people upon earth too. The temple He did honour so far as it was open to Him; the king's house was shut against Him, another possessed it. Yet He was the Shepherd of Israel, and His sympathies flowed out toward them. Such is not the case now; He has been put to death, and since His resurrection from among the dead, has been rejected afresh by Israel, now identifying Himself with nothing but a pilgrim and stranger band in its tarrying the little while upon earth until He comes again.

To be called to a walk upon earth, consistent with the truth that God looks upon us and judges of us as men whom he has made to be one Spirit with His Son who is arisen from the dead is a marvellous calling. It is freedom before God; freedom from all the elements of natural as well as earthly religion; freedom unto God; freedom to suffer and to do His will, though in a body of sin and death — an evil world, under Satan all around, until the glory come.

3. We come now to our third and last text upon this most interesting subject. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right-hand of God" (Col. iii. 1). "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. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory" (ver. 2—4).

The Christ is looked at, here, not only as arisen from the grave but as gone up from the earth to heaven. "He was carried up into heaven" (as we read in Luke xxiv. 51). "And... while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly towards heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing

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up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts i. 10, 11). Such is the doctrine of Scripture. The grace of His shewing Himself alive to the disciples upon earth—"being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts i. 3) must not be forgotten; nor the entire distinctness of the ascension, as a doctrine, from the doctrine of the resurrection of the Lord. In our verse He is pointed out as sitting at the right-hand of God — after having ascended. And the exhortation to us is to set our "affection on things above (that is in heaven) not on things on the earth." A natural consequence enough, if, indeed, we realise that we are risen together with Him; for the place into which we are risen is the place where the subjects of our interest will be found; our proper circumstances so to speak. And then, as giving weight to the word just spoken, he reminds them, "For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God." This is the present blessing we have, "We are dead," and "our life is hid with Christ in God." The security of the manna in the golden-pot, inside the ark, shut in by God, who dwells between the Cherubim, is a poor expression of that security which is ours if our life is hid with Christ in God. It is life, eternal life; it is life inseparable from Christ; and Christ rests, not only in a seat of power in heaven, but is in God. We have to seek the things which are above. That is for the present our proper occupation. And it is an occupation in which the Spirit will have some upon earth to be occupied with until that time. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory. It is Faith which owns Him as our life"; the eye sees it not; soon He shall take the place in which we shall see him for ourselves, and then what but to be seen together with Him in glory.

I may just remark that the apostle's use of the little word "if" (ver. 1), "If ye then be risen together with Christ" does not convey, is not meant to convey, any uncertainty; as though Paul doubted, as though he sanctioned their doubting, as though he even supposed they

doubted whether or not they were in Christ, and risen together with Him. The whole scope of the apostle's argument goes upon the fact that there was no doubt whatever about it—to faith the thing was clear and sure; He had left Judaism by reason thereof; he was proving that these Colossians were in danger of Judaizing, because they did not retain the fact before them; and in chaps. ii. and iii. he thrusts this blessed grace of God before them, that they may find the power of seeking the things which were above.

Some will say, “but we are down here”—“our bodies are on earth”:—and what then? May not God look at us, not according to what we are in the flesh, but according to what we are in the spirit, as partakers of a new life in Christ, a life which enables us to know that God identifies us, and looks upon us as one spirit with Him who sits at His right-hand; or, may not God, having made this good for a Paul, for poor Colossians, call upon them to walk by the faith of it? He certainly has done so; and faith, in us, as certainly as it knows what He has done, takes up His word, His thought, and counts it true and to be but the expression of that which has more of substantive truth and eternal reality in it, than all that which Satan sets man's flesh on to say in opposition. It is a sorrowful thing to see Christians pleading experience and feeling and sense as to what they are in themselves, and as to what the world around them is, and as to what power Satan has over them; and refusing to take God's estimate of the world, the flesh and Satan; and so not finding a practical refuge in Christ for themselves; and in Him, too, that new life, new in nature—a life in Christ; of Christ arisen from the grave; and after that gone up into heaven.

On the expression, “Seek those things which are above,” I would say a few words. And first, as to the definiteness of the place spoken of by the Spirit here; nothing could be more marked; “things which are *above*.” Where? “Where Christ sitteth on the right-hand of God.” Now, to many minds this is all in the clouds, very vague indeed. So, at least, many have said. But

just let us remark, in this very epistle, how Paul, walking by faith, as a man that was risen together with Christ, saw glory upon glory, in Christ, by which he could answer (with divine perfectness in his case, as one inspired while so writing), all the sophism and all the vain deceits of the adversary. In Christ's light he saw light; and saw glory upon glory in the Christ; and saw offices and relationships in Him too, which not only gave a light in which he could walk as a living man, so as to avoid pits, and snares, and traps, into which others might fall; but also which gave a nourishment and a strength to his soul, as well as a healthy occupation to it which some of these Colossians were in need of. O if Christians now had the eyes of their understandings rivetted upon the Christ of God,—upon Him who is not only now to be seen by faith, crowned with honour and glory (as in Hebrews and the Apocalypse), but in whom there plays all that liveliness of affection to the adopted children of His Father—and ten thousand bright and beauteous graces as well as glories—if these things might, indeed, be so with us—what a change in the life and in the testimony of many! Natural religion will carry its string of beads to count its prayers upon: does spiritual religion find nothing in Christ to answer thereunto? Yes; he links together glory upon glory, and grace upon grace, to be told over in praise before God. And what a halo of light, bright, but soft and beauteous, is seen around Him, by those that know Him in heaven. May God revive and restore the hearts of His people to spiritual, heavenly worship. If silence becomes us as to ourselves, surely there is much to be said for and about the blessed Lord Jesus.

The exhortation is double, first, "Seek them," those things which are above; and, then, secondly, "set your minds on them," on things above.

There is something worthy of remarking upon in the graciousness of the introduction of the truth of ver. 3 here. "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." It meets man both ways—little faith, or fleshliness, or worldly-mindedness, might object. "How can *I* do this"? The answer is, "Ye are dead." Weakness and conscious littleness on the other side is lured

on with the counter statements, which must ever be precious to every saint, "Your life is hid with Christ in God." How that word meets every temper in the soul. "Your life is hid with Christ in God."

In conclusion, it is clear that fellowship with Christ in life is not all that God has given to us; or all that God has made to be a matter of responsibility to us. Nor, again, would the life, being the life of Christ as risen from the dead, suffice — for as such He will rule over the Jews, and have the Gentiles under His power; yea, the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea under the power of the Christ, as having life in Himself; as being in a position in which to communicate it — and fellowship with Himself to poor sinners—He being arisen from the grave. It is not until we come to His ascension, and His place taken in the heavenlies, that we get to that which, as connected with the life taken anew by the Lord, marks off the distinctive position of the believer, while He, as Son of man sits at the right hand of the Father. There is no unearthiness, no unworldliness, like that which flows from affections formed and trained for the divine and heavenly glory of the Son of Man; affections fed by intercourse with Him whose thoughts were the first in all these things. The discontentment of an ugly temper, which is satisfied with nothing, may make us complain of the wilderness; the sorrows of the passage through it may make us groan; and God's chastenings too for our practical inconsistencies may do as much; but none of these things will give groans like unto those which a home-sick soul, a heaven-filled heart will have, a soul which is too much occupied with Christ in God, and the glory to come, to have much time or thought to give either to itself or to the experiences of the wilderness. Christ felt the wilderness and the trials which man put upon Him as well as Satan in this way, for His soul was blessedly filled with the glory He had come from; with the Father ever looking upon Him; and with that Father's house and kingdom of glory He was to open to us. May we know these things; *seek them* and *set the mind* upon them.

N^o. XIV.

1 THESSALONIANS.

WE find, in the Epistles to the Thessalonians, and especially in the first (for in the second it was already needful to guard that freshness from the perfidious attacks of the enemy), the condition and the hope of the Christian, as such, in this world, in all its freshness. These two epistles are the first that Paul wrote, unless we except that to the Galatians, the date of which is uncertain. Already long occupied with the work, it is only when this work was considerably advanced, that in watching over it he guards it by means of his writings: writings, as we have seen, various in character, according to the state of the Churches, and according to the divine wisdom which, by this means, deposited in the Scriptures that which would be necessary for all ages.

Newly converted, the Christians at Thessalonica suffered much from the persecution of the world; a persecution which the Jews of that place had already stirred up at an earlier day against Paul himself. Happy at the great work there, and rejoicing in the state of his dear children in the faith, a testimony to which was borne everywhere, even by the world, the apostle opens his heart; and the Holy Ghost sets forth, by his mouth, what that Christian condition was upon the earth, which was the source of his joy in the case of the Thessalonians; and what the hope, which threw its light upon the believer's existence, shining around him through his whole life, and illumining his path in the wilderness. In a word, the Christian character is unfolded to our eyes with all its motives and its joys; and that, in connection with the testimony of God, and the hope which is our strength in bearing it.

We all know that the doctrine of the coming of

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ON FELLOWSHIP TOGETHER WITH CHRIST.

PART VII.

ON SITTING TOGETHER WITH HIM IN HEAVENLY PLACES.

“AND made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. ii. 6).

The words, *made sit together*, are here the rendering into English of a compound verb, which is made up of a preposition, expressing “together with,” and a verb signifying to seat, set, make sit. This verb, in its uncompounded form, is that which is used to mark the position of the blessed Lord Jesus since His ascension into heaven. We will turn to some of the places of its occurrence; for instance:—

First: Eph. i. 20, “He [the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory] raised Him from the dead, and set Him [or made him sit] 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” (20—23). The context which I have quoted shows here, that “recognition in *glory* is the leading idea of the whole portion. The Lord Jesus Christ took a servant’s place. As Son of Man He could say, “My God,” to Him to whom we through grace, say “Our God” (John xx.17). Here the action is from God Himself as such: the God of our Lord Jesus Christ—the Father of Glory, has acted towards Him in a way to mark His estimate of Him, and hath declared it in the Word to us, that we, having the eyes of our under-

standing enlightened, as well as being endowed with the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, might know these things about the Christ.

The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, hath made Him (who said of Himself, when upon earth, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head"), to sit down at His own right hand in heaven; and hath heaped upon Him there titles of honour and glory. The *making Him sit* at His own right hand, marks in this place, the character of the Divine recognition of His worthiness who is so placed,—the conferring upon Him the honour that is due. That the word, "seated," "made sit," suggests naturally enough the idea of personal rest, is true, as we shall see shortly from other passages in which it is used; but, then it is used *here* in connection with the thought of glory, and in those other passages as connected with the taking of a position which supposed a certain *work* or character of service ended. And this makes an important difference. Very similar to this in some respects is—

Secondly: Heb. i. 3, "God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, *sat down* [took His seat] on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (2, 3).

It is to be remarked, that the action here is on the part of the Son: not viewed in that character of glory attaching to Him as the Son of the Father, but in that which He has as Son of God. Having made by Himself purgation of sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. It is there we see Him, crowned with honour and glory. Office and service are in this passage not at all the question — but rather the glorious position and honour taken by Himself and recognised as justly His by God, and owned with joy to be His by those who have faith. He is at rest in glory; His humiliation ended and in contrast with it; glory in the Majesty of the highest taken by Himself; owned by God to be His,

in that He has crowned Him with honour and glory;—but, if thus personally glorified, He there waits, amid the glory proper to Himself which he alone from among men could occupy, until He can take that glory which He *can share with His people. He sits at that right hand* until the time come for His taking the kingdom. His position is looked at as in glory in chapters i. and ii., and having glories many connected with it; but the idea of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man, is not introduced until the third chapter. This is to be noticed, the rather because, afterwards, the same idea of His session is introduced again, after various functions which connect themselves with worship have been treated of (see chap. x.) Government and worship are two truths inseparable from the thoughts when God, known as He is now, is revealed. In chaps. i. and ii., many allusions are made to government as to man under God's direction. With chap. iii. truth about worship begins, and in chap. viii. 1, we find the supremacy of Christ in the connection noticed.

We will turn now to this passage. “Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum. We have such a high priest, who *is set* [or seated] on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.” Both these passages (i. 3 and viii. 1) ascribe the highest place to the Christ, but the former refers rather to dominion,^a and the latter to worship. Both tell of the pre-eminence of His glory.

Again; in another passage the stress is not laid upon the glory in which He sits, nor upon that which attaches to Him who sits, but there is a contrast marked between the position of standing and sitting. Under the law “every priest standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God” (Heb. x. 11, 12).

The *many* priests, typical, all of them, of THE ONE

^a A perusal of the Psalms and Scriptures, referred to in chap. i., proves this most abundantly:—*dominion* is the leading thought of them all; so the references in chaps. viii., ix. and x. show that, in these chapters, *worship* is the governing thought.

which was to come; daily ministering and oftentimes offering,—one sacrifice and only one; standing too to do the work — seated because the work was ended; these are the points set in contrast. The Levitical priest necessarily had to repeat the sacrifice, because the tabernacle was on earth, and merely served the glory of God as King of Israel, and the needs of that people, and was done in a cycle of time which was limited to a year. Christ shed His blood on earth but presented Himself, in the power of the blood, in the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man; His work subserved the glory of God, as God, for eternity, and also the needs of all that believe, whether heaven or earth be the place in which they are met by God; and His work was done in God's own eternity. "For ever sat down on the right hand of God," may very well apply to the work which is the subject of the passage,—which does not treat of the place where Christ's ultimate glory is to be, nor of what is His present service, but of the value of the atonement offered on that great day of atonement in which He presided:—the work was done;—ended for ever; and, as to it, He sat down. Most reasonably, too, because by that "one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (ver. 14) Now if I, by faith in the blood, am sanctified, I am by that one offering perfected for ever: my conscience has for its answer before God, that which God has done in order to justify Himself in acting in mercy as on the throne of heaven: Christ, who has the full understanding of God's estimate of things, and of the correctness thereof also, could not assert there was need still of sacrifice without disparaging His own work and God's estimate of it; and the soul's estimate (that it needs nothing further as to sacrifice) is thus shown to be correct.

Again; where the subject is (not the completeness and sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice, *once and only once offered*, —but) the sympathies of Christ towards His suffering, faithful witness (as in Acts vii. 55, 56), there the Lord Jesus is represented (not as sitting down, but) as standing up.

"He [Stephen] being full of the Holy Ghost, looked

up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus *standing* on the right hand of God. And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man *standing* on the right hand of God."

On the other hand, again, where not sympathy with sufferers, still in the wilderness, is the subject, but ceasing (not from priestly offering — because Himself was the only one that could be offered — and had been offered and accepted, but) from His sufferings as Man of Sorrows, is the topic, we find rest marked by the word *sitting*.

"Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith: who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (xii. 1, 2). Truly He is in glory; but it is a glory the rest of which is set in contrast with the path-way of sorrow which led to it, and the which we now have to tread. A verse similar in some respects is Rev. iii. 21. "To Him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set [or seated] with my Father on His throne."^b A rest in glory, ordained in love, is the conqueror's prize, or *one* of the many prizes with the thoughts of which our Lord cheers our hearts.

"Instalment in office" seems the force of the word as used in chap. xx. 4. "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them," etc. Kings and priests they were before this — and had known it. Welcomed to His presence they had been — glory had begun — but the being seated upon the thrones and reigning with Him now began.

From these blessed verses, some correct idea may easily be gleaned of what the spirit of God's thoughts are, as connected with the session of Christ at the right hand of God. "The Christ" as a Jewish hope for the earth was *to be a king and to have subjects*; but the Lord Jesus, as such, was rejected; and in the writings of Paul to the Ephesians, we find who "the Christ" is who is heaven-

^b This naturally recalls to mind John xvii. 5; a most blessed glory which none but Himself could sustain.

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welcomed, when He was earth-rejected. He was given to be Head over all things to His Church, which is (as the body, with its many members, is to the head)—needful to make up the perfect man. The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, knows us as members of His body, as one Spirit with the Lord. And, accordingly, not only is no separation possible between the Head and the members, but the member is, necessarily and always, looked upon by God as a member and seen as a member of the body of which Christ is Head. Did He take His life again? We were quickened together with Him. Did He leave the grave and show Himself alive again? We have life together with Him. Is He ascended up on high? We are ascended up together with Him. Has God seated Him at His own right hand in heavenly places? God sees us as seated or made to sit together with Him in the heavenly places likewise. More blessed, far more blessed, than the glory, or the privilege, or the honour, is this grand truth of our identification, in the divine mind, with the person of Christ Himself. He the Head—we but members (it is true); but what union, what fellowship, is like the union, the fellowship of life—one life in common! And, ah, we have a life, His own life, so entirely in fellowship, so inseparably in union with the Christ who is sitting on high in the heavenly places, that God speaks about us (feeble yet rich) as having been made to sit together with Christ in heavenly places. It is an accident, a passing accident, that our bodies are still down here: let the Christ but rise up from the Father's throne (His Father's and ours) and we are found body, soul and spirit there where we now are; that is now through the life which is in the Christ who is there, and in us who are down here. It is an anomalous, abnormal, state of things for a man to have his body upon earth, but to have a divine and heavenly life flowing through him from heaven and back to heaven. This life is an eternal reality, the Head and Source of it is Christ, and the vital union which we have with Him is a much more real and powerful and important thing than the accident of our bodies being

down here. I find that many really overlook the unity of the life of the Christ and His members; they may think of a store of life in Him in God for them; they may admit that He has given to them eternal life; that the Spirit dwells in them to nourish an incorruptible seed, etc.; but the *UNITY OF LIFE between themselves and the Christ* they do not see or own; and, therefore, they cannot act on and from it. All of those in whom the Spirit of God and of Christ dwells are, really, vitally one with the Christ who is on high. The union is in the Spirit, but it actually exists and is known to us to exist—and it is a union which excludes for ever the idea of separation between the Head and members. To see it and to enjoy it and the grace which has made it ours, gives intelligence to the mind and warmth to the affections of the believer, such as nought else can; an intelligence and affection such as are needful for the heavenly walk here below of any who are sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty.

I have sometimes thought that there is no part of the doctrine of the fellowship of the believer with Christ, which shows the reality of its being a fellowship in life, so markedly as the passage before us, and others like it, which show the recognition by God of our union with His Son as the Christ, in the interval which takes place between Christ's rejection by man, and His taking possession of the glory which is yet to be conferred upon Him. The Son of God, "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Phil. ii. 6); As Son of the Father we read of Him: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He, hath declared Him" (John i. 18). Divine glory was proper to Him. He had glory with the Father before the world was (xvii. 5). When He became Son of Man, in grace and mercy He became a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,—that so (for so alone it could be), He might share the titles of glory pertaining to the Son of Man, with others from among men. His work on earth finished, but the earthly people not being ready to receive the blessing, yea rejecting it,—He went on high, and took His seat

there on the throne of the Majesty in the Highest; glorified as Son of Man with the glory which He had as Son of God with the Father before the world was.

It is not that there is more than one *power* of blessing, permanent, lasting blessing, whether for Jew, Gentile, or the Church of God. But that which, according to divine wisdom, gives its characteristic form and limit to the power when *in action* in those that are blessed — is the relationship in which the various parties (all partakers of one power) stand in Christ, and this relationship is connected with the place in which they meet God and the Lord. So seemed it meet to divine wisdom. *We* meet God in Christ on the throne, and know that which God has been pleased to reveal in the unveiled face of His Son, earth-rejected, but seated upon the throne of God, and in the glory which He had with the Father, as Son of God, before the world was. But He is not there without our being recognised as being there, even there in Him: made us sit together with Him in the heavenly places. This marks, to me at least, how dear to the mind of God and the Father the thought — the truth — of the vital union of Christ and the Church is: for when He is marking the Christ's presence with Himself during the now, nearly, two thousand years of His sitting there as Son of Man, we are made by God to be sitting together in Him. Our minds may more readily lay hold of the thoughts, "crucified together with," "dead together with," "buried together with;" because the first thoughts which such doctrines communicate to us are of liberation from ruin; or, again, we may find in "quickened together with," "having life together with," "raised up together with," "ascended together with" — that which, while it speaks of life, as the others do of freedom from death, present actions more connected with the movements of the Christ in doing work given to Him to do.^c

But in this His present position, there is something very peculiar; — it is an *ad interim* position — His highest personal glory is recognised. None but He could sit

^c He must have died, arisen and ascended — even if Israel upon the earth was the only party that had to be blessed.

where He does; to share that part of the glory of God, as He does, He must be God; and He is there as Son of Man, in a certain sense abnormally, for the throne of God and the Father are not the spheres of the display of His glory as Son of Man: yet most blessed is He there, and His having been there so long recognised in that glory as Son of Man, will cast a peculiar light on all the glory that is yet to come. For God will associate Himself with the Son of Man in His special glory, even as He has associated the Son of Man with the fulness of His Divine and Fatherly glory. But then, what a marvellous place this is for Him to recognise the unity of the Church with the Son of Man in—seated together with Him in heavenly places. The thought, the plan, the accomplishment of this marvellous work of the Church, the Bride of Christ, is all divine. And, blessed be God! there is divine power ready to make it known to us—to make it enjoyed by us—power sufficient to clear out room for God and this blessing even in this poor heart of mine;—power and readiness to make the cup flow over on every side with the blessing given.

This may be a good place to introduce some passages of Scripture, in which the most intimate and blessed associations are presented as resulting to the believer, through that root of all his blessedness, viz., association and vital union with the Christ of God. And the rather, do I introduce these passages here, because they show at once the marvellous delight which God has in the Church, and, consequent thereon, the marvellous privileges He had, of His own rich and boundless grace, prepared for her even from before the foundation of the world.

The passages to which I advert are these:—

1. 1 Cor. iii. 9: “We are *labourers together with God*: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.”

Who then was Paul; who was Apollos? Servants by whose instrumentality the Gospel was preached which these Corinthians had believed. But He about whom the Gospel was, even the God of Mercy and Compassion, who had placed all His glory in the cross of the Christ,—

He it was, and He alone, who chose the messengers of His Gospel and went with them, "even as the Lord gave to every man." And more than this; for He not only went with them, but caused all the blessing which attended their service. A Paul might plant, an Apollos might water, but it was God alone that gave the increase. "Neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." He is All. It is all one who plants and who waters, and yet every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. "For we are *labourers together with God*: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." What honour will not grace, free grace, put upon its servants: God has a tillage — God has a building. Does God use any man in connection with His tillage, with His building? He useth them not as dead tools, but as quickened saints, made willing in the day of His power. In that tillage, in that building, all is of God; and God is the all — for blessing. Yet He puts this honour upon His servants to enable them to say, "We are *labourers together with God*." What is the energy of an Alexander, of a Cæsar, of a Napoleon, compared to that energy which wrought in a Paul, in an Apollos? What the prize of present self-exaltation for a moment which the former sought, compared with the present exaltation which leads on to a "for ever of blessedness," which the latter possessed. The presence of God, of God in power working,—may well prostrate every soul before it,—must prostrate every soul that knows what it is: but if, on the one hand, it prostrates self with an "it is not anything" (ver. 7); on the other hand, how does it exalt the servants in giving them power to say, "We are labourers together with God." Such things were never said, save of a people who were one spirit with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word here used is the noun *συνεργός*, or *co-labourer*; one associated in work with another. It is the very same word as is found in Rom. xvi. 3, 9, 11. The leading subject of a context always, however, of course has to be borne in mind: in the passages already looked at, God is the All, though in grace He may be pleased to

energize and work through man; and because a man's affections, thoughts and energy are thus through grace energized by God — what the man was in Himself is counted dead and buried — and he living; yet not he, but Christ living in him — therefore God speaks of such as *workers together with Him*. In the passages which follow, all that are such are looked upon as fellow-labourers the one of the other. Thus:—

Rom. xvi. 3: "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my *helpers* in Christ Jesus."

9: "Salute Urbane, our *helper* in Christ."

21: "Timotheus my *work-fellow*, and Lucius salute you."

May our hearts not only know fellowship with a Paul in his labours, and the sufferings which are connected with it, but also the fellowship of that Almighty grace with all the blessing and liberty which are connected with it, and which formed to Paul the basis and root of his very life, as well as of all the proceeds of it.

2. My next passage is 2 Cor. vi. 1, "We then, as workers together with Him, beseech . . . that you receive not the grace of God in vain" [or as a vain, light, empty thing].

Here the word used is the verb, which corresponds to the substantive, which is used in the last cited passages. The two passages are very similar, yet there is a difference: in that which we have looked at, the field of labour is the Church which is upon earth; Paul might plant, as a master builder lay the foundation of churches; Apollos might water them. Neither Paul nor Apollos were anything, but God was the Blessor. Yet He that was the Blessor called those through whose labours He wrought *His fellow-workers*. What ineffable grace! In *this* passage: The Lord, before whose judgment man shall stand (v. 10), has provided a Gospel of good tidings of great joy. That Gospel had made Paul manifest before God (ver. 11), and manifest also before those among whom he laboured. And what had it manifested? That if Paul was beside himself it was to God (ver. 13); if sober, he was so for the sake of those among whom he laboured. For the love of Christ led him captive in

its blessed constraint; a love which declared, that as Christ had died, so all that believed in Him were dead together with Him; and that His object in doing this for all His people was, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them and rose again. This set Paul altogether in another system of things than that of this world; and, consequently, he knew no man after the flesh; Christ he had known after the Spirit, all things took their place accordingly. If any man were in Christ, he was a new creature; old things were passed away; a new order of things was introduced — not yet in glory, but yet in the principle of all true glory and blessedness,—all things are of Him who, first, has reconciled us to Himself, through Jesus Christ our Lord, and who, thereupon, has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation. Such was His love. Not merely to make us new creatures, but to give us to know *all things* to be of Him who hath reconciled us to Himself; and having done so, has identified us with the work in which He, in His love, is occupied — a work which our own salvation, position of blessing, new life and privileges have made dear to us — viz., the announcing of His own character and Gospel. It is not, merely, that we are called to plead with poor sinners, “Why will ye die?” “We beseech you receive not the grace of God in vain,” etc., etc. (as in vi. 1, which is our text); but more than this, we are associated by God with Himself as the One who is revealing Himself; who has committed the word of reconciliation to us who have tasted it, for ourselves know the mercy of God; the work by which that mercy opened a way for itself to us, and for us to it; we have tasted the suitability of it to ourselves and to poor sinners; we know, too, how God delights in it (vers. 18—21), and who, if He bids us, *invite* and *bid* those whom we may meet, is Himself standing to welcome those that come. For He saith, “I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee; behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” Context is always the safest medium in which to look at a text. And while these two texts are verbally very

similar, the light of the respective contexts gives a difference. In the former, the writer speaks as labouring in the Church upon earth; in the latter, as labouring in the light of the throne of the Lord of Judgment, and as proclaiming His mercy and the glad tidings, that "He who knew no sin [the Judge] had been made sin for us; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." In this service he was associated by grace with the work, and with all the affection, too, of God.^d

3. I turn now to Eph. ii. 19, in which we get another kind of intimate and blessed association referred to; and it also is one of the blessed consequences of this our fellowship together with Christ. "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but *fellow-citizens with the saints*, and of the household of God." The "ye" refers to the believing Ephesians, who had been, however, heathens, and as such had not had, like the Jews, any place in connection with God in the world — *without God in the world*. For this expression does not mean that they had been godless, and in the wickedness of the world as individuals; that, alas! many of the Jews were also — but that the Gentiles, as such, had no religious connection marked out for them with the only thing which was recognized before God as religious upon earth, viz., the Jew. Such they had been. With Jewish worship they had had nothing to do. But now, since they believed in the Christ risen and ascended, they had a most special connection as such with God in heaven;—

^d The same word which we have been looking at, is used also in Mark xvi. 20, Rom. viii. 28, and Jas. ii. 22.

Mark xvi. 19, 20, "So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord *working with* them, and confirming the Word with signs following."

Rom. viii. 28, "And we know that all things *work together* for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

James ii. 22, "Seest thou how faith *wrought with* His works."

The faith was the energizing power — the works the fruit of it. All these passages give the idea and sense of co-operation — working together with — in the fullest sense in which the subjects of them admit; and thus they confirm what has been just said.

they were among His heavenly holy ones, of His household (inmates of His house), this they had found, as we have seen, through and in the Christ, each one for himself had found it, each one been found of God — there was fellowship in the citizenship of all such, whether they had been drawn off Jewish or off Gentile ground. They were *fellow-citizens of* (*co-citizens with*) the holy ones (of heaven), and parts of God's family. "Our free-citizenship^e is in heaven" (Phil. iii. 19).

It is only when the scope of the Epistle to the Ephesians is weighed, and the peculiarity of its blessings, as contrasted with all earthly blessing, is considered, that the amazing blessedness of this portion of being *co-citizens with the holy ones of heaven and of the household of God* will be seen. But this rank, this fellowship, is to each of us but one of the many blessings resulting from our association in life with the Son of Man. They that are so have, most surely, their greatest of blessings in the association which they have with Himself — that is *in life* and in association, as of a member with the Head, of all that is His: it brings them, into certain privileged associations in service, through the purest grace, with God; but it sets them also, as here, all of them, in most blessed association the one with the other, in a freedom of the city which is in heaven, and in the liberty of the Father's house, too. And so entirely are these things linked together in one, in the Spirit's mind, that no sooner has the apostle named this privilege of being "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God," than he immediately goes on to speak of being "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

^e *πολίτευμα* (*conversation*), as used in the Authorised Version for citizenship, is an old English use of the word, but it presents too much the idea of "the round of our duties—the place where our turn is served"—the Greek word conveys more than that. It is there our names are inscribed (Luke x. 20). For there is there the Lamb's book of life, and the book of the living (Phil. iv. 3).

4. There is another verse in which a somewhat similar kind of blessing is referred to, which we will now look at:—

“That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel” (Eph. iii. 6). All is *in* Christ; all our blessings of whatsoever kind have their root and source in Christ. Nothing which has not Him for its root is blessing, or could be given to us by God as if it were counted by Him as fit to be a blessing to us.

The participation here looked at is in three things: 1st. A place in the expectation of the inheritance; 2ndly. A place in the body; and 3rdly. A place in the good promise—all three belonged to as many of these poor Ephesians (Gentiles though they had been) as believed,—a place in common with those from among the Jews also who had believed,—but the place was *in Christ* and in Him alone, and “in Him” was the participation found; for the inheritance was His; He also was Head of His body the Church; and in Him alone any promise could stand true; and all were yea and amen in Him, to the glory of God by us. He who had been a Gentile idolater might meet in Christ, one who had been a Pharisee of the Pharisees—but in Christ the old history of each lost its place of pre-eminence; once in Christ, and you are there where all is governed, and arranges itself according to a new order, even according to God’s delight in Christ, who is the Heir; the Head of the body, the Church; and His are all the promises of God. Some, in handling this verse, have made so much of the union of believers from among the Jews and the Gentiles, that they have overlooked the questions of “union in what?” and “union in whom?”

In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek; they that are in Him are a heavenly people; they are, through grace, all fellow-heirs, the one with the other, in that inheritance which is due to Him in whom they are; together they form a body, each one a member in particular of the body (and so they are united one to the other) of which He is the Head; even as each of them has shared, like all the rest, in the promise. Various as the

privileges are in which they have community, one with the other, those privileges are one and all in Christ, and Christ is the alone way into the possession of them.

The following passages naturally connect themselves with the subject, and show, in a striking way, the nature of the tie which binds the members together, after first uniting them to the head.

Eph. ii. 20, 21, "Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone: in whom all the building *fitly framed together* groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord."

Eph. iv. 15, 16, "Christ: from whom the whole body *fitly joined together* maketh increase of the body," etc.

In both of which passages, the word which expresses *the joining together in one*, is *συναρμολογουμενος*.^f

In the passages in Ephesians, this intimacy of adaptation of the parts one to the other, to accomplish a common end, is evident. First, in the building, Christ is the chief corner-stone, elect, precious, of a holy temple to the Lord;—and then each stone which is in Him is adjusted and nicely made to fit in to its own reserved, prepared place for the accomplishment of this common end. Secondly; in the body, Christ is the Head; each member in particular is a member of Christ, and as such has a place nicely suited to it in the body, in which it gets relationship with other members. But no member can speak of being member of another member; that would be to make that other member head, and to displace Christ, as did some at Corinth. The body is the body of Christ, and each one a member in particular; and because a member in particular of that body of which Christ is Head, having both responsibility as such towards the other members, and also, what is far better, having the privilege to be used as such by the Head for the blessing of the rest of the members.

^f This verb *συναρμολογέω* is used in the New Testament only in these two passages. Liddell and Scott say, in their Lexicon, that its force is identical in the New Testament with that of *συναρμόζω* in classical Greek; and they give, as instances of the force of *συναρμόζω* the *exact closing* of the eye-lids; *to join in wedlock*; *to compound* two words into one; *to suit or fit* two things to one another; as the flute to the harp, in music, etc.

Exact adaptation to places so near to Christ, when the temple (habitation of God), and when the body of the Christ are in question, is a precious privilege. In both cases, it is not by might, nor by power, but by the Lord's Spirit; and unites — if *for ever* — to scenes in which God and the Lamb will be the glory, yet unites *us* (men who believe in Christ during the days of His rejection) in one bundle of life, in the which not our individuality, but Christ's (as a man — a heavenly man) will have all the pre-eminence.

Then, again, we have the word *συνβιβάζω*^s used as in Eph. iv. 16, and Col. ii. 2, 19.

“From whom the whole body fitly joined together, and *compact*ed by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love” (Eph. iv. 16).

“I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you . . . and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; that their hearts might be comforted, *being knit together* in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ” (Col. ii. 1, 2).

“The Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and *knit together*, increaseth with the increase of God” (Col. ii. 19).

The *compacting*, the *knitting together* is, in each case, by the power of the life of that body, the Head of which Christ is. Paul, looked at as an individual, was but a member in particular; so was Apollos, and so was Cephas. But the power of the Life which united them to the Head, gave them, subordinate always to Him, a power of fellowship — a compacting, a knitting, together the one with the other.

In our day *vital union with the Christ* has been too much considered as a *high* doctrine, the doctrine of the elder classes in the school of God. Alas! where re-

^s Lit. 1st, *to bring together*; hence metaphorically, *to reconcile, bring to terms with*; 2ndly, *to put together, to compare*, hence to deduce, prove, teach.

covered as the doctrine of the family of God as such — it has, in more cases than one, been so corrupted as that, while the fellowship of the members has been held to, it has not been kept subordinate to the Headship of Christ. And so the most precious truth has been turned against the Lord as the Former and Giver of it.

Hitherto we have seen three great and distinct things. 1st. God reckoning; 2ndly. God communicating; 3rdly. The position in blessedness (before God, and in the mutual bearing of the parts one with the other), of that in which the blessing of God has, in these last days, presented itself.

1st. *God reckoning*;—He reckoned unto Christ all that we were as men, descended from Adam, and all that we had done; visited it all on Him; and received as a ransom His life, given as Son of Man. He reckons these three things to be true of us who believe; and bids us to reckon them so concerning ourselves and to act thereon.

2ndly. *God communicating*. The Son of Man taking life in the grave, is the fountain whence divine life flows to us; but, if divine, it is yet divine life derived and suited to man;—it is life together with the Christ; the life in which He rose up out of the grave and, after showing Himself on earth, ascended up into heaven.

3rdly. *The position in blessedness* of that in which the blessing of God now presents itself.

In heaven we sit together with Christ — in heavenly places. Upon earth we are recognised as associated with the work which God is doing; as thoroughly identified with the city and house of God, and with the body and members of which Christ is Head: *thoroughly* so, because we are identified with these things in the power of a life which is Christ,—a life which is hid with Christ in God; our eternal life.

In what follows, we shall have to look (4thly) at what results from all this. Being made one with the Christ, already one with Him, two things naturally result. 1st. now we have to suffer with Him; and, 2ndly, we must hereafter be glorified together. Various kinds of suffering now may be ours, as various kinds of suf-

fering were His; the glory, too, may be looked at in a different way, in different Scriptures, as we shall see it is: but this must never be forgotten. As to all our pilgrimage and strangership here below (with all the vast variety of ways in which we may be called to suffer, from the world, the flesh and the devil); and as to all the life of honour and power hereafter; yet it must be remembered, that both the one and the other are to us the results — necessary and inseparable results from vital union with the Christ of God. He took out of the way all that God had against us; He introduces us into that place, and those things into connection with us, which could enable God not only to have nothing to say against us, but to be able to delight in us; and all, in the power of that blessing which Himself had given as in Christ, to undertake to lead us to His own home, forming and fashioning our hearts, and teaching us His ways in contrast with our own, all through our wilderness pilgrimage. All the wrath due to us fell on the Christ — and *it is finished*. The cross has settled the whole question of God's wrath against ourselves who believe — Christ bore it all, and I that believe shall bear none; in Christ, too, the whole question of the acceptability and the character of the acceptability has been settled — He is risen and ascended: God has conferred every honour upon Him which even He had to give — conferred it upon Him as Jesus who died, the Just One for the unjust, and thus, the righteousness of God in Christ is inseparable from the full acceptance of the believer. The believer is accepted in (graced in) the Beloved. But the same grace which has linked us up to God by and in the Christ — has been pleased to link us up also with the fortunes of the Christ, both in this world and in that which is to come. In our next paper we shall, therefore, have to enter upon these results of the life so enjoyed by us already: viz., “that if so be we suffer now, we shall be glorified hereafter.”

N^o. XVII.

2 THESSALONIANS.

IN the second Epistle to the Thessalonians, the Apostle corrects some errors into which these disciples had fallen, with regard to the day of the Lord, through certain false teachers; as, in part of the first Epistle, he had enlightened the ignorance of the believers themselves, respecting the portion of the saints at the coming of Christ to take them to Himself; a point on which they were evidently but little instructed.

A measure of Jewish darkness was on their minds; and they were, in some points, still subjected to the influence of that unhappy nation, which was ever struggling to maintain a position lost through its unbelief.

This Jewish influence enables us to understand why the Apostle spoke as he did in chap. ii. 15, 16, of the first Epistle. At that time, this influence shewed itself in the tendency of the Thessalonians to lose sight of the heavenly side of the Lord's coming, to think that He would return to the earth, and that they should then be glorified with Him — as a Jew might have believed — and that the dead saints would therefore not be present to share this glory. I do not say that this thought had assumed a definite form in the minds of the Thessalonians; to them, the principal and living object was the Lord Himself, and they were awaiting His return with hearts full of joy and life; but the heavenly side of this expectation had not its place clearly marked in their minds, and they connected the coming too much with the manifestation, so that the earthly character predominated, and the dead seemed to be shut out from it.

When the second Epistle was written, this Jewish influence had another character; and the false teachers were more directly concerned in it.

The faithful at Thessalonica had learnt to contemplate

and grounded, may realise in their hearts, by Christ's dwelling in them by faith, the full effect, even to filling, to all the fulness of God, the greatness of the infinite scene of glory into which they are brought, and know that love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

In result, the general principle of the difference is this. In the Romans, the man is found alive in sin. Convicted of it, and has, Christ having died for him to put it away, to come, in the conviction of the hopeless badness of his nature, to death, and then rising again, alive through Jesus Christ, be thus justified before God, and by God, on the one hand, and alive in a new life on the other; then nothing shall separate him from the love of Christ. In the Ephesians the man is found dead in sin; but then he is raised up, and set in heavenly places in Christ, according to the power in which Christ, when dead, was raised of God, and set in the heavenly places, far above principalities and powers, and every name that is named, and brought as a new creation, children withal, and heirs, into immediate nearness to God. The additional truth is brought out, that we are united to Christ in this place, as members of His body, and His heavenly bride. I cannot here — time does not allow it — do more than draw out the great general principles of the different aspects of truth presented by the two Epistles. He who searches as a devout learner into the truth of God, will, I am sure, find in what I here notice in these Epistles, elements of deep and profitable instruction, as to his own relationship with God, the Christianity of his soul and of the word, and of his soul according to the word. Perhaps some one, for his own and our edification, may furnish us with further results which flow from it.

P O E T R Y.

—
“THE SEA BIRD.”

I've watch'd the sea bird calmly glide
 Unruffled o'er the ocean tide ;
 Unscared she heard the waters roar
 In foaming breakers on the shore.
 Fearless of ill, herself she gave
 To rise upon the lifting wave,
 Or sink, to be awhile unseen —
 The undulating swells between —
 Till, as the evening shadows grew,
 Noiseless, unheard, aloft she flew ;
 While, soaring to her rock-built nest,
 A sunbeam lighted on her breast,
 A moment glitter'd in mine eye,
 Then quickly vanish'd through the sky.

While by the pebbly beach I stood,
 That sea-bird, on the waving flood,
 Pictured to my enraptured eye,
 A soul at peace with God: — Now high,
 Now low, upon the gulf of life,
 Raised or depress'd, in peace or strife,
 Calmly she kens the changeful wave,
 She dreads no storm — she fears no grave:
 To her, the world's tumultuous roar,
 Dies like the echo on the shore.

" Father," she cries, " Thy pleasure all fulfil,
 " I gladly yield me to thy sovereign will ;
 " Let earthly joys, let comforts ebb or rise,
 " Tranquil on thee, my God, my soul relies."

Then, as advance the shades of night,
 Long-plumed, she takes her heavenward flight ;
 But, as she mounts, I see her fling
 A beam of glory from her wing —
 A moment — to my aching sight
 Lost in the boundless fields of light! .

FRAGMENT.

When Jesus is testified of to the saints of God, by the power of the Holy Ghost, he who speaks, loses sight of himself, and his audience; and his audience lose sight of themselves and the speaker; and the vision of each is filled with the glory of Christ.

" If we seek and receive honour one of another, and not that which cometh from God only," these blessings cannot be realised. " He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory : but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him."

H. P.

360*

N^o. XIX.

RELATIVE ORDER OF THREE SYNOPTICAL GOSPELS.

[THE Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke are arranged in three parallel columns in the following tables, in their relative order. There are five tables. On the outer margins of each table are consecutive numbers, for more easy reference to any parallel passages required. Each table is numbered in Roman numerals. Observe the following direction:—

• ° Put before any text shews that no parallel passage occurs in the other two Gospels. ^{1,2} or ^{1,3} or ^{2,3} indicate the columns in which parallels occur. The headings introduced, e.g. M. I. 6; L. I. 8, refer not to chapters and verses, but to the table and the marginal numbers opposite the line in which the passage referred to is to be found.—*Ed.*]

NOTE.

Mark is the most strictly chronological.

Luke follows him closest where he is so; but the middle of the gospel is a collection of instructions not chronological, but morally connected.

Matthew orders his materials, or the Holy Spirit by him, to shew the dealing with the Jews, as come to them according to promise, and the change to the new thing; and, though prophetically speaking of Church as well as kingdom, leads Christ, at close, to Galilee, with the residue, and does not follow the history to the ascension, but he alone gives the history of the resurrection itself. Harmonies lose the distinctive power of the gospel.

I believe Mat. xxviii. 1, to mean the evening of Saturday, the crepuscule of evening not morning; ver. 5 is a new paragraph. Luke xxiv. 34 alludes to the appearing to Peter, of which Paul speaks. Luke's account as to women is quite general. Mary Magdalene was at the sepulchre when it was dark. Peter and John go, and go away home. Mary remains and sees Jesus. When the women come they see the angels and flee. Mary Magdalene, taught of Jesus, goes and tells disciples. As the others went, Jesus meets them, and desires them to tell disciples He was going into Galilee. Mary Magdalene was to tell them He was going to the Father. It was only in their flight the women said nothing to any one. After meeting Jesus they were probably re-assured; and, at any rate, afterwards they told what the angels told them, as we learn from the Lord going to Emmaus, and see Luke xxiv. 9. But he unites all in a general statement, as often, and adds other women. Ver. 12 is apart; the Greek has not "then." The accounts are very brief, and refer to object of gospel. Several saw Him. See Mark xvi. 14; and 1 Cor. xv.

Page	Matthew	Mark	Luke	Table V.
1	27:27—56 ¹ He is crucified. ² The vail rent. ³ Graves opened—Centurion—women there.	15:47 ¹ Women at sepulchre.	23:55,56 ¹ Women at sepulchre to behold.	Mat. V. 2, 6; Mk. V. 1.
2	M. IV. 22; L. IV. 22; M. V. 1; L. V. 1. 27:57—61 ¹ Joseph places His body in tomb—women at sepulchre.	16:1 ¹ Sabbath past, Women come to see sepulchre.	24:1—3 ¹ First day of week, come to sepulchre very early (stone rolled away).	Mk. V. 3.
3	27:62—66 ¹ Day after preparation—priests place a guard.	16:2—4 ² Early in morning come to see sepulchre, at rising of sun, see stone rolled away.	24:4—8 ¹ Angels tell women He is risen as He said.	Mat. V. 6; Mk. V. 4.
4	28:1 ¹ Close of Sabbath, Women come to Sepulchre.	16:5,7 ¹ Women re-assured by angels, to say He was going into Galilee.	24:9—12 ¹ They return, tell disciples, Peter goes and departs wondering.	Mat. V. 7; M. V. 5.
5	28:2—3 ¹ Earthquake, Angel rolls back the stone.	16:18 ¹ Flee from sepulchre.	24:13—35 ¹ Interview with two going to Emmaus, opens Scripture, they return and find eleven.	Mk. V. 7.
6	28:4—7 ¹ The guards tremble— ² Women re-assured—Jesus going into Galilee.	16:9—11 ¹ Jesus appears first to Mary Magdalene, she tells disciples.	24:36—43 ¹ Jesus appears in their midst and eats.	Mat. V. 7; M. V. 5.
7	28:8 ¹ Go to tell His disciples.	16:12—14 ² Appears to two going into the country, to eleven at meat.	24:44,45 ¹ Explains Scriptures and opens their understandings.	
8	28:9,10 ¹ Jesus meets the women, they are to say they would meet Him in Galilee where they were to go.	16:15—18 ¹ Sends them all into the world to preach to every creature.	24:46—48 ¹ How repentance and remission of sins was to be preached, beginning at Jerusalem.	
9	28:11—15 ¹ Guards take money to say He was stolen.	16:19 ² The Lord received up into heaven.	24:49 ¹ To tarry in Jerusalem for power.	Mk. V. 9.
10	28:16—18 ¹ Disciples go into Galilee.	16:20 ¹ They go and preach everywhere, the Lord working with them.	24:50,51 ² Leads them to Bethany, while blessing them taken up to heaven.	
11	28:19—20 ¹ Mission founded on all power in heaven and earth given to them (no ascension near Jerusalem).		24:52,53 ¹ They worship, return to Jerusalem with joy, continually in Temple.	

N^o. XX.

COMPARED VIEW OF THE FIRST THREE GOSPELS, ETC.

I APPREHEND that the Gospel of Mark, which brings under our view the service of Christ, and particularly His prophetic service, and, hence, records simply the accomplishment of that service, as the events arose, is that of the three first gospels, which gives, generally, the chronological order of events. Luke places, in general, events in the same order as Mark, where he follows chronological order at all. In a large portion of his gospel, he drops the chronological order, and gives a general series of instructions, of which the occasions and elements are found scattered in the other two Gospels, or are found only in Luke. I take Mark, therefore, as presenting, in the main, the historical order. It is to be remarked, that, as is stated in the end of John, *very* few of the events or miracles of our Lord's life are recorded; only such as shew forth his ministry, and specially in the earlier part in Galilee, and then at the close at Jerusalem. In these, the Gospels, in the main, go together. Luke has a large portion of the middle part of his Gospel, occupied with general moral teaching. But the way in which this comes in, is not difficult to perceive, as, in the ninth chapter, it is said, the time was come for Christ's delivering up. In all the Gospels, the common history of the concluding events, begins with the healing of the blind man near Jericho. In Matthew, the method pursued by the Evangelist, is very evident; and the displacement of subjects, where they are found, is connected with that method. I will begin with him. The birth of Christ itself — not found in Mark — is treated in connection with the subject of the Evangelist, or rather of the Holy

of the Saints. Further, there is not the agony of rejection from the light of God's countenance — the opposite to all that every righteous man in Israel hitherto could say, for they had been heard. But we have the new man, the man that trusts in God. Having passed through it and drunk, in perfect obedience, the bitter cup, He can say, "Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit." In death, He trusts His soul to His Father. So the centurion also here recognizes the Lord in this character; "Certainly this was a righteous man." Luke adds the moral effect on the people, now, as so often happens, under the effect of what their misguided passions had led to. That He was with the rich in His death is then related by all. In what follows, as we have so often found, Luke relates in a general way, bringing all together, the discovery by the women and by Peter of the resurrection of Jesus; but there is no apparition of Jesus here to any of them. Angels spoke to the women — they to the disciples. It was as idle tales to these; only Peter went to the sepulchre and found it was so, and departed wondering. But then Luke gives the details of the touching history of the journey to Emmaus, just noticed by Mark, where Jesus reveals Himself. And here it is by an allusion to His death, which, though no way the Lord's supper, intimated a part of the same truth as that. The Christ they had to know, was a Christ who had died, whose body had been broken for them, and who then disappeared, was to be known by faith. At the same time, He had expounded to them the Scriptures. This, and indeed something more, is again found after His personal revelation of Himself to Simon, and to the eleven, and others. We have His revelation of Himself first to Peter, and then the clear setting forth that He was really a risen *man*, having flesh and bones, and having even eaten with them. Two things, then, are presented, divinely-given intelligence of Scripture, and power given from on high. Such are the great bases of the Gospel here presented — the man risen — known in death, and gone away, Scripture understood by divinely-given spiritual intelligence and power from on high. Of this

last we have little to boast. Next, all that passed in Galilee, recorded by Matthew, is omitted. Matthew gives his last glimpse of Jesus there, and does not speak of the ascension. What is recorded also by John as passing in Galilee, is also omitted.^e He closes with the respective positions of Peter and John (representing the Jewish and Gentile parts of the Christian Church), without historically mentioning the ascension. All this part of the history is omitted in Luke, and the link of the Lord's departure is with Bethany, His home when rejected of Jerusalem, the heavenly family. There He blesses them, and, as he does so, is taken up to heaven. The mission they receive is according to this. It is not going forth to the Gentiles, assuming the acceptance of, at any rate, the remnant of Israel: nor simply enlarging the service to all creation, but as from outside all, as from heaven, to preach to all the Gentiles, *beginning* at Jerusalem, which for heavenly things needed it as much as Gentiles, and as to dispensation, had the first place as object of promise. They were to go to all, but "to the Jew first." The apostles were witnesses, but the Holy Ghost also would be given. Though their blessing and mission were from heaven, they find their way to the temple, there praising God.

^e The Lord teaches the ascension to Mary Magdalene. See John's Gospel, though there be no account of it.

FRAGMENT.

It is the same divine counsel that has placed the Christ upon the throne of the Father, and which has arranged all according to his glory — which has also decided *who* of us in that day shall be alive on the earth to await Him; and *who* of us, also, He shall have to bring down as having been previously absent from the body and present with Himself.

N^o. XXI.

ON FELLOWSHIP TOGETHER WITH CHRIST.

PART VIII.

ON SUFFERING TOGETHER WITH HIM.

THREE passages in Scripture may serve as introduction for our meditation —

1. Rom. viii. 17: "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that *we suffer with Him* [εἵπερ συμπάσχομεν], that we may also be glorified together."
2. 2 Tim. i. 8: "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner: but *be thou partaker of the afflictions* [συγκακοπάθησον] of the Gospel according to the power of God."
3. 2 Tim. ii. 12: "If *we suffer*, we shall also reign with Him" [εἰ ὑπομένομεν καὶ συμβασιλεύσομεν].

The last of these passages (2 Tim. ii. 12) connects and contrasts endurance, or patience, or the abiding under trial NOW, with the FUTURE sharing of Christ's dominion. *Now*, PATIENCE; *then*, DOMINION together with Christ. It is more specific in its statement than either of the other two: "*Endurance*, NOW; *Dominion*, THEN."

The second (2 Tim. i. 8) connects *the suffering of afflictions* (or the suffering of evil trials) with the work of the testimony of Paul, and invites others to share the trials. It naturally recalls to mind a well-known text in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which presents us with another

witness, who lived in other days (chap. xi. 24—26): “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with [συγκακουχεῖσθαι] the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.” In Egypt, honourable place; to be called son of Pharaoh’s daughter; and treasures enough there to minister unto such the pleasures of sin for a season. But the faith which revealed God unto Moses, made Moses choose rather the afflictions of the people of God and the reproach of Christ. What had God and Egypt, or God and the house of Pharaoh, and the wealth of that house, in common? Nothing; and Moses knew this, and acted accordingly. The world of to-day is, according to God’s word, to us Christians what Egypt was to Moses. Are our moral estimate of it, and our conduct towards it, similar to Moses’s towards Egypt? [Reader, is your choice and is your taste practically the same as it was with Moses?] Whatever patience, whatever afflictions attend now those who preach the Gospel, in all such, faith will claim its share.

But it is not, merely, that we must be patient while we wait for the kingdom which is ours, or that there are certain afflictions which naturally attend the labour which is given to the Lord’s servant to do: the position he is set in, the people he is connected with, the work of testimony, will all bring sorrow now, ’tis true. But the teaching is wider in its scope still in our first text:—

For if we suffer together with Christ, brings before us the Son of man.

It was a free grace gift to the Philippians that Paul spoke of (chap. i. 29): “Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake; having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.” But then he goes on (in chap. ii.), to show them that there was yet more which was open to them to take up, even the acting as those who had the mind of Christ. For he was one who could say of himself, through grace, “Who now

rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church" (Col. i. 24).

The cross — *that* Christ had borne all alone: there He had taken to Himself alone all the wrath due to the sinner. But the cross was not all of the afflictions of Christ; there was that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ for us also; and when we consider that "the sufferings of Christ" were testified of to prophets, by the Spirit, at a time when the revelation of what man was, was more the object of God's dealings than now, that, man having proved himself irremediably bad by his rejection of the Son of God's love, God is showing His own love towards man as a sinner; — when we consider this, I say, we must not be surprised to find those sufferings of Christ, which were experienced at man's hand, and as fruits of man's condition, largely unfolded in the Old Testament. In many of these, the Apostle had his part, and bore, through grace, his share. Jealous against those who wished to avoid sharing these sufferings of Christ, he was fierce and altogether intolerant of those who pretended to set aside the wrath of God against sin in any other way than by the Cross of Christ, endured by Him alone on Calvary. No Apostle ever madly dreamed of himself sharing the wrath of God due to sin, which had been borne already by Christ the Just One, in place of the many unjust.

In the first eight Psalms I find no reference to the sufferings of atonement; but I cannot read those Psalms without those sufferings of Christ, in which the servant of God could share, being brought before me.

The perfection of the Blessed One, spoken of in Psalm i., is thus laid down — "His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth He meditate day and night." But what the effect of that upon Himself, when the scene around presented nothing but the counsel of the ungodly, the way of sinners, the seat of the scornful? Isolateness to one that loves communion; rejection to a heart whose affections are diffusive; sympathy with and dependance upon the Lord in such a scene — in a place loved of the Lord, but among a people who had no heart

for the Lord — are all causes of suffering. But to be possessed by the word of God; to find its indwelling to be the very mark of one's course, and to know the sorrowful bearing of it upon those who shut it out, because of its contrast to their own plans, ways, and established purposes is deep sorrow to one who knows who and what God is, and sees who and what man is, to oppose himself to God. Now in all this, that which was fully developed in the Christ may be shared by all that ever had the spirit and faith of the Lord's elect.

In Psalm ii. we see that not only is man individually wicked, but that there is a power, governing the world as a whole, which leads to the thorough rejection from the earth both of Christ and those that are His.

The Lord Jesus tasted this fully and all alone; but Peter, James, and John tasted it together, when, as in Acts iv., they quote, as applying to both Christ's rejection and their own position, the close of Psalm ii. The world knows us not, because it knew Him not.

In Psalm iii. we find one with nothing but multitudes of difficulties before and around him, and no answer to any one of them save in the Lord. Who tasted this fully, save the Christ? Who ever really walked with God, and has not, according to the measure of his faith, tasted it and its affliction?

It is a blessed thing, not without sweetness, though bitter be mingled with the sweet, when, amid the thousands and tens of thousands of trials, the soul's energy is roused, as in Psalm iv., by the sense of the contrast between its own integrity God-ward and the thorough corruption in wickedness of all around it; and this character of suffering has its own character of comfort—a character as peculiar to it as hope is the characteristic comfort of the state described in Psalm i.; waiting, of that of Psalm ii.; strengthening of oneself in God, of that of Psalm iii.

Appeal to God against the wicked characterises Psa. v., as patience under discipline and correction does Psa. vi., and appeal for judgment upon the enemy, Psa. vii.

The mind of Christ can be little known, if His sorrow as to the wickedness of the wicked round about Him is

not known. His heart can have been but little revealed to us, if His sorrow as to the state of the nation Israel, brought low by discipline and correction, on account of its careless walk with God, has never been seen by us. How could He be indeed the Son, the Servant of God—the One on whom all the duties of the kingly, prophetic, and priestly offices of that nation devolved—and not feel sorrow at the discipline under which the nation was? And His hard words against the harder hearts of that generation of vipers—His weeping over Jerusalem, that stoned the prophets, etc., it was all a service of suffering to Him—a service in which, at however great a distance from Himself as to measure, yet a service of suffering, which Paul shared with his Master. “If so be we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together,” is applicable to all this.

Psalm viii. is a psalm of glory; but as chap. ii. of Paul's Epistle to the Philippians teaches us, the glory due to the Son of man, had a pathway of suffering and sorrow into it. He who was, according to Divine counsel, to be the centre of a new system as Son of man, had to stoop to a path of suffering service, and to be obedient unto death—the death of the cross, ere He was to be highly exalted, and a name above every name given to Him, and be placed as Son of man at the Father's right hand. The cross is not looked at in Phil. ii. as the expression either of God's love to man in providing a Lamb, or of Christ's love to man in giving Himself, the Just One, in place of the many unjust; but as the expression of the perfection of His obedience—obedient unto death, the death of the cross. Blessed be God, we know that there, and there alone, that one thing without which God could not be just while justifying the sinner—without the knowledge of which, no soul can ever have peacefully to do with God was found; but the object of the passage is not to show this, but another truth. And we neither honour God's word, nor show a sound mind, when we, however unintentionally, force passages to other than their simple meaning. Now the meaning of Phil. ii., as well as the object of the Apostle in his writing it, is to press practical conformity on the mind and conduct

of the disciple, and not to show the enquirer where peace is to be found. And surely they who have known themselves so blessed with Christ, through grace, and have tried to exhibit the mind and walk of their Master, have known that it is a path of suffering, subjection, and of self-sacrifice.

The Old Testament believer must have found in the Psalms (not all that we find, but) a plain testimony that, independent of all blessings of God for a people on the earth, the household of faith, who always, somehow or the other, got tried, had to do with God in heaven. The pathway of their faith was always one of suffering.

These few remarks may suffice as to the fact of there being sufferings, quite separate from those of sin-bearing, or even of testimony, to the blessed Lord. If we stand upon the work He wrought in suffering upon the cross, we may share in His sufferings, in testimony, etc., and so only.

The life of the blessed Lord upon earth divides itself into three parts.

There is, 1st, His private life, from the birth to His public showing unto Israel; there is, 2ndly, His public life as a witness for God unto Israel; and there is, 3rdly, That part, alone, and in some sense, apart from the rest, in which He was bearing our sins in His own body on the tree.

A soul, taught of God, will have learnt the difference for itself of the three, though it may never have marked off for itself the lines of distinction. The question of how God can receive a sinner, of how a sinner can go to God, cannot be seen save by the Cross, where all God's wrath went over Him who was the substitute. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us — that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. I have no idea of myself enduring the wrath of God, or any part of it, as of God against a creature: it would be to me eternal misery and ruin. God saw no way of introducing, and of making effective, his mercy to a creature, found on the ground of rebellion, save the Cross of Christ. And faith knows no other settlement of the question of man's

guilt than this, that the whole penalty of it was borne by Christ — the just one in place of the many unjust.

That Christ suffered, in his life, for righteousness' sake; suffered as a righteous one, and as a righteous witness for all God's claims, and for pressing upon man his responsibility to God, cannot be denied. And so will those that are one with Him have to suffer. It would be impossible to hold the word of righteousness, and to urge God's righteous claims as Creator, God of providence, and God of government, and to urge man's responsibility to meet these claims in such a world as this, and not to suffer for it. But while Christ suffered for righteousness' sake perfectly — as some have done, and others now do, imperfectly — he introduced, so to speak, a new kind of suffering — for in Him first was presented openly God dealing in grace — "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." It was not that responsibility in man ceased, but a new element was introduced which had in itself an entirely new character. Man had owed God for this and for that which God had vested in men. Creation, providence, government, all of them not only gave streams of blessing to man, but by those very streams made man responsible. But when Christ came, though he might and did recall all that blessing and responsibility to man's mind, He came into a ruined system as a Saviour in grace, and this was quite another thing. If Israel would not own Jehovah dwelling between the cherubims, and so be kept from famine, hunger, sickness, and oppression, would they own Jehovah coming, as Son of Man, into the ruin which their sins had caused — a feeder of the hungry, a restorer of the sick, a Saviour for the poor and the meek.

Such was the new position taken by God in Christ; everything due by man to God was pressed by Christ, but Himself was there the answer in grace to all the need. When he acts in righteousness, and sustains that righteousness with power, judgment will be revealed. But He acted in righteousness — owned every claim of God — owned every debt of man — but stood in meekness and lowliness, offering Himself to meet all the claims, all the debts, and to do so at His own cost. He

was thus thrust from the wall continually, and He bore it all in gentle meekness and patience.

The Apostles, and Paul especially, never for a moment thought of denying the righteous claims of God, or the responsibility of man as to creation, providence, and government — and they all suffered for it; but the great characteristic of their suffering, together with Christ, was that they were witnesses of mercy and grace from God to man, through Christ, and by the power of the Holy Ghost, *in resurrection*. The very place that resurrection held as connected with their testimony — “Jesus and the Resurrection” — told how they had to hold themselves as sheep for the slaughter.

It is impossible to be possessed by the word of the Lord and not to suffer; and the word of Christ is inseparable from sufferings for grace’s sake. I find many overlook the difference of suffering for righteousness’ sake and suffering for the sake of grace.

But further, in the passage before us (Rom. viii. 17) the suffering is clearly defined by the context. The question here is not about suffering for righteousness’ sake, in any sense: neither in the sense that Abel did, who was slain because his own works were good, and he was hated by his murderer, whose works were evil; nor in the sense in which Jeremiah, and other of the prophets, suffered for a righteous testimony for God against an unrighteous people; neither, indeed, is the suffering in this passage limited to the sufferings which attend service and testimony, as connected with grace, as contrasted with righteousness. But the context defines a certain position, now the position of the possessors of faith; which position has privileges, power, hopes, and sufferings, connected with it. And most highly blessed as the position, the privileges, the possession of the power, and the enjoyment of the hopes so spoken of — they cannot be separated from a present suffering. Christ tasted death fully, and realised resurrection fully too — to open that position. And though he has left no wrath for our souls to taste, and is Himself the resurrection and the life to us: yet does He give us to know practically the principles of death and resurrection; and

that not only as perfectly set before us in principle, as realised by and in Himself, but because thus made true to us in the spirit, He adds to each member that has partaken in the blessing an experimental tasting of death and resurrection in themselves, and in their course through their circumstances.

Inseparable association with Himself, as the first-born among many brethren, is a preliminary to the suffering together with Him. He is in heaven now as Son of Man; but has there a heart to be touched with all that touches God and his people down here in the wilderness. If we want to have His standard of a walk in the wilderness, we have it perfectly given in His life when here below. But life, and the power to walk with Him, and (according to the measure of our faith) as He walked, begins to us only in our knowledge of Him gone on High, and remaining there for a season for our sake. And the power of continuance in this life is in communion with Him in heaven. In our introduction to Him there, and in our communion with Him there, we found, in the one, the beginning of power; and, in the other, the brook by the way to renew our power of being here below in affection, feeling, and thought, the present expressors of the mind of Christ, who is in heaven. Oh how fallen is all now-a-days! Where are they who are practically showing out grace reigning through righteousness, as the witness of their present enjoyed association with the Son of Man in heaven. "If so be we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together."

In a world, the foundations of which are out of course, where the power of evil is dominant, and ourselves in bodies of sin and death; suffering is sure to be man's portion. The "sorrows of humanity" are not, however, the sufferings with Christ. The worldling shares them with us. And the only way in which *we* can have them connected with Christ is, if recognising that all things are to us of Him, who hath reconciled us unto Himself, we bear them in Christ's strength, and for His sake. In bearing them as a Christian, in the strength of Christ, there is a Christian's reward. Another kind of suffering there is, also, in which, though its

sorrow come to us from our being true to God's claims, and true in recognising our own responsibilities as creatures, we "cannot be said to "suffer as a Christian," as Peter says (1st Epistle, iv. 16).

A broken limb, a fever, penury, may be common to me and to my unconverted neighbour — He may repine and I may find in each such sorrow, an occasion of patience, courage, and endurance, as becomes a Christian. Again, in many a question of governments, of commerce, etc., the fear of God, and respect to the just claims of man, will distinguish the consistent Christian from the worldling. But in neither of these two cases does the trial spring from the position in which the faith of Christ has set us; in neither case would a spirit-led heavenly-minded Christian act differently than would a righteous Jew, whose hopes and thoughts went not beyond the earth.

But there are sufferings which grow up out of faith in an earth-rejected and heaven-honoured Christ, who, from heaven, has revealed Himself, through faith. Christ has His sympathies and His feelings about things down here, and has a path of sorrow, of death, and resurrection, for His chosen flock to pass through. The sufferings of that path, grow up out of fellowship in life with Christ, and are the expression of intelligence in His mind, and of sympathy with His heart. Such are the sufferings, together with Christ, which we are considering.

Pilgrimage and strangership here below; the exercise of heart and mind as seeking His honor among His people; the sorrows of the failure of the testimony, and of the weak state of the flock, with all the suffering that comes out of the holding the position of being one, practically one, one in heart and mind, one in interests and in feelings (alas! how little do we attain to it) with a heaven-honored Christ, who is ever seen to us by faith, while we are in the place where and whence He was rejected, and which, as a place, knows us not, because it knew Him not; these are the sort of sorrows which are meant by suffering as a Christian. His anointing is upon us, and we are one with Him; and we must needs suffer, as ourselves dying daily, if the life of Christ is to be made manifest in us.

All God's counsels turn around the Anointed One, so to speak. Because the Son of Man is on high, creatorial, providential, and dispensational, purposes all stand fast, and can be acted upon or towards by God. I cannot doubt but that, because Messiah is on high, Israel is remembered on high; because the Messiah, who is the head of government and worship upon earth, is on high, therefore, also, the nations, as they are, and the nations as they shall be, are thought of and acted towards. But then the spiritual, heavenly believer, while his faith sees all this, and finds joy as to Christ, and rest as to himself in it, knows that the range of life, and of the positive action of the Spirit in life, and as the Comforter or Paraclete is circumscribed. The Lord Jesus has a present testimony connected with His present place, and the Paraclete, has a present work connected with the present faith. God made us what we are, and God found us where we were, and God sees us where we are; but that which *is of us* while it may be, and is, the occasion for God and Christ to be recognised and honored by us, is a very different thing from that which flows out of the anointing; which is connected with the Person of the Anointed One who is in heaven, and which we have to live out, and act out, and own here, according to the mind of Christ, and by the Spirit. This, in every part of it, is connected with divine and heavenly grace; but to us, if living in it, with suffering. Not only did the Son of God learn obedience as Son of man, by the things which He suffered, but, further, it was impossible for the life of God to be perfectly displayed in such a world as this, save amid sufferings. Mercy needs circumstances of need and want in which to shew itself. And mercy cannot see such circumstances without a correct, and to itself, a sad, estimate of them in themselves, and of the sin which has produced them.

Man may see affliction, and may try to alleviate it, without our hearts really tasting the bitterness, not of those in the circumstances only, but of what caused the circumstances. It was never so with Christ; is never so with the spirit-led man, so far as he is really taught of God. And who can see what the fallen state of the

church is, what the triumph of evil, what the supremely good opinion man has of himself is now, and see it with eyes enlightened by the glory of Christ, and with affection quickened towards Christ by the Spirit, and not find a world of woe for him, as a Christian, as one who cares for God and His Christ, as one who enters into and sympathises with Christ in His thoughts, and feelings, and desires, for the glory of God, and the blessing of the people of God down here on earth. Such is the fellowship of his sufferings. To enter into His sympathies — to sympathise with Him, and to live out that sympathy, is “suffering together with Christ.”

“THE CHURCH OF GOD,” ACTS XX. 28.

“THE Church of God,” amazing, precious thought !
That sinners, vile and outcast, should be brought,
Renew’d in heart and cleansed by Jesus’ blood,
To form the body of the “Church of God.”

Angels around the throne that never fell, —
Seraphic spirits that in glory dwell, —
The holy patriarchs before the flood, —
Nor Israel since, — compose the “Church of God.”

Distinct in glory from the Church they shine,
Though each unfolds a wonderful design ;
The Holy Spirit makes His blest abode,
In those, alone, who form the “Church of God.”

Renew’d and quicken’d by the Holy Ghost,
The Church began on earth at Pentecost,
When like a fire He came on each, and stood,
That little band commenced the “Church of God.”

The Church of God.

The Church is *one*, it has one glorious Head,
And by one Spirit through this waste is led ;
And nourishment from Christ, on high, bestow'd,
Together binds in one, the "Church of God."

United to her risen Head above,
E'en now she knows the sweetness of His love ;
His power is hers to help her on the road —
Bride of the Lamb,—Church of the living God !

Soon will he come and take His Church away —
And O sweet thought ! fast hastens on the day,
When He will stand with all His saints avow'd
Head of the Church,—the purchased "Church of God."

A.M.

A VERSE OF PRAISE.

To Thee, who hast loved us, and saved us by blood,
And brought us as kings and priests to Thy God,
To Thee, be dominion, strength, glory, and power,
All blessing, and honor, and praise, evermore.

T.

END OF VOL. X.

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