

# SIMPLE TESTIMONY.

*A Monthly Magazine.*

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“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the **Word**, that ye may grow thereby.”—1 PETER ii. 2.

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the **Word** with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. **Therefore** many of them believed.”—ACTS xvii. 11, 12.

“The **Word** of the Lord endureth for ever.”—1 PETER i. 25.

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## SIMPLE TESTIMONY.



### HOLINESS.

TURNING over our papers the other day, we came across an article from the *War Cry* of January 12, 1884, which a kind friend cut out and sent to us some time ago. This is the title of it, "Is the Army right about Holiness?"

For the convenience of his readers the writer of the article sought to place the whole subject in a nutshell. We are thankful he succeeded so well, as it enables us to transcribe in full the two short paragraphs in which the doctrine of the Army is set forth.

"We teach that the man whose sins are forgiven has still in him what the Church of England's Article calls 'the original, or birth sin,' and that this original sin, or inward corruption of heart, will always be causing outward sin as long as it is allowed to remain there.

"And then we say that Jesus Christ, having 'all power in heaven and on earth,' is able to destroy this inward evil the very moment we come to Him asking and expecting that complete

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deliverance. We say that this is definitely promised in such scriptures as these: 'From all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.' 'He shall save His people from their sins.' Now is this teaching wrong?"

To the answering of this question, briefly and in no unkindly spirit, we address ourselves.

Oddly enough, the two passages quoted in support of this doctrine do not apply strictly to the Christian at all. Anyone who will take the trouble to read Ezekiel xxxvi. xxxvii., from whence the first quotation is taken, will see that those chapters speak of the future blessing of God's ancient people—Israel. Matt. i. 21 refers to the same; for Jehovah's people they in truth were, though for the time "Lo-Ammi" was written against them. (Hosea i. 9.) Their sins shall be taken away, as Rom. xi. 26, 27 plainly teaches. Jesus—Jehovah the Saviour shall save them from their sins.

But apart from that, Is it taught anywhere in the New Testament that at any moment in the earthly history of a child of God, the sinful nature is either made holy or is destroyed, so that it no longer exists?

Possibly an isolated passage could be found here and there which, without examination, might seem to countenance such a way of thinking. But is it right to bolster up this, or any other doctrine, by texts torn from their connection, and

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without any regard being paid to the subject in hand, or to the argument of which those torn-out texts form a part? Is it fair, is it honest, is it truly helpful to souls, is it according to God to do so?

Further, Is there any living person mentioned by name in the Scriptures to whom we could point as an individual in whom this "inward corruption of heart" had been destroyed? If this freedom from "inward evil" is to be found anywhere, we might look for it reasonably enough in the apostles themselves. Which of them was free from it? Peter? Why at Antioch Paul had to withstand him to the face because of his dissimulation. Barnabas too and others, influenced by his example, walked in the same deceitful steps. Where did this crookedness come from, if the "inward corruption" was no longer there? Could it have sprung from "the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness"? (Eph. iv. 24.) Do you say Paul? Why after having been caught up to Paradise, and not knowing whether he was in the body or out of it, because of the marvellous things he saw and heard, he needed a thorn in the flesh to keep him humble. (2 Cor. xii.) John? Why he warns us that "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John i. 8.) And if we fail to find this freedom from "inward evil" in a Peter, Paul, or John, we are

not likely to find it in any child of God to-day, unless we admit that a way of holiness has been discovered, concerning which the apostles knew nothing.

All true holiness must have for its basis the new birth. There can be none without it; for holiness is not a work of "the flesh," and until a man is born again there is nothing but "the flesh" there. What "the flesh" is capable of may be learnt from Galatians v. 19-21. In that appalling passage the Spirit of God exposes it so that none may remain ignorant of its hateful nature. Nothing ever changes, or can change, the character of "the flesh;" it is enmity against God, is not subject to His law, *neither indeed can be.* (Rom. viii. 7.) This solemn verdict of an unerring tribunal shows that every effort to improve the flesh must fail. It is bad, wholly bad. Hence the necessity of the new birth. Nothing avails now but a new creation. (Gal. vi. 15.) But *it is a new creation*, not an improvement of the old. He who in the beginning breathed into man's nostrils, and man became a living soul, has created the believer anew in Christ Jesus, and communicated to him another life altogether distinct from the old Adam life. Not only so, but he is sealed with the Holy Ghost, who now dwells in him, so that as regards his standing before God he is said to be in the Spirit, not in the flesh (Rom. viii. 9); though the latter is still in him

as an evil principle, ever to be watched against and kept down.

And these two—the old nature and the new—the flesh and the Spirit—dwell at one and the same time in the believer, and will dwell there until his earthly career ends in eternal glory. The old is not made holy, or there would have been no need of a new. It is not done away, or there would be no such conflict as is described in Gal. v. 17, nor is it bettered in one degree. In all its incurable evil it remains, a treacherous foe not to be trusted for one brief hour.

Think of the immense damage souls sustain, in being deluded into the belief that their inward corruption is all gone. How soon do they discover their mistake, unless they have fearfully low thoughts of what sin is ! Then what perplexity follows, what darkness, what distress, what profound agitation of soul, if they are sincere and upright ! What a triumph for Satan, who soon persuades them that it has happened unto them according to the true proverb, “The dog is turned to his own vomit again ; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.” (2 Peter ii. 22.) They looked for perfection in the flesh and found nothing but corruption there.

What shall we say then ? Is the old nature, with its deceitful and hateful lusts, to have dominion ? Is the Christian under an obligation to sin ? Is the evil nature, like a slave driver, to

whip the cowed Christian whither he will? Is it the Christian's lot to sigh and groan for freedom which will not and cannot be his till the morning of eternity dawns? Is he, like a caged bird, to beat against the bars of his cage only to find how hopeless his captivity is? God forbid! There is present freedom from *the dominion* of sin, though not from its presence; freedom to serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life; freedom not found in the vain conceit that "the flesh" is either made holy or taken away, a miserable delusion! but in the knowledge of the truth. "Ye shall know the truth, and *the truth* shall make you free."

And this word "free" has more meanings than one. "Now being made *free* from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness." (Rom. vi. 22.) This passage is cited, by the writer in the *War Cry*, as if the word "free" meant *exempt from*, as the body may be free from pain or disease. No knowledge of Greek is needed to enable the careful reader to see that the word is not used in this way in this verse. The least attention to Paul's argument will show that it is freedom as opposed to bondage. Look at that negro yonder! He was torn from his home in Africa years ago and sold as a slave. But he is now free. He was a slave, and bondage was his estate; he is now free, and liberty is his. In this way the Christian is said to be free from sin, free

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from it as a master-power ; it no longer controls him. The "inward evil" is not taken away, but we are free from its authority and rule.

If then we reject as false the notion of the "inward corruption" of the heart being destroyed, have we no alternative but to tell the newly-converted that they must not look for complete victory over the sins into which they fell in their old days ?

The *War Cry* sees no course open to us but that. It overlooks the fact that the new nature in a Christian loves holiness, and hates sin, and that its very instincts lead us to seek to do the will of God. It overlooks the fact that the Holy Spirit personally indwells us who believe, and that one reason of His presence is that we should not do the things which the flesh would ever seek to incite us to do. (Gal. v. 17.) It overlooks the fact that it is written, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able ; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. x. 13.) Precious promise of a faithful God ! And finally, it overlooks the fact that the Lord has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee ; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Be sure of it, reader, the secret of victory lies not in thinking the flesh is done away, it is found rather in remembering that it is always present in all its original badness, but that God having judged it in

the cross of Christ, and judicially set it aside, we are no longer debtors to live after it, and there is no reason at all why we should yield to it in a single thing. Weak we are—let us remember it—weaker than water spilt upon the ground, but His grace is sufficient, and if we look to Him to give us the victory, we shall not only conquer, but be more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

And with these ideas of holiness there are, alas ! very imperfect thoughts both of sin and holiness too. The latter is confined to the absence of what is outwardly wrong, and the conscience sees nothing to reproach itself for if there has been no yielding to anything manifestly evil. This is a low standard of holiness indeed, a standard not beyond the power of “the flesh” to reach, of which Paul, before his conversion, is a witness. (Phil. iii. 6.) Such a view of holiness knows nothing of sanctification through the truth which the Lord prays that His people might know. (John xvii. 19.) It leaves no room for the purifying power of those heavenly hopes which heavenly truth begets in the hearts of those who know it. (1 John iii. 3.) And no place is found for growing conformity to Christ, such as we read about in 2 Cor. iii. 18. We leave it for the Christian reader to say what this scheme of holiness is worth from which these things are excluded, and which consists only in being kept from “outward sin.”



**THE THREE WITNESSES ;**  
**OR,**  
**THE SPIRIT, THE WATER, AND THE**  
**BLOOD.**

DEAR ———, It was good of you to send me (through Miss M.), what enabled me to see how much in common we held of blessed truth, that only by His grace we should either of us have ever known. Your doing so emboldens me to try and place before you (where I think you have not seen clearly), the way the Word puts things that deeply affect the enjoyment and power of all that is made ours in Christ. I do not think that you sufficiently distinguish between the place of (1) water and (2) blood and (3) the Spirit in our blessing. These are the three witnesses presented together in 1 John v., of how all is absolutely *conferred upon us* in Christ the last Adam, instead of coming through the first. It is *God's gift to us in His Son*. Now blood and water both flowed from the pierced side of the Lord Jesus when His death was accomplished. Yet, strange to say, this water is almost dropped out of the faith of Christendom, though occupying quite as large a place in the Word, both in doctrine and in type, as the blood—the last for propitiation, the first for purification. The blood is the ground of all before God, and therefore put first in John xix. 34. In 1 John v. 8 the order is that of their application to us. The Spirit, bringing home the water of the Word in power to our consciences by which we are born of God, opens our eyes to the value

of the blood, and then takes up His dwelling-place in us as the power of our enjoyment of all we have been brought into by both water and blood. To be clear in the respective place of each helps greatly as to our own relationship with God, as well as the communion that flows from it, and which is its deepest and richest privilege. It will help us too in leading others on.

The difficulty is the immense range connected with each in the word of God, so that I hardly know how in a letter to place clearly before you what I believe you would find profit and blessing in the understanding of. The place of the blood must be learned, I think, chiefly from such scriptures as Rom. iii. 25, where it is the key to, being the antitype of, the wonderful figures presented to us on the great day of atonement (Lev. xvi.), when the blood was brought in and sprinkled on the mercy-seat. The word "propitiation" in this verse (Rom. iii. 25) is that used for mercy-seat all through the Greek Translation of the Old Testament, and so translated in Heb. ix. 5. It is the blood that meets all the need of God's glory as to sin. It brings out His holiness and righteousness against sin, as well as all His love to the sinner, as it never had been brought out before. Thus laying the *righteous* ground for God to justify us, as well as for the accomplishment of God's everlasting counsels as to us in Christ, though this last aspect of the cross is not developed in Romans.

On the ground of the blood thus presented to God, in which every question of sin has been gone into and settled for God's glory, we have declared the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity; and upon which *He* can challenge all the ingenuity of Satan to bring

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one single thing to our charge, as He does in Rom. viii. In Hebrews also, chap. ix., we find the perfection of the work of the cross *in itself*, and chap. x. its *application to us*, the doctrine again founded on the type of Leviticus xvi. It is beautiful in this last (Heb. x.) to see how the will of God the Father, the work of the Son, and the witness of the Holy Ghost, are all brought out—the whole Godhead in activity, to give us a perfect conscience as to every question of sin in the presence of God.

Now when we examine the testimony that the Holy Ghost bears to the work of the Son of God, we find three great points in it. First, it satisfies God as the blood of bulls and goats never could; second, it leaves us no more conscience of sins; and third, we have boldness of access into the holiest—the immediate presence of God, the veil being rent. Without the second we could not have the third; and both rest upon the infinite perfection of the work in itself satisfying God perfectly. As to the second point, you will find it is in *direct contrast* with the blood of bulls and goats that needed to be constantly applied, bringing sins constantly to remembrance in being so applied, because their blood never could put away sins. There was nothing in the blood of a bull or of a goat adequate to the enormity of our sins; there *is* in the blood of the Son of God. The whole glory of God has been made good as to sin in His blood-shedding, so that the moment we believe God's testimony to the infinite value He finds in it, we have no more conscience of sins for blood to be applied to. And in contrast to the priests standing daily (*v. 11*), we have the Lord Jesus sat down continuously or uninter-  
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tedly (it is not the ordinary word for "for ever," but that translated "continually" in verse 1); "for by one offering He hath perfected uninterruptedly" (same word) "them that are sanctified."

The thought of a continuing application of the blood of Christ is to put dishonour upon His work, lowering it to what was but its shadow; and is the direct denial of the truth brought out in Heb. x. Besides, it separates the *offering* from the infinite *suffering* that gave it all its value. (Chap ix. 25, 56.) If He had continually to present His blood for us, as the High Priest for Israel, it says He would have often to suffer. See also verse 22, where it doesn't say without application of blood, but *without shedding* of it, there is no remission. The blood-shedding purged our sins (see chap. i. 3); and the testimony of God to its value, when we believe it, purges and perfects our consciences for ever, as to every question of them.

But now I come to what meets our need as to the defilement we are liable to contract in passing through this defiled and defiling scene; *i.e.* the cleansing of water by the Word. That water means the Word we know from Ephesians v. 26. But this too is *founded on* an application of the Word, that being once done, is done for ever.

Both are found put each in its place in John xiii. 10: two words being used, one for the washing that could never be repeated, and another for that which needs constantly to be, according to their defined use in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, already referred to (known as the Septuagint, and used often by the Lord and the apostles, as current at the time even more than the Hebrew in the Holy Land).

If you refer to Lev. viii., you will find the

priests were washed with water, as to their whole persons, on the day of their consecration.

From Exodus xxx. 18-21, we see they washed their hands and their feet when they went into the tabernacle.

These are the two words, never interchanged, that the Lord uses to Peter, answering beautifully to the type. For as the priests were bathed first, and this was never repeated, so as the basis of all purification we have been "*born* of water and of the Spirit," as in John iii. We know, from James i. 18 and 1 Peter i. 23, that this is by the *Word* applied to our souls in power by the Spirit. Thus we have received the nature of God, being made "partakers of the divine nature;" and in it we are clean every whit, and need not save to wash (using the other word) our feet.

It is deeply important to see that in thus being "born of God," and receiving the divine nature, there can alone be any true purification. There can be none of the flesh—"that which is born of the flesh is flesh," religious, amiable, cultivated it may be, but flesh still. And "the end of all flesh has come before God." All God can do is to make an *end* of it, either for faith, as at the cross, or for unbelief in the lake of fire. No wonder that all *our* weary efforts with it came to nought. But blessed it is to bow to God's total judgment of it, that the Word by which we are born carries with it; and to see that same judgment totally executed in the cross of Christ. So though the flesh is in us, and Romans vii. describes the needed learning in our own souls of its incurable evil, yet when we have bowed to that judgment, "knowing that our old man has been *crucified with Christ*," we see that we are no longer in the flesh, but have

passed by His death and resurrection, and the power of the Spirit of God, given to dwell in us, into a wholly new state and place in Christ risen from the dead, where there is no condemnation for us. (Romans viii. 1.) And this is looked at from the side of the delivering power of the good in verse 2, and from that of the total condemnation of the evil in verse 3. God has condemned *sin in the flesh*—that is, the root that produced all the guilty fruit of our sins—and when we know it, we are no longer under the power of sin (Romans vi. 14), or under law which was the strength of sin. (Romans vii. 6, and 1 Cor. xv. 56.) But this blessed deliverance is realized from moment to moment by the faith that *reckons true of us* what God says, and is true before Him; *i.e.* that we are dead to sin, as having died with Christ. (Romans vi. 11.) Thus we see how the flesh is disposed of under God's judgment and for faith, and how the life and nature we have received from God is set free from its dominion to enjoy the blessed things of that nature that are revealed to us by His Spirit. "They that are after the Spirit mind the things of the Spirit." (Romans viii. 5.)

But this is not all. John xiii. presents to us in figure the loving service, so suited to our need, that the Lord is carrying on for us in the glory now, in order that we may have communion with Him (*v.* 8), and that it may be restored when it is broken.

We have to go through the world, out of which He has had to depart utterly to the Father (*v.* 1), where "all that is in it is not of the Father." (1 John ii. 16.) He loves us with an unchangeable love. Blessed assurance that He gives us! But then love delights to serve its object, and so

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He takes in wondrous grace the place of the servant of our need in the glory. We have no excuse for ever sinning again, yet how liable to it as long as the root of the flesh is in us in all its old, unchanged, incurable evil, though, as we have seen, we are no longer in it before God. If we say that it is not—that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, “and the truth is not in us.” Even the thought of foolishness is sin, and absolutely breaks communion with God. John writes to us in his epistle of these blessed things, of the divine nature and eternal life we possess, with its wonderful privileges of fellowship with the Father and the Son, and joy to the full—he writes, I say, of these things, that we sin not; but if, alas! we have done so—and here comes in the service of John xiii.—we have an advocate with the Father, who is there in all the perfections of His person, and unchangeable value of His work, and for us, so that there can be no question of the sin being imputed to us. But we have sinned against cloudless light, against infinite love, against the relationship of children with the Father, in which we stand; and we have to be brought to feel it as such, and judge it, so that the communion may be restored. He applies His word as in John xiii. (a service too that He gives us to have part in towards each other, *v.* 15), searches our consciences and hearts by it, and brings it all out in confession, that we may receive the Father’s forgiveness, know the removal of His chastening hand, and be once again in communion with Him.

The question of the righteousness in which we stand—“justified from all things,” without possibility of imputation—is never raised. And just because of this it resolves itself into the deeper

one of holiness, and what is fitting and essential to the infinitely holy presence into which we have been brought. Jesus, the Son of God, has to stoop to wash our feet that we have gone and defiled; and this He does by the water of His Word, and not by blood.

Thus, in that remarkable ordinance of the Book of Numbers—the book of the wilderness—it is the *water* of purification, not blood, that is sprinkled upon him that becomes unclean by contact with what defiles. (Num. xix.) The ashes put into water are the memorial of the sin having met its judgment in the death of the victim whose ashes they were. The infidel has dared to suggest it was a mistake, this isolated sacrifice being found in Numbers. The believer sees how perfect its place is in the book of the wilderness, as connected with the scene where we are liable to contract defilement. In Ps. cxix. 9, the cleansing of the way is referred to the same instrument, the Word—that word which ever tells of the infinite agonies in which through His bloodshedding the sin was taken away as guilt. And the heart ever turns back there and sees sin in its true character (though it be but an idle word), in what it cost Him to put it away. But then there is more in the Word that makes it such an infinitely perfect and precious means of cleansing from day to day. It is not only that Christ ministers it to us according to the marvellous grace of John xiii., but it is the *revelation of Himself*. In John xvii. 19 we learn that He has set Himself apart in the glory of God, that we may be set apart by the truth—that is, by the revelation of *all that He is there* as the source, measure, character, and power of our separation to Him.



The immense power of Christ being so presented to us is seen in 2 Cor. iii. 18. We can behold in perfect peace the glory of God revealed and shining on the face of Jesus without a veil. This is in contrast to Israel, who couldn't look on the face of Moses, for the reflection of the glory on his face was connected with the still unsettled claims of the law he held in his hand. But the glory we see on the face of Jesus is the proof He Himself appealed to, that every question of broken law and outraged holiness of God has been settled for ever. (See John xiii. 32.) What face can we gaze into as we can into His who loved us and gave Himself for us? Beholding, it says, the glory of the Lord, we are changed from glory to glory into the same image. The bright shining down of all that Christ is in glory into our hearts, now free to be occupied with Him, transforms us morally more and more into His image, in tone and ways, in separation from the world, in the whole character, spring, motive, object of our walk here. We know we shall be perfectly like Him only when we see Him as He is; but this becomes an incentive now to purifying ourselves, even as He *is* pure. (1 John iii. 2, 3.) So we must look at Him to get the measure of all practical purity, and as we look we find the power too.

Thus also in Hebrews xii., if we are exhorted to lay aside every weight and sin which does so easily beset, and to run with patience, it is in *looking unto Jesus* that we find the power.

Thus generally we find the answer to the double question of Job xxv. 4 in the blood for propitiation, which is the righteous ground of our perfect justification, and in the water of the Word, in the one first application of it that can *never* be

repeated, by which we were born of God, and the *constant* application of it to the practical cleansing of our ways. In point of view of application to our souls, the *Word* comes first, for it was thus we found out our sins, and need of the *blood*. Then, the moment we believed God's testimony to the blood for the forgiveness of our sins, we received God the Holy Ghost, who had wrought *on* us in our natural state to quicken our souls, but who now comes to dwell *within us*, making our bodies the tabernacles of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. vi. 19), shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts. (Romans v. 5.) He is the Spirit of adoption too, by which we cry, "Abba, Father" (Romans viii. 15, Galatians iv. 6), the seal of God upon us marking us as His—the earnest of all that is before us in the glory (2 Cor. i. 22; Eph. i. 13)—thus completing the Christian position, and becoming the immense power in us of all our blessing and our joy.

Only let us not grieve that blessed indwelling Spirit by whom we have been sealed to the day of redemption. (Eph. iv. 30.) For leave us He never will, nor could, according to the definite promise of John xiv. 16. He abides with us for ever. He it is who takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us (John xvi. 14, 15), that the new man, finding all the qualities it loves in the Person that it loves, may be formed morally like Him.

I fear I have long since wearied you, but I wrote on, the subjects being so blessed. And yet, after all, I have given you but the poorest outline of what Scripture presents on the three great parts of our blessing that go to make up our full Christian position and state.

Believe me to be, yours sincerely in the Lord  
Jesus Christ,

J. A. T.

## THE EXCELLENCY OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST.

It is one thing for a perishing man to be saved by another, but it is something further for him to know the One who saved him ; so also it is one thing for a perishing sinner to be saved by Christ, and another thing to go on to know Christ when saved.

This comes out in a very striking manner in Philippians iii. The writer is the apostle Paul. As Saul of Tarsus, previous to his conversion, he had distinguished himself amongst his fellows by his persistent hatred of the name of Jesus, and determined persecution of those who followed Him. In Acts xxvi. 9-11, when defending himself in the presence of Porcius Festus and king Agrippa, referring to his former manner of life, he says, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem : and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests ; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme ; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities."

Again, in Gal. i. 13, 14, "For ye have heard of

my conversation" (manner of life) "in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers."

And again, in 1 Tim. i. 13, "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."

And one more example, in Acts xxii. 19, 20, where he repeats what he had confessed to the Lord, saying, "Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: and when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him."

Now this course that Saul pursued was not that of an ignorant and infidel sinner showing out the natural enmity of his heart against God and His people, but of a learned, religious man, zealous in doing God service, but whose heart was not one whit better. (John xvi. 2.) He was a man of good position, enjoying high privileges, and punctilious in his outward observance of the law of God; but instead of these things producing true subjection and love to God whilst leading in the profession of service to Him, he was using them to his own profit (Gal. i. 14), and had

become Satan's stoutest champion in seeking to overthrow the truth.

But in course of time Saul, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, is furnished with letters from the high priest, and starts for Damascus in order to bring them bound to Jerusalem; and as he journeyed the Lord met him. (Acts ix. 1-8; xxvi. 12-18.) A light above the brightness of the sun shone suddenly round about him, and he falls to the earth. But richly as he deserved judgment, it was as his Saviour, and not his Judge, that the Lord stopped him on his mad career; so that we find him saying, in 1 Tim. i. 14-16 "*And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.*"

From that time forth Saul of Tarsus (whose name is changed to Paul), forgiven and saved, and with the Son of God revealed in him (Gal. i. 16), leads the van in heralding the gospel of the grace of God. The devil's slave became the Lord's freedman, and willing bondsman in the glad tidings.

And now, in Phil. iii. 4-7, we may learn from

his own pen the wondrous effect produced upon his soul by this mighty change—"If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."

How mighty indeed the power of divine grace! He could look round upon his kinsmen after the flesh and say, "*If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more.*" He had been circumcised the eighth day, according to the original institution that God gave to Abraham; he was of the stock of Israel, the privileged earthly people, that were not to be reckoned among the nations, and to whom pertained "the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises," &c. (Rom. ix. 4); of the tribe of Benjamin, the youngest and favoured son; an Hebrew of the Hebrews, ranking amongst the highest of his kinsmen; as touching the law, a Pharisee, the straitest sect of the Jews' religion; concerning zeal, persecuting the Church, the body and bride of Christ, the dearest object of His heart; and touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless; a man so strict in his

observance of the law of God, that he walked without blame in the midst of his fellows. But then, having summed up all that he might trust in (and things too which many around still trusted in, though far beneath his standard), he gives us their true value in the presence of God (and it was there he had learnt it), saying, "But what things were gain to me, those *I counted loss* for Christ." Note it well—"loss for Christ." Many slur it over, as though it read, gave up for Christ. Such a thought apparently never entered his mind. Gave up! that was not how Paul reckoned. He counted himself *a gainer*, not a loser; he would have been a loser to go on with these things when he had Christ; he learnt *the end of the flesh*, as well as the putting away of his sins, by the death of Christ. To hold to what was ended there was to be a loser both here and hereafter.

These things had been a gain to him as a man in the flesh. He had *profited in the Jews' religion* above many his equals in his own nation (Gal. i. 14); but now Christ was his Saviour and his boast, and God's salvation his profit instead. "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." Beloved reader, how is it with you? Is Christ your Saviour? If so, how are you looking upon the things that are a gain to you after the flesh? Are you clinging to them at the expense of what is due to Christ? Do you begrudge even giving them up, and retain them

with a bad conscience? Is it a difficult task? If so, how far short of counting them loss! Surely if we know a Saviour in glory, and rightly value Him, it ought not to be so. There was no effort on Paul's part. Everything beneath the sun had been eclipsed when the light above its brightness had shone round about him. Blinded at his conversion for three days, his eyes were again opened to be fixed upon a new object, a Saviour in glory, who had saved him, and in whose company he was shortly destined to spend an eternity of bliss. Oh that we, like him, may be able to say in the sight of God, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ!"

But there is something more. In the next verse we read, "*Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.*"

What we have hitherto been dwelling upon was the effect produced upon Paul at his conversion, an event which transpired about the year 34; but he is here writing to the saints at Philippi some thirty years or so afterwards; that is, if the dates in the ordinary Bibles are correct. In verse 7 he speaks of having counted loss for Christ, things which *were* a gain to him. This was when he first knew Christ as his Saviour; but now he adds, "*Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss.*"



“Yea doubtless,” surely; there was no question about it, no hesitation whatever. “I count.” For some thirty years he had pursued his undeviating course towards the goal that he had before him. Was he weary and full of regret on account of his self-sacrifice? No; he was *occupied with Christ*, and superior then, as at starting, to circumstances which, if he had allowed room for the flesh, his heart naturally would have sought after and turned back to.

And not only so, but he counts all things, not merely things which were a gain to him, but *all things* loss. What for? For Christ as a Saviour? Nay, not even so merely, but more than that. Christ was his Saviour still; perfectly true, and salvation in Him was doubtless his joy. But he is not satisfied with that; for, saith he, “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for *the excellency of the knowledge* of Christ Jesus my Lord.” Long had he known Him as his Saviour; but here his heart is ravished with the Person who had saved him. This is true devotedness. Men around him might boast of the excellency of the knowledge of natural things. The arts and sciences, literature, astronomy, geology (things right enough in their place), might attract many; but Paul has an object before him infinitely superior to them all. What is to be compared with *the excellency of the knowledge of Christ*, the chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely,

the fairer than the children of men? He knew who his Saviour was; but here his whole soul's desire is for "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." He is enraptured with the Person of the Christ; he would learn *Him*, become more intimately acquainted *with Him*, know more of *His* excellent moral glories, enjoy still deeper and sweeter communion with *Jesus*, the Son of God's love; he would have *Himself* without a rival, alone enshrined in his soul. "Christ Jesus *my* Lord"—mine, as though He wholly belonged to him. Whatever others might own (and he longed that all saints should own the same), for himself he says, "*My Lord.*"

How many thousands know Christ as their Saviour, but there stop, satisfied apparently with getting all they can through His finished work, rejoicing too, it may be, to speak about salvation to others, and yet have no relish in their souls to go on, and progress in the knowledge of the One who saved them! Other objects engross their minds more or less to the exclusion of Christ. They are thankful to know Him as a Saviour, but shrink from saying, "Christ Jesus *my Lord.*" He is not *their all*. The will is more or less active, and the world in certain aspects, and the things that are in it, more or less attractive; and to own the Lordship of Christ would mean a *broken will* henceforth subject to Him, and the world as a worthless thing beneath their feet;

but for this they are not prepared. But, beloved Christian reader, if through these feeble times *your soul* should be more occupied *with Himself*, who died for you, they will not have been written in vain.

And note also now in closing what the apostle adds, “For whom *I have suffered* the loss of all things, and do *count them but dung*, that I may win Christ.” Christ was no mere doctrine to him, but a living Person in glory, that engrossed his soul, and more than satisfied his heart. For the knowledge of Him he had suffered the loss of everything that the flesh values, and was enabled, after thirty years’ experience in the path of faith without it, to count it as so much filth, that he might win Christ, or have *Christ for his gain*. In this he is an example to every believer in Jesus. May God in His rich grace enable many more to sing, with the heart as well as with the lip—

“Oh, fix our earnest gaze  
So wholly, Lord, on Thee,  
That, with Thy beauty occupied,  
We elsewhere none may see.”

Such knowledge of Christ, instead of leading to carelessness and license, becomes a true preservative against evil. And the more we know of Him the more earnest will be the desire that our whole manner of life henceforth should be conformed in every detail to Him. And the more truly too we shall be enabled to say with the apostle, “To me to live is Christ.”

## CORRESPONDENCE.

“Everything loss for Him below,  
 Taking the cross where'er we go,  
 Showing to all, where once He trod,  
 Nothing but Christ, the Christ of God.

“Nothing save Him in all our ways,  
 Giving the theme for ceaseless praise ;  
 Our whole resource along the road,  
 Nothing but Christ, the Christ of God.”

The remaining verses of this same chapter show the further practical effect of occupation with Christ upon the whole life of the apostle, but space will not permit us to go beyond our present point.

E. H. C.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

H. E. M. B. (1 Peter iii. 21).—In the time of the flood the ark was the means of safety to Noah and his family. The waters of the deluge were ruin and death to all outside. Through those waters the ark safely passed, and arrived at last to a place of security, while those who were in it entered, as it were, into a new world. That ark was a type of Christ, who passed through the waters of death for us, and we being baptized unto His death confess that death to be the only means of salvation ; for it is no mere question of the putting away the filth of the flesh, but of deliverance from it, and from the condemnation that is its due. But what gives a good conscience before God which is asked for? for the word “answer” in the text should really be “demand ;” it is the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is at the right of God. *That* gives the good conscience here demanded, inasmuch as the resurrection and exaltation of Christ is the most convincing proof that our sins and iniquities shall be remembered no more.

## THE PERSON OF CHRIST IN GLORY.

I DESIRE to bring a few Scriptures before you that speak of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ as He is now as a risen Man in the glory of God. Not a few of the Lord's people know the blessed truth of forgiveness of sins through His precious blood, and are trusting simply to His finished work on the cross; but they have never thought much of the glory of the Person who did the work, nor of the place where He is now.

Many when they think of the Lord only think of Him as on the cross dying for their sins; others think of Him as risen on earth, and then have a sort of vague, indistinct idea that after He left this earth He ceased to be a Man, and is now in the form of God again, although still believing that He ever lives to make intercession for us.

Others have said, "I never thought of the Lord Jesus as a Man in heaven; I had always thought of Him more as a spirit."

This has led me to bring a few Scriptures together that speak of this wonderful truth of Christ being a Man in the glory of God; for till this is seen there can be no growing in the things of God or in the understanding of His word.

Many, I believe, spiritualize the Lord's second coming because they think of the Lord as a

## 30 THE PERSON OF CHRIST IN GLORY.

spirit, and thus His coming must be a spiritual one too.

The first Scripture we will look at is Luke xxiv. 36. Here we find the Lord Jesus appearing to His disciples after He had risen from the dead with the blessed words on His lips, "Peace be unto you." They saw Him who had died for their sins, and that He was alive again.

"But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit." They thought, as some do now, that the Lord was a spirit; but what did the Lord say to them? Verse 38: "Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my *hands* and my *feet*, that it is *I myself*, handle me, and see; for a *spirit* hath not *flesh* and *bones*, as ye see me have. And when He had thus spoken, He shewed them His hands and His feet." Here we see the same Jesus that was on earth now risen from the dead, He Himself with a body of flesh and bones, which He assured them a spirit had not. Then, verse 50: "He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and *carried up into* heaven." And in Acts i. 9: "While they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight." Thus we see that the blessed Lord rose from the dead with a body of flesh and bones, and with that body went up into

## THE PERSON OF CHRIST IN GLORY. 31

heaven. He did not vanish from their sight in an instant, but evidently they saw Him go up, as we gather from Acts i. 10: "And while they looked stedfastly toward 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 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."

*This same Jesus* was to come again as they had seen Him go. We can picture those disciples standing gazing up into heaven, their eyes following their Lord as He went up, till the cloud hid Him from their view. That same Jesus was to come back again, and so He will; but before that day comes we are permitted to look, so to speak, by faith on the other side of that cloud, and see this same Jesus where He is now.

Turn to Acts vii. 55: "But he" (Stephen), "being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly 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."

What a wonderful scene! Here is a man washed so clean in the precious blood of Christ that he can be filled with the Holy Ghost, and the heavens are opened for him to look in. And what does he see? He saw the glory of God, we are told; but he does not speak of that, his eyes

## 32 THE PERSON OF CHRIST IN GLORY.

are fixed upon a Person in that glory. There is no cloud to hide that blessed One from Stephen's sight; He sees "this same Jesus," the Son of man, in the glory of God. The disciples looked stedfastly *towards* heaven as He went up, and the cloud received Him out of their sight; Stephen looks stedfastly *into* heaven, and sees the Saviour *there*—"the Son of *man* on the right hand of God."

This same Jesus also spoke from heaven to the apostle Paul when he was converted. "As he journeyed he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." (Acts ix. 3-5.)

Here is the same One that went up from Bethany, whom Stephen saw in the glory of God, speaking from heaven to His bitterest enemy on earth, "to show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." (1 Tim. i. 16.)

Another passage is Rev. v. 6, which, although the truth in it is given to us in figurative language, is nevertheless equally clear.

"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain,



## THE PERSON OF CHRIST IN GLORY. 33

having seven horns and seven eyes." Here, in the midst of the throne of God and the heavenly saints, represented by the four-and-twenty elders, is the Lamb as it had been slain. The Lord Jesus, who has been slain, but is now alive again, and has entered as man into the glory of God, is the object of praise and worship of all heaven. All power given to Him (seven horns), and the perfection of sight (seven eyes), nothing escapes His notice. The Lord Jesus said, "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but *ye*" (those that are His) "see me." (John xiv. 19.) This is true now. "Ye see me." Believers see Him, not the world. Of course it is by faith. And where do we see Him? No longer on earth, but where He is now—in the glory of God. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." (Heb. ii. 9.)

But in case it might be thought that in pressing the manhood of the Lord Jesus His Godhead glory has been overlooked, I will quote a verse in Col. ii., where we have the Godhead glory, and at the same time His manhood brought out in one short verse (*v.* 9): "For in Him" (Christ) "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (or in a bodily form); that is to say, that all the fulness of Godhead dwells in the Person of "the Man Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. ii. 5.)

May the eyes of our faith be upon Him where

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He is, in all His glory, that we by beholding it may be changed into the same image from glory to glory. (2 Cor. iii. 18.) That is what takes place now. Beholding Him by faith where He is we become morally more like Him, till that day comes when "He shall change our vile body" (or body of humiliation), that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body (or body of glory). Then we shall be like Him, conformed to His image, and although He will eternally be man, He must ever be the object of our worship and adoration; for He is the true God, and eternal life." (1 John v. 20.)

R. F. K.

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JOB had the blessing, but was *working to keep* it, as verse 5 of the first chapter shows us. He did not fully know grace, and was miserable, as he himself says in chapter iii. 25, 26.

God sent him all the trial to teach him grace, so that he might know that he neither *deserved* the blessing nor could he keep it.

This lesson when learnt made Job a happy man.

How many there are like Job!

If I get the blessing without deserving it, it is clear I can never lose it for want of merit. We *stand* in grace. (Rom. v. 2.) *Working to keep* the blessing—with that object—is to have fallen from grace. (Gal. v. 4.)

M.

## “THERE IS ONE BODY.”

EPHESIANS iv. 3.

WE do not doubt that the Christian readers of *Simple Testimony* are acquainted with the scripture at the head of this paper—“There is One Body.” but we would affectionately ask them if they are acquainted with the deep and important meaning which God has attached to it? and whether they have ever considered it in relation to themselves and their personal responsibility?

The truth of the One Body is one of the great foundation truths of Christianity, and we propose to look at some of the principal scriptures upon the subject, with a view to discover what God has said concerning it.

From Eph. i. we learn that Christ, having made atonement for sin, was raised from among the dead by the power of God, and seated at His right hand in the heavenlies, far above all principalities and powers, and given to be Head over all things to the Church which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

The body did not exist prior to the cross; *for there was no Head*. Christ only became Head of the body after His death, resurrection, and ascension into glory.

The questions now arise, Who compose the body? and how is it formed?

In Acts ii. we read that the disciples "were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

Before His departure from the earth Christ had promised to send the Spirit; and accordingly, when He was exalted on high as the Head, the Spirit descended, and at once commenced to gather out a people, form them into one body, and unite them to Christ in glory. For, in 1 Cor. xii., the apostle writes: "And as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: *so also is Christ*. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free."

From this we learn that saved Jews and Gentiles *compose* the body of Christ, being baptized into it by the Spirit. Paul, in Eph. i., reminds the saints that, having believed, they were sealed with the Holy Spirit (see also Gal. iii. 2); and in the following chapter, that *before* they were quickened, they were dead in trespasses and sins.

Clearly then no ordinance—such as *water-*

baptism, for instance—can bring into the body. As many as are led to exercise faith in Christ as their Saviour, and are cleansed from their sins by His blood, and receive eternal life and the Holy Ghost, are by Him baptized into the One Body.

You will have noticed that the apostle, in order that the great truth of the One Body might be more easily understood, uses the human body as an illustration. Consider for a moment your own body. It consists of *many* members, but those members together constitute *one* body, *one* person; and Paul says, "*So also is Christ,*" i.e. the Head in glory; and the body on earth, consisting of many members, are *one* through the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and are called *Christ*. You will see a figure of this in Gen. v. 2, where the man and woman are called *Adam*.

The wonderful fact connected with the body is, that Christ and it are ONE.

The Lord Himself brought this out in a remarkable way to the man who was afterwards entrusted with the work of making this truth known. When Saul of Tarsus was journeying to Damascus for the purpose of conveying the disciples bound to Jerusalem, there suddenly shone round about him a light from heaven, and he heard a voice saying unto him, "Saul, Saul, *why persecutest thou me?*" and he said, "Who art thou, Lord?" and the Lord said, "*I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.*" Here was a revelation of the union which existed

between the Head and the members. Saul was persecuting the saints; but Christ asks, “Why persecutest thou me?” He that touched a member of the body touched the Head. Saul, in persecuting the saints, persecuted Christ. “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.”

We thus find that between the body and the Head there exists a perfect and indissoluble union. The same Spirit who dwells in Christ glorified in heaven, dwells in the saints on earth, uniting them one to another, and to the Head.

My Christian reader, have you ever pondered over this wonderful truth? Are you aware that you have not only forgiveness of sins and eternal life in the Son, but that you are also a member of Christ's body, united to Him in the place where He is by the Holy Ghost who dwells within you?

*Our* thoughts concerning this grand truth are feeble, and our apprehension of its depths very limited; but God has given us His thoughts about it, and we have now to trace out what they are, and we turn to Eph. iii.

The apostle Paul there states, that by revelation this mystery was made known to him; that in other ages it was not made known unto the sons of men that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel; that from the beginning of the world it was hid in God; but it was now given to him to make it known unto men to the

## "THERE IS ONE BODY."

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intent that NOW unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.

Some important and little-understood facts are here stated. First, the mystery of the One Body was hid in God from the beginning of the world, and not made known to any until it pleased Him to reveal it to Paul; we cannot therefore find it in the Old Testament. There may be, and indeed are, prophecies about the Gentiles; but they relate mainly to those saved Gentiles who will be brought into blessing after the close of this dispensation, when Christ reigns as Messiah, and Israel at the same time occupies a place of *special* blessing; but the great feature of this mystery is, that the Gentiles are *fellow-heirs* with the Jews, of the *same* body, and *joint-partakers* of God's promise by the gospel.

Secondly, God's present intention respecting the Church or Body is, that by it the angels shall learn His all-various wisdom.

At the creation the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy. As the angels watched the formation of the earth and its inhabitants, the fruit of divine wisdom, power, and skill, they admired and adored; but the fullness of God's wisdom was not displayed even in creation. Peter tells us that the angels desire to look into the wonderful plan of man's redemption; and surely as they gazed on the cross,

and Him who hung there, they marvelled at the wisdom of the divine counsels which had planned that the eternal Son should become Man, that by dying for sinners He might save them from hell; yet the completeness of divine wisdom was not unfolded even in the *salvation* of man; it was reserved for the Church to be the exponent of the all-various wisdom of God. Col. ii. tells us that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge were hid in the mystery (*i.e.* Christ's glory as the exalted Head of the Church, and Head also of all things in heaven and earth).

When the Son of God had made atonement for sin at Calvary, had risen out of death and ascended into heaven, the Holy Ghost descended to earth, and the angels watched as He drew out of the ranks of Israel (a nation whose hands were red with the murder of their Messiah), and out of the bosom of the heathen Gentile world, a people whom He united to and made one with the risen Christ. They have viewed the unfoldings of God's wisdom displayed in that gracious and glorious work, which has gone on in spite of every adversary for nigh two thousand years, and which will go on until it is completed; and Christ, rising from off the throne, shall come into the air, and catch His redeemed up to Himself to accompany Him into the Father's house, to shine in His glory, and to be throughout the eternal ages the witness of the exceeding riches of God's



grace, as they are *now* the witness of His wisdom.

You and I, reader, when contemplating the physical creation, with its endless variety of scenery, its many and varied beauties and wonders, and the marvellous changes wrought by the revolution of the seasons, may have often burst into exclamations of delight and praise at the wisdom that planned and governs it all; but remember this is only a partial manifestation of God's wisdom; its full and eternal display is to be found in the Church. And I ask you, What have been *your* thoughts concerning it? Have *you* ever united with the angels in admiring God's wisdom revealed in this mystery? or have you, like so many Christians, remained satisfied with knowing that you are saved from hell, and never given a thought to this transcendent purpose of God? Remember you yourself as a member of Christ's body are an object of the angels' wonder, and an evidence of the marvellous wisdom which it has pleased God to display in the union of the Church with His risen and glorified Son.

But we must pass on, and the next question to be considered is the saint's responsibility, and this is found in Eph. iv.: "I therefore . . . beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; *endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit*

*in the bond of peace.*" And again in John xvii., where the Lord Jesus expresses to the Father the intense desire of His heart: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: *that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*"

From this it is evident that Christ's people are responsible to keep and publicly exhibit the unity of the Spirit in faithfulness and obedience to God's word, saint forbearing with saint in lowliness, humility, and love. It was His desire that the Church should present to the world the marvellous and unprecedented spectacle of a vast company of people scattered over the earth, and yet *one* in communion, doctrine, motives, hopes, mind, purpose, faith, and love.

In the union of the Head and the body the angels learn the manifold wisdom of God. By the public manifestation of the Church's unity the world was to learn that the Father *did* send the Son.

Hitherto all that we have considered has been perfect, for all has been of God, and I would that we could close, pointing to the Church as the great witness to the world of the divine mission of the Son; but, alas! Scripture proceeds to record its sad and terrible failure as a corporate witness for God on the earth.

We find that the Church at Corinth was guilty of the allowance of many evils, and Paul in his first epistle to it attacks them one by one; but the

first evil that he denounces is that of schism or sectarianism. "It hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren . . . that there are contentions among you . . . that every one of you saith I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided?"

The saints had failed in their responsibility. Instead of striving to maintain a visible oneness, they had allowed strifes and divisions, and were making the names of dear and honoured servants of Christ to be centres around which they rallied according to pleasure. The Church's outward unity was endangered; its testimony was declining, and Paul in grief and alarm condemns the terrible sin, and grandly asks the question, "IS CHRIST DIVIDED?" *i.e.* Has it ceased to be a fact that the Head in glory and the body on earth are one? And if not, how can you be *outwardly* divided, and thereby practically deny the unity which subsists by the Holy Ghost?

But the leaven which appeared at Corinth has spread. Satan has succeeded only too well in his foul design. At this present moment the people of God are divided into hundreds of sections and parties. Each independent of the other, outward unity is gone, the testimony is wrecked, and the Church, instead of being Christ's witness, forms an object for the ridicule of the unbeliever.

Human rules and regulations have taken the place of God's word. Men have become leaders

in place of the Holy Ghost. Particular doctrines and creeds have become the ground of gathering together instead of the One Body, and anything and everything a centre rather than Christ, the great Head of the Church.

And the Church is satisfied! Saints are happy in their partizanship; the thought and ambition of each sect is the prosperity of its particular *cause*, regardless of the well-being of the whole body. God is dishonoured; His word ignored; the high calling of the Church forgotten; the presence and functions of the Holy Ghost disregarded, and Christ's desire as to its testimony frustrated.

And what think you are God's thoughts about this? What is it to Him to see the failure of His people, their disobedience and indifference to His word?

And yet amid all the ruin and disorder there abides the unchangeable, unalterable truth, that “there is One Body.” No evidence of it may be visible; but the sure word of God is sufficient for the faithful; and though Satan has succeeded in scattering the saints, the truth ever remains, that through the power of the Holy Ghost there subsists a vital and an eternal union between the Head in glory and the body on earth, which no power, either human or infernal, can ever touch.

Beloved reader, solemnly, and as in the presence of God, I ask you, Are you in association with anything that practically denies the oneness of

the body? Are you identified with one of the many bodies of Christendom? Are you assisting in the awful work which has so dishonoured God, grieved and quenched the Spirit, and deprived Christ of that glory which is rightfully His?

It is a mark of the Spirit's work when saints are gathered together to the name of the Lord Jesus on the ground of the One Body, regarding sectarianism as opposed to the great truth that "there is One Body."

To what name then and on what ground are *you* gathered? In what way are *you* endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit? In what way are *you* striving for the fulfilment of the desire of your Lord and Master, that His people may be visibly one?

Does God see in *you* one who, amidst and in spite of the prevailing confusion, cleaves to the truth of the One Body, and abstains from fellowship with anything that touches that truth?

If you cannot reply in the affirmative to this latter question, then His solemn word of command to you is to come out from among them, and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing; to depart from iniquity, to purge yourself from every vessel of dishonour, and to go forth UNTO JESUS, without the camp, bearing His reproach. (2 Cor. vi.; 2 Tim. ii.; Heb. xiii.)

W. H. S.

## GOING ON TO PERFECTION.

### HEBREWS vi. 1.

IT is clear that we are enjoined to “go on unto perfection,” but certainly it is not to perfection in the flesh. This was the error of the Galatian believers, and brought upon them such apostolic censure. They were remonstrated with by the Spirit of God as “foolish,” “bewitched,” and as those “who did not obey the truth,” in that, having “begun in the Spirit,” they afterwards sought to be made perfect in the flesh. (Gal. iii. 3.) They “did run well,” but they seemed to have lost sight of what Christ crucified had done for them, and to have forgotten that they had two natures—that “which is born of the flesh” and “that which is born of the Spirit;” and let slip the blessed fact that they were now “not in the flesh” (though the flesh was in them), but “in the Spirit,” a new creation in Christ Jesus, which neither circumcision, law, nor any ordinances of any kind, could bring about or alter. “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.” (Gal. vi. 15.)

It is certain then that the going on to perfection here set forth in nowise favours the false notion, so subversive of Christianity, and so severely

censured in Scripture, of seeking to be made perfect in the flesh. As to moral principle, we should, as God's children, seek to imitate our Father; therefore our Lord said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." But this is a widely different thought from being made perfect in the flesh. The truth is, that the believer will not lose this evil principle in him, which is born after the flesh, in which dwells nothing good, until the Lord comes, or he falls asleep through Jesus, and is for ever with the Lord.

In order to understand what is here meant by "let us go on unto perfection," we need to remember that the epistle is written to Hebrews, and that the expression occurs nowhere else in Scripture. Those addressed had been born and educated in a religious order of things, which, though it recognized man in the flesh, under law, and of the world, was divinely instituted before Christianity was brought in, though these Jewish things abounded with types and shadows of realities now made known. They had been accustomed to think of the rudimentary truths of "repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God;" they were familiar with divers washings or "baptisms," "laying on of hands" on the sacrifices, and believed in "resurrection of the dead," and "eternal judgment." But these things were the beginning of the doctrine of Christ,

infantile truth, the "milk" of divine revelation compared with "strong meat," which God has given us since the accomplished work of His beloved Son, and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Many of these Hebrews were still looking at Christianity as connected with a system on earth, and were taken up with the first buddings of divine revelation, with which Jews were familiar, instead of knowing God's Son now glorified as the central object of God's present ways. The consequence was there was no spiritual progress. Instead of being teachers, as they ought to have been, they needed to be taught again "the first principles of the oracles of God;" so that there was no hope of their getting on a truly Christian footing, and progressing in the truth, until they received in faith the "strong meat" which communicated to souls the perfections of the Person, work, and offices of a Messiah not now on earth, though He will be, but glorified in heaven. (Chap. v. 11-14.)

"Therefore," said the writer to these Hebrews (observe this word "therefore" as connecting it with what had gone before) "leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ," or the word of the beginning of Christ, first principles, "let us go on unto perfection." What seems to have brought the writer to this point in the epistle was, he desired to say "many things" to them about "the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec," the Son in heaven; but they were "dull of hearing;"



they had not the sense of the contrast between Judaism and Christianity, but were so taken up with Jewish things which dimly pointed to Christ, instead of with Christ Himself where He is, that their state of soul was low indeed. The inspired writer knew they would not advance until they had to do with Messiah now in heaven as a totally distinct thing, and in contrast with the Jewish system which still surrounded them; for the temple was then standing, and shadowy things in measure still going on. For such there was no deliverance but being taken up with the personal glory of the Son, the eternal efficacy of His one offering, His all-prevailing and unchangeable priesthood, and His present intercession for us in the sanctuary above. Here we have perfection, a perfection which not only had its source in divinely "perfect love," but gives "perfect peace" to the believer, because he has a perfect conscience, and a perfect way of approach to God.

It was then to *Christ in heaven* the writer of the epistle directed the hearts of these Hebrews; and, when we are under the Spirit's guidance, we pass through the various chapters with our feet consciously on earth, but our eyes every now and then specially directed to the glorified Son of man in the heavens. Let us observe some of the instances of this.

In chapter i. we are invited to look at the Son, by whom the worlds were made, who after He

had died for our sins sat down on the throne of glory. "When He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (v. 3.)

In chapter ii. the proper attitude of a believer on earth is described as gazing on the Lord in glory. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." (v. 9.)

In chapter iii. we are enjoined to consider Him, not only as the One who came down from heaven, but who is also gone up there, and entered upon His priestly office for us. "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." (v. 1.)

In chapter iv. we are bidden to behold Him as Man passed through the heavens, yet Son of God, and there our sympathizing High Priest, so that we may hold fast our confession, and approach God's throne with boldness as a throne of grace to find grace for seasonable help. What unutterable blessedness we know in present intercourse with the Son of God where He now is! "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession" (confession). "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of

grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (*vv.* 14–16.)

In chapter v. we behold Him as the Man, yet God's Son, who was on earth offering up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him who was able to save Him out of death, but now Priest by divine appointment after the order of Melchisedec. "So Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee. . . . Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec." (*vv.* 5–10.)

In chapter vi. we see Him as the Forerunner who is gone inside the veil for us who are still running the race here. Blessed object for the contemplation of our hearts! "Within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (*vv.* 19, 20.)

In chapter vii. we are still gazing on the Son in heaven His eternal and unchangeable character, as able to save us right on to the end, and ever living to make intercession for us. (*vv.* 24–28.)

In chapter viii. He is presented to us a *sitting* Priest, and active in the sanctuary in heaven. These were entirely new ideas to a Jew. Their priest, from Aaron downward, could never sit down, but was always *standing* because of having to offer many sacrifices which could never take

away sins. But “*we* have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens ; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.” (*vv.* 1, 2.)

In chapter ix. we learn that He went into heaven itself by His own blood, and now appears before the face of God for us, having obtained *eternal* redemption, and has made the power of it known to us by the *eternal* Spirit while going on to our *eternal* inheritance. (*vv.* 12–24.)

In chapter x. we are instructed that we have liberty to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus where He is, and are assured by the witness of the Holy Spirit that our sins and iniquities will be remembered no more, and that the coming of our Lord is nigh. “In a little while, He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” (*vv.* 14, 19, 37.)

In chapter xii. we are enjoined to look away from every other object to Him who ran the race of faith perfectly, who endured the cross and despised the shame, and is now as Man, who resisted sin unto blood, sitting at the right hand of the throne of God. While running on to meet Him at His coming, we are sustained and cheered by thus being occupied with Him where He is. (*vv.* 1, 2.)

In chapter xiii. we are so supposed to be occupied with Him, and all the goodness and mercy of God to us in and through Him, as to be offering “by Him” the sacrifice of praise to God continually ;

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that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks "to His name," and, like Him, not forgetting to minister to those around us.

Nothing more need be quoted to show how clearly it is the mind of God that we should now while on earth know the heaven opened over us to faith by the rent veil, and have personal occupation with our Lord Jesus Christ there as truth which delivers from a weak and infantile state of soul, and is not "milk," but "strong meat;" because it ministers to us the perfections of Christ in heaven, the eternal efficacy of His one offering, and of His divinely-appointed and unchangeable priesthood as sitting on the throne of God.

It is well to lay this to heart, and to often ask ourselves, "Am I taken up with the Son of God in glory on account of what He is in Himself, what He is to God, and as the One in whom are *all* my resources, blessings, joy, strength, and inheritance?" The more we ponder this epistle the more we shall be convinced that our souls have not accepted the blessings which the accomplished work of the Son entitle us to enjoy, unless we are consciously inside the veil where He now is and offering to God the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving as purged worshippers. Then our hearts delight to sing—

"Oh, fix our earnest gaze  
So wholly, Lord, on Thee,  
That with Thy beauty occupied  
We elsewhere none may see."

H. H. S.

## NOTES.

WHETHER it be in saint or sinner, it is wickedness and folly to *cover* sins. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper." (Prov. xxviii. 13.) How is it possible to truly cover them, seeing that "all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do"? And "who can forgive sins but God alone"? God only can cover; because against Him, and Him only, have we sinned, and done evil in His sight. Hence the preciousness of that word from God: "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins *are covered*." (Rom. iv. 7.) How forcibly it speaks as to WHO is the Coverer! even He who can say of every one that believeth in Jesus, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." And again, "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." What a *Coverer*—the blessed God! What a *covering*—the precious blood of Christ! C. C. W.

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WHAT a mistake Jacob made when he said, "All these things are against me," when in fact they were, every one of them, for him." (Gen. xlii. 36.)

How different that beautiful utterance of faith in Rom. viii. 28, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

Beware of Jacob's mistake.

M.

## A WISE THING TO DO.

I REMEMBER hearing of a dear old Christian who was troubled with a bad memory. He seemed to forget everything he wanted to remember. At last a happy thought struck him. Why not ask the Lord to remember for him? Accordingly the next time he heard anything good which he desired to retain, he simply looked up, and said, "Now, Lord, keep that for me till I need it," and this practice he continued to the end.

"The time of need" evidently did not come to the dear old saint till he was lying on his deathbed; then the blessed truths which he had "banked" with the Lord were again returned to him, no doubt with interest, for the comfort and joy of his own soul. But not only so; they rolled out of his lips for the comfort, joy, and blessing of others also.

Often have I thought of the dear old man! What a wise thing to do! What a safe bank to put his spiritual treasures in! What a gracious God to commit them to! He knows best when we need them, and when to return them to us. When *He* does that it is real food for the soul.

W. E.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

ANONYMOUS.—Your letter, dear friend, has deeply moved us. We have spread it out before God—infinite in power, infinite in love—and in accordance with your request have asked others to do so too. May He give an early answer of peace!

One word to you. Look away from yourself and from your backslidings, which have filled your heart with darkness and despair. There is no profit in dwelling on them. Look up. There is One in heaven who suffered for the sins you deplore, and who, having

loved His own that are in the world, loves them *unto the end*. When He chose you, and called you to know Himself, when he rejoiced over you as the shepherd over the sheep, He knew everything—knew all about these backslidings even as he knew Peter would deny Him with oaths and curses. They have not taken Him by surprise. Go then to Him, unburden your soul to Him, and go confiding in that love which never alters. Jesus is the same; and He who spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, loves you with a Father's love. Return then, poor wanderer; never did a warmer welcome wait for any than for thee.

FAIRWOOD.—We do not think “the prize” referred to in Phil. iii. is “a crown of life” as in Rev. ii. 10. It is rather Christ Himself, as He will be known and possessed only when the resurrection-state is reached. It is easy to see in reading Phil. iii. that Christ in glory was everything to Paul; but, apostle though he was, and profound as was his knowledge of Christ, even he said, “Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” How eagerly he longed to reach the goal and obtain the prize this chapter tells!

Nor do we think that perfect submission to the will of God will be attained by having the eye fixed on beautiful characters in whom we seem to discern this lovely feature of the divine life, though their example is not without its value. There is One who was ever subject under all circumstances, and some of them infinitely more distressing than any saint can ever know. He who, in the hour of rejection, meekly said, “Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight;” and in Gethsemane, “Not my will, but thine be done,” invites us to take His yoke upon us, and learn of Him, “and ye *shall* find rest unto your souls.” Oh to be learners in His school, and to drink into His spirit! then we shall find *rest* indeed.



## “KNOWN AND BELIEVED.”

“WE have known and believed the love that God hath to us” (1 John iv. 16) is the bright, cheery language of faith as it looks away from self to Christ. “We doubt and fear” is the dismal, melancholy language of unbelief as it turns the eye away from Christ, and looks at sinful self. What a contrast!

We are never asked to believe in *our own* love to God. Never. Yet how many are occupied with this, making vain attempts to love Him; as if they thought to find satisfaction in that! But it all ends in disaster, and leaves them, as before, dwellers in Grief Street—a miserable place to live in.

There are some who know all about the way of salvation, but *will not trust* the Saviour; so these of whom we speak are captured by Unbelief, and carried to “Doubting Castle;” and in that gloomy prison they often find themselves in the dreaded company of “Giant Despair,” until at last they believe the truth which procures their liberty—“Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John viii. 32.)

Thank God there is something infinitely better than our love to God, with all its accompanying train of doubts, fears, and unbelief. We are brought face to face with the expression of *God’s love to us*, and asked to believe that.

But perhaps the reader of these lines may ask, How do we know that God loves us? Well, that is a very important question; therefore we could not do better than allow Scripture to furnish us with its own answer.

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, *not that we loved God*, but that *He loved us*, and sent His son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John iv. 9, 10.) This is how we know it. He has shown it, proved it by sending His Son to die for us; and we are sure that any one sitting down, and quietly and thoughtfully reading those verses, must rise up with the settled conviction in his soul that God has indeed manifested *His* love to us poor guilty sinners.

Yes, He has *sent* His Son to give us what we had not—eternal life (v. 9); and *sent* His Son to take away what we had—our sins (v. 10); and *sent* His Son to be the Saviour of the world. (v. 14.) Three reasons why He *sent* His Son.

Then there are three ways in which His perfect love is seen. 1. It is perfected *towards* us to give us life and forgiveness. 2. It is perfected *in* us to give us present enjoyment of it. 3. It is perfected *with* us to give us boldness in the day of judgment. (See marginal reading of verse 17.) How wonderful all this is!

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“ Love divine’s a mine of treasure  
 We shall never all explore ;  
 Yet the very smallest measure  
 Fills *our* hearts to running o’er.”

But let us look and see where *our love* is in all this. Why it is left out entirely, until He has given us all this beautiful, full, and blessed display of His own love. Then it comes in, “ We love Him ;” but why ? “ Because He first loved us.” (*v.* 19.) Even in speaking of our loving one another in verse 7 he stops to show us God’s love *to* us in verses 8–10, and then uses it as a motive, and says, “ Beloved, if God so loved us ”—and He has, and given us the very same life and nature which is characterized by love—then “ we ought also to love one another.” (*v.* 11.) Thus we see *His love to us* is always put first.

Are you then, dear reader, amongst those who can say, “ We have known and believed the love that God hath to us ” ? or are you amongst those who as yet can only say, “ I wish I were ” ? If the latter, then turn your eye away from yourself entirely. Do not even *think* of your love to God, but gaze upon that wondrous expression of *His love*. Think how He has loved you, unworthy you, and given His beloved Son for you. Thus look and look, and continue to look, until your poor weary heart has taken its fill, and you find yourself lost in wonder, love, and praise. Then, and not till then, will you be able to say with the rest of the children of God, “ We have known and believed the love that God hath to us.”

W. E.

## VARIED ASPECTS OF THE KINGDOM.

THERE is great confusion in many minds with regard to the kingdom. Some with sad lack of intelligence speak of it as though it were the same thing as the Church, using the terms interchangeably; whereas the kingdom denotes *rule*, but the Church is defined in Scripture as *the body of Christ* and *the house of God*. (Eph. i. 22, 23; 1 Tim. iii. 15.) And others again are puzzled as to the meaning of the different terms that are employed in relation to the kingdom. Let us endeavour to gather a few simple thoughts from the word of God concerning it.

Constantly in the Old Testament we have allusions to the reign of the Lord. For instance, in Exodus xv. 18, in the course of Israel's song of triumph on the borders of the Red Sea, we read, "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever." Hannah, in praying in 1 Samuel ii., says, "The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and He shall give strength unto *His king*, and exalt the horn of His Anointed." Psalm xxii. 28 tells us, "The kingdom is the Lord's," besides many others. Isaiah, in chap. ix. 6, 7, speaks of the Prince of Peace, adding, "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon *His kingdom*," &c.

Daniel ii. 44 tells us that the God of heaven shall "set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed;" and chap. vii. 13 of the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of days, and *a kingdom* being given to Him, &c. And from many parts of the Old Testament we might multiply passages which speak of a coming King and kingdom. In short, the great point to which the whole of the yet unfulfilled prophetic utterances converge is the judgment of the nations, and the establishment of a kingdom in the hand of God's King, Israel's Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ. This period is still future, and has no reference to the rule of Christ in the heart of the Christian (though *there is* a moral aspect of the kingdom brought out in the pages of the New Testament, which we shall refer to later on), but to a coming moment in the history of this world, when the heavens shall rule, "and the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one." (Zech. xiv. 9.) And it is all-important to apprehend that this glorious epoch, the restitution of all things spoken by the prophets (Acts iii. 21), will not be ushered in by the conversion of the world, as many have been led to imagine, but by most fearful judgments upon this habitable earth. During the present interval of Christ's rejection God is taking out a people for His name (Acts xv. 14), but the world is fast ripening for judgment. It is not until after

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the present gospel of grace has ceased, and the heavenly saints have been translated to glory, that the *gospel of the kingdom* will be again proclaimed. In that day a remnant of Jews will bear testimony to all nations that Jesus is the true Messiah, and that He is about to come and establish His kingdom, and then shall *the end of the age* (not world) come. (Matt. xxiv. 14.)

Now in the opening pages of the New Testament we are at once met, in Matt. i. ii., with the birth of the promised King. And in chapter iii. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, goes forth in the wilderness of Judæa preaching, and saying, "Repent ye: for *the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" Jesus Himself also bears the same testimony in chapter iv. 17; and in the sermon on the mount we have from His own blessed lips the principles of the kingdom, and what must characterize those who would have part in it. A feeble remnant followed Him; but the mass, led by their religious leaders—Pharisees, scribes, &c.—refuse the testimony. Hence in Matt. xiii. the Lord spake seven parables, which in verse 11 He called "*the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.*" Knowing that He would be rejected and crucified, He brought out *secret things* connected with the kingdom, which His disciples alone could understand, and they only feebly, until the gift of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, and closed by saying, "Every scribe which is *instructed* unto the kingdom

of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasures *things new and old.*" (Matt. xiii. 52.) The old things are given in the Old Testament; the new had just fallen from His own lips, *the mysteries* (or secrets) of the kingdom of heaven—things which would take place consequent upon His rejection here as King, and His taking His place at the right hand of God. Hence the kingdom *in this form* is going on now.

All who profess to own His authority are in the kingdom. They own the rule of the heavens. Some are true, and others false. The former will be displayed in glory in the heavenly sphere of the kingdom with the King when He comes to reign over the earth; but the latter will be judged. (Matt. xiii. 30, 41.) Till that day the wheat and the tares are to be left *to grow together in the field* (the world, Matt. xiii. 28–30, 38). Whereas the Church (which is altogether distinct from the kingdom, although those who compose it are in both) is enjoined to be *separate from the world*. The term, "The kingdom of heaven," or the rule of the heavens, is dispensational in character, and is only found in the gospel of Matthew.

In Luke, where the kingdom is often referred to, it is called the kingdom of God, and it is also spoken of thus in the other gospels, as well as in Acts, &c. Now our Lord told Nicodemus plainly that to see or enter the kingdom of God he *must be born again*. (John iii. 3–7.) This is an absolute

necessity for all. But through the power of Satan and the failure of men masses of people have professedly owned the rule and authority of God, taking their place within it (but without the new birth), so that it was likened by the Lord (who foreknew what would take place) in its *present outward character* to similar things as the kingdom of heaven. (Compare Matt. xiii. 31-33, and Luke xiii. 18-21.) It embraces the same sphere—all who profess to know God. (Titus i. 15, 16.)

It is important, however, to notice that the kingdom of God had already come when Christ was on earth. God was there in Him. (2 Cor. v. 19; 1 Tim. iii. 16.) The Word was God; and the Word became flesh, &c. (John i. 1, 14.) Hence we find our Lord saying, "If I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt *the kingdom of God is come upon you.*" (Luke xi. 20.) Again, "When He was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, *the kingdom of God is within you*" (margin, *among you*). (Luke xvii. 20, 21.) Furthermore, we learn hereby that there is also a moral force connected with the term which is confirmed in Rom. xiv. 17, where we read, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." It was connected with the presence of Christ when



on earth, but now during His absence with the presence of the Holy Ghost.

The kingdom of God then denotes God's rule; the kingdom of heaven, that of the heavens over the earth.

Now when the kingdom shall be displayed, there will be both a heavenly and an earthly sphere. Christ will reign with His saints in the heavens over the earth, and His dominion will be acknowledged by all on the earth. The heavenly saints judge the world and *reign with Him* (1 Cor. vi. 2; 2 Tim. ii. 12); whereas Israel and the nations will be the *subjects of the kingdom*. The heavenly sphere is called *the kingdom of the Father*, and the earthly is *the kingdom of the Son of man*; for He who will judge and reign is a Man. (Matt. xiii. 43; Daniel vii. 13, 14.) Hence we find the Lord teaching His disciples to pray for the Father's kingdom—"Our *Father* which *art in heaven*, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it *is in heaven*," &c. And in Matt. xiii. 43 we read, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in *the kingdom of their Father*." And again, "Fear not, little flock; for it is *your Father's* good pleasure to give you *the kingdom*." (Luke xii. 32.) And again, at the passover supper, Jesus said to His disciples, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new *with you in my Father's kingdom*." (Matt. xxvi. 29.)

## 66      VARIED ASPECTS OF THE KINGDOM.

Now to understand this, we must remember that the disciples were expecting earthly blessings in Messiah's kingdom. But the Son of man was going to the cross and the glory, and they were to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, which they afterwards did, and became heirs of *heavenly blessing*, instead of *earthly*. So that instead of being *subjects* on the earth, their portion and ours is *to reign in the heavenly sphere*.

On the mount of transfiguration, we have a sample of the coming kingdom and glory; and there we find the Lord, with face shining as the sun, and glistening garments, accompanied by Moses and Elias, whose position with Him in the same glory-cloud *sets forth* the coming portion of the raised and changed saints with Christ in the Father's kingdom. And Peter, James, and John, in an exalted position on the mountain-top, yet on the earth, represent the earthly blessing of the saved nation of Israel in the future, under the dominion of the Son of man; *though the disciples themselves*, as we have seen, will partake of the heavenly blessing, having received the Holy Ghost later on.

In 2 Peter i. 11 the Christian is taught that if he follows certain things, "so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into *the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*."

This of course is the same kingdom. There are

not two. It brings before the soul its *everlasting* character, in contrast to all other kingdoms of this world. Many mighty kingdoms have risen up and fallen in the past, and so it will continue till that day. As saith the prophet, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn . . . till He come whose right it is." (Ezekiel xxi. 27.) But His dominion shall be everlasting. (Daniel vii. 27.) "His name," saith the psalmist, "shall endure for ever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed," &c. (Psalm lxxii. 17.) "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet," &c. (1 Cor. xv. 24, 25.) The Christian has part, as we have seen, in the heavenly sphere with Christ, and an abundant entrance if faithful. But in Ephes. v. 5 the apostle says of the ungodly, "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in *the kingdom of Christ and of God.*"

It is this period of the reign of Christ which is usually spoken of as the millennium, on account of its duration being *a thousand years*. If you turn to Rev. xx., you will find that it is mentioned no less than six times in the first seven verses.

Another term in reference to the kingdom is also employed by the Spirit of God in Col. i., where He is unfolding part of the Christian blessing, and says, "Who" (the Father) "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into *the kingdom of His dear Son*" (or the Son of His love). This is the portion of the Christian now. In nature all are under the power of darkness; but every believer is now delivered from that condition, and that for ever, and translated (mark the expression) into the kingdom of the Son of God's love. We are already in it, under His rule, the rule of One who loves us perfectly, and to the end (John xiii. 1)—Himself our Saviour—the expression of the love of God. And when He comes He will claim us as His own; and when He appears (or is manifested), we shall appear with Him in glory (Col. iii. 4); we shall *reign with Him*. (2 Tim. ii. 12.)

Much more might be said upon this wide subject, but our desire is to furnish *simple and brief testimony* to the truths of Scripture, and we trust what has been said may, in some measure, help to make clear to our readers the meaning of the terms employed, and to simplify some of the passages which refer to this subject, and which so many find to be somewhat difficult to understand.

But before we close we would add a few practical words for any who may read these lines.

Knowing that the Lord is at hand, and that at any moment His people may be translated from this scene, hereafter to be displayed in the coming kingdom and glory, and that all who are left behind at that moment, if they have heard the gospel, and not believed it, are left for the hour of judgment, may we ask each of our readers to put to himself the questions, Have I been born again? and, Have I entered the kingdom? Or, Am I a mere professor, with a name to live, and yet dead? All true believers, like the wise virgins in Matthew xxv. 4, have oil in their vessels with their lamps, and know somewhat of the power of that scripture, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy *in the Holy Ghost*."

But many around us, like the foolish virgins, have nothing but a mere lamp of profession.

Dear reader—be honest with yourself—how is it with you? For if such is your case, remember how the Lord has said that at that day "the Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend" (margin, scandals) "and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. xiii. 41, 42.) But if you are in the kingdom, and through faith born of God, remember for your pathway the words of your Lord, "Seek ye *the kingdom of God*." (Luke xii. 31.)

E. H. C.

“SAVE THYSELF.”

“Let Him save Himself, if He be Christ.”—LUKE xxiii. 35.

“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”—1 TIM. i. 15.

JESUS, Lord, despised, rejected—  
 Man of sorrows ; true Thy name !  
 Stricken, smitten, unprotected  
 From those scoffing words of shame.

We, for our own sins oft blushing,  
 Shrink before the thought of scorn ;  
 Thou, our load of guilt so crushing,  
 Meekly, patiently hast borne.

Meekly borne amidst reviling,  
 Son of God, how hard for Thee !  
 Cruel jest, sardonic smiling,  
 “Save Thyself, if Christ Thou be.”

Hours of anguish, oh, how bitter !  
 God-forsaken, no relief.  
 Man could taunt Thee—how much fitter  
 Had he wept to see Thy grief !

Tender, loving Heart, that never  
 Failed man’s sorrows here to share ;  
 Healer, Soother, Blessor ever,  
 Was there none to pity there ?

Would the sons of men and daughters  
 Had but known ’twas love for us !  
 Love, unquenched by many waters,  
 Held Thee, Lord, a captive thus !

Save Thyself Thou couldst ; but, rather  
 Than our guilt on us should lie,  
 There, to glorify Thy Father,  
 Thou wouldst suffer all, and die.

Blessed Lord, ’twas love impelled Thee—  
 Love which Thee for sinners gave !  
 Love, undying love, that held Thee,  
 Not *Thyself*, but *us*, to save.

M. A. W.

## “JESUS THE SON OF GOD.”

GOD had spoken by prophets. At different times, and in many ways, one prophet after another, according to his measure, had testified of the coming of the sinless and guileless Redeemer. The woman's seed, the prophet which Jehovah would raise up like unto Moses, the child born and son given of Isaiah, the suffering and reigning One spoken of by David, and other holy men of God pointed to Him in whom God would be well pleased.

When the time came that the Word should become flesh and dwell among us, His coming into the world was triumphantly announced by a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.” The Holy Ghost, who, till then, had been speaking of Him in types and other ways by prophets, now revealed to Simeon that this was “the Lord's Christ,” so that in Him he saw God's salvation. Others, who looked for redemption in Jerusalem, also spoke of Him, and were filled with praise and thanksgiving to God. After thirty years of trial in this world, like a grain of wheat alone, when even His brethren did not believe on Him, we find that the heaven was opened over Him, the Holy Ghost came down in a bodily shape and abode

upon Him, and the Father declared concerning Him, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." Thus, as Son of Man He was sealed, because of His own personal and moral perfectness. Here we have perfection indeed, both human and divine. (Luke iii. 21, 22; John vi. 27.)

It had been revealed to John the Baptist that the One upon whom he should "see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him," was not only the Lamb of God, but the Son of God, and the One who "baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." (John i. 33.) What glory we have presented to us here! Who but a divine person could baptize with the Holy Ghost? Who but One who was man—perfect man—could be God's Lamb, a sacrifice for sin suited to God? Who could this mysterious One be but "the Son of God"? What adoring and praising hearts become us in the contemplation of this perfect One! Divinely perfect, perfect man, personally perfect, morally perfect; the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Though "in the likeness of sinful flesh," those taught of the Spirit could discern glory in Him which was infinitely beyond anything of created glory, and could only describe what they saw in such words as, "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John i. 1, 14, 33, 34.) May we reverently, and with worshipping hearts, ponder a little further God's word concerning Him!



In the epistle to the Hebrews, where those addressed were enjoined to "go on unto perfection," we find the Deity of the Son announced in the very opening verses; for, without doubt, it is the glory and perfection of His person that gives such eternal value and efficacy to what He did on the cross, as well as to all the offices He now sustains. Not only is the Son here set forth as the One by whom the universe was made, and the upholder of every thing, but as the One who will yet, after sitting on His own throne, and reigning as Israel's king, fold up this old creation as a vesture, while He Himself is the same, and His years shall not fail.

It is God who has spoken in the person of His Son. He had spoken in the prophets, having used their mouths to speak and their hands to write; so that the instrument so employed could truthfully say, "Thus saith the Lord;" or, "The word of the Lord hath come unto me, saying," &c. Holy men of God had spoken "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The Father too had spoken, and given testimony from heaven to the personal perfections of the Son of man on this earth, saying, "This is my beloved Son; hear Him." And again we read, "For him hath God the Father sealed." But in these last days God hath spoken to us in the Son, or in the person of the Son. It was God who spake in the prophets by the Holy Ghost; it was God the Father who

gave testimony to the person of the Son ; but here we have the Son speaking, who declared the Father—the Son by whom all things were created, the Heir of all things, the Upholder of all things, who did by Himself purge our sins ; the Son so far above all created things that He could truly call God Father, and the Father own Him as His only-begotten Son ; the Son who is now seated on the Father’s throne, and crowned with glory and honour ; the Son of whom it will be said, when He comes into the world as the first-begotten, “ Let all the angels of God worship Him ;” the Son of whom it can be truly said, “ Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom ;” the Son concerning whom, when speaking of the created heaven and earth, it is said, “ They shall perish ; but thou remainest ; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment ; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed : but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.” These surely are nothing less than varied glories of the perfection and Deity of the Son.

In the Son, God was manifested in the flesh. Though the Son eternally in the bosom of the Father, and before the universe was formed the central Object of divine counsels and grace toward man, according to eternal purpose, yet was He also the Son by incarnation as born of Mary, according as it was said to her by the

angel Gabriel, "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke i. 35); fulfilling also the prophecy of Psalm ii., "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." Again, He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection from the dead" (Rom. i. 4); and now sits on the Father's throne as righteously exalted above all creatures, and expecting to come forth to judge; for to which of the angels said He at any time, "Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool"?

Till the fulness of time came when God sent forth His Son, God had been revealed as God who created, as the Lord God who was in relationship with man, as the Almighty who could do everything, and from whom no thought could be withholden, as Jehovah in covenant relationship with Israel; but the Father had not been revealed. Hence we read, "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.) In this way the Father was made known; the Father was seen in the Son. The words He uttered were of the Father—He said, "The Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." (John xii. 49.) Again the Son said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. . . . Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and

the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me." (John xiv. 9, 10.) Thus while the Son was so truly One in divine essence with the Father that He could truly say, "I and my Father are One," yet was there such distinction of persons between the Father and the Son that the Father sent and commanded, and the Son came and obeyed. Moreover, He could speak of leaving the world and going to the Father, of finishing the work the Father gave Him to do, of glorifying the Father on the earth, and of obeying the commandment of the Father in laying down His life for the sheep. We can therefore praise God with our whole heart that the Son came and declared the Father as none else could.

We have thus the revelation of God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We have seen how clearly God the Father has testified of the perfection of the Son; we know too that God the Holy Ghost is the testifier and the glorifier of the Son; but in these last days God the Son has spoken to us of the Father, and has assured us, who, through grace, have believed that the Father Himself in sovereign grace has revealed the Son to us, drawn us to Him, brought us into the everlasting relationship of children, that He loves us as He loves the Son, purposes to conform us to the image of His

Son, to the praise of His glory, and would have us now know it and enjoy it. When we ponder the words of the Son, let us never forget that it is that person speaking who is the Son. As another has forcibly put it, "It is God Himself who speaks; not by another; not as the Father, nor in the person of the Father; not merely by the Holy Ghost using a person not divine, but as Himself a divine person, and that person the Son."

It is no marvel then that God speaks of the Son as the brightness or effulgence of His glory, the express image of His person, or rather an exact expression of His substance or essential being. Such surely He was and is; for "in Him all the fulness was pleased to dwell," and "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead *bodily*." It is the infinite perfection of the person of the Son we have here. So that as the Son, He is Raiser of the dead and lifegiver, and all judgment is committed unto Him, which only a divine person could carry out. "What things soever He (the Father) doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. . . . For 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: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him." (John v. 19-23.) He therefore "knew

all men, and needed not that any should testify of man : for He knew what was in man,” and yet he delighted to tell out the love of God to the world in giving “His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John ii. 25 ; iii. 16.)

The Son, divinely perfect, and perfect as man—personally perfect—without a taint or a flaw, was morally the expression of the glory of God. Not only was He apart from sin, neither was guile found in His mouth ; but in His every step and every word there was such perfect obedience, love, and faith, that He always did the will of Him that sent Him, and it was His meat to do so ; so that He never uttered a word which needed correction ; nor took a step He had afterward to retrace. He was inwardly pure, so that He could say, “Thy law is within my heart ;” and outwardly “holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.” How truly we can say, when considering the pathway of the Son on earth—

“Thy name encircles every grace  
That God as man could show ;  
There only could He fully trace  
A life divine below.”

With the unutterable agony and shame of the cross immediately before Him, He could challenge His bitterest enemies with “Which of you convinceth me of sin ?” “Devils spoke of Him as the holy one of God.” Pilate took water and washed His hands before the multitude, saying, “I am innocent

of the blood of this just person; see ye to it." Judas also, His betrayer, brought the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders saying, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood." The Roman officers exclaimed, "Never man spake like this man;" and the Centurion glorified God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous man." The thief hanging by His side also gave his testimony, saying, "We receive the due reward of our deeds, but this Man hath done nothing amiss." This perfect One, to whom angels had ministered, had only to ask His Father and He would presently have given Him more than twelve legions of angels; but He added—for He came for the suffering of death—"how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" But above all the testimony of creatures was the voice from heaven once and again, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased;" and lastly, raised from among the dead by the glory of the Father, and set on His right hand in righteousness. He is there the everlasting witness to His perfect obedience, perfect walk so glorifying God in life and death, as to merit the glory of God, into which, as the crucified, risen, and ascended Son of Man he entered. Language fails to give utterance to the personal, moral, and official glories of this perfect One. Well might an apostle exhort these, who were dwelling on rudimentary truth and typical things, to "go on unto perfection." H. H. S.

## “A MAN IN CHRIST.”

2 CoR. xii.

THE death of Christ has closed for faith the existence of the old man, the flesh, the first Adam-life in which we stood as responsible before God, and whose place Christ took for us in grace. . . . Our place, our standing before God, is no longer in flesh. It is in Christ. Christ, as man, has taken quite a new place, that neither Adam innocent, nor Adam sinner, had *anything to say to*. The best robe formed no part of the prodigal's first inheritance at all; it was in the father's possession, quite a new thing. Christ has taken this place consequent on putting away our sins, on having glorified God as to them, and finishing the work. He has taken it in righteousness, and man in Him has got a new place in righteousness with God. When quickened, he is quickened with the life in which Christ lives, the last Adam, and submitting to *God's* righteousness, knowing that he is totally lost in the first and old man; and having bowed to this solemn truth, as shown and learned in the cross, he is sealed with the Holy Ghost, livingly united to the Lord, one Spirit: he is a man in Christ. Not in the flesh or in the first Adam. All *that* is closed for him in the cross, where Christ made Himself respon-



sible for him in respect of it, and died unto sin *once*, and he is alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. He belongs to a new creation, having the life of the Head of it as his life. He *was* a man in the flesh, he *is* a man in Christ.

Amazing and total change from the whole condition and standing of the first Adam, responsible for his own sins, into that of Christ, who having borne the whole consequence of that responsibility in his place, has given him, in the power of that (to us) new life, in which He rose from the dead, a place in and with Himself, *as He now is as man before God*. And if in Christ, the title and privilege of Christ is our title and privilege. The man in Christ has Christ for his title, and is entitled thus to all that Christ enjoys, to joys and glories which mortal apprehensions cannot receive, and language formed by mortal ways cannot express, that are not meet to be communicated in this scene of human capacities. They belong to another sphere of things.

Ask many a true-hearted saint what is the meaning of “when we were in the flesh” (Rom. vii. 5), and he could give no clear answer—he has no definite idea of what it can mean. Ask him what it is to be in Christ—all is equally vague. A regenerate man may be in the flesh, as to the condition ~~and~~ standing of his own soul, *though he be not so in God’s sight*; nay, this is the very case supposed in Rom. vii., because he looks at himself

as standing before God on the ground of his own responsibility, on which ground he *never* can, in virtue of being regenerate, meet the requirements of God, attain to His righteousness. Perhaps, finding this out, he has recourse to the blood of Christ to quiet his uneasy conscience, and repeated recurrence to it as a Jew would to a sacrifice, a superstitious man to absolution. But he has no idea that he has been cleansed and perfected once for all, and that he is taken clean out of that standing to be placed in Christ before God.

*Extract from "A Man in Christ," by J. N. D.*

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### CORRESPONDENCE.

A. G. S.—The Red Sea for the children of Israel was the door of deliverance from the house of bondage, the placing of them for ever beyond Pharaoh's power, and setting them in the wilderness as a redeemed people brought to God.

It is to us a type of the death and resurrection of Christ, not so much in the passover aspect of the former, where the blood met the claims of God's justice as regards the people's sins, but as that which has annulled Satan's power, delivered us from it, and brought us to God in perfect peace, so that we can joy in Him whose power has wrought so great a deliverance for us. This line of truth will be found in the Roman epistle.

Jordan was the entrance into Canaan. The crossing of it is in nowise a type of the death of the body, nor Israel's entering into it a picture of the departure of a believer to be with Christ. It was when the people had

crossed Jordan that the wars of Canaan properly began. There will be no fighting in heaven, no Canaanites to be dispossessed when we get there. But the Jordan *must* be crossed before Canaan can be reached, and Canaan, or rather what answers to it, is our place *now*, if indeed by faith, and in the power of the Holy Ghost, we enter there. If the passage of the *Red Sea* is our redemption from Satan's power, so that henceforth we might walk with God through wilderness scenes, at peace with Him, and standing in His favour, He being for us in all His love and unfailing resources, the crossing of the *Jordan* is our entrance by faith into the blessed fact, that we have not only died with Christ, but that we who were dead in sins have been quickened together with Him, raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Him. The Red Sea and the Jordan have closed for ever our history as men in the flesh, and now we have a new place in Christ before God, and are in spirit associated with Him where He now is, having been quickened with His life, and having the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. And this is the true Christian position, the proper portion of every believer. But let it be remembered that it is one thing for all these things to be true of the believer when viewed, as in the place which the grace and power of God has made his, and another for the soul to be consciously standing in possession of it all. It is in the Ephesian epistle that our heavenly position and privileges are unfolded, and it is there we learn the need of the whole armour of God to enable us to stand (even when it is known) in the present enjoyment of what is infallibly and eternally ours in Christ.

In reply to your question on John vi. 39, 40, we

have to say that "the last day" mentioned there does not refer to the end of all things. The Jews had a "this world" and a "world to come," "this age" and an "age to come." "The last day" refers to the end of the age that will close when Messiah's kingdom is set up, and the "age to come" begins, and it embraces the moment of the Lord's coming for His saints (1 Thess. iv. 16) up to the establishment of the kingdom. It is during that period that the Lord will raise His own from among the dead. The resurrection of the unjust takes place after the millennial kingdom closes, and immediately before the eternal state is ushered in. (See Rev. xx.)

Lastly, we believe that when the children of God are gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for prayer that He Himself is in the midst, according to His word in Matt. xviii. 20, and that if they wait on Him He will lead by His Spirit one and another to pray as the mouthpiece of the whole, apart from human leadership. The unseen but present Lord is the true and only President, and to set up another is practically to set Him aside. How could we sanction *that*, and remain faithful to Him?

H. E. M. B.—No rule is laid down in Scripture as to how often the Lord's Supper should be eaten, but from Acts xx. 7, we infer that it was at least every "first day of the week" that the early Christians partook of it. At the beginning it was much oftener. (See Acts ii. 46.) They broke bread in the house; for great simplicity and fervour of affection marked them, and they were happily free from the now prevailing but unscriptural notion, that the Lord's Supper could not be partaken of without an official to administer it.

## THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS.

MATT. XXV. 1-13.

THERE is no room for difference of judgment as to who is meant by the bridegroom in this parable. It is the Lord Jesus Christ, and no other. He it is whom the virgins go out to meet; He is the one referred to in the midnight cry, "Behold the bridegroom!" and it is with Him that those who are ready go in to the marriage. But what is meant by the coming of the bridegroom, and when does He come? Is it at the last hour when the pangs of dissolution seize us, and weeping friends gather at our side to take their last farewell ere we quit the land of the living? Is that the bridegroom's coming? Is that the event pictured here under the joyous figure of a bridegroom and a marriage? We trow not. The coming of the bridegroom is the coming of Him who said to His sorrowing disciples, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." It is the fulfilment of that faithful promise.

Other scriptures abundantly confirm this. The angels witnessed to it, as from the slopes of Olivet the astonished disciples looked stedfastly up into heaven, their eyes and hearts following their ascending Lord. "This same Jesus," said they,

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“which is taken from you into heaven, shall so come *in like manner as ye have seen Him go* into heaven.” (Acts i. 11.) It was a visible and personal going away ; it will be a visible and personal coming again.

The great truth of the Lord's coming in person the second time will in very deed be found to shine in the pages of inspiration like stars in the midnight sky. Alas that it should have been so forgotten ! But the Lord foresaw this and foretold it. “While the bridegroom tarried, they ALL slumbered and slept.” Not alone the foolish, but the wise ceased to watch and wait. So in process of time it came about that the coming of the Lord was no longer an object of joyous hope and expectation, and the promise of His coming was either spiritualized and explained away, or it dropped out of sight altogether. In the early days of Christianity it was far otherwise. The Lord's return, like a golden thread, was interwoven with all other truth, and the youngest convert was led to look at once for the Saviour. Is this questioned ? We would ask then, of those that question it, What other meaning can be attached to those words of Paul, in 1 Thess. i. 9, 10, “Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God ; and *to wait for His Son from heaven*, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come” ?

Some of our readers may say, We have always

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believed the Lord Jesus would come in judgment at the end of the world—that is nothing new. Stay, stay, dear friends, we are not speaking of that dread appearing. He will without doubt come to judge, for we are told that God “hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained.” (Acts xvii. 31.) And when He thus appears, it will be in flaming fire, and with the angels of His might, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thess. i. 7, 8.) All that is solemnly true, and we would that men heeded it more; but were we to explain our parable as if it related to that event, we should mar its beauty and pervert its meaning; for it treats of the coming of the *bridegroom*, not of the Judge. A world of guilty criminals may hear with alarm of the Judge’s approach, knowing in themselves that the hour of punishment is at hand; but the bridegroom’s coming is waited for with earnest desire by those who are assured of His faithful love. Accordingly, at the close of the Revelation, when the Lord Jesus calls Himself the bright and morning star, the Spirit and the bride say to Him, “Come.” And the last word spoken by Him from the glory is, “Surely I come quickly.” To this assurance, so cheering and sustaining, there is the ready response—“Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” Who could ever imagine that such

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language would be used if we looked for Him as Judge?

“At midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.” What are we to understand from this but that a clear testimony was to go forth immediately before the bridegroom came? And surely we may say that the cry has been raised; and, whether men will heed it or not, the fact that the Lord is coming again has been sounded out far and wide. At any moment He may come, and then shall be brought to pass that which is written, “The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and *the dead in Christ* shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be *caught up* together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.) Then will it be said, The Bridegroom has come, and they that were ready have gone in with Him to the marriage.

And if we believe that the midnight cry has gone forth, and that the Bridegroom is at the door, how needful it is that we should see that our lamps are well trimmed, so that they may burn with a brighter, purer, steadier flame than ever. “Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.” (Eph. v. 8.) Again, the same Spirit by the same servant says



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to us, "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. THEREFORE let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him." (1 Thess. v. 5-10.) Brethren, we shall do well to heed the Spirit's word of exhortation, calling us, as it does, to watchfulness and sobriety of mind, to the exercise of faith and love and hope in view of our Lord's return.

"A little while—He'll come again;  
 Let us the precious hours redeem;  
 Our only grief to give Him pain,  
 Our joy to serve and follow Him.  
 Watching and ready may we be,  
 As those that wait their Lord to see."

Here we pause, and before laying down our pen would enquire of you, unknown reader, whether *you* are ready for the Bridegroom's coming? Only such went in with Him to the marriage, *and the door was shut*, adds the Lord with terrible significance. The foolish virgins—the baptized but Christless multitudes—were not there. No oil had

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they in their vessels with their lamps, and they only discovered their deficiency when it was too late to supply it; for while they went to buy the Bridegroom came. How foolish to forget the one thing that would make the lamp of any use at all! Is it so with you? Perhaps at this moment no one but God knows you have NO OIL in your vessel. You have taken your place with the virgins; you carry the lamp of Christian profession, and are enrolled among the followers of Christ, but your lamp has no oil. A name to live you have, but are dead. How serious this is! And oil you can never have unless you first receive forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus, and are born of God. The Holy Spirit only indwells such. Ask yourself, as in the presence and under the eye of God, "Have I oil in my vessel with my lamp? Is Christ mine? Is the Holy Ghost mine?" If such questions cannot be answered as they should be, then be persuaded to have personal dealings, as a lost sinner, with Him who still says, "Come buy . . . without money and without price." Delay not; for "behold, the Bridegroom cometh: go ye out to meet Him."

The midnight hour will soon be here,  
 The voice will sound distinct and clear,  
 And fill both earth and sky.  
 The Bridegroom comes, let no man doubt;  
 Alas! for those whose lamps are out,  
 They'll find no oil to buy.

## “GO, AND DO THOU LIKEWISE.”

THE darker and more cloudy the day, the brighter do the acts of faith and love shine out, even as the dark background of a picture throws the brighter colours into bolder relief. The history of David abounds with such scenes. What makes many of them all the more striking and touching is the love and devotedness seen on the part of *strangers*. They shine like so many gems, sparkling and brilliant in their moral beauty.

Take, for instance, that lovely picture in 2 Sam. xv. 13–23, and gaze upon the love of that Gathite stranger and exile, Ittai—a love which carried him in the path of a rejected David, to share his sorrows and his trials. It is a beautiful and touching picture. Would that we had more living examples of it. The chance was given him to return, with the king’s good will and favour, if he would have taken it. But no; it was not the king’s good will or mere favour he desired; it was *himself*, and his heart could alone be satisfied in the company of David, whether in *life* or *in death*.

Jesus said, “If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be.” (John xii. 26.) And in Paul we see another Ittai—a devoted follower, whose whole desire was to be in the path of One who was not

merely his Master, but also the engrossing object of his affections, and thus glorify Him in his body, whether *by life or by death*. (Phil. i. 20.) These men, in their devoted lives to David and David's Lord, do indeed provoke us "to love and good works." (Heb. x. 24.)

Look again at another picture, in 2 Sam. xvii. 27-29. See those strangers thinking of the needs of David and his men in the wilderness, and putting their thoughts into deeds. Oh, how much is lost to the dear saints of God through allowing their thoughts of love and kindness to rush from their minds almost as quickly as they entered, instead of seizing on the thought, and giving shape to it by action!

What a contrast this Shobi, the Ammonite, presents to his brother Hanun, in chap. x. 1-19. Machir too, of Lo-debar, who had sheltered Mephibosheth and his nurse, now comes forward to nourish David and his men. Barzillai, the Gileadite, likewise comes at this opportune moment; all of them bringing of their substance for the hungry, weary, and thirsty people in the wilderness. What a cheer to David. How affecting to find such true affection, and at such a time!

Are not these dark days, and the true David rejected? And what innumerable opportunities there are to show forth our love and devotion to Him "who has loved us and given Himself for us."

"And those that are His own."

“GO, AND DO THOU LIKEWISE.” 93

Shall we not minister joy to His heart “till He come”?

Think how such actions affect the heart of the blessed Lord. What is it to Him to see a soul in sympathy with His thoughts and heart, like these strangers with David? Surely it is as precious ointment, the odour of which fills the house, and the record of which shall never be hushed. It is the Marys who minister to His heart that shall never be forgotten; or the devoted women, “who ministered to Him of their substance.” (Luke viii. 3.) Is this nothing to Him? Or a Gaius, well-beloved, whose house was a refuge for those who went forth to serve Him, taking nothing of the Gentiles. (3 John viii.) Is this nothing? Rest assured all this is remembered by the true David, and shall have its place and reward when He recounts *His* worthies and their deeds. (2 Sam. xxiii. 8–39; Rom. xvi. 1–16.)

What a picture gallery is God’s word! It amply repays the student who will walk through with his Master, and examine, by the Holy Spirit’s light and teaching, those beautiful characters whose portraits He has been pleased to give for our instruction, and present for our contemplation, that we might be imbued with their spirit, and imitate their faith, love, and devotedness. Surely they each say to us, as likewise His own blessed example and words in Luke x., “Go, and do thou likewise.”

W. E.

## THE FINISHED WORK.

It was at the near approach of death, "even the death of the cross," that our Lord said, "Now is the Son of man glorified." It was on that cross, with all its shame and unutterable suffering, its scorn and rejection, that He reached the highest point of moral excellence and worthiness that could be reached in this world. It is true when the people came to make Him a king that "He departed again into a mountain Himself alone" (John vi. 15); for how could He accept the place of honour and authority among those whom divinely-sent messengers had called on to "repent"? How could he reign over a people whose hearts were alienated from God? He might die to save them in richest, purest grace. He might love His enemies, and pray for those who despitefully used Him; but He surely could not receive honour from those who so dishonoured God! A sufferer all through His path, despised and rejected of men, emphatically a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, He now reached a moment in His history when He could say, "Now is the Son of man glorified." He was now in the place where He fulfilled all that scripture had said of Him, where He was completely doing the will of Him who sent Him,

and that under the most adverse circumstances. Resisting temptation and sin unto blood, He vindicated God as to His hatefulness of sin, endured the righteous judgment sin merited, as well as the guilt and apostacy of the Jewish nation, and the enmity of man's heart to God; and magnified the holiness, righteousness, truth, and ways of God, as well as fully told out the love of God to sinners. All too He did perfectly. His faith, love, patience, obedience, surrender of Himself, were all perfect.

Marvellous as it was, He could now say, "Now is the Son of man glorified." He endured the contradiction of sinners, and now reached the perfection of obedience in a scene of hatred and opposition. His faith faltered not from first to last. His loving heart, both in its activities toward the Father and toward us, knew no abatement of fervour; for in full view of Calvary He could say "that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do."

On the cross then was the place where He glorified God, and could truly say, "Now is the Son of man glorified." What grace! Where others only saw degradation and shame, He saw what was most pleasing to God, and for the glory of God, perfect too in its suitability to One whose meat was to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish His work. Like the setting of the sun in majestic

splendour, to the admiring gaze of those who had eyes to see it, after illuminating and comforting many by his vivifying and cheering influence through its course ; so the Son of man, now leaving the world to go unto the Father, could most truly say, " Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." He was here the only Man in Israel who was the faithful One before God.

He was verily " the faithful and true witness," and God was glorified in Him. His love, holiness, righteousness, truth, hatred of sin, and grace to sinners, all came out in the death of the cross. All was perfect, and was done once for all. The attributes of God were manifested, and the desperate wickedness of man was there seen. The One who gave Himself for our sins, being divinely perfect and perfect Man, His work was perfect, so that by one offering the believer is perfected for ever ; his sins purged, and conscience purged, so that he is before God a purged worshipper. *Love* in its perfectness was then manifested, love to us when sinners, love that neither the malice of men nor power of Satan could quench, nor even death itself could stop. God's *holiness* was seen in that He forsook His own Son because our sins were upon Him. *Righteousness* was established in delivering Him up for our offences, to suffer unsparingly all the just judgment which our sins deserved. *The truth* of God was so fully carried out, that all Scripture concerning the judgment of



sin and the Saviour's path was unfailingly fulfilled. Not one word was written but had its accomplishment; so that He could truly say, "It is finished." He was the antitype of all that types and shadows had *given* concerning His one sacrifice for sin. There God's perfect *hatred to sin* was manifested in so forsaking His own Son that He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" while the abundance of *grace to us* when we were yet sinners shone forth with eternal lustre in the death of the Son. Thus God has been glorified even as to our sins. Justice has been satisfied. Righteousness has been truly established. All the demands of divine holiness have been met. The truth of God has been fulfilled, and all the claims of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens have been fully answered. The love of God too has been there manifested, love to us when sinners, bringing peace and the gift of righteousness *to us*, in widest contrast with the law which demanded righteousness *from us*. Thus a full atonement for all our sins has been made; all the ways of God have been vindicated by Jesus His Son, who is the propitiation for our sins, who as our Substitute bare our sins in His own body on the tree, and was so perfect in the entire surrender of Himself unto the death of the cross that now, to the praise of the glory of God's grace in Him risen and ascended, we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins, and are accepted in the Beloved. As all He

did was for us, we are righteously entitled to be in glory with Him, without which He would not see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied.

The divine testimony to the finished work of the Saviour on the cross was at once shown in the rending of the veil. While He was dead on the cross this testimony to the reality of His perfect work was thus given. We read, "Jesus, when He had cried with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom." (Matt. xxvii. 50, 51.) Then on the third day we know that He was raised from among the dead, and afterward in ascension was in righteousness placed as man in the glory of God, and at Pentecost sealed with the gift of the Holy Ghost those who had through grace believed on Him, and had been cleansed from all sin. By this all such were entitled to *know* God's estimate of the perfect value and eternal efficacy of Christ's finished work, and that they were now children of God by faith in Him. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God." (Rom. viii. 16; Heb. x. 15, 16.)

Because the work is finished, done once for all, nothing more will be done, because nothing more is needed to take away our sins. "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." Moreover, the One whose blood was shed for many for the remission of sins, is in the glory of God. The Son

of man is glorified—gone into heaven itself by His own blood—and because “it is finished,” He sat down on the right hand of God. There in God’s presence we have access with confidence; can enter into the holiest with boldness, because of the eternal value and all-cleansing efficacy of the blood of Jesus. His being there now assures us of our having eternal redemption through His blood; and the blood on our conscience having removed all guilt, even in God’s most holy presence, our hearts have leisure and comfort in His service, and find praise and thanksgiving, our becoming and suitable employment.

Thus the believer is before God cleansed from all sin, and in His presence is ever reminded of the cost of our blessings to Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us. There is no veil now between us and God, and we have a righteous ground of standing and acceptance for ever before Him. Matchless grace! How the contemplation of it melts our hearts, constrains us to live unto Him, and fills us with gratitude and praise!

The magnitude of the Saviour’s finished work is necessarily seen when the glory of the Person who did it is before our souls. How could the offering of One who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, and yet was found in fashion as a man, be connected with anything less than *eternal* blessedness and results? How could it fail to have eternal value before Him? With

men it is the worth of their service which gives glory to the doer; but with Jesus, the Son of God, it is the eternal glory of His Person which gave such infinite worth to all He did.

Then, if we consider that the *prospect* of the work which He wrought in the death of the cross was connected with such inward agony and distress, that "His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground," what must have been the magnitude of the work itself? If the cup being before Him caused Him to be "sore amazed, and very heavy," what must have been the unutterable suffering which was involved in the drinking of the cup? Who can tell what He then passed through to accomplish our eternal redemption, and bring unceasing praise and glory to God?

Moreover, when we glance at the results of this finished work, we again see evidence of the amazing magnitude of the work of the cross. We read of the One who was thus obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, "wherefore God hath highly exalted Him." Yes, as Man He was thus righteously exalted, and had a name given Him which is above every name; because He had been so perfectly obedient, God did indeed straightway glorify Him. In righteousness He now sits as Man on the right hand of God. Besides this, present peace, liberty, standing, union with Him by the Holy Ghost, newly-formed relation-

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ships and blessings, are all ours in consequence of the death of the cross. The Church, His body and His bride, will share His glory as His co-heirs; Israel, the favoured nation, will be in peculiar blessing on earth as "His own" for which He died. And more than this, at the name of Jesus every knee is yet to bow in heaven, on earth, and under the earth (the infernal regions), and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. How vast then must have been this finished work, which has been and will be connected with such marvellous results! How soon He may come again to take us to our prepared abode in the heavens!

"'Tis not far off—the hour  
When Christ will claim His own!  
We soon shall hear the voice of power:  
The Lord Himself shall come!"

H. H. S.

## SELF-JUDGMENT.

## AN EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

I DO not believe true self-judgment ever stops at the act which necessitates it. About the act, it may be, there can be but one judgment; namely, that it was utterly wrong, unjustifiable, and inexcusable. But how came the act to be committed? It was not committed while the soul

was walking in the presence of God, but when not so walking. The act itself, therefore, is but the index of a previous departure. The moment the soul is out of God's presence the door is open for the action of that flesh which is within—Satan works, the flesh acts, and practice dishonouring to God is the result.

Self-judgment therefore, when true, pauses not at the act, though taking full cognizance of it; nor at the opening of the door which led to the act, though marking that likewise most fully. It goes back to the point of departure from the presence of God which led to the opening of the door for flesh's action, however far back that may be, and it is not thorough until that point has been reached and confessed before God.

As the word itself implies, it is *self* (not "act") judgment. Then the question arises, Who is the "self" upon whom this judgment is exercised? It is sometimes, I fancy, thought it is on the old man, the old nature, that is in the believer; but I hardly think so. I doubt its being correct to speak of self-judgment (in the sense in which we now speak of it) as being the judgment of the old Adam nature that is in me; *that*, if I am a believer, and have known redemption, I have already accepted God's judgment about, both as to its character and deserts, recognizing by faith its judicial end in God's judgment of it on the cross, where sin in the flesh was condemned.

This judgment is, or ought to be, a for-ever settled matter.

Before that full redemption was known by the soul, the old Adam nature did for that soul constitute "myself" according to the judgment of conscience; but for the believer who knows and enjoys redemption it no longer does so. I doubt, therefore, the correctness of the statement, that *self*-judgment by the believer is his judgment of the old Adam nature that is in him. A believer, in the sense in which I now use the term, is one who has a new nature as being born of God, has Christ as his life, is a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and has the Spirit of God dwelling in him. He has, no doubt, still the old nature within; but, as I have written, his settled judgment of that is that it is utterly bad, so much so that God has already dealt judicially with it on the cross.

In this new relationship in which he has been set, in this new nature and life he has been given, *the believer* is responsible to manifest the characteristics of the nature he has from God, and the relationship in which he is set with God. If I, as a believer, have failed to do this, and have manifested the old nature, the flesh, Who has failed? Not the old nature, for it never was responsible for this (I mean this manifestation of new nature, divine life); and upon whom is self-judgment to be exercised? Not on the old Adam; for its action has been quite consistent with its own character.

Who then has failed? Who is to exercise self-judgment? and upon whom is he to exercise it?

"I," the responsible believer, have failed; "I," the responsible believer, have to exercise self-judgment; and upon "myself," the responsible believer, have I to exercise it.

In a word, I do not judge the bad nature and character which I have manifested, putting the blame on it (that nature and character I have through grace a fixed judgment about); but I judge "myself," a believer who has not only failed to manifest the character I ought, but have manifested a very different one.

Such I believe to be self-judgment, such the person who exercises it, and such the person or individual on whom it is exercised. It is not an old Adam nature we have to judge when it has acted, it is *ourselves*, believers, we have to judge for having opened the door to that old nature so that it could act.

There is, I believe, great comfort, and not only comfort, but positive power for exercising self-judgment thoroughly when this is seen; for in thus judging oneself one does it with the consciousness that one is passing judgment on an individual (a believer) on whom God has no judgment to pass, save in a governmental sense, and then only with a view to produce that judgment of self which may have been neglected.

J. L.



## FIVE THINGS THAT SHOULD GO TOGETHER.

WE find in Scripture and in the practice of the early Christians the following *five* things linked together :

(1) The Lord's day ; (2) the Lord's table ; (3) the Lord's Supper ; (4) the Lord's death ; (5) the Lord's coming.

If therefore our practice, in respect to the Lord's Supper, be in accordance with Scripture and the example of the early disciples, we shall be found, if possible, every *Lord's-day* at the *Lord's table*, eating the *Lord's Supper*, in remembrance of the *Lord's death*, and in view of the *Lord's coming*.

Let us briefly consider these five things, and we shall see how intimately they are linked together, the precious link that unites them being the name of the *Lord Jesus Christ*, who said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, *there am I* in the midst of them." (Matt. xviii. 20.)

1. The first *Lord's-day* was that "morrow after the sabbath"\* when the Lord rose from among the dead—the first day of a new week and of a

\* See Lev. xxiii. 11, and an article on the "Feast of First-fruits" in *Simple Testimony* for 1884, p. 225.

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new era—on which He sanctioned by His presence the assembling of His disciples together, speaking “peace” to them as the result of His death and resurrection. This was repeated the following first day of the week, when Thomas also was present; and it would appear, from Rev. i. 10, that that day soon became known as the “Lord’s-day.”

Now in Acts xx. 7 we read, “Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them;” and from this we gather that Christians were wont to connect the breaking of bread, or *Lord’s supper*, with the first day of the week, or *Lord’s-day*, and that they had apostolic sanction for so doing; though doubtless they did not confine it to that day, but at the first observed it even more frequently.

2. The *Lord’s table* is the name given, in 1 Cor. x. 21, to the table on which were spread the memorials of the Lord’s death—the bread (or “one loaf”) “the communion of the body of Christ;” and the cup, “the communion of the blood of Christ.” (v. 16.) Thus was the *Lord’s supper* connected with the *Lord’s table*, and we should be careful to ascertain whether the table at which we partake of the communion, or “break bread,” is indeed the Lord’s table; for there are many tables which men have set up, all claiming to be the Lord’s table, but which, if tested by the

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Word, would be found contrary to divine order. That only can rightly be called the *Lord's table* which the Lord Himself owns, which is open to all the members of the body of Christ (without any special membership), to which none but true believers are admitted, from which even these are excluded, if leavened by evil doctrine or practice; and where everything in the way of worship, ministry, and discipline is left to the Lord to direct, by His Spirit, "as He will," apart from all human order or arrangement. In short, the Lord Jesus Christ being recognized as present in the midst, everything must give way to Him, and befit His presence. All must be according to His *name*, and therefore consistent with all that He is as "made Lord and Christ," and "Head over all things to the Church, which is His body."

Do not then rest satisfied, dear reader, with breaking bread every Lord's-day, but apply the test of scripture to your position, and see whether you are indeed in fellowship with those who are at the *Lord's table*. Even at Corinth, where so much internal division and confusion prevailed, they still came together "into one place" (1 Cor. xi. 21, &c.) to eat of the "one loaf" (chap. x. 17, Greek), and thus was the *outward* expression of the oneness of the body maintained; though surely the outward expression is of slight account unless there be also the endeavour to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the (uniting) bond of peace."

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3. The *Lord's supper* is the name given to that blessed feast which the Lord Himself instituted after the Passover supper (see Luke xxii.) on the night of His betrayal, as that in which His people should be able, after His departure, to call Him to mind. We get the expression in 1 Cor. xi. 20, and in the verses which follow the apostle communicates to us what he had "received from the Lord" respecting it, and he expressly connects it with—

4. The *Lord's death*, which, he says, ye show (or announce) "as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup." The very fact that the cup is apart from the bread brings before us that His precious blood was shed; and we remember His death, as that through which we have for ever been delivered from the guilt and power of sin. It is most important to remember, that it was from the side of a *dead* Christ the blood and water flowed (see John xix. 30–35); for "in Him was life;" and although it is blessedly true that "God hath given to us eternal life" (1 John v. 11), yet "this life is in His Son," and could not be imparted to us without His laying down His life, and taking it again, as He did, in resurrection; after which He could, and did, impart His own risen life in the power of the Holy Ghost, as we see in John xx. 22. Again, in John xii. 24, we read, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and *die*, it abideth alone:

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but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." The Lord Jesus might at any time have gone back to the glory from which He came; but there He must have abode alone, and left us in our sins to go on to death and judgment, had not His love and the Father's purpose led Him to come down to the place where we were, in death to be made sin for us, and bear our sins "in His own body on the tree;" then, leaving sin, death, and judgment behind, to rise out from among the dead, and breathe on us who believe a life victorious, sinless, and eternal. Well may we remember *His* death!

It may be well to remark that there is no reference to the Lord's supper in John vi. 53, &c.; for if the Lord's supper were intended, we should be forced to conclude, from verse 54, that whoso eateth the Lord's supper hath eternal life, and will be raised up for glory, which even a Romanist would not assert. If we have never fed spiritually and by faith on the death of Christ as the ground of our forgiveness and all our blessings, we certainly are not fit persons to sit down to the Lord's supper, in which believers are called in a special way to remember and feed upon the *Lord's death*.

"The Lord of glory crucified;  
The Lord of life has bled and died."

But there is another thing connected with the Lord's supper; namely,

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5. The *Lord's coming*. In the verse already partially quoted (1 Cor. xi. 26) we are told, "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death *till He come*." The Lord, when He instituted the supper, was just about to leave His disciples, but promises (John xiv. 3) to come again, and receive them to Himself; and He simply invites those who have a heart for Him to call Him to mind together in this blessed way until He comes. We count on His presence in our midst, recall His *first* coming, and His death under the judgment of our sins; and we do it in longing expectation of His *second* coming. And can we not hope that each time may be the last, or we may be "caught up" from that very feast to meet Him in the air, to see Him face to face, and so be "ever with the Lord"? (See 1 Thess. iv. 13-18.)

It is clear then that Scripture connects these five things together, and that it was the custom of the early disciples to assemble together, in the name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, every *Lord's-day* (if not oftener) around the *Lord's table*, to eat the *Lord's supper*, in remembrance of the *Lord's death*, and in view of the *Lord's coming*.

Thank God, there are at least "two or three" thus gathered in very many places week by week, in fellowship with all who desire to keep His word, and not deny His name; and in spite of all the efforts of the enemy to throw contempt on

## "TO KNOW THEE."

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the simple feast, to sow dissension, and to scatter, we believe there will be to the end a little company so doing; for is it not written, "Till He come"? Dear fellow-Christian, would not *you* like to be found amongst that number when He comes?

E. B. G.

## "TO KNOW THEE."

THOU, Saviour, on the cross didst bear the wrath our sins  
deserving;  
Thy Father's will Thou didst fulfil—obedience unswerving;  
Now, through Thy grace, we love to trace Thy path of patient  
serving.

To know Thee as the One who came, our human nature wearing,  
Down from the heights of glory, still Thy Father's image bearing,  
Along Thy lonely pathway here our griefs and sorrows sharing.

To know Thee as th' Eternal Word, the Son of God most holy;  
Yet here on earth the perfect Man, Jesus, the meek and lowly,  
Jehovah's fellow, yet the One alone who served Him wholly!

To know Thee as the One who hung upon the cross, forsaken  
Because the judgment of our sins upon Thyself hadst taken,  
That Thou mightst us from death of sin to light of life awaken.

To know Thee as the One who came, the Father's heart revealing,  
By virtue of Thy finished work that fount of love unsealing,  
That "whosoever will" may come, and drink from streams of  
healing.

To know Thee as the Mighty One who burst from death's dark  
prison,

To know Thee as the Living One, because the dead and risen  
Thee see; unseen by mortal eye, but bright to faith's clear vision.

Thee see exalted on the throne, and know Thou hast in keeping  
The hidden life of every saint—the waking and the sleeping—  
Whom Thou wilt gather home at last beyond this vale of weeping.

To know Thee thus is life indeed, a spring that faileth never;  
Thee knowing, know no creature-thing us from Thy love can  
sever,

For Thou art yesterday the same; the same to-day—for ever!

A. E. A. S.

## THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST.

How many precious things are mine in thee, Lord Jesus Christ!

1. When thou, on Calvary, didst say, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" the wrath of the eternal God, due to me a rebel creature, was borne by thyself.

When thou saidst, "It is finished," no drop of wrath remained as against me.

*Thy drinking the cup of wrath was my wrath-bearing.*

2. Thy life having been given a ransom for me, and thy body laid in the grave, thy rising from the grave was proof before all of the efficiency of what thou hadst done; and that he that believes in thee is not still in his sins, but has been fully justified. Who shall lay anything to my charge? It is God that justifies. Who shall condemn me? It is Christ that died; yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God.

*Thy rising from among the dead is my justification.*

3. And not only so—beauty and loveableness, as before God and thy Father, are mine in thee. Graced in thee the Beloved—Thou, the glorified Head, sitting in the eternal glory on high; I, a member in particular of that body of which thou art the ascended Head.

*Thy glory ascended is my acceptance.*

4. Anchor and forerunner fixed within the veil; who makes intercession for me, the eternal lover of my soul, my spirit, and my body; thou hast made me a son of God, not being ashamed in heaven to avow myself as thy brother. Thou first-born among many brethren! Thou guardest me through the wilderness—even from the time thou didst bring me out from the world, until the time when thou shalt have come again and received me, even me, to thyself, my Saviour, out of the world, through this life unto and into glory and thy Father's house.

*Thou in thy life above art my guard and guide.*



## THE SYMPATHY AND POWER OF JESUS.

JOHN xi.

THE narratives of the gospel by John are fewer in number than those of the other gospels, and for the most part are given in much more fulness of detail. In the other evangelists the incidents recorded are like pictures in miniature; but in John there is a greater stretch of canvas, and larger pictures are presented to the eye—pictures of profound interest—in which the varied glories of the Lord Jesus are strikingly displayed. Our chapter is an illustration of this.

The scene is laid in Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha, who with Lazarus, their brother, were the objects of the Lord's tender love. Simple and touching are the words in which this is expressed: "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." It is worth the while to linger for a moment over this sentence, and to note that each one is separately mentioned as being loved by Him. The love of Jesus individualizes its objects. "Who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*," said Paul. And who does not know that there are times and seasons when the soul of the saint of God specially needs to remember the Lord's love to him individually, and finds comfort and strength in remembering it? You, Christian

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reader, though you are but one among the many thousands of God's redeemed, you have your own special place in the affections of Christ. He loves *you* as if there were not another in the wide world on whom His love rested. It is written that He calleth the stars by name—how much more His sheep! He knows each one—the circumstances of each, the smiles and tears, the joys and sorrows, the sunshine and clouds, the greetings and the partings; and He who knows all about all, loves each one with a mightier love than has ever been associated with the tenderest of earthly ties.

But though thus loved, they were not sheltered from circumstances which awakened many a fear and burdened their spirit with a weight of sorrow. Lazarus fell sick. Beautiful indeed, and so worthy of our imitation, was the action of the sisters at this juncture. Sweet too their confidence in the Lord's love, and strong their assurance of His interest in them. They sent to say, "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." No urgent request that the Lord would hasten to their relief accompanied this statement of their case; enough for them to tell Him all, to lay their burden on the bosom of infinite love. It was not in vain that the Lord had tarried under their roof, and that Mary had sat at His feet and heard His word. (Luke x. 39.) Knowing His love, they turned to Him in the first blush of their sorrow; and if their expectations were not answered in the way

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they had thought, it was only because the love of Jesus was too great not to suffer the trial to go to its utmost length, that they might know Him better, and reap a richer harvest of blessing, than could otherwise have been theirs. Let us ponder this, that we may profit by their example. Child of sorrow, hast thou told thy griefs to Jesus? Thy anxieties, thy fears, hast thou spread them out before Him, whose love for thee individually is so deep and true? Go, speak to Him about them; and if for awhile there be no answering voice, let not thy faith in His love on that account give way.

And when the message of the sisters reached the Lord, He abode two days still in the same place. Was He then indifferent to the dark shadow that had fallen across the beloved family at Bethany? Did He not know that Lazarus was at the door of death? Such questions need no answer. But the Lord tarried till the fitting moment came; for Son of God though He was, yet was He ever subject and obedient, never taking a step without the full knowledge that it was His Father's will. Easily we may imagine the feelings of the sisters watching by the side of their brother, their hearts alternating between hope and fear as they earnestly looked for the Lord, and yet He came not. Thus the weary hours passed, and Lazarus grew worse, till at length the flickering flame of life died out.

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Lazarus was dead. Had then Love been doing its very best for them? Yes, indeed! Better for Martha, better for Mary, that Lazarus should die than that the Lord should have interposed before. Had He done so, they might have been spared the heart-ache, the blinding tears, the bitter pang caused by the dying of their brother; but God would not have been so greatly glorified. They would not have witnessed the resurrection-power of the Lord, and still more they would have never seen His *tears*; for Jesus wept.

And those tears and groans were but the index of what was passing in the heart of the Lord at that moment. The knowledge of all that He was about to do did not make Him less sensible to the desolation of the scene around, nor lessen His sympathy one degree. "In all their afflictions He was afflicted." The tears of Jesus appeal to us more powerfully than the manifestations of His might. These astonish, but those touch the tenderest chords, and show us that every pang in our hearts has its counterpart in His.

Wonderful it was when He who is the Resurrection stood at the grave's mouth, and cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." Obedient to that voice of power, he that was dead came forth, wearing the garments of the tomb. What a display of the glory of Him whose Spirit by the ancient prophet said, "O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction!"

## THE SYMPATHY AND POWER OF JESUS. 117

(Hosea xiii. 14.) It was a sample of that which shall be more fully and perfectly seen at the coming of the Lord, when "they that are Christ's" shall be raised from among the dead in incorruption and in glory.

Thus Lazarus was restored to them again, and the broken ties were formed anew, but not for ever. So in resurrection our loved dead who have died in the Lord shall be given back to us once more, not to be known after the flesh—for the former things shall have passed away—but to be known in those divine relationships which shall endure to everlasting. Yes, mourner, you shall see them again, not in a body of sickness and suffering, but in a body of glory like the Lord's, and be together and with Him in that home where there is fulness of joy and where there are pleasures for evermore.

Many are the lessons that will suggest themselves as we read and meditate on this narrative, so rich in moral beauty, and fraught with heavenly comfort. Here we may learn that if the answers to our prayers are slow in coming, it is better that it should be so, if such be His will; or if the power of the Lord is not exercised on our behalf as we would have wished, it is because He has a more excellent way. Let us trust Him then, let us rest in His love. Could we but stand where He stands, and view our life, from the beginning to the ending, as He views it, we should see that

the dark threads and the bright have been skilfully and lovingly woven together. We should bless Him for unanswered prayers, and adore the love that has ordered everything for us so wisely and so well.

Are we in spirit near enough to the Lord to know and understand His interest in us? Can we each say, There is one heart I know better than any other; it is the heart of Jesus, who loves me perfectly, and who in the glory of God, and at the right hand of power, is leading me by a *right* path on to the rest beyond?

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### JESUS IS OUR SHEPHERD.

JESUS is our Shepherd, wiping every tear;  
Folded in His bosom, what have we to fear?  
Only let us follow whither He doth lead,  
To the thirsty desert or the dewy mead.

Jesus is our Shepherd; well we know His voice;  
How its gentle whisper makes our heart rejoice!  
Even when He chideth, tender is His tone;  
None but He shall guide us, we are His alone.

Jesus is our Shepherd, for the sheep He bled;  
Every lamb is sprinkled with the blood He shed;  
Then on each He setteth His own secret sign,  
“They that have my Spirit—these,” saith He, “are mine.”

Jesus is our Shepherd; guarded by His arm,  
Though the wolves may raven, none can do us harm;  
If we tread death’s valley, dark with fearful gloom,  
We will fear no evil, victors o’er the tomb!

## THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST.

PERFECTION marks the priesthood of the Son of God. His mercy, faithfulness, sympathy, succour, and intercession are all perfect. The Aaronic priesthood, like everything else connected with law and man in the flesh, "made nothing perfect." It was interrupted by death, was successional, connected with a worldly sanctuary, and with the offering oftentimes the same sacrifices which could never take away sins, never make those who were objects of the high priest's care perfect as pertaining to the conscience; whereas the priesthood of Jesus, the Son of God, is for ever; is founded on the unchanging value and eternal efficacy of His one sacrifice for sins; is connected with the sanctuary above which the Lord pitched, and not man, and is for those who are sanctified and perfected for ever by that one offering.

There is then a change in priesthood, as Scripture plainly tells us. (Heb. vii. 12.) It is changed as to its *appointment*; for the Aaronic order was made "without an oath," but the present High Priest "with an oath." "The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever," &c. The *order* too is changed; for Jesus is Priest after the order of Melchisedec. Aaron was a priest for a little time, and *did not continue* by reason of

death ; whereas Jesus is “consecrated *for evermore.*” Aaron was a *standing* priest, could never sit down, because his many and oft-repeated sacrifices could never “take away sins ;” whereas Jesus, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, *for ever sat down*—sat down in perpetuity on the right hand of God. He is, therefore, a sitting Priest—set on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.

No doubt some of the Aaronic functions were typical of Christ's present office—His having gone into heaven itself by His own blood, which His own merits and personal excellencies fill, as the cloud of incense set forth ; His now appearing before the face of God for us ; His being an interceding Priest inside the veil, thus giving *us* now by faith access unto God with confidence. When He comes out He will make known to His people Israel the value of His work for them, and then His favoured nation will have to do with Him as the true Melchisedec, both King and Priest upon His throne. (Zech. vi. 13.) As Melchisedec was a blessing priest, and brought forth bread and wine to cheer and comfort the man of faith after his conflicts, so Jesus is now in the heavens our blessing Priest, and ever will bless us, and minister to us the infinite depths of divine love and grace set forth in His one sacrifice for sins. How bright is the prospect ! Now we walk by faith, and have joy and peace in believing. All is by faith ; but



soon we shall see His face, be with Him and like Him for ever, and enjoy His unceasing blessing.

The common notion, that Christ is our High Priest to give additional title to glory and increased efficacy to His one sacrifice, is not found in Scripture. The idea not only undermines the infinite value of the work of the cross, but it would make the office of priesthood to have to do with taking away our sins, which it has not. In point of fact, when the purging of the conscience is the question, we are plainly told it is wholly by the blood of Christ; and as to our title to glory, we are clearly taught that we have liberty to enter into the holiest with boldness by the blood of Jesus, because, as we have seen, we are perfected for ever by His one offering, and are assured by the Holy Spirit through the Word that our sins and our iniquities God will remember no more. (Heb. x. 14-17.)

Priesthood is not then about our sins; for they are cleared away for ever by the sacrifice of Christ; neither, strictly speaking, has priesthood to do with the Father, but with God. The Son, as our High Priest, appears before the face of God for us, among other reasons, to maintain us as His creatures, born again, in His infinitely holy presence, so that we may hold fast the confidence of our hope. If Aaron bore the names of all the tribes of Israel engraved on precious stones on his breastplate and shoulder-pieces, how much more are we who are purchased by His own blood

borne up continually before God in all the perfectness of His love and the almightiness of His power?

Again, having Himself passed through temptation—"in all points tempted like as we are sin apart"—He is able to succour those that are tempted. Knowing as He does our need most perfectly, and all the difficulties of our path, as having passed through all Himself, He is able to save us through all right on to the end, and make intercession for us according to our need. Having Himself trodden perfectly the path of faith, and had to do with men and Satan in every way, He is able to sustain us in all our ways and to sympathize with us in all our infirmities; "for we have not a high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Besides, we can always count upon His mercy and His faithfulness; for He was "made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people." (Heb. ii. 17; iv. 15.) His priestly functions, therefore, are carried on on our behalf according to His own unceasing care and faithful love, whether we apprehend it or not.

Nor is He as Priest engaged, as some have said, in appeasing God on our behalf, but, on the contrary, He is appointed of God to the office of Priest for our sustainment and blessing. The same loving heart that met our deepest need in the

blood of the cross is now engaged about our need as our Priest in heaven.

We are again and again reminded in the epistle to the Hebrews that Jesus, the Son of God, is a sitting Priest—set as man in the glory of God on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. And while looking at Him there, we are exhorted to consider Him and the infinite glory of His person, His perfections in life and in death, His finished work, His triumph over death, and annulling of him that had the power of death, thus setting us free from the fear of death ; His session as the glorified One on the right hand of God, His moral perfections, official perfections, and personal perfections, then necessarily fill the vision of our souls. And when the present activity of His perfect love to us as our Great High Priest occupies our hearts, it strengthens our confidence and the rejoicing of our hope, as well as attracts us to Himself as an unceasing Object of comfort and of joy, while passing through this scene of grief and need. And certain it is, if we have come to God by Him, that He will bring us right through every difficulty and opposition to the end, save us for evermore, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for us. I have then an assurance founded on the divine certainty of God's unerring word, that Christ, now in heaven, known to faith and unseen by mortal eyes, is actively engaged in bringing me through every difficulty and temptation, and is

ever living there to make intercession for me according to my need. "This man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost [for evermore] that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. vii. 24, 25.) Let us ponder every word of this precious scripture. What a source of joy and gladness to our poor hearts to have this divinely-given assurance that the Son of God is thus so graciously engaged in heaven on our behalf! Well may we hold fast the confession of our hope! Well may we rejoice in Him always! Not only is He bearing on His heart continually, and upholding by almighty power, "them that come unto God by Him," and thus appearing before the face of God for us, but, according to our necessities and infirmities, cares for us in deepest love and sympathy, and ever lives to make intercession for us. Surely we have in Him a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother!

In the contemplation of Jesus, the Son of God, as our Great High Priest, it is evident we are not occupied with types and shadows, or even with rudimentary truth, but with the glorious Person and infinite perfections of Him who has gone into heaven by His own blood, and now sits on the Father's throne, unto whom angels, authorities, and powers are all made subject, and who says to us, "Behold, I come quickly." H. H. S.

## A FREE MAN, YET A BOND-SERVANT.

IN the days of the apostles the gospel of God addressed itself to "every creature under heaven," and won its trophies from different classes of society. Bond-servants (or slaves) heard the good news, and believed on the Lord Jesus. Some who held the position of masters (or lords) also believed.

The place of the Christian slave must have been a trying and difficult one, if under the dominion of a heathen master; and we can easily imagine that it would give rise to much and deep exercise in the soul of the convert.

To such the apostle Paul wrote in his first epistle to the Corinthians. These are his words: "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a [bond-]servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a [bond-]servant, is the Lord's free man: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's [bond-]servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the [bond-]servants of men. Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God." (vii. 20-24.)

Thus were the poor slaves comforted with the precious fact that they were the freemen of the Lord, whatever might be their condition with men. And though their position was low in the social scale, and drudgery might be their portion, they

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might abide in their position *with God*. Elsewhere the Spirit of God gives beautiful exhortations to such, as to their work and general behaviour. (See Eph. vi. 5-8; Col. iii. 22-25; Titus ii. 9-14.) These portions were distinctly addressed to bond-servants.

Others, however, might boast of their freedom, and assert that they were not like the slave, who must always do his master's bidding, but were at liberty to please themselves. Such were reminded by the apostle's words that they were Christ's bond-servants.

We invite you, dear reader, to dwell with us upon these two pregnant expressions, "THE LORD'S FREEMAN;" "CHRIST'S BOND-SERVANT." The Scriptures show that both of these are true of every believer in our Lord Jesus Christ.

## THE LORD'S FREE MAN.

From what bondage has the believer been delivered? Turning to Rom. vi. 17, 20, we find a description of our past state contained in these words, "Ye were the [bond-]servants of sin." Sin is that principle of self-will which is found inherent in every child of Adam's race, which begins to assert itself very early in the child's history; and which, if grace check it not, rapidly develops with the man, ultimately plunging him into the eternal doom of the lake of fire. Our Lord Jesus said, "Whosoever committeth sin is the [bond-]servant of sin." (John viii. 34.) The Jews boasted in being Abraham's seed, and of never being in bondage to any. Since their day thousands of men have boasted similarly, and in our own time many sing that they "never shall

## A FREE MAN, YET A BOND-SERVANT. 127

be slaves." But, in spite of all these loud boasts, the solemn fact remains—the sinner is the slave of sin.

Some may retort, We do just as we please in every matter; can you call this slavery? We reply, Man was never formed to act according to his own will, but to live solely for God; and whilst practising the things which are dictated by his own will and thoughts, he is under the dominion of Satan, the prince of this world. He leads men captive by the lusts of their own heart, bidding them do whatever they please, hiding from them the awful fact that on account of these things the wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience.

And when is the real character of this slavery made manifest? When the slave wishes to escape from his master. In other words, when the conscience has been aroused, and the soul learns how contrary to God his life has been; as he recognizes God's claims over him, sees how he has failed in his responsibility in days that are gone, and now yearns to live for God alone, keeping His holy law. Ah, then he finds that sin has dominion, or lordship, over him, and he is its poor slave. "I am carnal, sold under sin," is his sad cry. (Rom. vii.) He makes good resolutions of a better life; he strives to attain to the law's just standard; but, alas! all in vain. The chains seem to bind him the tighter; and with repeated failure to free himself, he becomes the more intensely sad. Miserable slavery!

In his utter helplessness he cries for a *deliverer*, for one who can set him free from this bondage and all its terrible results. Can such an one be

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found? Yes, thank God. The gospel tells of a Deliverer.

Turning again to Rom. vi. 17, we read, "Ye were the [bond-]servants of sin, *but* ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin." Thus believers are shown to be the Lord's freemen. But what is this doctrine thus unfeignedly obeyed?

The gospel of God tells us of One who has died in our stead; and through the redemption that is in Him, God freely justifies us from all our sins. Further, in Him who died for us sin in the flesh has been utterly condemned. And He having taken up our cause, God looks upon us always as associated with Him, and accounts true of us whatever is actually true of Him. Thus, as He has died to sin once, God reckons that we have died with Him, and looks upon us as no longer alive in the flesh. He now lives to God, death having no more dominion over Him, condemnation a past thing. God speaks of us as alive *in Him*, and there is no condemnation for us. This is *His* reckoning, and He bids us reckon with Him, that we are dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.

Yet further. His risen life is ours in the power of the Holy Ghost, who dwells in us, and delights to lead us as the sons of God. By His power we gain practical and real deliverance from the law of sin and death, under which we were previously in bondage. The mind of the flesh is still contrary to God, and lusts against His Spirit; but the Spirit has His desires against the flesh, so that we should not do the things which we natur-



## A FREE MAN, YET A BOND-SERVANT. 129

ally would. So, as we walk in this world according to the Spirit, and not as men in the flesh doing our own will, the mind of God concerning us is fulfilled. (Rom. viii. 1-11.)

All this the gospel of God declares, and is the portion of those who embrace it with the obedience of faith. The believer is no longer the slave of sin, the bond-servant of Satan ; but, delivered through the death and resurrection of Christ, he is the Lord's free man.

## CHRIST'S BOND-SERVANT.

*Lord* and bond-servant (or slave) are terms which correspond with each other. Sin, as we have seen, had dominion, or lordship, over us, and we were its slaves ; now, every one taught by the Holy Ghost calls *Jesus* Lord. (1 Cor. xii. 3.) During the days of His flesh men of faith addressed Him by that title, and He approved it, saying, "Ye call me Master [Teacher] and *Lord*, and ye say well, for so I am." After His ascension to heaven, Peter, speaking by the Spirit, said, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both *Lord* and Christ." His title of dignity and dominion is Lord ; His official title is Christ (the Anointed). Taught by scripture, we speak of Him as our Lord Jesus Christ. The day is coming when, according to God's decree, *every* knee shall bow at the name of Jesus, and *every* tongue shall confess Him Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. ii. 10, 11.) Faith confesses Him as such now, though by the world He is rejected. The believer can say, "Christ Jesus, *my* LORD."

Corresponding with this, the believer rejoices

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in being "the bond-servant of Jesus Christ." See, for example, Paul and Timotheus (the opening of the epistle to the Philippians); Peter, James, and Jude (the opening of their epistles). By this term the Lord had frequently spoken of them when He was upon earth. In the words of our text we read, "He that is called, being free, is Christ's [bond-]servant."

We may be permitted here to remind the reader of the difference between a hired servant and a bond-servant. The former hires himself to a master, stipulating for certain wages in return for work of such a character as may be agreed upon, and at any time, with proper notice, may freely leave his master's employ. It is far otherwise with the bond-servant. He is bought for a certain price, and thus becomes his master's absolute property, to serve him when, where, and how he pleases. It is his master's right to command, his place simply to obey; nor can he leave his work at any time.

When sin had dominion over us, we were not free servants, having power to leave it when we desired, but bond-servants, needing another to free us. Just as absolutely do we now belong to Christ. He has bought us with a price—ah, what a price!—and we are His *for ever*. As His bond-servants we call Him our Lord, own His authority, recognize His perfect right to command, bow to His word, and seek to obey.

"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" was the cry of one who was awakened to know the position of Christ in glory. Such is the fitting language of a servant. Being Christ's bond-servants, we should never, from the moment of

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our conversion till we reach the Father's house, do our own will, but ever seek to know and do His will. This is the first step of a servant, even to know his master's will; without it he cannot serve acceptably.

Where then have we the revelation of our Lord's will? In the Holy Scriptures. Whilst with His disciples upon earth He gave them commandments, and showed that those who loved Him would have them and keep them. (John xiv. 21.) Nay, more; He called His own into the intimacy of friendship, saying, "Henceforth I call you not [bond-]servants; for the [bond-]servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you *friends*: for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." (John xv. 15.) The love of His heart could not content itself with our occupying a position of mere bond-servants, simply hearing His commands and doing them, but He draws us into perfect intimacy with Himself, and makes all known to us, keeping back no secrets. Precious grace of a blessed Master! Does He so act that we should serve Him the less truly? Surely not, but that having the fuller knowledge of His thoughts we may serve Him intelligently.

Beyond His own words, uttered in the hearing of His disciples, many things were made known by the apostles through the inspiration of the Spirit. Thus Paul writes, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." (1 Cor. xiv. 37.) Peter also speaks of "the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour."

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Whatever therefore is written in these epistles is binding upon "all who call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's." (1 Cor. i. 2.)

It becomes then a heart-searching question for us, as to how far we are instructed in the will of the Lord, and acting in accordance with it. Do we search His word for guidance in every question that arises, whether it be personal, connected with our family circle, affecting our business relationships, or touching our church association? We are never at liberty, under any circumstances, to do as we please. It is never permitted to us to do our own will. Nor are we to be influenced by any supposed benefit that *we* may receive; so to think, speak, or act is a practical denial of the Lordship of Christ. We are not our own, and consequently may not consult our own will, thoughts, or wishes. We belong absolutely and for ever to Him who died for us and rose again; consequently we must live to Him, consulting *His* will, thoughts, and desires, acting upon them without any hesitation or compromise. Sad is it indeed if He has to say of any of us in any measure, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke vi. 46.) The rather let us search His word carefully, waiting upon Him in prayer, the language of our hearts being, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth." "Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors." (Prov. viii. 34.) We "do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the [full] knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." (Col. i. 9.)

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Does any one exclaim, "Such bondage must be sore and trying. *Never* to do one's own will; *never* to seek one's own pleasure for a moment!" Ah, dear friend, if such be the language of your heart, you know not the Master. He never glorifies Himself at His servant's expense. In the infinite love of His own heart He has devoted Himself to serve us. For our sakes He became poor, adopted a bondman's form, served, suffered, and died. In risen life, amid the glory of God, He serves us uninterruptedly, unweariedly; Great Priest over God's house, and Advocate with the Father. He will come again, and take joy in introducing us into the untold joy and eternal blessedness of the Father's house, and minister to us there. Has such love begotten no response in your heart? Do you cry unfeignedly, What can I do for such a blessed Saviour? He grants you the privilege of serving Him a little time in this world. Not perhaps in any prominent place. It may be in a kitchen, a workshop, or behind a counter; but whatever be your station or employment, you are privileged to do ALL in the name of the Lord Jesus. The commonest action of everyday life you may perform with the holy dignity of a servant of the living God, as one who serves the Lord Christ.

"My yoke is easy, and my burden is light," the Lord said. LOVE is the chain that binds us in this most blessed service. As one said, "The love of Christ constraineth us." See a wife attend her beloved husband in dangerous sickness. She watches him night and day, scarcely permitting another to approach him. She anticipates his smallest wish, and cares for him in everything

with the greatest tenderness. What is the chain that binds her to him? What is the spring of such devotedness? LOVE. She has well known his love for her, and hers to him now shines in every word and action. It is no hardship to serve in such a case; nay, it would be misery to be forbidden to serve. Love delights in being near its object, even Christ; hastens forth to fulfil with devotedness all that may be desired; and if there be no need for further activity, to rest at His feet.

“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” (John xiv. 21.)

“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.” (John xiii. 17.) J. R.

“I HAVE A SAVIOUR. He is in heaven and I upon earth. He has saved, is saving, and will save me from all that He can find to save me from, until, having saved me from and through all, He will safely deliver me up faithfully to Him who entrusted me to Him, to be my Saviour, even His Father and God. Possessed of such an One I need to have nothing in my own hand.”

“I have a Saviour! Yes! I have not only a Saviour God, but God has given to me the Christ, His Christ, and He is my Saviour.”

“In what details, O God! my God! (in and through Jesus Christ) wilt Thou this day enable me to work out, with fear and awe, the deep sense of Thy presence and nearness upon me, my own deliverance?”

“For verily it is Thou only that energisest in us the being, willing, and acting energetically, according to Thine own pleasure.” (Phil. ii. 12, 13.) G. V. W.

## KNOWN AND SEARCHED.

PSALM cxxxix.; EXODUS xxxiv. 29-35; 2 COR. iii. 18,  
and iv. 1-6.

THERE is one fact true of everyone, that at some time or other each must have to do with God. This is a thing that people do not like to think of or admit, and hence you find many who seem to have some kind of vague idea that they will be able to pass in the crowd, and that God will not require any account from them. But this is all wrong; people will not be judged in a mass. “Every *one* of us shall give account of himself to God.” (Rom. xiv. 12.) Look at the opening verses of our Psalm: “O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising.” And in verse 3, “Thou art acquainted with all my ways.” Now think for a moment of the intimate knowledge God has of all our actions. It is very solemn, and it is not a pleasant thing for a sinner to learn; but it is the very first step to blessing, and ends in nothing but blessing.

The Psalm divides itself into two parts—from the first to the thirteenth verse, and from the fourteenth to the end. In the first part the soul finds itself thoroughly known and exposed, and the desire is to get away from God. This is found

to be impossible. Then, when it is fairly driven into a corner, it learns God's heart and works, and the result is praise.

Have you ever observed that God condescends to mark every little circumstance connected with you, that He has to say to little things as well as big? Even the seed you sow in your fields is quickened by God. Each individual seed acted on by His power. I have been struck with this lately in reading Deuteronomy xxii. 6, 7. Think of God telling them even what to do with a bird's-nest! Here we read, in the second verse, that He understands our thoughts. Now men are sometimes ashamed of their actions, and do not like to have them known; but what do you think of your thoughts being exposed? No one would like that. Well, God knows them all. "Thou understandest my thought afar off." And again, "There is not a word in my tongue but, Lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether." The result of finding this out is simply to make one honest with God; it makes a man tell God the truth about himself. If this was so, it would cut a good many long prayers short. Are you honest with God when you pray? Do you tell God the truth about yourself? and do you ask for what you want? There is no way people deceive themselves so much as in prayer; very often they don't want or expect what they ask for at all, and I am sure they would be very sorry if they got it.



In verse 5 we read, "Thou hast beset me behind and before." The presence of God is everywhere. All round you, wherever you go, you are never out of it, though you may not be consciously there. You may desire to get away from it; but it is impossible. You can't get away. Darkness even cannot hide from Him; "the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee." It is thus the soul is compelled to have to do with God. If you do not, be assured of this, you must have to do with Him hereafter. Do you remember the two thieves? One of them was honest about himself in time. He condemned himself, and acknowledged the judgment that had overtaken him as just, and "the due reward" of his deeds. He turned to the Lord Jesus, who hung on the cross beside Him, acknowledged Him as Lord, and got far more than he asked—an entrance into paradise that day in company with the Lord Himself. Depend upon it, having to do with God is the beginning of blessing. Saul, in Acts ix., was brought into the conscious presence of God. There he learnt what he was, and what he had done, and that the One against whom he had sinned was his Saviour. Thus he was converted. In verse 14 of our Psalm we have, "I will praise thee," &c. Many can talk of God as Creator; but it is another thing to talk of Him as Redeemer. Here the soul not only knows and speaks of His works, but knows His thoughts, and

finds them precious. What do we know about His thoughts and heart? We get them unfolded in John iii. 16—"God *so* loved," &c. The gospel all comes from God's side. The rejecters of it are reckoned among the "fearful" in Rev. xxi. 8. If God would save sinners, He must do it in a righteous way. Judgment must fall on another. The cross of Christ shows this. He was obedient unto death; and He was the only one of whom that could ever have been said. It is no obedience for us to die. We have no right to live. He had; He had never forfeited His life; it was His own. But in Isaiah liii. we read that it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, and that the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all. This was the work of redemption, and God thinks so much of it that He raised Him from the dead, and set Him on His own throne.

We see the effect of the glory in the face of Moses when he came down from the mount with the tables of the law in Exodus xxxi. It was the glory of the law they had broken; it condemned the Israelites. But how great the difference in this passage in 2 Cor. iii.; here it is the glory in the face of Jesus Christ. It does not condemn, but its effect is to reproduce the same in us. We get an instance of this in Stephen. (Acts vii.) He looked up, "saw the glory of God," and the result was to change him into the same image. It made him like Christ, and, like Him, he was

able to pray for his murderers. "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Practical conformity to Christ is the result of beholding Him in glory. I am not afraid to look at the glory when it is in the face of the Man who died for me. People talk of clinging to the cross. I should be very sorry to cling to an empty cross. There is no sense in it. Christ is not on the cross now, nor is He in the tomb; if He were I should have no Saviour and no peace. But He is exalted now, and the higher He is exalted the more it brings out the glory of the One who died for me. He couldn't be there if my sins were not atoned for.

In the Old Testament offerings they had to repeat their sacrifices every day. The fire was always kept burning, always fed by fresh victims, and never satisfied. The victims consumed by the fire could never meet its demands; but, as another has said, in the cross the opposite is the case; for there the victim consumed the fire. The spotless victim exhausted the judgment of God against sin. Who can fathom the thoughts of God? Impossible. The psalmist even says he cannot count them, and in Ephesians ii. we find that He waits for coming ages to show by us (His people) the exceeding riches of His grace. His thoughts "are more in number than the sand." When I know all this, do I want to get away from Him? Oh, no! But I have still much to learn; for as soon as I

find God is on my side, and I am at home in His presence, I find out the enmity of the world. It is as contrary to God now as ever it was, and in Scripture I read that "the friendship of the world is enmity with God." Are you keeping up a friendship with the world? You say you must meet them. True; but you can go through it as a stranger, not as a friend. God says, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate;" but if you are faithful you will have little trouble, for they will soon separate from you. Look at Deut. xi. 18, &c., and see what the word of God was to be to the Israelites. They were to lay it up in their heart. It was to be in their hands, their mouths, their houses, &c., to control them. Christians find it hard to get on because they don't use the Word thus; if they did they would be invincible. If they were more faithful the world would take sides against them. In verse 23 of our Psalm we have one who knows God's thoughts, and what is his language? "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts," &c. Am I afraid now of Him making any discoveries, or His heart being turned from me? No. We have many discoveries to make about ourselves. God has none. He knew us when we had done our worst. He knows all. M.

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"WHEN you have no will and no strength, then you can follow Christ, and then He can trust you." J. N. D.

## A FEW THOUGHTS ON ETERNAL LIFE.

“THE Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” (Gen. ii. 7.) This breath from God distinguishes him from the brute creation. Breath of life, derived from this source, can never cease to be. Hence man has eternal existence; his life came from the Lord God.

Now man having disobeyed God, sin entered, and the wages of sin is death. (Rom. vi. 23.) But though, consequent upon the fall, it is appointed unto men once to die, death is *not a cessation* of existence. From the fall onwards Adam and all his race have been dead morally towards God whilst living on the earth, and the end of all here (with two exceptions, Enoch and Elijah) has been the death of the body. And death is the dissolution of the body only. The soul and body are separated. The former lives on, the latter goes to corruption and dust. But the same scripture that tells us, “It is appointed unto men once to die,” adds, “But after this the judgment.” Sinners will be raised to judgment (John v. 29); the dead, small and great, stand before God. (Rev. xx. 12.) Soul and body reunited, the body having been raised by divine power, they stand in their sins before the throne, and are cast into the lake of fire, which is

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the second death. (Rev. xx. 14, 15.) And as the first death is not cessation of existence, neither is the second; but the impenitent sinner's sure portion is eternal woe, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. (Mark ix. 44, 47, 48.)

But the Lord is "not willing that any should perish; but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter iii. 9.) The desire of His heart is, that all should be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth. (1 Tim. ii. 4.) "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." (Ezek. xxxiii. 11.) And judgment is His *strange work*. (Isaiah xxviii. 21.) All men are therefore now commanded to repent. (Acts xvii. 30.) All are responsible to believe the gospel, and in the gospel we have the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins, and everlasting life, &c. (Acts xiii. 38, 39; John iii. 16.)

No man has these blessings in his natural state; neither can he obtain them by baptism, nor by the observance of the Lord's Supper, though both these institutions have their place in the ways of God. But whosoever *believeth* on the Lord Jesus Christ receives the remission of sins and everlasting life. Without the former it is impossible to escape the judgment of God, and without the latter there is no entrance into glory. We must have eternal life here, or we cannot have eternal glory when we leave this scene.

But some may not be quite sure as to what

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eternal life is. Let us see how the word of God defines it. We read in 1 John i. 1, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (for *the life* was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you *that eternal life*, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us)."

Of whom does this Scripture speak, but of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God? Hence in saying that we must have eternal life, it is saying, in other words, we must receive Christ. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons [or children] of God, even to them that believe on His name." (John i. 12.) And, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." (John iii. 36.) "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life." (1 John v. 12, 13.)

But every servant of the Lord who speaks with people concerning the welfare of their souls constantly comes in contact with persons who lack the assured consciousness of the possession of life eternal. There is no question that they have been born of God. The deep and painful exercises that they pass through are a clear evidence of

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this. But all is uncertain, the mind and heart filled with doubt and fear. How is this? It is either the fruit of self-occupation and unbelief or defective teaching. Both produce the same disastrous effects. The word of God is clear and plain; but many, instead of believing God, are either expecting to be better in themselves, or waiting to pass through some mysterious process, or fail to understand that which is most simple, if taken simply. The following substance of a recent conversation gives some idea of the entanglements into which souls fall:

“What is your difficulty?”

“I think mine is unbelief.”

“But Christ died for sinners, did He not?”

“I know He died for sinners; but I’m not a true believer. Is not faith an operation of divine power? Does not God reveal the truth to you?”

“Perfectly true. But you are responsible to believe. And, instead of believing that Christ died *for you*, a sinner amongst the rest, you are making it as though He died for true believers, and therefore not for you, because you do not know whether you are one.”

“I know I ought to be like a little child, and take God at His word; but somehow I cannot rest on it, though I know all about it, and can see how plain it is.”

“But you make God a liar, and God cannot lie. Suppose a person you knew sent you a letter to



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tell you something. If you had confidence in him, you would take him at his word ; you would *believe* him. You would not say, "I cannot rest upon it, and I do not know whether I believe it." You would believe him or not. It would be one thing or the other. So now you have to believe God. 'If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.' (1 John v. 9.) And, 'These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God ; that ye may *know that ye have eternal life.*' (1 John v. 13.) Now do you believe on the name of the Son of God or not ? and will you believe God ?"

"But——."

"No, no ; no 'but.' Do you, or do you not ? Now tell me, Would you be in hell if you were to die ?"

"Unbelievers will."

"Would you ?"

Perfect silence. No answer ; and then presently, "I understand believers can say they are saved, and I cannot."

"Dear soul, believe on the name of the Son of God, and He says eternal life is yours. Take Him at His word. Have confidence in Him, and you will know it is yours."

Now, dear reader, this conversation is but similar to many. Hundreds who doubtless are born of God go on often for months in this indefinite way, lacking the assured possession of

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eternal life through self-occupation, and hence unbelief. And yet you will find that these very persons who fail to take God at His word as to their eternal salvation, if closely pressed, believe that they will never go to hell. Would God have souls remain in such a state? Assuredly not. Then if it is yours, take Him at His word now.

And there is another point of all-importance in connection with this precious truth of the present possession of eternal life; and that is, that once we have it *we can never lose it*.

Now the minds of some of the many readers of these lines may at once revert to a number of passages which may seem to imply a doubt as to this. But let me ask you *first of all* to look with us at two scriptures that confirm this statement, and to follow our comment upon them.

In John x. 27-30 we read, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."

Now you will remark here that we have nine most positive and precious statements from the lips of the Lord Himself concerning the blessing and security of His people:

"My sheep hear my voice."

## A FEW THOUGHTS ON ETERNAL LIFE. 147

“And I know them.”

“And they follow me.”

“And I give unto them eternal life.”

“And they shall never perish.”

“Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”

“My Father, which gave them to me, is greater than all.”

“And no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.”

“I and my Father are one.”

But some man will say, “Ah, but you may pluck yourself out of His hand.” But what saith the scripture, “Neither shall any;” and, “No man is able,” &c. And you are someone, are you not? Do you dare to contradict the blessed Lord? And again, “They shall never perish.” Dare you say they shall if, &c.? Many are led to talk in this foolish way through not being themselves assured of the possession of eternal life. Now we do not usually speak of losing a thing unless we first have it; so that such would do well to make sure that they *have eternal life*, and it will be time enough then to talk about losing it. Reader, have *you* it?

Then again we read, in Col. iii.: “Our life is hid with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory.”

Now, beloved fellow-believer, how can you lose

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your life if it is hid with Christ in God? If in your keeping, you would assuredly lose it. But it is *hid with Christ in God*. God says so. And can Satan touch it there? Was he not completely vanquished at the cross? Has he ever planted his foot across the empty grave of the risen and exalted Christ? Can he touch Christ? Can he reach God? And Christ *is our life*, as the same verse goes on to show. And when He shall appear (or be manifested) then all who have this life which is now hid with Him in God shall appear (or be manifested) in glory with Him.

In the face of these plain and incontrovertible passages, will you ever allow yourself for one moment to indulge the thought that once saved you can ever be lost?

And now if you have accepted these scriptures in their plain and simple meaning, *without any subtraction or addition whatever*, and are living in the power and joy of them, you are in a condition to search the Word, with prayer to God for light and guidance, as to the true meaning of those passages which cause you difficulty, and suggest the thought that you might be lost after all. Start with the distinct understanding, that whatever any other passage may mean, not one can in any possible way whatsoever contradict or qualify in the smallest degree the above plain, imperishable statement of the word of Him who cannot lie.

Doubtless there are passages somewhat difficult,

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but God will give light to the honest searcher after truth. We have not space to go into them in this paper, but any constant reader of these pages will have found several of them explained in past numbers; and it is very probable that others will be so in future ones from month to month, if the Lord tarry. But let us just simply add that on God's side all is plain, positive, assured, fixed, eternal. But man being responsible, there are passages to warn the Christian, lest he should sin and bring himself under *the present governmental dealing of God*, as His child, because he will not be condemned with the world. (1 Cor. xi. 28-32.) Others, that he might prove by his conduct the reality of his confession; for what is the worth of the latter without the former? for God looketh upon the heart, and if the heart is right, the ways will be right also. And again, others which are solemn warnings to those who merely profess to know God, but in works deny Him, &c. (1 Titus i. 16.) But there is not one to cause the slightest uneasiness to the feeblest child of God who seeks to walk with Him.

“He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” (1 John ii. 4.) “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.” (1 John i. 6.)

These are solemn abstract statements, to which all will do well to take heed; for though grace

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is superabounding, and eternal life is the free gift of God to every one that believeth, it is right we should remember that the grace of God teaches godliness. Where the latter is lacking, we may well ask, What proof or evidence is there that the former is known and enjoyed, however loud the tongue may be in professing to know the Lord? Talk without walk is utterly valueless. "The Lord knoweth them that are His" (2 Tim. ii. 19); and "by their fruits ye shall know them." (Matt. vii. 20.)

There is one more point before we close. We are sometimes met with the answer that it is quite true that the life God gives is eternal; but they add, "Suppose that I lose faith, shall I not then lose the life?" This is a foolish supposition, dear fellow-believer; for after all *faith* is the gift of God, as we read, "For by grace are ye saved through *faith*; and *that* not of yourselves: *it* is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast;" and therefore you cannot lose it. To reason thus is, on the one hand, to make faith your Saviour instead of Christ; and on the other to look upon it as a human effort instead of the divine gift.

"The wages of sin is death; but the gift" (or act of favour) "of God is *eternal life* through Jesus Christ" (or in Christ Jesus) "our Lord." (Rom. vi. 23.)

Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." (John vi. 47.)

E. H. C.

## SAINTS EDIFIED AND MULTIPLIED.

“Then had the churches rest throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified ; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.”—ACTS ix. 31.

THE assemblies have often had trouble ; it was so almost from the beginning. Satan’s first attack was by inducing some inside “to lie to the Holy Ghost.” This having been at once judged, and the persons removed, the haters of the truth combined to stone faithful Stephen to death—a man “full of the Holy Ghost.” This devoted servant having thus gone to the Lord Jesus in triumphant faith, persecution set in, and the saints were scattered abroad ; but while this turned out for the spread of the gospel everywhere, many of the persecuted saints were homeless, houseless, and exposed to poverty and distress in a foreign clime. But it is not *always* trouble in God’s assembly on earth. It may be so for a season, if need be, for faith must be tested, and grace in many ways proved ; but, having gone through the trial, our God can again give quietness and blessing. It was so in the apostles’ days ; it has often been so since. But then in the very places where there had been such persecution and scattering, it was afterward said, “Then had the churches (or assemblies) *rest* ;” and this was the case “throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria.”

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It has been much the same in principle in the history of the Church on earth since. Trial has sprung up within, either from false doctrine or unholy practice, unsuited to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and dishonouring to Him, or from persecution from those who are without. The trial in the former case is, whether we shall look at men, please or excuse them, or whether our eye be so wholly fixed on the Lord as to judge and refuse everything that dishonours His name and corrupts His truth. When both these elements are active, Satan can easily stir up fleshly activities, and produce such trouble as ends in separation; for the Lord's claims are paramount. But when flattery from the world presents itself, we need to cleave to the Lord to preserve us, as much as when the power of persecution is let loose upon us.

But, as we have seen, it is not *always* trouble in the assembly. When the Lord's claims as to evil have been responded to, the world's flattery refused, its persecutions faithfully endured, and His purpose through all accomplished, then we may expect rest and blessing to follow. The saints having been profited by deep trial and exercise before the Lord, now cleave unto Him, are occupied with His interests, and are therefore edified. This is something more than gospel preaching, for the assemblies were "edified" or built up. No doubt the gospel was preached as well in all directions, and that the word of God



sounded out according as they had received gift and grace; but besides this the assemblies had peace, and were built up. Saints knew and enjoyed their standing, relationship, and nearness to God, and acceptance in the Beloved, so that through the word of His grace there was growth.

Then had the assemblies rest or peace. How sweet to them it must have been. Were they idle on that account? Far from it; their past trials had been a real blessing to them. If in the days of sorrow they had looked to their unseen Lord, and rejoiced in Him, their hearts were now fresh and fervent in brotherly care and kindness; so that they sought each other's spiritual welfare, and we are told they were "edified"—they were built up on their most holy faith, they were growing in grace, and increasing with the increase of God. It is to be feared that in the present day, when there is such freedom from outward persecution, that many are taking advantage of it for earthly gain, and have become so dead and drowsy that the word of the Holy Ghost to them would be, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

It is important to notice that in connection with the saints being increased or "multiplied," we are told they walked "in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost."

No doubt they prayed, prayed in secret and together, and prayed earnestly too. Nor can we

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doubt that the love of the Lord was often on their lips, because they tasted and enjoyed it in their hearts. But this was not all. Like others, in another time, "They spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name." (Mal. iii. 16.) How encouraging is this to our hearts; for if Jehovah so treasured up the remembrance of His earthly people who thus feared Him, can it be less acceptable to Him if His own heaven-born and heaven-bound children walk in His fear?

The dear saints in the Acts, we are told at that time, were "walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost." These things characterized them. The Lord Himself was so before them, that they spoke and acted as under His eye. They were occupied with Him; not men, not self, not circumstances, but the Lord who loved them and freed them from their sins by His own blood. It was not slavish fear, not the dread of punishment, not that fear which hath torment, but they feared lest they should fail to please their loving Lord, lest they should grieve the Holy Spirit, lest they should dishonour God their Father by yielding to the pride, selfishness, and unbelief of the flesh. We may be sure that they cultivated an humble and contrite spirit, and trembled at His word, and heartily addressed

themselves to the work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope. When we are enjoying the truth that we are the Lord's, redeemed at such a cost, and made so nigh that nearer we cannot be, the purpose of heart then must be, by grace, whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, to do all for the glory of God. We may find those who speak fluently about the things of God, and desire more enjoyment of His love, yet manifest little interest in the members of the "one body," and give little testimony for the Lord. Why is this? Is it not because they are not habitually walking in the fear of the Lord? Surely this is the beginning of wisdom and of knowledge. When the Lord has His rightful place as the object of our hearts; when we have Him before us, who is our life, our righteousness, and our peace; when His perfection and worth engage our souls, can we aim at less than to please Him? When we are occupied with Him *where He now is*, in His present activities of Shepherd, Priest, Advocate, and Bishop of our souls, who never forsakes us, never slumbers nor sleeps, never takes His eyes from us; when His word is our food; when His infinite worth, His perfect and changeless love, His eternal greatness and glory attract and satisfy our hearts, does not His love constrain us to live not unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again? *Then* surely we shall walk in His fear; and that not on great occasions only, but on all occasions,

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and in every department of our pilgrim path. As the scripture admonishes us, we shall be "in the fear of the Lord all the day long." (Prov. xxiii. 17.) In the assembly, in our private life, and in our family relationships we shall equally bow to the authority of the Lord; we shall keep His word, and own the guidance of the Spirit of God. However solitary our path may be, we shall never forget to walk in the fear of the Lord.

As belonging to the assembly on earth, we shall fear lest we act, or move, or speak in anyway unsuited to Him, the Holy and the True, who is in the midst; we shall fear lest we deny His name or fail to keep His word, for is He not there not only to instruct and comfort, but if need be to discipline? As gathered to the Lord's name, as members of His body, and on the ground of His assembly, are we not brought into the highest place of collective blessing on earth? and when this is realized, can we be otherwise than deeply exercised about being well-pleasing to Him? Can we *then* fail to be occupied with His interests, His saints, His truth, and His service?

In private life too we "fear" lest we should get away from His presence, from the guidance of His word and Spirit, and do what is contrary to His mind. We fear lest our spirits, our thoughts, our motives, and our occupations be not in accordance with His mind. We fear lest we give away to unbelief, and thus drop down from the life and ways of faith. We fear lest our hearts grow cold

and forget our entire dependence on Him, and so slide into self-importance, self-seeking, and love of the world. If secret prayer and meditation on the word of God be neglected by us, we shall soon cease to walk in the fear of the Lord and to have the comfort of the Holy Ghost; while those who habitually turn to the Lord, through the Scriptures, for food and strength, will know in their consciences what it is to be in separation to the Lord and walking in His fear.

Perhaps nowhere is our weakness more manifested than in the family circle. Here too God looks for obedience to His word; and here it is that, whether we be wives or husbands, servants or masters, children or parents, we are called as heavenly people to manifest the ways of the Lord, to be types of Christ—the perfect Husband, the perfect Master, perfect Servant, perfect Son, and perfect too in parental care for His own, to whom He said, “Children, have ye any meat?” To walk with outward morality and propriety is one thing; but it is when husband and wife walk like Christ and the church; when servants act with singleness of eye as the Lord’s servants, and masters rule as knowing they have a Master in heaven; when parents train their children for the Lord, and children obey and honour their parents as it is fit in the Lord, then there will not only be the absence of unbecoming improprieties, but there will be walking in the fear of the Lord. May God work mightily in these closing days in reviving

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family piety according to His own word. How truly has the Scripture said, "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." (Job xxviii. 28.)

It is not surprising to find that those who so walked had "the comfort of the Holy Ghost." How could the Spirit comfort them if they were entangled with *unholy* associations? Is there not then a divine order in these words, so that those only who are walking in the fear of the Lord will enjoy the precious comfort of the Holy Ghost? Such have to do with the God of hope, and have "joy and peace in believing." They know that God is their Father, that He loves them as He loves His Son, cares for them, ministers to them, guides them, and makes them happy in the sense of it in their own souls. If afflictions abound, they find that consolation much more abounds, and they realize that they are able to comfort others with the comfort wherewith they themselves are comforted of God. They are assured that God is for them, that He works all things together for their good, that He will freely give them all things, and that nothing shall ever separate them from His love. The Holy Ghost comforts them by the hope of our Lord's return, the certainty of being in the Father's house, of reigning and judging with Christ, when like Him, and with Him, and near Him for ever. Whatever be the trouble, however trying the path or perplexing the circumstances, we are assured that His

perfect love to us knows no change, and His almighty power on our behalf will never be diminished; the cross tells us the measure of the one, and His resurrection from among the dead that of the other. But while many *know* all this, they have *not* “the comfort” of it in their hearts, and why? Because they are not walking in the fear of the Lord, but walking worldly, so that the Holy Spirit is grieved, and thus hindered from comforting them.

When under the comforting ministry of the Holy Ghost, we shall be occupied with Him of whom the Spirit testifies. We shall often recall to mind His work for us on the cross, look up and see Him by faith where He now is, while looking for His coming. We shall abide in the love of God, turn to Him as the source of all our blessing, rejoice in the Lord in and through whom all our blessings are; and thus drinking of the Fountain of living waters, we have springs of joy, resources, and consolation, which only the Holy Spirit can minister to us.

The effect of thus walking in the fear of the Lord, and comfort of the Holy Ghost, was that there was much blessing to others—saints were “multiplied.” And we may be sure it will be so still, for God is not changed. Those who so *walk* find it a path of separation not only from the world, but also from everything in the professing church that is dishonouring to God. When walk in the fear of the Lord we depart from evil, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost occupies us with

the love and goodness of God. However blessed and important prayer most surely is, we do well to notice that the wide-spread blessing to souls is not here connected with that so much as with "walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost." Will not true prayer be always connected with thus walking? And where this holy fear is lacking, is it surprising there is the absence of blessing to others?

H. H. S.

### JOTTINGS.

To be taken up with the Spirit's guidance apart from the authority of the written Word, may lead to the *wildest fanaticism*, of which there have been painful examples.

To be taken up with the Word apart from the Spirit's teaching, is *rationalism*; for it is founded on the false assumption of man's competency to reason about God's truth, instead of being judged by it.

To refuse the authority of the Word because we cannot understand it, is *infidelity*. To look for any persons or ordinances to come between us and God, besides the accomplished work of His beloved Son, is *ritualism*. To accept any other mediator between God and men but the man Christ Jesus, is to deny the testimony of Holy Scripture as to the "One Mediator," and is *popery*.

To use means according to God's Word, and trust in God, is *faith*. To say we trust in God, and use not the means He directs, is *presumption*. To use means of any kind and trust in them, is *infidelity*. H. H. S.



## THE THRONE AND THE ALTAR.

IN the sixth chapter of Isaiah we have a three-fold repetition of a short phrase, which appears to call special attention to the words that in each case follow.

The prophet says, three times, "Then said I," and each introduces a fresh and deeper experience in his soul; and in looking at this portion of God's word we find a wondrous unfolding of the grace of the God we have to do with. It is our privilege to know Isaiah's God as he never knew Him. He knew Him as a gracious pardoning God; we surely, through mercy, know Him too as that; but we can also speak of Him as our Father. This Isaiah did not know.

Remembering, then, that the God that this chapter reveals to us is our Father also in Christ Jesus, may we not seek to learn, from this picture of divine grace, somewhat as to our standing before Him, and also what the heart of our God desires for us.

"Then said I, woe is me; for I am undone!" The light from the throne has shown the prophet his true state, as a fallen man in the presence of the God who is Light; for prophet and servant of God though he was, he had not yet learned the

first lesson taught before the throne ; namely, deliverance.

But this throne is no throne of judgment, it is a throne of grace, pure unmingled grace reigning through righteousness. Quickly comes the answer to the cry of despair. "Then flew one of the seraphims unto me," bearing with him the "live coal from off the altar," which tells us surely of the present living value of the work of Christ, the sweet savour of a risen Saviour on the throne of God, how God can cleanse and save the "unclean" sinner because of the One of whom that altar spoke.

Just let us compare verses 5 and 7 of our chapter with verses 24 and 25 of Romans vii. In the one the cry is, "Woe is me, for I am undone !" and the answer, "Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged ;" whilst the cry in the other is, "O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?" then, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." This brings us to the point, so blessed for us, that the first experience of the delivered soul is, that he stands cleared, forgiven and justified before God, because of His complete satisfaction in the work of His beloved Son, "in whom we have redemption through His blood, *the forgiveness of sins*, according to the riches of His grace." (Eph. i. 7.)

But wondrous as this clearance is, displaying, as it does, both the grace and righteousness of

our God, it is after all only the first step, there is a nearer one still. "Then said I, here am I; send me." God wants a messenger to tell of coming judgment; who so fit as the one who is delivered from all fear of it? So we find the response, "Here am I; send me." So that not only have we clearance before the throne, but are placed in the position of being able to render acceptable service; may it be ours then to seek to serve, as the Master guides, remembering His own words: "As thou has sent *me* unto the world, *even so* have *I* also sent *them* unto the world." Nor is this all; once more the word comes before us: "Then said I, Lord, how long?" Isaiah could seek to know the purpose of his God; we in our day can say—

"Higher and higher yet,  
Pleading that same life-blood;  
We taste the love that knows no let  
Of *Abba*, as of God."

We may seek to know our Father's will, not only without fear of a rebuff, but having positive encouragement to do so; for He has "made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself." (Eph. i. 9.)

If Isaiah could thus stand before the throne of God, what a standing is ours! delivered from judgment, free too to serve acceptably, sent into this world from a risen Christ in the glory, and

encouraged to learn our Father's will from Himself ; knowing as we do from His own Word that we are "accepted in the Beloved ;" and as the Lord said, in John xvii. 23, "Thou hast loved *them* AS thou hast loved *me*."

Yes, dear reader, if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is your blessed privilege to take these words just as they stand, in simple faith ; true, we may not understand how it can be so, but there it is plain and true for faith, "accepted in the Beloved," and loved as He is loved. What a word too for the servant ! Sent forth as we now are from a risen Saviour with a message of grace, shall we not serve better and more faithfully if we tarry awhile before going forth, to seek counsel where our Master sought it when a dependent man here on earth ?

But if, my reader, you should not yet have learned to say, "Woe is me, for I am undone !" remember that the God who looked down in grace on Isaiah, looks down in pity on you, but can only have to do with you, in grace, as you take your true ground before Him, as a lost, "undone," "unclean" sinner, needing the application of the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ before you can hear these wondrous peace-giving words : "Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."

J. R. B.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

S. S., BLEEHYDEN.—One remark in your letter we are deeply thankful for—it is that in which you say “that peace with God is a matter for ever settled; His word settles that, blessed be His name.” Yes, dear friend, it does indeed. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Nothing can touch that peace, founded as it is on the glorious fact of Christ’s death and resurrection. He died for our sins, and His resurrection is the proof to the whole universe that those sins have been for ever put away.

It is in the knowledge of this that the sin-stricken conscience finds rest. For if it is seen that all our sins from first to last have been answered for at the bar of divine justice, and that God has raised Him who answered for them from the dead, then in believing such joyful news we have peace with God—settled peace established on a work, the efficacy of which shall remain for ever unchallenged. How could it be otherwise, seeing that the Doer of it has been exalted to the right hand of God?

But after this is known in the soul by the power of the Holy Ghost, it often happens that we have to learn experimentally what we are, what the flesh in us is. “I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing.” It is one thing to own this in a general sort of way, and another to learn it in one’s experience. And each must learn it for

himself. "*I* know that in *me*," etc. Mark how personal and individual this is. Often when the sinner is converted and brought into peace, he is altogether taken up with the joy and blessedness of it, and with the wondrousness of that work which makes it possible for God to be just and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus. The true character of "the flesh," unchanged and unchangeable, is for the time forgotten, if indeed it has been ever known. This has now to be learnt; and if the learning of it is painful, it is nevertheless attended with the greatest profit.

At this point let us carefully distinguish between sins and "sin which dwelleth in us." The former, as we have seen already, have been put away to be remembered by God no more; the latter abides, and from its presence we shall not be free, though there is present freedom from its rule and bondage. It is this you earnestly desire to know in practical power. You long to live wholly to God, and in fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ; but these deep longings are not satisfied. The hopes of the morning are blighted ere evening comes, and disappointments follow each other in cruel succession, perplexing and casting you down. You would do good, but evil is present with you; and how to perform that which is good you find not. Ah! you are now finding out, what you may have accepted already in theory, that *you* are without strength, and that in *your* flesh there dwells no good thing. You had heard of this with the hearing of the ear, but now your eye sees it, and you abhor *yourself*; not your sins only, but **YOURSELF**, which is a very much deeper thing; and you realize more than ever that the mighty, measureless grace of God, which

neither asks for nor expects any goodness from us or in us (that is, in our flesh), is your only resource.

But the consciousness of your own weakness and good-for-nothingness is not in itself power, though it lead on to it. How to be delivered from the rule of "sin in the flesh"? That is your difficulty. Your old self you abhor, and you would fain be free from its dominion. Well, first of all see how God has dealt with it, and remember that you are to receive as true all that God in His word says is true of you. To this end we quote a few pregnant words from Rom. vi.: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him." What does that mean? And again, "I am crucified with Christ." To what, I may ask, do the "old man" and the "I" refer? The answer is simple. They refer to your old Adam nature, to yourself in fact; for it is your privilege to look back to the cross, and to believe that you, as a child of the first man, Adam, came to your end under judgment there; your history in God's reckoning closed for ever in that cross and death of Christ. All your guilt and all that you are, and all your responsibilities as a man "in the flesh," received their full recompense at the hand of a holy and righteous God, in the person of Him who stood your substitute, and with whom you were associated—"planted together in the likeness of His death." And now a new place is yours, even in Him who is risen from the dead—the second Man, the last Adam—whose life you share. Receiving the Holy Ghost, you are now seen to be "in Christ," those words defining your place when you think of yourself up there, and "in the Spirit" when viewed as down here.

Therefore you are not a debtor to "the flesh," to live according to it. "The flesh" has no manner of claim upon you. You are to reckon yourself dead to it—dead to sin. Not dead to *sins*—for that is not the argument in Rom. vi., from which we quote—but dead to *sin*, "sin in the flesh," and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

But if you are thus in Christ, His life yours and the Holy Ghost dwelling in you, all this does not take you off the ground of entire dependence on God as to your daily walk. The new life in you is a dependent thing, and the Holy Ghost would never lead you to forget how weak you still are in yourself. Recollect, however, that you are under no necessity to yield to the flesh under any circumstances, seeing that the grace of Christ is sufficient for you, and that His strength is perfected in our weakness.

By efforts of your own, the deliverance for which you groaned could never have been yours. Your mistake was in supposing that it could. It is found rather in the divinely-given perception of our having died with Christ, and that we are now in Him, sharing the life of the last Adam, and indwelt by the Holy Ghost. Thus set free, to whom shall we now yield ourselves? To sin? Nay, we reckon ourselves dead indeed unto it, and joyfully yield ourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

May the gracious Lord bless you, dear friend, and grant you to know and stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.



## THE FATHER'S LOVE.

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God : therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.”—1 JOHN iii. 1-3.

CHILDREN of God ! Is this indeed the name by which we are called ? Has the Father's love shown itself after this manner ? Is this the grace bestowed upon us who had sunk so low ? Not saved ones only, not saints only, but children—children of God. Yes, it is even so.

The angels in heaven know not God thus. In all their ascriptions of praise recorded in the Scriptures we never find them calling God Father. Ours is a nearer place than theirs. If in our childhood we were taught to sing—

“ I want to be an angel,  
And with the angels stand,”

we now see that a better portion than theirs is ours, even while on earth. “ Beloved, *now* are we the children of God.”

The saints of Old Testament days had not the knowledge of this relationship ; for Father was not a name by which it had pleased God to make

Himself known to them. To Abraham He revealed Himself as the Almighty God, to Israel as Jehovah; but the name of Father they took not upon their lips as expressing a known relationship in which they stood. Therefore in the book of Psalms God is not addressed as Father. There are, of course, the most precious expressions of confidence and joy in God, and deep breathings of soul after Him; but a child speaking to a *Father* is not to be looked for there.

The Father's name was first revealed by the Lord Himself while here on earth. The concluding words of his own prayer in John xvii. show us that. "I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." Then, after His resurrection, He said to Mary Magdalene, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God." Thus they were brought into blessed association with Himself in the relationship in which He stood as man with God. And the love too of that relationship—a Father's love—which He had so fully known, and in which His heart had ever rested, was to be in them also. What blessedness is here!

Nor are we children of God by adoption merely. A childless couple might adopt a dear orphan babe, and bring it up as if it were their own; still, it would never be more than their adopted child,

for there could be no birth-tie between them. But we are *born* of God, as the Holy Ghost tells us in John i. We are God's dear children now just as truly as we shall be when in heaven glorified with Christ. The relationship of a child to his parent never grows; for it is perfect at the beginning. See that child cradled in his mother's arms. Behold him twenty years hence. The child has grown into a man, but he is not more the child of his mother than when he was a babe lying in her lap.

How foolish is the thought, that this relationship which God alone has formed—for we are born “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God”—may be less enduring than similar earthly ties! Everybody knows that ties of *birth* can never be dissolved. Other ties, formed by mutual consent, may be; but birth-ties never. Now we are *born* of God.

Well might the Spirit's voice invite us to behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God. In setting us in so near and dear a place, the Father's love displays itself. It is His joy to bless us thus. Do we sufficiently dwell on that? Are we not in danger of thinking only of the manner and measure of our blessing, and losing sight of the great fact that God our Father rejoices to bring us so near Himself? The warm welcome, so unexpected and undeserved, the loving kiss, the fond parental embrace, the robe and ring, the

shoes and the fatted calf, and the gladness that filled the whole house, tell of God's deep delight in doing His very best for us.

And if "the Spirit itself beareth witness *with* our spirit, that we are the children of God;" if we can look into the face of God, and say, "Father," as a dear child, then it follows that in our intercourse with God our prayers and praises should be suited to this near relationship. How strange it would be to hear a *child* of God saying, "From thy wrath, and from everlasting damnation, good Lord, deliver us." Such language would be out of harmony with a *child's* place, however suited to one over whom the threatening clouds of divine wrath hung. If we could forget for the moment that we were children of God, and think of ourselves only as poor sinners who had fled for refuge to the Lord Jesus Christ, we ought to have no dread of wrath to come, seeing that He is our Deliverer from it. (1 Thess. i. 10.) Nor should we fear eternal judgment; for the Lord has said that into judgment we shall never come, and His word cannot be broken. But we are *children*, and it is He who is our *Father* who is seeking worshippers, and the worship which is acceptable to Him is that which rises from the hearts of those who have not only been delivered for ever from all fear of wrath, but who also know what it is to stand in the sunshine of a Father's love.

What high and holy dignity connects itself

with the place of a child—a child of God! Just as God is infinitely higher and beyond all created things and beings in the wide universe, so our being His children is immeasurably beyond the closest and most lasting ties of earth. Children of God! Think of it, believer. Behold the love that has given *you* such a place as that. “Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not.” The Lord Jesus was a stranger here, unknown by the world His hand had made. Man discerned not the divine glories that lay hid beneath His holy humanity. To them He was as a root out of a dry ground, Jesus, the carpenter’s son, and nothing more. Here and there might be found one to whom the Father had revealed Him as Son of the living God; but the world as a whole knew Him not. Therefore it knows us not. What does the world know of the life a child of God possesses, of the relationship in which He stands to God, and of all the glory he shall share ere long with Him who is the Firstborn among many brethren? Nothing. Point the world to yonder man, bowed beneath the weight of years, yet forced to break stones by the roadside for his daily morsel. Say to the world, “Do you know that that man is a child of *God*, and an heir of glory?” and the world will stare at you, and burst into a laugh, as if your question were the outcome of a disordered brain. The world knows us not, because it knew Him not.

The future that awaits us when Jesus is manifested in glory, and the purifying power of that heavenly hope over the child of God now, is stated in verses 2 and 3. Into this we do not now go. Suffice it to say, that out of this relationship certain responsibilities flow. As children of obedience, we are not to conform ourselves to our former lusts in our ignorance; but as He who has called us is holy, so we are to be holy in all our conversation. (1 Peter i. 14, 15.) And in Eph. v. 1 we are exhorted, as "dear children," to be imitators of God, and to walk in love, even as Christ loved us. He is our example, who in giving Himself for us had God as His only object. May we abide in the consciousness of our relationship with God, and seek grace ever to act as becomes a dear child.

The God who dwells above, we call  
 Our Father and our Friend ;  
 And, blessed thought ! His children all  
 Shall see Him in the end.

Though now dispersed, the day will come  
 When He who made us His  
 Will call us hence, and take us home  
 To see Him as He is.

Though now unknown, we then shall be  
 The sons of God confessed ;  
 Those who disown us then shall see  
 How richly we are blest.

Then let us, brethren, while on earth,  
 With foes and strangers mixed,  
 Be mindful of our heavenly birth,  
 Our thoughts on glory fixed.

## WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN'S RULE OF LIFE ?

BEFORE seeking to bring out what the Scripture teaches in answer to the question at the head of this paper, let us ask each reader of these lines, "Are you a Christian ?" Some one might possibly reply, "What a question to ask ! why, we are all Christians in this country, are we not ? You do not take us for heathens, surely." But stay a moment ; you may be born in a so-called Christian land ; you may make a profession of Christianity ; yet after all not be a Christian. The word Christian has come to have a very wide and vague meaning ; and we fear that much that passes nominally as Christian, would be more correctly termed *anti-Christian*. Let us then affectionately ask you again, "Are you a Christian—a true one ?" A Christian is a child of God, who has the forgiveness of sins, and everlasting life, and the Holy Ghost. (1 John ii. 12 ; John vi. 47 ; 1 Cor. vi. 19.) Are these blessings yours ? If not, the only way to possess them is to take the lost sinner's place, and to claim the lost sinner's Saviour ; to plead guilty in self-judgment before God, and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ—His Son.

Now the grievous and soul-destroying mistake that thousands around us are making, is to

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endeavour to rule their lives more or less according to their own ideas of the meaning of Scripture, *without being born again*. (John iii. 3-7.) They read the Bible, and their minds are filled with a mixture of law and gospel; there is an indefinite effort to love God and their neighbour; a profession of keeping the ten commandments; or, as many express it, they "do the best they can." But, beloved reader, be warned ere it be too late, all this is utterly vain. There may be a good measure of sincerity in what you are doing; but the word of God is unmistakeably plain, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Rom. viii. 8.)

Some may reply, "But did not God give the ten commandments as a rule of life?" He did; but to whom, and when, and for how long? He gave it to Israel, when they were at the foot of Mount Sinai, and till the seed—Christ—should come. (Exodus xix., xx.; Gal. iii. 19.) And Christ is the end of the law. (Rom. x. 4.) The law addresses man in the flesh, when God was looking for good in man. But though He lingered long over him, *that good* He could not find. The law demanded that which flesh could not produce; it demanded *righteousness*. "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." (Rom. vii. 12.) But the flesh is the opposite. It is unholy, unjust, and bad. Therefore we read, "If there had been a law given which could have given life,



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verily righteousness should have been by the law." (Gal. iii. 21.) But that is just what the law could not give. It is not a ministration of life and righteousness, but of death and condemnation. (2 Cor. iii.) Israel was *fully tried*; but the teaching of the Holy Ghost through God's servant Paul is, "There is none righteous, no, not one;" "All have sinned," &c. (Rom. iii. 10, 23.)

Will you then, a poor sinner of the Gentiles, go back to that which only condemns all who attempt to stand by it before God? But "Christ is the end of the law for *righteousness to every one that believeth*." (Rom. x. 4.) And as another has said, "You are nearly nineteen hundred years *too late*." "If righteousness come by the law, then *Christ is dead in vain*."

Furthermore, if our readers will read carefully chapter xv. of the Acts of the Apostles, they will find that there was a conference held at Jerusalem about this very question, of whether the Gentiles which have not the law (Rom. ii. 14), and who *believed through grace* on the Lord Jesus Christ, were to be put under the law; and we find that the apostles, the elders, and the whole Church, and above all the Holy Ghost, were all against it, saying, "Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have *troubled you with words, subverting your souls*, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave

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*no such commandment," &c. (Acts xv. 24.)* And Peter in verse 10 says, "Now therefore *why tempt ye God*, to *put a yoke* upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"

"Well, but," some may still reply, "did not Christ say, 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven'?" (Matt. v. 17-19.) And if Christ said so, surely it must be right." A moment, friends, think over that passage again; turn to it in your Testament, and pay special heed as to whom the Lord is speaking. You will find that it was addressed to *Jewish disciples* (v. 1), and to them only. And, moreover, *when* addressed to them, man was *still on his trial*. As the passage shows, He was expecting righteousness from them. "Whosoever shall do," &c.; "Except *your righteousness* shall exceed," &c. (Matt. vi. 19, 20.) But it was not long after this ere He was refused as the King, cast out and crucified; and His death is the end of the moral history of the race of the first Adam

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before God. In crucifying Christ, man showed out clearly that instead of keeping the law, by loving God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself, he *hated both*. Christ was *God* manifest in the flesh, and man's true *neighbour*. (1 Tim. iii. 16; Luke x. 30-37.) The cross was man's solemn award to that Blessed One, when He, the holy, perfect man, kept the law, which they professed to keep, but broke. From that moment the flesh was set aside as utterly corrupt. From that moment God no longer sought righteousness from man. From that moment legal righteousness—that is, human righteousness—was pronounced utterly worthless. (Rom iii. 10-20.)

But Christ, as we have seen, came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil. And He fulfilled it; He magnified it, and made it honourable. (Isa. xlii. 21.) The law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good; and Christ was holy, just, and good. The law demanded righteousness from man. Every other had failed; but He was Jehovah's *righteous servant*. (Isa. liii. 11.) The Son of man was perfect in all His obedience, and the law's highest claims were more than met by Him. The Son of God became flesh, sin apart, and glorified God as the holy Man throughout His pathway. (Heb. vii. 26; 1 Tim. iii. 16.) And not only so, but He went to the cross, and glorified God as to sin. He, the sinless One, was made sin (2 Cor. v. 21); He died, His blood was shed, He

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was buried, and God raised Him again the third day, according to the Scriptures. (Acts ii. 32 ; 1 Cor. xv. 4.) And where is He now ? Seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens—a Man in the glory of God. (Heb. i. 3.)

And now, dear reader, let us look at the blessed result. "*By the deeds of the law,*" says the apostle, "*there shalt no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe,*" &c. (Rom. iii. 20–22.) What could be plainer ? The righteousness of God (not of man, or of the law) is upon all them that believe. Mark it well—righteousness of God *without law*. "*By faith of Jesus Christ.*"

You must have a righteousness before God before you can walk by any rule so as to please Him. Of the rule that we are responsible to follow we shall speak directly. But, first of all, have you apprehended that of which we speak ? Is this righteousness upon you ?

In Romans x. we have a most important Scripture bearing upon it. Paul, speaking of his kinsmen, the people of Israel (but equally applicable to thousands to-day), says, "*They, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted them-*

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selves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of [the] law for righteousness to *every one that believeth*," &c. Now are you clear? Have you submitted yourself to the righteousness of God? If so, then you are one to whom the apostle refers when he says, "Even David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God *imputeth righteousness without works*." (Rom. iv. 6.)

Being accounted righteous by God, on the principle of faith in the finished work of Christ, we are meet for His presence and glory. To such God gives the Holy Spirit, whereby we are sealed for the day of redemption. (Eph. iv. 30.) But the saved are mostly left for awhile on earth, and hence our need of a rule of life. But each must be reckoned righteous before God first, and that by faith, *without the law, without works*. (Rom. iii. 21; iv. 6.) It is of the utmost importance to be perfectly clear as to this, or our walk is sure to be legal, faulty, and of a low standard. The prodigal was pardoned, reconciled, clad with the best robe, before the shoes were put on his feet. (Luke xv.) And we must be pardoned, reconciled, clothed with Christ, before we can be fitted to walk before God so as to please Him.

And now we come to the point more immediately before us in this paper—"What is the Christian's rule of life?" Many, again, who readily admit that we are not under the law for

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justification, still plead that we must take the ten commandments as the standard of our walk. But what saith the Scripture? We have already alluded in passing to 2 Cor. iii., which shows that they are a ministration of *death* and *condemnation*. How then can they be a rule of *life*? Have such persons never read in the Word, "Cursed is every one that continueth not *in all things* which are written in the book of the law to do them"? (Gal. iii. 10.) And "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet *offend in one point*, he is *guilty of all*." (James ii. 10.) And where is there one who is not convicted on that ground? Where is there one that will have the effrontery to say he has kept all without fail? There is then nothing but death and condemnation for all who attempt to stand by the law. To go back to it, after being justified by faith, is to return to bondage. It is another gospel, and yet not another; for it takes the gospel away. (Gal. i. 6-9.)

But God has given us a rule of life, and it is a far higher code than the law. Paul sums it up in one short sentence, full of meaning: "To me to live is *Christ*." (Phil. i. 21.) This is abundantly confirmed elsewhere: "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, *even as He walked*." (1 John ii. 6.) "Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth Himself, *even as He is pure*." (1 John iii. 3.) "If any man serve me, let him *follow me*," &c. (John xii. 26.) "Even here-

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unto were ye called : because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should *follow His steps* : who did no sin," &c. (1 Peter ii. 21, 22.) "That the righteousness" (or righteous requirement) "of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but *after the Spirit*." (Rom. viii. 4.) "Be ye therefore *followers of God*, as dear children." (Eph. v. 1.) And lastly, "*In Christ Jesus* neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (or creation). "And as many as walk *according to this rule*, peace be on them, and mercy," &c. (Gal. vi. 15, 16.) And we might multiply passages, all showing the same truth, that Christ is now the believer's rule of life ; that is to say, that the Christian is to follow Christ in the power of the Holy Ghost, who dwells in him (Rom. viii. 14), taking Christ as his rule, standard, measure, example, in everything.

The whole teaching of the epistle to the Galatians is to show how evil a thing it is for Christians, who are the subjects of grace, to return to the law. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. *Christ* is become of *no effect* unto you, whosoever of you

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are justified by the law ; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but *faith which worketh by love*," &c. (Gal. v. 1-6.)

"Wherefore, my brethren," we read again, "ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even to Him who is raised from the dead*, that we should bring forth fruit unto God . . . that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." (Rom. vii. 4-6.) "But be ye *doers of the Word*, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." (James i. 22.) "Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being *not a forgetful hearer*, but *a doer of the work*, this man shall be blessed in his deed." (James i. 25.)

Is there any room for license in all this ? God forbid. No, there is none whatever, but the very opposite. "I through the law," says the apostle, "am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." (Gal. ii. 19.) We are redeemed, and we are also purchased. Redemption makes us Christ's freedmen, and purchase makes us His bondsmen. "Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body." (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.) "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." (Gal. v. 16.)



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And "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: *against such there is no law.*" (Gal. v. 22, 23.)

To sum up, in closing, what we have written: The law is God's claim of obedience from man in the flesh, showing what he must be, and do, and not do, if he would please God. After full trial, he utterly failed. But Christ, the holy One, magnified the law. Then He bore its curse on behalf of the sinner on the cross; died, rose, and thereby wrought a complete deliverance for every one that believeth.

The Gentiles are brought in on the ground of grace, and all alike are accounted righteous by faith without the deeds of the law, being accepted before God in Him the Beloved. And Christ is the object and hope, standard and example, for every believer. In short, Christ is our Saviour, and our rule of life when we are saved, and not the law at all. And just in proportion as the Christian, walking in the power of the Spirit, keeps the Word, so in proportion is there conformity to God's standard. May we be ever mindful of the words of the apostle—" *To me to live is Christ.*"

E. H. C.

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"No extent of knowledge, even where given of God, is in itself spiritual power in our souls."

## BOASTING.

IF we could be saved by the works of the law it is manifest we should have very good reason to boast. Everyone who went to heaven on the ground of his own works would be singing, *Worthy am I;*" and till he got there it would be clearly presumption on his part to say he was sure of being saved.

But it is not presumption for those who believe in Jesus to say they are saved. God says they are, and their salvation is due entirely to the grace of God through faith, and that, as Scripture says, excludes boasting. Aye, and more than that, God will have no discord in heaven. There will be no one there who will deserve to be there; and so all the song shall be: "Unto *Him* that loved us, and washed us from our sins in *His* own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to *Him* be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (Rev. i. 5, 6.)

It is not presumption then to say that *He* has washed me from my sins in His own blood, and has made me a king and priest. It is the very thing that shuts out presumption; that leads our hearts away from ourselves and our own doings to Jesus, and what He has done, there to make our boast in Him and in His finished work.

"For ever be the glory given  
To Thee, O Lamb of God!  
Our every joy on earth, in heaven,  
We owe it to Thy blood."

M.

## THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE.

"To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us  
*accepted in the Beloved.*"—EPH. i. 6.

OH, wondrous place ! I'm brought *to God*  
To stand in cloudless light,  
Without a spot, without a stain,  
All perfect in His sight.  
I'm robed in righteousness divine,  
Christ's beauty covers me ;  
And as the Father's eye beholds,  
Christ only doth He see.

According to His thoughts of *Christ*  
*So am I loved and blessed,*  
Through Him I now can *joy in God*,  
And rest where He doth rest.  
His wondrous grace has brought me there  
All blameless in His sight,  
A *child* within His house to dwell,  
To give His heart delight.

In fellowship with God Himself  
And His beloved Son,  
My joy is full, I want no more,  
'Tis heaven on earth begun.  
Christ's *present place* in heaven above  
Is now my spirit's home,  
His Father's well-known love is mine  
As through the waste I roam.

In *Him* are hidden treasures found  
Of wisdom, knowledge, power,  
And this to faith is now revealed  
By God the Spirit's power.  
Oh, what can creature-streams supply  
Since I the Fountain know !  
'Tis when *God's Christ* my heart has filled  
*I nothing want below.*

L. W.

## DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT.

## EXODUS xiv.

THE history of the children of Israel is full of interest and importance for us, and has been written of God expressly for our benefit. (Rom. xv.; 1 Cor. x.) What was true of them physically and literally is true for us spiritually and figuratively. There are three well-known places which stand intimately connected with Israel's history—Egypt, Canaan, and the Wilderness. Egypt is the place of origin, and represents this world looked at naturally. Canaan is the place of destiny, and typifies heaven—more exactly “the heavenly places.” The Wilderness is the pathway from the one to the other. On Canaan the eyes of Jehovah are always set. It is the place with which are connected all God's counsels, both literally and figuratively, and here He was determined to bring His people. But much is required to be done to carry this into effect. The people were in Egypt, and under the power of Pharaoh, and needed deliverance therefrom. How was this to be accomplished?

In Exodus xii. they had, by divine instruction, put the blood of the lamb on the door-posts of their houses, and by that means had been perfectly preserved from divine judgment. But they were still in the place where the judgment was executed,

and to which judgment applies. Have you, my reader, been sheltered from divine judgment by the precious blood of Christ being before the holy eye of God on your behalf? Thank God that you can say you are, on the authority of that blessed word, "When I see the blood I will pass over you" (v. 13); and you know He *always* sees the blood.

But perfect preservation from divine judgment, though so blessed and important, is not sufficient. God wants His people with Himself, and *His* place is not Egypt. Hence He comes down, not to preserve from judgment only, but "to *deliver* them out of the hand of the Egyptians." (Exodus iii. 8.) Let us see how this is done. On the very night the blood was sprinkled on the door-posts they prepared to leave the place, and very soon we find them "encamping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baalzephon." But here a serious difficulty arises. "The children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid." In a worse position than ever they seemed now to be. With the Red Sea (death) in front of them, the whole power of evil (the Egyptians) hotly pursuing them behind, and mountains on either side, escape seemed impossible. And so they thought and said. (Chap. xiv. 11.) But "what is impossible with men is possible with God," and here we have a splendid opportunity of

putting this truth into practical effect. Have you ever been in these circumstances morally? Death staring you in the face—not as the dissolution of the body, but as the judgment of God—and the power of evil so pressing you on towards this, that you felt it was all over with you. What could you do? “They cried out unto the Lord.” This is the only right thing. And what is the blessed answer, notwithstanding their murmuring? “Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will shew to you to-day.” Here is a new word in Bible language—*salvation*. And see the One by whom the salvation is accomplished; it is none other than the Lord Himself. “Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians *dead* upon the sea shore.” The work was complete, and the evidence of the victory remained. No wonder they can sing, in chapter xv., “The Lord hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.” They were now delivered from the power of the enemy by the direct intervention of God in power on their behalf. “There remained not so much as one of them.” There was no singing in chapter xii. How could there be? God was there acting in judgment, and the whole thought and endeavour was to keep Him away from them as far as possible. Here, on the contrary, He is acting as

a Deliverer, and the whole thought is that He may come as near as possible. Thus, you see, these two chapters are a perfect contrast in this respect; but both are necessary. Now in which of these ways do you know God—as a Judge, or a Deliverer? If you only know Him as a Judge, even though the judgment does not overtake or fall on you, you cannot have true peace, and you cannot rest, much less rejoice, in His presence. But when you see that instead of being against you in judgment He is for you in salvation, then you are truly able to sing, “The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation.” What a deliverance! Accomplished, not by keeping the enemy at bay, as the destroying angel was kept out by the blood being on the doorposts, but by the complete overthrow of every adverse power. “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” (1 John iii. 8.) Nor is this all. Not his power only but himself also is destroyed (or annulled), as we read, in Hebrews ii. 14, “That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them,” &c.

The Red Sea sets forth in figure the death of Christ, not as the place where sins are borne, but as the place where the whole power of evil has been completely annulled, and by means of which the believer is taken clean out of Egypt,

the place of judgment. Do you know and rest in the value of this truth for your own soul before God? And do you know also the value of it in your practical life in the wilderness? For I quite own that after the Red Sea has been crossed the toil and testing of the wilderness still lies before you. But what a magnificent mode of entrance on the journey! You will indeed have dangers to meet and difficulties to overcome in the wilderness; but no difficulty or danger, however great, can ever undo the glorious work accomplished at the Red Sea, or place you back again on its Egypt side. Indeed, the more you feel the difficulties of the wilderness, the plainer it becomes that you are not in Egypt; for the wilderness is just what Egypt becomes to a child of God—that is, this world, which was once to us the source of pleasure and strength, becomes to the man of faith “a desert land,” and a “waste howling wilderness”—a place in which no supplies can be found to minister in any way to the new man, a place characterized by the absence of water and the absence of way, where everything must come from above. But everything needed is supplied—guidance, sustenance, and refreshment. The pillar of fire by night and cloud by day, the manna, and the water from the smitten rock, were their constant portion till the journey was completed. But my object is not now to speak of the wilderness, but only of the



great work which (practically) lands you there. May you, my reader, know experimentally the separating power of the death of Christ. That by it you are delivered from death as the judgment of God and the power of Satan, and by it you also get complete deliverance from Egypt.

B. W. K.

### FRAGMENTS GATHERED UP.

“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 should ever 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 scapegoat, with his strong, broad back, has carried them all away into a land not inhabited.’ That calmed me. The Lord Jesus Christ is the scapegoat, is He not?”

“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, is what I mean by heaven.”

“How is it that I love strangers from another land—persons of different habits, whom I have never known—more intimately than members of my own family after the flesh ? How is it that I have thoughts in common, objects infinitely loved in common, affections powerfully engaged, a stronger bond with persons

whom I have never seen, than with the otherwise dear companions of my childhood? It is because there is in them and in me a source of thoughts and affections which is not human. God is in it. God dwells in us. What happiness! What a bond!"

"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 I have asked anything of God, and have received His answer, I then act with assurance—with the conviction that I am in the path of God's will; I am happy and contented. If I meet with some difficulty, this does not stop me; it is only an obstacle which faith has to surmount. But if I have not this certainty before I begin, I am in indecision, I know not what to do. There may be a trial of my faith, or it may be that I ought not to do what I am doing. I am in suspense, and I hesitate. Even if I am doing the will of God, I am not sure about it, and I am not happy. I ought therefore to be assured that I am doing His will before I begin to act."

"Some Christians are apt to confound these two things—special joy and abiding communion—and to suppose, because the first is not always the case, the discontinuance of the latter is to be taken and acquiesced in. This is a great mistake. Special visitations of joy may be afforded, but *constant fellowship with God* and with the Lord Jesus is the only right state, the only one recognized in Scripture. We are to rejoice in the Lord always."

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. G., SHETLANDS.—Jude 6 ; 2 Peter ii. 4 ; Job i. 7. We shall be always safe if we keep close to Scripture ; neither going beyond nor falling short of it. It is clear the first two passages teach that the angels who sinned and kept not their first estate are reserved for judgment in chains of darkness and in the deepest pit of gloom. But that Satan himself is not there, and many wicked spirits also, is equally clear. Their present seat is in the heavenlies, as we learn from Ephesians vi. 12. Moreover it was Satan who tempted the Lord Jesus in the wilderness, and the presence of the Saviour on earth seemed to make these evil beings the more manifest. Rev. xii. shows us Satan cast out of the heavenlies—in chapter xx. 2, 3, he is shut up in the bottomless pit ; and finally, in verse 10, he is cast into the lake of fire—but all that is still future. Job i. 7 simply states the fact that Satan presented himself among the mighty angels of Jehovah, and God used him as an instrument for His own ends, even as He used “a messenger of Satan” to buffet Paul. (See 2 Cor. xii. 7 ; Matthew viii. 29.)

James v. 13. We know no reason for supposing the word “Psalms” in this verse to be incorrect, rather otherwise. But we hardly think the Psalms of the Old Testament are referred to, inasmuch as the standing, position, hopes, and relationships to God of a Christian are so different from anything a Jew could possibly have known. Praise suited to a Jewish standing is scarcely what the Spirit of God would place in the mouth of a Christian. We conclude, therefore, Christian psalms are meant.

Rev. iv. 6 ; v. 6, 8. The word "beasts" in these and other verses has been more appropriately translated "living creatures"—a rendering we very much prefer.

Psalm xxxii. 1, 2. In the light of New Testament teaching the difference between iniquity, transgression, and sin is plain enough. Sin—*not* sins—refers to the principle of evil found in every individual, and which when allowed to act produces sins. Transgression is the breaking of an express command. Of course, broadly speaking, every transgression is a sin, but every sin is not a transgression. Iniquity would include any deviation from the will of God, whatever shape it might take.

Rom. viii. 7. From this solemn verse we learn that the carnal mind, or mind of the flesh, is enmity against God—is not subject to His law, neither indeed can be. How vain then the attempt to make it so. Rom. vii. 14 tells us what the individual who in the experience of his own soul is under law finds out. First, that the law is spiritual; second, that *he* is carnal or fleshly, a slave to his hard master—sin, from whose bondage he groans to be delivered. 1 Cor. iii. 3 refers to the low state of soul the Corinthian saints were in, and which resulted in low practice, of which the passage goes on to speak. It is not the same line of things as Rom. vii.

In reply to your question, as to whether it is right not only to preach the gospel to sinners, but to sing at a gospel meeting such a hymn as

"There is life for a look at the crucified One,"

we would say that for our own part we would leave the evangelist to act in such a matter as he felt free before the Lord. To such a case we believe the words in Rom. xiv. 4 apply, "Who art *thou* that judgest the servant of another? to his own master he standeth or falleth."

## CHRIST'S PRESENT MINISTRY.

## PART I.—PRIESTHOOD.

THE present ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, at God's right hand, is a great and most blessed reality, and it is a subject which we only begin properly to apprehend and appreciate after our souls have been brought into rest and peace in the presence of God—all our sins having been blotted out, judgment past, ourselves justified, and eternal life and salvation grasped as our present possession, by faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is all-important for us to understand that Christ is not engaged in any service now for those who are unsaved or unconverted. "I pray not for the world." (John xvii. 9.) Neither is He continuing or completing in heaven the work He did on the cross. Either of these thoughts would be dishonouring to God, and a slur upon the work of redemption so gloriously completed by Jesus *before* He passed hence to God's right hand.

The Lord Jesus can do no more for a lost sinner *as such* than He has already done on Calvary. He "*died* for the ungodly" (Rom. v. 6), and that death has atoned to God for sin. God is

satisfied with it, yea, glorified by it, and the sinner's salvation depends upon his having faith in God's acceptance of that death as a full satisfaction for all his sins. The sinner who *believes* in the Lord Jesus is saved, he has eternal life, has "no more conscience of sins," and shall never come into judgment; is "accepted in the Beloved," a child of God, and can never be separated from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now, mark, this is all the result of the *work* that our Saviour accomplished when down here. It was finished *here*, and He never returned to glory until He had absolutely completed the work which sets the believer in the presence of God—"perfected for ever," "as pertaining to the conscience." (Heb. ix. 9; x. 14.)

God raised Him from the dead because all was finished to God's everlasting glory.

Meeting a person one day, in the course of our conversation I expressed the hope that she was saved. "Oh," she replied, "I cannot say that; but I trust the Lord will do something for me." "You make a terrible mistake, madam; the Lord will do *nothing* for you." She appeared shocked. "No," I continued, "He *has done* all that divine wisdom, power, and love combined could do; He has *died* for you, borne the judgment of sin, glorified God in doing it, and He is now at God's right hand. If He were to do any

more to atone for your sins, it would prove His work down here had been left unfinished."

But if all this be so, what is the character of Christ's present service on high? For whom, and with what objects, is it exercised? Let us examine the word of God, and we shall ascertain.

The present ministry of the Lord Jesus divides itself into two great branches, entirely distinct one from the other. One of these is His Priesthood, the other (for the want of a better word) we must call Advocacy, or Feet-washing. The first is *preventive*, the last is *restorative*. In other words, His *Priesthood* is exercised to sustain me in my path of faith down here, and to *prevent* my giving way to sin amidst all the weakness, temptation, and opposition I have to encounter on my way through the wilderness to the Father's house. His other service—that is, His Advocacy, or Feet-washing—is exercised for me when I *have been* heedless, careless, or sinning, to *restore* me to the enjoyment of God's holy presence.

It helps us, in distinguishing between the two, to observe that Priesthood is to be found only in Hebrews, and Advocacy is to be found only in the gospel of John, and his first epistle, though there are allusions to both elsewhere.

What power there is for our souls in knowing that there is a living Christ up there in heaven for us now—the Man whose loving heart unfolded itself to us in all its depth on Calvary, occupied

actively for us every moment, in service that He will never lay down until He has us with Him and like Him in the Father's house! Then we shall no longer need a priest, for the condition of weakness will have ended; nor will our feet require washing in a scene where defilement is unknown. His service then will assume another character; for, marvellous to say, He will gird Himself once again, and make us to sit down to meat, and come forth and serve us. (Luke xii. 37.)

If it were not for this present active ministry of the Lord Jesus for us in heaven we could not get along consistently for a single hour, and I feel that it has not as prominent a place in our hearts as it ought to have.

Now let us consider His Priesthood in some of its bearings. First, let us observe that His priestly work began only *when He ascended up to heaven* after completing the work of redemption. By that work He has rendered us as fit for the presence of God as He is Himself, and as Priest He now acts to maintain us in the enjoyment of that position. "If He were on earth, He should *not* be a priest." (Heb. viii. 4.)

And yet it *was on earth* He qualified Himself, so to speak, for this blessed ministry. The eternal God has taken upon Himself humanity, that He might as Man become acquainted down here with all the sufferings and infirmities (or weaknesses) necessarily attendant upon a human



condition, in order that, having done so, He might from His place of power on the throne of God be able to succour His beloved people in perfect human sympathy and love divine, and furnish them with all the grace and strength needed to sustain them in the place He has left.

“In that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.” (Heb. ii. 18.) “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, sin apart. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb. iv. 14–16.)

And what a character and value this gives to the *life*-sufferings of the Lord Jesus! It was on the cross, when forsaken of God, that He made atonement for sin, and *only there*. His life-sufferings had no part in that wondrous work. But how needed they were to qualify Him for the service in which He is now engaged we have seen from the scriptures quoted from Heb. ii. and iv.: “Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him who was able to save Him out of death, and was heard in that He

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feared; though He were a SON, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." (Heb. v. 7.)

But again, His *death*, and the marvellous work accomplished by it, was necessary as a basis for His Priesthood. "This man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God . . . for by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," and "we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Heb. x. 10, 12, 14.)

Before the Lord Jesus could assume this service for us it was necessary that the work of atonement should be absolutely complete. In the exercise of His *Priesthood* He has not to do with sin or sins at all.

In the epistle to the Hebrews sin is looked at as so completely removed from the believer that he is fit for the holiest of all, and there is no more sacrifice for sin. If a believer sins, he will find in other parts of the New Testament how his God and Father has provided for his restoration; but not in *Hebrews*, for Christ's *Priesthood* has nothing to do with sin.

Now let us examine a little more in detail what it is that the Lord Jesus does for us as Priest.

In chap. iv. 15, already quoted, we read, He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (or weaknesses, *not our sins*), and "was in all points

tempted like as we are—sin apart,” or “sin excepted;” and in chapter ii. 18, “In that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.”

There are two words here used, namely, the word “*tempted*” and the word “*infirmities*,” the bearing of which it is all-important to grasp. “Temptation” is used in two senses in the New Testament—as to “sin” and as to “trial.” Now the Lord Jesus was not tempted by sin; “He was in all points tempted like as we are—without sin” (that is, sin apart, or sin excepted).

Satan tempted Him we know, but he “found nothing” in Him; there was no evil nature in Him as there is in us to act upon. He was in all points tempted like as we are with the one exception of sin. James says, “Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.” Clearly he does not mean “sins.” Again the Lord teaches His disciples to pray to the Father, “Lead us not into temptation.” But God would not lead His people into temptation in the sense of temptation from sin. (James i. 13.) The word here again means trial or testing.

Then as to the other word “infirmities,” we read the Lord Jesus can be touched with the feeling of our *infirmities*. Does this mean “our sins”? Certainly not. Jesus was *not* touched with the feeling of our sins, nor do we want *sympathy* from Him for our sins. God’s *wrath* was poured out

upon His blessed head for our sins, because He could have no sympathy with us in them. Some people are inclined to regard as weakness or infirmity, and to look for the Lord's sympathy in it, what ought plainly to be judged as *sin*. For instance, a bad temper. Is that an infirmity? It is *sin*, and Christ endured the woes of Calvary for it. The Lord Jesus must not be looked to for sympathy in this sin any more than in other forms of it.

In all our battlings *against* sin, and the exercises which the new man passes through in consequence, we have His fullest sympathy. When sin was presented to the Son of man down here, it caused Him the keenest spiritual suffering. In our case, when tempted with sin, how often we yield and find *pleasure* instead of horror at the barest thought of it. But if we are walking in communion with God, and something sinful is encountered, *the new man suffers*, and shrinks back from the danger, and there is safety. "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind: *for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.*" (1 Peter iv. 1.) "In that He Himself hath *suffered* being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." (Heb. ii. 18.)

To return to the subject of "infirmities." The Lord Jesus took part in human weaknesses or infirmities (Matt. viii. 17; 2 Cor. xiii. 4), and He

can therefore be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Now what are they?

Paul says, "I take *pleasure* in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, than am I strong." (2 Cor. xii. 10.) Again he says, "Most gladly therefore will I rather *glory* in my infirmities; that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (Chap. xii. 9.)

Now it would be wickedness to "take pleasure" or "glory" in "*sins*;" but a saint is enabled to "take pleasure" and "glory" in "*infirmities*." The Lord Jesus took part in them in wondrous grace to us, and His sympathies and succour support us.

What then is infirmity in this sense? Infirmity is that *weakness which naturally and of necessity attaches itself to a human condition as such*, whether it be *innocent* humanity, as Adam's before He fell; *fallen* humanity, as ours; or *holy* humanity (Luke i. 35), such as our blessed Lord's. For example, the Lord was *hungry* (Matt. iv. 2, xxi. 18); He was *thirsty* (John iv. 7); He was *wearied* (chap. iv. 6); He knew what *reproach* was (Ps. lxix. 23), and what it was to be tempted and *betrayed*.

Now it is *no sin* to be hungry or thirsty or weary! these are infirmities inseparable from a human condition under possible circumstances, and rendering such a condition a *dependent* one, so

fully so, that a *perfect* human condition is that of perfect dependence and obedience.

Can *we* not be hungry, thirsty, weary? Do *we* not know what reproach, distress, and persecution are in greater or less measure? Well, *He* felt these things, as none but *He* could, that *He* might lend to us the power of *His* wondrous sympathy. See *Him* at the grave of Lazarus, feeling with such perfect tenderness and depth the loss those two dear women had sustained. How *He* groaned in *His* spirit, and was troubled, as *He* witnessed the havoc and desolation sin and death had brought in; and those human tears expressed what words could do but imperfectly—"Jesus wept."

Yes, beloved, tried, and burdened one, *He* knows every sorrow, every pressure of thy heart; *He* has drunk deeply of every cup of human woe; *He* knows every turn of the road, having trodden the sands of our wilderness journey before us, and from *His* present place of glory and exaltation *He* ministers to us all the grace we need.

But although these infirmities that *He* shared with us down here are not *sins* they *may lead to sin in us*. *Hunger* has often led to theft; *thirst* has led millions to destruction. When *weary* is just the moment we like to be at our ease, and then is Satan's opportunity. How often has *sleep* resulted in a fall (Judges xvi. 19, 20; Matt. xxvi.

36-45, 56); but never so with Him. Reproach and persecution, testing, trial, and pressure of whatever kind, are very apt to drive us into unfaithfulness and failure; for example, Peter—and this is where the Priesthood of the Lord Jesus intervenes—by His intercession for us on high, anticipating and sheltering us from the danger.

“This Man . . . hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save to the uttermost those who come unto God by Him, seeing *He ever liveth to make intercession for them.*” (Heb. vii. 24, 25.) See also Rom. viii. 34: “Who is at the right hand of God, who also *maketh intercession for us.*”

And since “it is of necessity that this Man have somewhat also to *offer*,” therefore “through the eternal Spirit” He “*offered Himself* without spot to God;” but *not* “that He should offer Himself *often* . . . for then must He *often* have suffered . . . but now *once* in the end of the world hath He appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself,” and “after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down” (or *continuously*, in contrast to the priests who *stood* daily ministering) “on the right hand of God . . . for by *one* offering He hath perfected for ever” (or *continuously*) “them that are sanctified.” (Chap. viii. 3; ix. 14, 25, 26; x. 12, 14.)

The Lord Jesus has offered Himself *once* to God as a sacrifice for sin, and “by His own blood

He entered in *once* into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (chap. ix. 12), and the value of that one sacrifice is ever before God. *On the ground of it Jesus intercedes with God for us*, and the result is a constant supply of grace kept up to meet our every need.

And this is the double way in which we derive comfort and blessing from our great High Priest. His sympathy as the result of His *humiliation* down here on the one hand, and His intercession in His place of *exaltation* on the other, leading us to "come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace for seasonable help." (Chap. iv. 16.) With *God* He *intercedes*, to *us* He ministers His *sympathy*.

How simply the difference between Priesthood and Advocacy, or Feet-washing, is illustrated by the case of Peter. (Luke xxii. 31-33.) The Lord, foreseeing His poor disciple's danger, warns him—"Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have PRAYED for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted" (or restored; *lit.*, "hast returned back"), "strengthen thy brethren."

Here was the Lord *interceding* for Peter *before* he had failed—just as He now prays for us, knowing the constant danger to which we are exposed. But Peter does not mind the warning. "Lord," he says, apparently indignantly, "I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to



death." Just after the Lord says, "Pray that ye enter not into temptation;" but before many moments have elapsed, Peter is sleeping instead of watching and praying.

We know the rest; deeper and deeper he fell, till at last he denied his Lord with oaths and curses.

But now mark the Lord's action; too late *now* for His intercession. *Sin* had now to be dealt with. "And the Lord turned, and *looked* upon Peter. And Peter remembered *the word* of the Lord, how He had said unto him, "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice."

The *Word* entered his conscience—this is the application of the water to the feet (John xiii.)—and the bitter tears told how well it was doing its work. After the resurrection the Lord continues the work of restoration. Thrice Peter denied Him, and thrice must the searching question be put, "Lovest thou me?" And when the root of self-confidence is reached, and Peter is brought to confide in the Lord—the One he had sinned against—the Lord shows His confidence in him again by those cheering words, "Feed my sheep;" "Feed my lambs;" "Follow thou me."

Thus does this illustration help us to understand how that as Priest He intercedes for us, to anticipate or prevent failure; and as Advocate He applies the water of the *Word* (Eph. v. 26) to the conscience, when we have sinned, to restore us to communion with the Father and the Son.

There is another aspect of His priesthood presented to us in Hebrews x. and xiii. We read, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus . . . and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near," &c.

We are exhorted to enter the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus, and because our High Priest is there. He presents our *worship* and *praise* to God. (Chap. xiii. 15.) "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually; that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name."

Here we have the Lord Jesus in another character; namely, as the glorious medium through whom our worship and praise goes up to God, with all His own fragrance and sweetness added thereto.

Some have difficulty about reconciling this branch of Christ's priestly service with the nearness of our place as children with the Father, appearing, as it does, to imply a distance inconsistent with that relationship.

To such it will be helpful to note that we do not want a priest as children with our Father, and Scripture never puts priesthood in such a connection. It is as *worshippers* with God in the holiest that we "offer up spiritual sacrifices, [made] acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Peter ii. 5.)

The thought will occur to many, In what way is Aaron's priesthood a type of the Lord Jesus Christ?

The purpose of priesthood is to maintain a people in relationship with God; and this is true in principle of both Aaron's priesthood and that glorious one to which it pointed forward.

In order to this, Aaron's priesthood had, however, to do with sins, and with the offering of sacrifices for the cleansing of the people ceremonially from defilement. This is not so in the case of our great High Priest, because by one offering He made infinite satisfaction to God, and put all our sins absolutely away for ever; and since there are no sins upon any of God's children, no further sacrifice is needed.

In Aaron's day no one was "once purged," no one could speak of having "no more conscience of sins," all were alike without a purged conscience, and there was "a remembrance again made of sins every year." (Heb. x. 3.) As to us, our sins and iniquities He will remember no more; and "where remission of these is, there is *no more offering for sin.*"

So that Christ is not now offering for our sins. There is no necessity for Him to do so; for the believer's sins are gone out of God's sight and memory for ever.

In this, as in many other details, Christ's Priesthood has to be *contrasted* rather than *compared*

with Aaron's; necessarily it must be so where the reality so far surpasses the shadow.

As has already been said, however, the principle remains true in both cases; priesthood being an institution necessary to maintain God's people in relationship with Himself, and giving access to Him.

As we know, there was no *real* access to God in Aaron's day, because there was not the *absolute* putting away of sin, and this again because there was no sacrifice of sufficient value to satisfy the claims of infinite holiness.

The Aaronic priesthood fades away before the transcending glory and perfection of that of the Lord Jesus Christ, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

In the coming day of glory, when He shall reign for a thousand years, He will come forth in the Melchizedekian character of priesthood, blessing Israel and the nations. At present the *character* of His priesthood is Aaronic, although He is a Priest for ever after the *order* of Melchizedek.

In conclusion, if it be asked what provision has been made for the sins of the believer—that is, those committed after he is saved—the answer is, this has to do with the other branch of Christ's present ministry; namely, that of Advocacy, a subject which I propose to consider in a separate paper, intended as a companion to this.

J. C. T.

## THE GREAT DAY OF ATONEMENT.

LEVITICUS xvi.; HEBREWS ix.

“AND the Lord spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the Lord, and died ; and the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil before the mercy-seat, which is upon the ark ; that he die not : for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-seat.” As far as we can see, Aaron had had liberty to enter into the presence of God ; but now, after the failure of the priesthood, the offering strange fire on the part of the sons of Aaron, and his own conduct with regard to the sin-offering which should have been eaten in the holy place (chap. x. 16–20)—conduct which, though it might be styled satisfactory from one point of view, yet was not according to what the glory of God demanded—all was changed. Hence the prohibition ; Aaron can only come into the holy place within the veil upon a certain day, and under certain conditions. As he had not conducted himself according to God’s glory, God would not allow him to come into His presence in his proper priestly attire ; he must no longer wear those “robes for glory and for beauty” suitable

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to God's glory which God had had made for him ; he must now come in in a plain linen dress.

Moreover, instead of entering into the presence of God to enjoy communion with Him, he must come bringing with him the tokens of how terrible a thing sin is. His very dress as he comes in would show how great a difference there was between this time and that day when he had first put on his beautiful garments ; and, while to enter God's presence without blood in his hands would now be certain death, yet even with it he did not now enter, that he might remain there. Having sprinkled the blood to make atonement in the holy place, he must come out again.

“He shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins : and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.” Even the tabernacle, God's house, was defiled ; for here it is a question, not so much of sin as it appears in the form of rebellion, revolt against God's majesty as with Nadab and Abihu, but of sin in its uncleanness—the discrepancy between it and the glory of God.

In the ninth and tenth chapters of the epistle to the Hebrews we have this chapter of Leviticus put into New Testament language. Sin is rebellion, it is revolt against God's majesty, and it is

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also unclean; but the atoning work of Christ meets it alike in its rebellion and in its uncleanness. If one were to draw a circle, and put dots all round it, and then fasten upon every one of those dots some character of sin till all was defined, the atoning work of Christ has met them each and all. Moreover, there is not a point in the nature and character of God, which had been outraged and violated by sin, which has not been glorified by Christ. Was man abominable and filthy? Christ was the Holy One of God. Was man selfish? Jesus Christ pleased not Himself. There is not a black speck which sin has brought in that is not effaced by the glory of Christ. And He is the One of whom we read in wonderful contrast with the high priest of Leviticus xvi.

“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.”

Now, in the glory instead of the eye of God lighting upon a blot, it lights upon Christ; so, when you go into the presence of God through faith in Him and His precious blood, with what confidence you can enter there! Let us consider who He is who has gone in. What is the glory of the Person who by His own blood entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption. The One who is presented in type in Lev. xvi. 12, as taking the sweet incense within the veil, is the One who goes to offer the blood of the

sacrifice. From chapter xxii. we find that the high priest must be perfect, and the sacrifice must be perfect also. Who then is He who comes into the presence of God to make atonement? The One who fills the heart of God with ineffable delight—"His beloved Son in whom He is well pleased." It is by His work that the black circle of sin has been put out of sight, and only the white circle of grace and truth remains; for where sin was, Christ is.

We may ask, What is atonement? The Spirit of God writes the definition of that word upon the heart, when He points to the cross of Christ. The meaning of the word in Scripture is that you cover something, as Noah did—and there the word is first used—when he pitched the ark with pitch. He put something upon it which completely covered it, and put it out of reach of the elements around. The same root-word, expressing in a substantive form the thing that covers, is used for the mercy-seat. Is sin upon the mercy-seat? No; the precious blood of Christ, which has put sin clean out of sight, is there; that precious blood is the atonement, the thing which covers. Upon the mercy-seat, which is itself the covering of the ark, was the blood—the covering of blood—and upon that the cherubim of glory looked down. This covering of blood upon the mercy-seat typified that atoning work of Christ, which is such that sin is by it covered, forgotten, buried as in the



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depths of the sea, no longer to be seen while the glory of God is by it fully maintained.

Christ, by whom all the glory of God has been vindicated, is the One of whom I can draw nigh into the presence of God. I have not to ransack my soul for some reason why I may come into His presence. It is enough that God has been glorified by Christ, and He is the one by whom I approach, with none of the distrust so natural to my condition as a sinner. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having a High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

Why does the blood of Christ make the conscience perfect? Not because it produces any effect upon *me*; but the Spirit of God brings home to me the assurance that the glory of God has been met, and that the One with whom I have to do is the One who has perfectly glorified God. There could be no flaw in the Priest, no flaw in the Sacrifice. Thus in Hebrews we have a perfect Priest, a perfect Sacrifice, and a perfect conscience; for only perfection could do for God.

"For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean,

sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

This is where faith attaches itself; this is where the conscience becomes perfect. One has been found—a spotless One—who could offer Himself. There is a pure spiritual power (the Eternal Spirit) whereby He accomplishes the act. By nature I am in darkness, and God is in the light. I needed a priest to take me into God's presence; and, as a sacrifice, I needed that which was fit for that presence. If the smallest cloud had ever passed between Christ and the Father, then He would have been unfit; but there never was a spiritual motion between the Father and the Son in all eternity which was not in perfect harmony. By that Eternal Spirit He was born, in time was baptised, was anointed, lived, and finally offered Himself spotless to God. But God raised Him from the dead, and glorified Him at His own right hand. We are speaking of what took place between God and Christ when you and I were not there at all. And when, by faith, the soul finds itself upon that ground, it learns its right of entrance into the holiest, that Christ has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and that now, where sin did appear in the presence of God against it, Christ does appear, and that to the glory of God; and that is the atonement.

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“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” The high priest of Leviticus xvi. had to go out of the holy place, for the blood which he brought in did not make atonement; it was impossible that it could put away sin. For if God’s whole nature had been perfectly satisfied, if He had been glorified by the offering of the blood of bulls and of goats, Aaron need not have left the holy place. In Hebrews x. the Priest remains, for the work is done. There is no more to accomplish, and so Christ sits as Priest on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heaven. Faith looks there and sees Him, His offering presented, and His presence there the proof that His work has been perfectly accomplished. Faith recognises that where man has been disobedient Christ has been obedient. It knows that while man has been as a beast before God, yea, worse, Christ has been owned as His beloved Son; it owns that God has been perfectly glorified by Christ, and that in virtue of His perfect work the soul of the believer stands spotless and unrebukable in the light of His presence. May God by His Spirit direct your eye and your heart to Christ, that you may see that the question is not of us and of our sin, but of the accomplished work of Christ, whereby He has glorified God in making atonement for it.

E. C.

## UNTO CHRIST, BY HIM, AND FOR HIM.

Two Christians were speaking together upon their privileges and responsibilities, when one of them said, "I think the first thing for a Christian is, to do all the good he can."

"I do not," replied the other; "for God's word shows that to be the third thing."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, turn to Hebrews xiii. 12-16, and you will see, 'Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.'"

Now we learn here that Jesus suffered without the gate; that is, outside the Jewish order of things, which was defiled and coming unto judgment, that He might sanctify (or set apart) the people with His own blood; and then follow three exhortations for the Christian, and the order in which they are presented is most important. Doing good, you will find, comes third.

First, "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach;" that is,

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get into the right company, in a right position. Christ is outside the Jewish order of things revived in Christendom under other names; and the Christian is first of all to be found in His company. He is not exhorted to go forth without the camp unto Him, but unto Him without the camp. *His person* is the attraction. He suffered outside, and He takes His place outside, and He would have us *with Him*. What heart that beats true to Him will not desire to be found there? That is where His presence is known and enjoyed. Could we be in better company? May every Christian reader of these lines be found there.

Secondly, "*By Him* therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name." This is sure to be the spontaneous result if the soul is in communion with Him. Get into His company, and the joy of His presence, and the glories of His person, revealed to the soul by the Holy Ghost, will surely cause the heart to overflow in worship, praise, and thanksgiving; and the lips will be found expressing the heart's joy in the ear of God. One continual stream of praise will ascend to God *by Him*. In the company of Christ, in a right position, with the soul in communion, God, and what is due to Him, will be before us, ere we think of man.

Thirdly, "But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." The activity of the love of God in the

Christian towards his fellow-men comes third and last. To do good, &c., is perfectly right, but the glory of Christ stands first; and the worship of God stands before service towards men. The order is most instructive. And how are we to do good? To express Christ morally in our ways. He went about doing good. And if we are walking in the power of the Spirit, who dwelleth in us, *goodness* will manifest itself in innumerable ways in ministering *for Him*, both to the souls and bodies of those around us. And the heart being happy, and confident in God as to temporal resources, liberality will characterize us in communicating of our substance for the benefit of others. Selfishness will depart, self being displaced by Christ.

The divine order then is to go forth *to Christ* first, to praise God *by Him* second, and to do good *for Him* (that is, in His name) third.

Fellow-Christian, do you answer to this?

E. H. C.

### THE SECRET OF SUCCESS.

“THIS book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.” (Joshua i. 8, 9.)

# “LET US DRAW NEAR.”

HEBREWS x. 11-22.

Not as the Jew of old we come,  
 Outside an unrent veil,  
 Whose mystic curtains barred access  
 To Him whose truth and righteousness  
 Required that “better sacrifice,”  
 Whose blood doth still avail

To open wide the way to God,  
 And bring the sinner near,  
 With not a cloud to dim the sight,  
 Without a shadow in the light,  
 Where all is holy, all is bright,  
 And love has cast out fear.

Our terror now for ever gone,  
 As worshippers we come ;  
 The blood still meets His holy sight,  
 Has cleansed our sins as snow so white,  
 And now in peace, though God is light,  
 His presence is our home.

In spirit now, where He is gone  
 Soon we ourselves shall go,  
 There gaze upon His glorious face,  
 Our bodies suited to the place,  
 And praise the glory of His grace,  
 Who stooped for us so low.

Thrice-blessed Lord, our hearts are cheered—  
 “Behold, I quickly come.”  
 The night’s far spent, the day is near,  
 The Morning Star will soon appear,  
 Thy gathering shout we wait to hear,  
 That calls us to Thee—home.

There to be like Thee, Jesus, Lord,  
 Though so unlike Thee now ;  
 As sons before a Father’s face,  
 We’ll share Thy home, and share Thy place,  
 And share Thy throne ! Oh, wondrous grace !  
 Our hearts in worship bow.

W. M.  
 B.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

M. T. A., SOUTHAMPTON.—Neither Matthew v. 34 nor James v. 12 refers to a judicial oath. The Lord is dealing with the conduct of His disciples individually, and not their relations to “the powers that be.” It is a matter of ordinary communication, not an oath before a magistrate. From the verses that follow in Matthew v., we see that it was no uncommon thing among the Jews for a man to swear by heaven or by earth, by Jerusalem or by his own head, and it is against such a practice that the Lord speaks. He would have His disciples simple in their communications. A Christian with a “weak conscience,” if obliged to give evidence in a court of justice, might have serious objections to his taking an oath; and were he to take it he would sin against his conscience and probably plunge himself into distress. Esteeming it to be a wrong act, to him it would be wrong. This principle is laid down in Romans xiv. 14. But the two passages you quote have, in our judgment, no reference to oaths of that kind, nor do we know of any other that forbids a judicial oath being taken by a follower of the Lord.

A. G., SHETLANDS.—The last trump among the Romans was the signal for all to start from the camp. They sounded one trumpet, and pulled down their tents; then a second, and put themselves in order; and when the last was sounded, they all started. It is the same idea in 1 Thess. iv. We have three there: the Lord first; then the archangel carrying it on; and then the trump of God that completes all.



## “ K E P T . ”

“ Kept by the power of God through faith.” — 1 PETER i. 5.

WE were visiting some time ago an aged child of God lying on her death-bed. During our talk with her she said, “ I always believed that if I held fast to the Lord, He would bring me safely through and take me to heaven in the end ; but I have seen for a good while now, that it is not so much my holding fast of Him as His holding fast of me, and the difference is great.”

What say you to that, Christian reader ? Was this dear old soul right ? Is it a question of the Shepherd’s strength rather than the sheep’s ? Of His keeping you rather than your keeping yourself ? If so, what a difference it makes ! as great a difference as there is between the strength of a grasshopper and that of the Lord God Almighty.

It is of moment that this point be clearly seen. Imagine yourself in a boat. From some cause it capsizes, and you are thrown into the water. Unable to reach the shore, there seems nothing before you but a watery grave. Your struggles are without avail, your strength is gone, and you are about to sink from sheer exhaustion, when, lo, a strong man swims out to your rescue. If your

reaching land is made to depend on your maintaining a firm hold of him, you will never get there, for strength you have none; but if it depends on his being able to bring you to shore, the case is altered. In the one instance, everything hinges on the endurance of an exhausted drowning man; and in the other, on the power of one who is more than equal to the task he has undertaken.

But the thought of thousands is, that everything turns on their holding fast to Christ. Perhaps it has been yours too. If this be true, then your safety is exactly measured by your power to persevere. In proportion as your efforts relax, your prospects of salvation become dark and doubtful; whereas, if Scripture is to be believed, the eternal safety of the feeblest believer is connected with the ability of Christ to keep him. Is the Shepherd able so to keep His sheep that none shall ever pluck them out of His hand? He Himself says He is; and He assures us that they shall never perish. (John x. 28.) Shall His words in eternity be found true or false?

“True,” says one, “If we remain sheep to the end, we shall never perish; but if we don’t, we shall. Have you never read of the dog returning to its vomit, and the sow that was washed, to its wallowing in the mire?”

We have indeed; but we know of no occasion on which the true child of God has been likened

to a sow or dog. A sow, if washed, is a sow still; and as for dogs, we are warned to beware of them. (Phil. iii. 2.) But are you really serious in your objection? Do you see what your words involve? In effect this is what you say: “If we are sheep of Christ to-day, still we must not suppose that we shall never perish; and though no one can pluck us from His hand, we may pluck ourselves therefrom, and thus cease to be His sheep. But if in the very last moment of our dying we are still His sheep, then we shall never perish, nor shall any pluck us from His hand.”

Is there then, we would ask, any danger of perishing in heaven? Is there any one there who will seek to catch us away from Christ?

No; the Saviour's words are not to be tortured and frittered away thus. They are intended for earth, to give confidence to His timid sheep in the midst of dangers seen and unseen. Not carnal confidence, but the confidence of faith—confidence in the Shepherd's power to keep the sheep given to Him by His Father, God. “My Father, who gave them me,” He said, “is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.” (John x. 29, 30.)

Yes, He who is “*greater than all*” holds us in His hand. His power compasses us about. Let the feeblest lamb of Christ's flock remember that He who is “GREATER THAN ALL” will keep him safe. “Kept by the power of God.”

“Should all the hosts of death,  
And powers of hell unknown,  
Put their most dreadful forms  
Of rage and mischief on,  
I shall be safe ; for Christ displays  
Superior power and guardian grace.”

“Kept by the power of God *through faith*.” Faith is the means. We are not kept apart from it as if we were inanimate objects without heart and conscience, as a man might keep a bag of gold. And this faith is sustained by Him who ever lives for us in heaven, and carries on His gracious work for us there as our Advocate with the Father and our High Priest with God. “I have prayed for thee, that *thy faith* fail not,” said the Lord to Peter. Now Peter failed, as we well know, awfully failed, for he denied that he ever knew the Lord, and emphasized it with oaths and curses. But his faith, which, apart from the prayer of Jesus, might have given place to despair, did not fail; and, therefore, when the Lord looked upon Peter with that look of sorrow, compassion, and love unutterable, the strong man went out and wept bitterly.

And this point Bunyan pictures in his *Pilgrim's Progress*. He relates how on one occasion Christian saw a fire burning against a wall, and one standing against it always casting much water upon it to quench it; yet the fire burned higher and hotter. Christian could not understand this, so he asked the meaning of it. Whereupon Interpreter

took him by the hand and led him behind the wall, where he saw a man with a vessel of oil in his hand, of which he constantly poured upon the fire; thus it was kept burning in spite of every effort to put it out.

The fire of faith in the believer's heart shall never be extinguished, however low it may sometimes burn, for it is fed by the unwearying hand of our living Saviour. So it is written, “Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you, *will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*” And again, “Who shall also confirm you *unto the end*, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor. i. 8.)

Are you afraid, dear fellow-Christian, to believe in your eternal safety lest you should grow careless in your every-day life? Do you imagine that the assurance of salvation leads to ungodliness? Stay, think, Is there no other incentive to personal holiness, higher, nobler, stronger, than fear of being lost for ever? Was that the motive that kept the feet of the Lord Jesus in the path of obedience when He “took upon Him the form of a servant”? And if it be said that we have sin in us, and He had not, we admit it fully; but does the absence of sin in Him account for His perfect obedience to the will of God? Did He not *delight* to do it? Did not His holy nature *love* to move in a path always in accordance with

His Father's will? And is it not thus, in their measure, with the angels? Do they serve in order to escape divine wrath and win heaven? Such questions carry with them their own answer, and force the most unwilling mind to recognize that the highest obedience springs from love—love begotten in the heart by the knowledge and belief of God's love—“We love Him because He first loved us.”

Nor must it be forgotten that the eternal life which the believer now receives is the very same life as dwells in Christ Himself. So truly is this so that Scripture speaks of Christ as being our life. (Col. iii. 4.) All the features of this life were conspicuously and perfectly displayed in Him when here on earth, and joyful obedience was one of them, as we know. The very instincts of this eternal life lead us to desire to yield ourselves to God, even as the Lord did; for we are set apart to the obedience as well as the blood of sprinkling of Jesus Christ;—that is, to obey as He obeyed. (1 Peter i. 2.)

Along with the unshaken conviction that we shall be securely kept goes the sense of our own personal weakness. And this grows upon us, and the truth of it is wrought within our souls. We would not have it otherwise; “for when,” as Paul says, “I am weak, then am I strong.” (2 Cor. xii. 10.) This is a divine paradox, but the believer knows well how to explain it. He knows that his weakness makes room for the power of Christ

to rest upon him ; that he is only strong when he is weak, and able to do all things when he can do nothing. The firmest persuasion that we shall reach heaven and home at last never takes us off the ground of dependence upon God. The same mighty hand that plucked us as brands from the burning must keep us every hour. Thus our souls are rightly balanced. On the one side, strong in faith, we are fully persuaded that what He has promised He is able also to perform ; and on the other, conscious of our constant need of Him, His grace, His strength, we learn to trust and lean upon Him more and more.

Let us not fear to receive the words of our Lord in the trustful spirit of a little child, who harbours no doubt in his unsuspecting mind. Strong faith is always simple, and in its simplicity lies its strength. Out of the hand of the “great Shepherd of the sheep” none shall catch us, nor out of the hand of Him “who is greater than all.” The feeblest lamb is safe while Jesus lives. Neither ravening wolf nor roaring lion shall make a prey of him. “He *shall* keep the feet of His saints.” (1 Sam. ii. 9.) And when thou, timid, trembling believer, shalt have reached the heavenly shores, and passed into the unveiled presence of Christ, who loved and loves you so well, thou wilt then gladly own that in thy pilgrimage through this land of pits, of drought, and of the shadow of death, thou wast “KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD” from the beginning to the end.

## CHRIST'S PRESENT MINISTRY.

### PART II.—ADVOCACY ; OR, FEET WASHING.

IN considering the subject that forms the title of this paper let us turn to the passages in the New Testament—one in the first epistle of John (chaps. i. ii.), the other in his gospel. (Chap. xiii. 1–7.) These scriptures bring before us one branch of the service carried on now by the Lord Jesus in heaven on behalf of His redeemed ones who are still on earth. The other branch is His Priesthood, which has been dwelt upon in another paper.\*

Now it is necessary for our souls to be perfectly clear as to the fact that the present ministry of our Lord for us is *based* on the *work* which He has *already completed* when down here, by which the sins of the believer have been absolutely and for ever put away (Heb. x. 17), sin in the flesh condemned (Rom. viii. 3), and judgment executed, and past, because infinitely endured by the Lord Jesus as our Substitute on the cross.

A thousand difficulties which believers are troubled with would be avoided did they at the outset of their Christian career but apprehend clearly what has been accomplished by the death and resurrection of Christ, and then the nature of His *present* service in heaven would get its distinctive and peculiarly blessed place in their souls.

\* *Christ's Present Ministry*, Part I. "Priesthood."



From whence come all the doubts and fears so constantly found in the hearts of God's dear children? How is it that souls are not more generally resting without question and in peace upon His finished work? And why is it that "assurance of salvation" is so frequently thought to be the privilege of a few, instead of what it is—the common and proper blessing of *all* the family of God on earth?

Just because what we call "Christ's *finished* work" is not really *believed* to be *finished*, and *self* is looked to, to supplement by feelings, or faith, or walk, or experience, what admits of no addition; and this again results from not having honestly believed God, that "in me, that is, in my flesh, good does not dwell." (Rom. vii. 18, New Trans.)

Reader, are you doubting your salvation? And if so, why? Is it because you don't feel happy? or because you have not love enough? or because you live so inconsistently? Ah! you are looking at self, and confounding the value God sets upon Christ's work for you, with your own poor estimate of it as proved by your walk or experience. What a mistake!

Your (the believer's) sins, past, present, and to come (only we should not think of or expect to sin in the future), have been atoned for by the Lord Jesus on the cross. Sin in the flesh—the source from whence they came—has been condemned in His death (Rom. viii. 3); and God sees you now alive in Christ risen, "accepted in the Beloved," and "made the righteousness of God in Him." (Eph. i. 6; 2 Cor. v. 21.)

All the evil of your nature, the badness of your

heart, and the shortcomings of your Christian course, were fully before the mind of God when Jesus died; and there a complete end of all that you are, as well as all that you have done, was *judicially* made.

"Yes," says some believer, "I see that the Lord bore all my *past* sins, but what am I to do about my *everyday and my future sins*? This is what troubles me so much."

Such a question is, I am persuaded, but expressing the difficulty of countless numbers of the Lord's dear people, and it is my earnest desire in dwelling a little on this point that many of them may be led to see the fallacy that lies at the root of it. For before we can profitably look into the subject more immediately before us, it is necessary to be perfectly clear as to this question of eternal forgiveness.

To such then I would put this question, *When* were your sins atoned for? The answer must be, On Calvary more than 1800 years ago.

How many of your sins were "*future*" when the Lord Jesus died for them? *All* were future of course—*all* the sins of your lifetime, from birth until death, or until the Lord comes.

Then, when you speak of your "*future sins*," you mean the sins you committed after your conversion. But, dear reader, consider. Did the Lord Jesus only make atonement for the sins you committed up to the date of your conversion, and leave out any you might commit after that date? Surely this is not the case.

When He died for you He bore *all* your sins right on to the end of your path. **THEY WERE**

ALL FUTURE TO CHRIST WHEN HE BORE THEM. Not one of them had then been committed; you had not then been born, much less "born again;" and therefore you cannot but see that it is a foolish mistake to make a distinction between the sins committed before and after your conversion, where *atonement*, or your own acceptance with God on the ground of it, is concerned.

That there *is* a difference, and a very important one, I do not deny. In the *one* case, they were the sins of a poor unsaved, unregenerate sinner, who could do nothing but sin; in the *other* case, they were the sins of a child of God, whose privilege and responsibility it is to walk in holiness.

But do not imagine that the Lord Jesus had not *all* your sins, of every sort, and of each period of your life, upon Him when He gave Himself for you to death.

Why, to maintain such a doctrine would be, in principle, to reduce Christianity to the level of Judaism.

Turn to Heb. ix. and x., and see the contrast there drawn between the two systems as to this very point. On the great day of atonement—once a year (Lev. xvi.)—the high priest made atonement (in figure) for all the sins of Israel for the past year. Two goats were taken, one of which was slain, and its blood carried into the holiest of all by the high priest, and sprinkled *upon* and *before* the mercy-seat. Upon the head of the other goat were confessed the sins of the people, which was then led away, and let go in the wilderness; and we read that "on that day shall the priest make atonement for you, to cleanse

you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord." (v. 30.)

But, alas! for the sinner who lived in that day this cleansing did not go for much; for "the Holy Ghost" was thus "signifying that the way into the holiest of all was *not yet made manifest* while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that *could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience.*"

The great day of atonement was the important day; for it was only on that day—once in each year—that the high priest went into the holiest of all, and placed the blood on and before the mercy-seat, which laid the foundation of Jehovah's relationship with Israel. But forgiveness of sins in an absolute sense could not be proclaimed, and was not known.

The consequence was, that each fresh sin required a fresh sacrifice, and the forgiveness then pronounced had reference only to each particular offence. (Lev. iv. 26, 31, 35.)

So that whether we look at the broad basis upon which the whole Levitical system rested, as presented in the sacrifices of the great day of atonement (Lev. xvi.), or at the everyday sacrifices for sins in detail (Lev. iv.), all was imperfect. "For the law, having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never, by those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect."

The sacrifice of Christ was pointed to, no doubt, by the blood of these animals shed for 1500 years.

But the results of the one system are in direct contrast to the results of the other, inasmuch as the reality infinitely exceeded all that could be shadowed forth in the type. And this the following passages will prove :

- |             |   |  |
|-------------|---|--|
| The Law .   | { | " Could <i>not</i> make him that did the service <i>perfect</i> , as pertaining to the conscience." (Heb. ix. 9.)  |
| The Gospel. |   | " By one offering He hath <i>perfected for ever</i> them that are <i>sanctified</i> ." " How much more shall the blood of Christ . . . <i>purge your conscience ?</i> " " The worshipper <i>once purged</i> [has] <i>no more conscience of sins</i> ." (Heb. x. 14 ; ix. 14 ; x. 2.) |
| The Law .   | { | " A <i>remembrance</i> again made of sins every year." (Chap. x. 3.)   |
| The Gospel. |   | " Their sins and iniquities will I <i>remember no more</i> ." (Chap. x. 17.)   |
| The Law .   | { | " Every priest <i>standeth</i> daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins." (Chap. x. 11.)   |
| The Gospel. |   | " But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, <i>sat down</i> on the right hand of God." (Chap. x. 12.)  |

Now here are three points of direct contrast as to the results ; namely :

1. The conscience is purged, perfected for ever.
2. Sins are forgiven and forgotten.
3. And the One who accomplished the work has *sat down* at God's right hand, because His work was so perfectly done that there was no more a question to be raised or settled as to sin.

But people will admit the difference between the *value* of the sacrifice of an animal and of the Son of God ; but as to the *results*, the constant tendency all over Christendom is to limit the practical blessings flowing from the work of the Lord Jesus to that which resulted from the Levitical order of things.

The great point of contrast I desire to press here, however, is this : The blood of bulls and goats served only to bring sins to constant remembrance. The blood of Christ has purged the believer's sins, and God's testimony being believed as to the perfection of that blood, his conscience as to them is perfected for ever. The efficacy of the blood is eternal, and on the ground of it God could look all along the ages prospectively, and not only put away the believer's sins up to the date of his conversion, but all the sins of his lifetime.

How blessed to know and tenaciously cling to the fact that our "sins and iniquities He will remember no more," and that there never can be any interruption to our constant, unchanging *acceptance* with God, which is unaffected by any state of ours !

From this it must be clear, that if a believer sins again God has not ceased to love him, and

this sin does not come up against him for future judgment. Assuredly not. It has been met by judgment infinitely executed, and therefore for ever past. The work of Christ on Calvary would have to be undone, and the blood to lose its value in God's sight, before these things could take place.

But although his salvation is not touched, his enjoyment of it has been interrupted. His happiness as a child in the Father's presence has been broken, and communion would never again be possible were it not for the present ministry of Christ as the Advocate or Restorer of our souls.

How soon after the truth of redemption was brought home to us, giving us salvation and peace with God, did we allow the flesh to get up again and lead us into sin and sorrow! Ah! what vile hearts we have! We thought perhaps we had done with sinning for the future; but, alas! though God gives us the power to resist the devil, and tells us to "walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Gal. v. 16), the flesh is in us still in all its old, unchanged evil (though we are not in it if the Spirit of God dwell in us), and ready at any moment to break out in rebellion against God, should we grow careless, and take our eyes off the Lord Jesus, and fail in the energy of faith that reckons ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Him.

Not that the *existence* of an evil nature in us need disturb communion with God (for none of us could ever enjoy it on earth if that were the case), but *allowing* it, even in the smallest thought or act, does. And, as has been said, if communion be broken, and our souls have lost

their happiness, the service on high of the Lord Jesus becomes necessary before we can be restored.

His Priesthood is exercised in connection with our WEAKNESS (not sins) to maintain us in consistency with our place in the cloudless light before God, that we may not sin.

His Advocacy is exercised in connection with our SINS AND FAILURES, to *restore* us to fellowship with the Father when we *have* sinned.

The epistle to the Hebrews treats of the one, and the passages alluded to in the epistle and gospel of John deal with the other. It is with the latter we are now concerned.

The blessed Lord was about to "depart out of this world unto the Father." "Having come from God," we read "He went to God," the work the Father had given Him to do being *finished*. And now the question might arise, "Will He forget us when He is away at the Father's right hand?"

How sweetly the question is answered by those words which follow: "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." Oh, no! He could not forget those for whom He bled and died. He has only passed from one scene of service on earth, to another scene of service in heaven.

He has said, as it were, in the language of the Hebrew servant, "I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free." (Exod. xxi.) His ears have been "digged" (compare Ps. xl. 6; Heb. x. 5; Isa. l. 4; Exod. xxi. 5, 6), and He has become a servant *for ever*.

As to the *past*. "The Son of man came not to



be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Matt. xx. 28.)

As to the *present*. He is serving us by His Priesthood, on the one hand, and as Advocate on the other. And

As to the *future*. He soon will come for us, to take us to be with Himself for ever; and then will He gird Himself once more, and make us to sit down to meat, and come forth and serve us. (Luke xii. 37.)

Well indeed may it be said, that having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them right on to the end.

Having by His death and resurrection absolutely fitted us for heaven, His ministry now on high is directed to making us *fit for earth*, seeking to keep us in communion with the Father and Himself, or to restore us if we fail.

"My little children, I write unto you that ye sin *not*. And *if* any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins." (1 John ii. 12.)

You see it is not, "If any man sin, we have no hope," or "never can call God Father again," but, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father," who is the propitiation for our sins, and He proceeds to do what is necessary to restore our souls to the enjoyment of God's holy presence.

It is not that in the capacity of *Advocate* He intercedes for us with the *Father* when we *have* sinned. *That* He does as *Priest* with *God* to *prevent* us sinning; but when we disregard the warnings that ever go before, and give way to sin, then the *action* of the Lord Jesus is with *us*.

The expression, "We have an Advocate with the Father," would naturally convey the thought of pleading for us when we have sinned; but the translation is misleading, though it is difficult to substitute a better. It is the same Greek word as is rendered "comforter" in speaking of the Holy Ghost (John xiv. 16); but neither would that word convey the sense. It is One who manages our affairs. We have such an One with the Father, the full value of whose blood is ever before God, and on the ground of it He acts for and with us when failure has come in. Not, I judge, that He *does* anything with the Father, but He is *there* in all the perfection of His Person, and the unchangeable value of His work; the action is, as it seems to me, wholly with *us*, and what that action is John xiii. opens up.

"Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God, He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded."

Here we have in symbol the action which the Lord Jesus in deepest, richest grace proceeds to take as our Advocate to restore our souls to communion when we have grieved and sinned against God.

It is sometimes rather lightly said, that if we have sinned we have but to confess the sin to God, and we shall be restored. There is truth in the statement, but it would convey a very shallow appreciation of the facts. For before there can be

real self-judgment and confession the Lord Jesus has first to act. Think of the Son of God stooping to take our dirty feet into His hands! In other words, He has to reach down from His place in glory, and address Himself to our condition, and by applying the water of the Word (Eph. v. 26) to our consciences and hearts, to bring home to us what a grievous thing it is to have *sinned in, and against the Light* into which we have been brought!

If I have sinned and grieved my Father, I am just as much His child as ever; but communion is absolutely broken; I am not happy, and never again could I be so, if the Lord Jesus did not stoop down once more to my need, and apply the water of the Word to cleanse my conscience and heart of the defilement.

I believe the Lord sometimes allows us to remain for a while under the cloud we have brought in between us and Himself, that He may produce a deeper judgment of the evil, and teach us how dependent we are upon Him for restoration to the enjoyed sense of His presence.

Peter resists the Lord; but how solemn are His words, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Communion broken cannot be restored without divine intervention. Confession of our failure *follows* this action, and cannot, to be real, precede it.

And is it not good for our souls to know that if we by carelessness have brought in a cloud, it is not in our power to remove it when we will, but are wholly dependent for it upon the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Peter then yields, but makes the condition, "Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head;" to which the Lord replies, "He that is *bathed* needeth

not save to *wash* his feet, but is clean every whit." The figure is very simple, and beautifully instructive.

The great washing or bathing took place when divine life was imparted to our souls (John iii. 5), and this *never* requires repetition. We are "clean every whit," according to the new life and nature we have received. The person might get his feet soiled, however, on his return from having his whole body bathed, and they would therefore require re-cleansing.

Bear in mind that we are only once "*born* of water and of the Spirit" (chap. iii. 5); but, alas! how many times our *feet* have required to be washed again, because our *walk* has been bad!

"Clean every whit" is the unchanging condition of the believer, and never can a stain again appear *upon* him in the sight of God, not only because he has been cleansed and pardoned once, and for ever, but because he has been made partaker of the divine nature, which last is more the thought in John xiii., both the bathing and the feet-washing being by water. The Blood, of course, is the foundation of all, as we read in 1 John i. 7—"If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Here we have three characteristics of the Christian position and condition as the apostle John presents it to us—the common and unchanging privileges of all believers, however little known.

1. We walk in the light.
2. We have fellowship one with another.
3. The blood cleanses from all sin.

If a man has divine life he must be walking *in* the light, though he may not be walking *according* to the light. "Now ARE ye light in the Lord: *walk as children of light.*" (Eph. v. 8.)

1. What an awful thought it is, that if a child of God sins he sins *in the light*, because he cannot get out of it!

2. We have fellowship one with another, a family privilege belonging to all the children of God as such. Let us seek to enjoy it more thoroughly.

3. "And the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." This is the property that belongs to the blood.

Mark well, this clause is not stating the remedy for a Christian's failure, which is the general thought. If this were so, it would read, "If we do NOT walk in the light . . . . His blood . . . . cleanseth us from all sin." But the passage says, "If we walk in the light," not, if we don't.

Provision for failure is to be found further on, but this verse is stating what is always true as to the value of the precious blood. It is sometimes contended that because the verb is in the present tense—"cleanseth"—it teaches that the blood goes on cleansing the believer daily, which is a very great mistake.

The blood *has* cleansed us if we are children of God, and never requires to be reapplied, although, of course, its efficacy is ever before God as the ground of all His ways with us in love.

The passage, as has been said, is speaking in the abstract of three special features of the Christian position and privilege, and when it is said of the

blood that it "cleanses us from all sin," the Spirit of God refers to the PROPERTY belonging to the blood.

The question here is not whether it *has* cleansed or *is* cleansing, but that it is the property of the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, to cleanse us from all sin. As we might say of a medicine, "That medicine cures such and such a disease."

If we fail, it is not the blood, but another application of the *water* that is needed for the feet to restore us to the *enjoyment* of our place in the light, and to fellowship with the Father and the Son, and with one another.

The blood once shed has determined my place for ever as a child of God in the light, and it never requires reapplication. My enjoyment of that place is quite another thing, and depends upon my walk and behaviour; and where there is negligence as to this the blessed Lord applies the water of the Word to the conscience, and brings the erring one to judge himself, and this leads to confession.

"If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Observe, Scripture does not say, "If we pray for forgiveness," but, "If we confess our sins." It is a very much more difficult thing to make a true and real *confession* of our sin, tracing it out from the beginning, and to its source in our own hearts, than merely to ask for forgiveness.

If we are honest and genuine in telling our God and Father all about it, judging ourselves in the most unsparing manner, He assures us He is

*faithful* and *just* to forgive us. He owes it, so to speak, to the blood of Christ to do so.

Now this is the *Father's forgiveness* of *His child*, and we must not confound it with God's forgiveness of the *sinner as such* at his conversion.

As to this latter, we read (Acts xiii. 38), "Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all that believe are justified from all things." This is *absolute* and for ever. His sins are *gone*, and never can judgment come upon him hereafter.

If I break down after I am saved, I have not lost my place in the family of God, nor do I need to come again as a guilty sinner to be pardoned. I am still a child of God as much as ever, but a *naughty* one, and cannot *enjoy* my Father's love. I need to be broken and humbled, and smashed to pieces in heart and conscience, and then after full confession, to receive *my Father's* forgiveness.

Had you a naughty child, would you turn that little one out of doors, and disown it as your child, because it had sinned? Certainly not. Then why impute to our loving God what you would not tolerate in a human being?

Nay; but how gladly and ungrudgingly He yields to me His forgiveness! And then the clouds are broken, and once more the sun of my Father's countenance beams into my soul in all its warmth and brightness. I am now not only *in* the light, but I seek to walk *as* a child of light, and *enjoy* fellowship with the Father and the Son and the beloved people of God.

And the lesson—bitter as it has been—will not be forgotten, or be barren of result; for the Lord, in His wisdom and love, makes our very failures

contribute to our blessing. We learn to be humble and dependent, and to walk softly, and keep in the sense of His grace, having proved the wretched character of our own hearts, and thus can be used to others. "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet." See what a different man Peter was after his fall from what he was before it; and how blessedly he obeyed the words of his Master to him: "When thou art converted [restored], strengthen thy brethren."

Marvellous indeed is the grace we have to do with, and full is the provision that grace has made for us, to keep us all our journey through

"Till travelling days are done!"

Let us not then trifle with anything that would bring a cloud of moral distance between our souls and God. Let us beware of the very first thing that would approach to draw our hearts away from Him. And should any one reading these words have departed in any measure from the Lord, oh, hasten back to Him! Tell Him all the sad story of your sin, lay your heart and conscience bare before Him, let His word search you through and through, and then, with fullest grace and love, will the Father come in and heal your backslidings, giving you soon to taste again, and in deeper measure than ever, of the love and joy and comfort of His presence.

And soon the Lord Jesus will come and take us home, and we shall be done with all the difficulties and dangers and temptations of this scene of sin and sorrow, and our hearts shall rejoice in being perfectly like Him and with Him for evermore!

J. C. T.



## WILDERNESS SCENES.

EXODUS xv. 23-27 ; xvii. 1-7.

WE have in these passages three ways in which God ministers blessing to His people in the wilderness, and in ascending order, so to speak—Marah, Elim, Rephidim. Marah and Elim are what we find in the wilderness itself—supplies given *instrumentally*. Rephidim is direct from God Himself ; there were no streams there before. This is an immense advance. The blessing itself is of a higher order, dependence on God more direct, and thus independence of the scene around more complete.

The Israelites in chapter xv. start on their journey without a care, little thinking what “a barren, thirsty land” they had to journey through. Three days’ experience undeceives them—they find no water ; and when at length they find some, it is bitter. So with the Christian. He starts full of the new-found joy of redemption ; but what does he find here to meet his spiritual wants ? A strange sort of supply—trials, tribulations, infirmities, and all sorts of adversities. How disappointing to nature ! But God’s way of blessing is best. He begins with what applies the cross to nature. What is bitter to nature, and mortifies it,

is the means of blessing to him who is crucified with Christ, nevertheless lives, yet not he, but Christ in him. "We which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh." That is the way God cultivates our spiritual life; thus He, by the cross (the tree thrown in), converts our *trials* into blessings.

But He is full of tender mercy, and the next stage of the journey brings them to Elim; and there by those twelve wells and seventy palm trees God ministers welcome refreshment to His weary pilgrims. Thus now, by suited instruments, He ministers blessing to His people, through the ministry of His word. It is *privileges* we have typified by Elim—an advance on Marah, and most blessed surely. But still it is *instrumental*; it is what we meet with from time to time in the wilderness, and it is momentary. They cannot tarry there. God had borne them "on eagles' wings" and brought them, not to Elim, but "to *Myself*," and they had to learn to do without Elim. They had to learn the full blessedness of direct dependence on God, where neither wells nor palm trees were ready to hand. This we find at Rephidim; not what the wilderness supplies under God's providence, but what God Himself gives—blessing bestowed, independently of instruments, and direct from God. The rock is smitten, the waters gush forth. "The love of God is

poured out in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. . . . God commendeth His own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." There we get the full stream of divine love, hitherto pent up, gushing from the smitten rock and carried right into our hearts by the Holy Ghost. (Compare John iv. 14, and vii. 37-39.) Now I have what comes to me direct from God Himself, and what is unfailing. Marahs and Elims are *left behind*, but the rock *follows*; "and that rock was Christ." (1 Cor. x. 4.) Now let wilderness scenes vary as they may, let circumstances change as they please, let my path be amid *trials* or not, let it be where *privileges* are found or not, that faithful rock ever follows with its inexhaustible spring and perennial streams. "All my springs are in thee." W. H. K.

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## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. G., REDHILL.—The questions raised in the first part of your letter are hardly suitable for examination in the pages of this magazine, but you will find them discussed and fully answered in a small pamphlet entitled *The Immortality of the Soul*, by J. N. Darby, published by Morrish, Paternoster Square, London.

Life and incorruptibility have indeed been brought to light by the gospel. The Spirit of God tells us so

in 2 Timothy i. 10. But this does not mean that they then began to be. To think so is a great mistake. They were *brought to light* by the gospel revelation, but they existed before. To deny it would be to deny that the saints of Old Testament days had life, from God too, and were born again. What sober mind would be prepared for that?

The mystery mentioned in Eph. iii. 9 is explained in verse 6. The middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile was broken down at the cross; and when the Holy Spirit came down, consequent on the ascension of the Lord Jesus, He baptised into One Body believers, both Jews and Gentiles, and united them to Christ the Head in heaven. Thus the ascended Lord, and those who believe on Him here on earth, are One Body; He the Head, they the members. This is The Mystery now revealed, and which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men.

We have only to add that the Hebrew, Greek, Armenian, and German quotations which adorn your letter astonish us, to say nothing of the confident way in which you speak of the contents of the old manuscripts. We fear you have fallen a prey to unscrupulous men who, in order the more easily to palm off their false and misleading notions, have recourse to a display of learning by which they seek to impose on the ignorance of plain folks who, in the very nature of things, cannot say whether their use of Hebrew and Greek is honest or not. It is well to remember that the Holy Spirit can and will lead the humble-minded Christian into the knowledge of the truth, much more than would any little acquaintance with those ancient tongues.

## “YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN.”

JOHN iii.

WE feel constrained once more to call the serious attention of our readers to the short, simple, but deeply important statement at the head of this paper. The truth expressed therein, we make bold to say, lies at the very foundation of Christianity, and never was there a moment when it seemed more needful that it should be jealously guarded and strongly insisted on than now. Especially is this so, seeing we are surrounded with vast numbers of religious folks, who may be sincere enough in what they profess and believe, but who have never searched the Scriptures for themselves to see whether what they believe is in accordance with what is written there. Let such remember that the plea will not avail before the bar of God, that their teachers taught them this or that. The word of God is in the hands of all, and each is responsible to test what he receives by that unerring Book, and by that alone. Is it our habit to do this?

And is it not significant that, of all persons in the wide world, Nicodemus should have been the man to whom the Lord first addressed those solemn words, “Ye must be born again”? No such lesson was impressed on the sinful and

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sinning daughter of Samaria in John iv., or on the convicted adulteress in John viii. They needed to be born again as much as he, but they were not exposed to the same dangers. Nicodemus had much to trust in that they had not. Blameless in his life, and religious to a degree, it was the more urgent that the deepest depths of his need should be laid bare before his astonished eyes, lest he should regard rites and ceremonies, and the diligent performance of a round of religious duties, as a passport to the kingdom of God.

The Nicodemus sermon must be preached again and again to-day, and the more so now that men are making haste to tell us that those who live according to their baptismal vows have but little to fear—that conversion to God has nothing to do with them, and only concerns those who have flagrantly sinned. Take heed, reader, that you listen not to such blinding and deadly error. The interests involved are not temporal, but eternal. You cannot afford to make a mistake on such a matter, and we beseech you to bear in mind that it was to Nicodemus, not to the dying thief, that the Lord said, “Ye must be born again.”

And the necessity of the new birth implies the total ruin of man altogether; for why insist on being born again if anything less would do? A hopeless wreck, a spring poisoned at its very sources, a moral leper, a being with a will wholly

contrary to God—such is man at his best estate. Anything short of being born again would leave him where he was—kind, it may be, upright, moral, and religious too ; but at an infinite distance from God, *dead* in trespasses and sins. This was the truth Nicodemus had to learn. He little thought when he placed himself under the tuition of this "Teacher sent from God," that a doctrine so distasteful to the pride of man would greet him at the threshold. It was a heavy axe to lay at the root of his tree. Nicodemus the Pharisee must enter the kingdom of God by the same door as Mary of Magdala ; there was no other.

"Except a man be born of *water* and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Water and the Spirit—these are the agents. The Spirit is of course the Holy Spirit, but what of the water ? Does it refer to baptism ? It is clear Nicodemus did not so understand the Lord ; for "the doctrine of baptisms" was more than familiar to "a master in Israel," and therefore but little likely to evoke the wondering enquiry, "How can these things be ?" But other passages preclude such an interpretation ; for in the Scriptures—let the reader note it well—baptism is never the figure of the communication of life, but always a symbol of death. Moreover, in the chapter in which the needs be of the new birth is so solemnly stated, the Lord tells us that eternal life, which is inseparable from the new

birth, is connected with *individual faith*; and so is it throughout John's writings.

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever *believeth* in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 14, 15.)

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever *believeth* on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.)

"He that *believeth* on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 36.)

"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." (John v. 24.)

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that *believeth* on me hath everlasting life." (John vi. 47.)

"Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that *believing* ye might have life through His name." (John xx. 30, 31.)

It would be easy to quote other passages, but these suffice to establish the fact that life and personal faith in Christ go together, and where the latter is not the former is not found.

What then are we to understand by being "born of water"? Scripture answers the question so as to leave no doubt in any subject mind.



“YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN.”

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“Being *born again*, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by THE WORD OF GOD, which liveth and abideth for ever. . . . And this is the Word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” (1 Peter i. 23, 25.)

“Of His own will begat He us with THE WORD OF TRUTH.” (Jas. i. 18.)

“Now ye are clean through THE WORD which I have spoken unto you.” (John xv. 3.)

“Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD.” (Eph. v. 25, 26.)

“And we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of *the Spirit* and BELIEF OF THE TRUTH.” (2 Thess. ii. 13.)

Are not these divine statements enough to show us that water is a figure of the Word—the word of God quick and powerful, the mighty instrument in the hand of the Holy Spirit for effecting the new birth?

Yes, my reader, to be born again is something vastly different from being baptized with water. The latter may be true of an individual without his heart and conscience ever having passed under the searching, cleansing, life-giving power of the word of God. You perhaps were baptized in your infancy, confirmed in your youth, and since then have been a devout and regular communicant, a Sunday-school teacher, district visitor, a most ealous worker in every branch of religious

service in which you could engage, and yet—must we say it?—*you are on the road to hell*—a nineteenth century Nicodemus who must be born again, or remain for ever outside the kingdom of God!

How solemn all this is! Will you not heed it? The thought of your being rocked to sleep in this religious cradle while your soul is unsaved is more than we can endure. You *must* be born again; the Lord Jesus says so. If you suffer yourself to be deceived it will be with His words staring you in the face. Rouse yourself! The precious moments are flying so fast, and you are in awful danger, all the greater because you know it not.

And then, what about your sins? If the eye of God looked into the innermost recesses of your heart what would He see there? Sin, sin, sin. Your life, what has that been? Have no sins defaced it? We mean not glaring, frightful sins that shock almost everybody, but sins which that Eye sees and which expose you to His judgment. Will your religious work give you peace in respect of these? Never. But Jesus, the Son of God, has once suffered for sins the "Just for the unjust." He died for our sins, according to the Scriptures. And now God declares the glad tidings—"That through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not

be justified by the law of Moses.” (Acts xiii. 38, 39.)

“ARE JUSTIFIED.” Observe those words in the passage to which we have just referred. Not shall be, but *are* justified, and that too from all things. Present justification, present salvation, is what the gospel bestows on those who hear it with the hearing of faith. This your round of religious duties, however faithfully performed, could never give. Indeed, it may not have ever entered your mind that anyone on earth could know himself saved. You think it an impossibility; and no wonder; for in your heart you connect salvation with works of righteousness which you must do. It is true you believe that Jesus died for you, but of what has been accomplished by that death you know nothing. Peace with God, standing in His favour, the forgiveness of all trespasses, the possession now of eternal life, are blessings to which you are a stranger. Yet all these, and many more, are made known in the Scriptures as belonging to those who are children of God, not by baptism, but by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. iii. 26), and who have been born, “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John i. 13.)

Oh that you would turn to the Scriptures for yourself to see whether these things are so! Surely God will teach those who desire to be taught of Him. The hungry He fills with good things; it is only the rich He sends empty away.

## SHALL I EVER DIE?

"OF course you will, sooner or later," most men will answer.

"I DO NOT KNOW," is the answer which most Bible-students *ought* to give.

Of believers, it is only those who have a special revelation that they will die, as Peter had (John xxi. 18, 19; 2 Peter i. 14) and Paul (2 Tim. iv. 6), who are justified in saying, "Certainly I shall die." Peter *could* say so, for the Lord Jesus had promised to him in particular the martyr's crown; Paul knew the same of himself. But *I* am only an ordinary Christian, and I do not pretend to be either a Peter or a Paul, and I do not pretend to have had any revelations direct from the Lord Himself to me about my own private self in particular. Therefore, I am obliged to be satisfied with the general light which God, in His word, gives to His family as such—that clear and broad light which shines upon the people of Christ as such.

I am thus obliged to be satisfied with such words as these: "As it is appointed unto men" [man as a sinner; not, as often wrongly quoted, "unto *all* men"] "once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb. ix. 27.) [So far we read of

what awaits man in fallen nature—death and the judgment.

Then comes what is true of the believer only]: “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.” (v. 28.)

As mere man is a sinner, and as such is appointed to death and judgment;

So the believer (every believer) had all the penalty due to his sins borne by Christ. He looks for Him: “To them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” (Heb. ix. 28.) Again: “Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.” (1 Thess. i. 9, 10.)

Again: “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” (1 Cor. xv. 51.)

Again: “This we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise *first*. *Then* we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Where-

fore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thess. iv. 15-18.)

These scriptures and many others show—First, that the path of the believer, as laid down in Scripture, leads the mind, not down to the grave, but up to meet the Lord at His coming; and, secondly, that the believers in apostolic days did look up that bright and shining way to the Lord returning as their hope, even as it becomes those "whose conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." (Phil. iii. 20.)

Thus did they, as I, having no special communication of my death, act up to the word of the two in white apparel who spake to the disciples as they stood looking up stedfastly toward heaven, where a cloud had received Jesus from their sight. "Why stand ye gazing 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.)

Being myself only one of the flock—nor bell-bearer nor shepherd—the prospect of the flock is my prospect, nor more nor less. Special communication to myself, as an individual, as to what ought to be looked for by myself in particular, have I none; so I must content myself with the hope set before all Christians, and seek to be like unto one that waits for his Lord from heaven: "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be

fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things to Himself." (Phil. iii. 21.)

It must be so. The Lord has not yet fulfilled the promise which He gave to poor self-confident Peter. (See John xiii. 38, and xiv. 1-3.)

"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."

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Yes, such is our hope—that "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." (Col. iii. 4.)

Some one may say, "If these things are so in the Scriptures, how come the religious people of our day not to see them?"

To this I answer, The Pentecostal Christians were by faith and through the Holy Ghost occupied with the ascended Lord, who, having by His death cleared them of all guilt, was in heaven caring for all their heavenly and spiritual interests, and about to come again that He might receive them unto Himself.

Few of the religious, now-a-days, know even

what the value of His death and resurrection is to them ; they therefore cannot study His glory in heaven ; and they do not long for His return, or even wish to do so.

It might be said, "Are you alone right and everyone else wrong?" I reply, "Thank God, I am not alone in this ; but if I were alone I would be alone in truth rather than with a multitude in error."

But are you sure you are right ? Of this I am sure—First, that God's word is with me ; and, secondly, that God will not suffer those that prayerfully search His word, and lean not to their own understanding, to err in their faith and hope.

Certainly Christ in His coming, and not death, was the hope of the early Christians. Certainly, too, *it is written* at the end of the Revelation (and it cheers my heart to read it for others' sake as well as for my own), "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come."

"Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."—*Extracted.*

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LAMB of God ! Thy faithful promise  
Says, "Behold I quickly come ;"  
And our hearts, to Thine responsive,  
Cry, "Come, Lord, and take us home."  
Oh ! the rapture that awaits us,  
When we meet Thee in the air,  
And with Thee ascend in triumph,  
All Thy deepest joys to share.



## “IN CHRIST JESUS.”

“All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ;  
Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption  
that is *in Christ Jesus*.”—ROM. iii. 23, 24.

“IN Christ Jesus” is a constantly-recurring term in the epistles. Its force differs according to the connection. A few thoughts may be helpful to some at this time. In Rom. iii. 19 we read, “Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God” (or subject to the judgment of God). And in verse 23, “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” These are the plain and solemn statements of the word of God concerning the whole of mankind, when they had filled their cup of iniquity to the brim, in having crucified the Lord of glory, and resisted the Holy Ghost. But we have the further blessed announcement immediately following—“Being justified freely by His grace through *the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*.” We come short of the glory, but the grace of God makes us meet for it in Christ. “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” (Rom. v. 20.)

Now this verse 24 of Romans iii. is, I think I may say, a short summary of the contents of the following chapters up to the end of chapter viii.

This part of the epistle, as is well known to many, is divided into two. The first (chap. iii.—v. 11) brings out the manner of our justification from the guilt of sins, iniquities, and offences, by the death and resurrection of Christ, and of our reconciliation to God, &c. The second (chap. v. 12—viii.), the two headships, and our justification from sin and deliverance from law, on the ground of the condemnation of sin in the flesh on the cross, and our death with Christ there—chap. viii. unfolding many of the mercies of God which are ours *in Christ* as the result.

It is God that justifieth. He does it freely. It is not of works, but by His grace. It is through the redemption that is *in Christ Jesus*. Redemption (eternal in its character, Heb. ix. 12) was obtained by Christ, and is found by the sinner *in Him* alone.

The two parts mentioned are not consecutive, but concurrent; and the one must be believed, and the other known in the soul, to apprehend the force of “in Christ Jesus” in this epistle. In the first we learn how the guilty sinner is justified from guilt; that is, forgiven what he has done; perfectly cleared, and accounted just or righteous before God. It is on the principle of faith. We believe in Jesus, whose blood was shed for us, and on God, who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. The result is

peace with God, standing in grace, rejoicing in hope of glory, &c. And not only so, but we joy in God Himself, being reconciled to Him. (Rom. iv. 24; v. 11.)

All this is complete in itself, as to the line of things that the Holy Ghost is presenting; *but* it is of the utmost importance to see that all who stand in the grace of God, and participate in the consequent blessings, *stand there in Christ Jesus*, though the truth of this does not come out until the second part. For the man who is justified by faith the condemnation of *sin* is past, as we shall see. We cannot be justified twice, and we must be cleared from sin as well as sins.

In this second part (chap. v. 12–viii.) we have the two headships contrasted—Adam and Christ. By the former sin entered, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that *all have sinned* (note the same words as in chap. iii. 23). All in nature belong to this fallen (as well as guilty) race. All are *under condemnation*, lost. "For the judgment was by one to condemnation." (Rom. v. 16.) But following upon this we get, "But the free gift is of many offences unto justification." And in verse 18, "As by the offence of one [or one offence] judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one [or one righteousness] the free gift came upon all men unto [or for] *justification of life*."

As belonging to the race of Adam—fallen, born

outside of the earthly paradise—all stand under condemnation; but Christ became obedient unto death for the glory of God, and our deliverance from condemnation, and justification in a new life in Him. He bore this condemnation; *for God condemned sin in the flesh at the cross*. He who knew no sin took the curse upon Himself. And chap. vi. 6 shows that as believers we are to know that our old man (the evil, fallen nature, to which sin attached, and which was characterized by it, all who stand in Adam being in like condition) was *crucified with Him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed (or annulled), that henceforth we should not serve sin. Hence in the death of Christ we get not only the judgment of our offences borne by Him (resulting in our forgiveness), but also the judgment of sin itself, which, working in us, produces them. And our old man, being crucified, it continues. “For *he* that is dead [or has died] is freed\* [or justified] from sin.” But God having raised Him from the dead, we have died with Him, and now live in Him risen, which is as far as Romans carries us up to, the commencement of chapter viii. And what is the character of this new life which God gives us? It is life in the One who has risen out from death and from all condemnation (borne for us), the last Adam; a life to which no sin or judgment can

\* Almost everywhere the same Greek word is translated “justified,” and it has the same force here.

possibly attach ; a life characterized by righteousness. Hence the force of the passage already quoted—“By the righteousness of one [or one righteousness], the free gift came upon all men unto *justification of life*.”

We gather then from this that the believer is not only justified *from sins*, but also from *sin* itself (as well as delivered from all claims of law, chap. vii. ; but which we cannot dwell upon here), from what he has done as a sinner, and from what he was as born in sin. He is forgiven what he has done, and accounted righteous by faith without works, and has also died with Christ to his former standing and condition in Adam. He now stands justified in Christ, the last Adam, in positive righteousness before God. Being justified by faith he stands in the favour of God ; but, as the second part shows, it is in a new life in Christ, where there is no condemnation now ; for sin has been condemned, and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made him free from the law of sin and death. (Rom. viii. 1, 2.) Hence we are enjoined, in chap. vi. 11, “Likewise reckon ye also *yourselves* to be dead indeed unto sin, but *alive unto God* through Jesus Christ [or *in Christ Jesus*] our Lord.” We are to reckon with God about ourselves what is true of us before Him in Christ. It is only thus that we can enjoy our standing in Christ. The Holy Ghost is the power that puts us in possession, and enables us to enjoy it.

In nature children of the first Adam, both as to position and condition far from God, and guilty by practice, but on the ground of the sacrifice of Christ our sins are put away ; and sin having been also condemned, the old man crucified, ourselves judged in our Substitute, henceforth we stand in Christ in a new position and condition altogether, “being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is *in Christ Jesus*.” This is further confirmed in 2 Cor. v. 21, where we read that God “hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made *the righteousness of God in Him*.”

It is true that many souls who are doubtless born of God are often long kept in bondage through self-occupation and defective teaching, without knowing justification from sin, and their standing in the risen Christ. But this is where God sees every one who is justified by Him. This is the full blessing of the gospel of God, according to the teaching of Romans (including, of course, all the additional blessing unfolded in Rom. viii.). Hence we find the apostle elsewhere saying, “*In Christ Jesus* I have begotten you through the gospel.” (1 Cor. iv. 15.)

“*Stand fast in Christ.* Ah, yet again  
He teacheth all the band !  
If human efforts are in vain,  
*In Christ it is we stand.*”

But besides all this, if we turn to Ephesians, we find further revelation with regard to the wonderful truth of “*in Christ*.” We have seen that redemption is *in Christ Jesus*; here we are told of its fulness. “*In whom* we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, accord-

ing to the riches of His grace.” (Eph. i. 7.) And, “Now *in Christ Jesus* ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” (Eph. ii. 13.) Furthermore, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ “hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” (Eph. i. 3.) And “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.” (Eph. ii. 5, 6.)

We learn from these passages that our place and blessings are where Christ is. He is in heaven, at the right hand of God; and not only is it true that we are in Him who is there, but we are in the heavenlies in Him. It does not say that we are seated in Him in the heavenlies, but God hath “made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” So that we have a new place as well as standing in Him. The order of the words here employed by the apostle is most important. This is where the eye of God beholds His saints at this present moment and for ever, and that according to His eternal counsel in Christ before the foundation of the world—*in the heavenlies in Christ*. A blessed place, a glorious position, a wondrous standing, a marvellous portion indeed. Unto Him be all the glory and all the praise. And may each one of His own who reads these lines, and enters into this precious truth, be found seeking to walk worthy thereof, till the moment when we shall be with Him.

There are many other passages which speak of our blessings in Christ were we to pursue the subject further; but the above will suffice to bring before the reader the points immediately in view.

E. H. C.

## A FEW THOUGHTS ON JOHN THE BAPTIST.

JOHN was a remarkable man of God. He was the offspring of pious ancestors, full of the Holy Ghost from his birth, and practically set apart for God. Dwelling in desert places, content with locusts and wild honey for food, and camel's hair with a linen girdle for raiment, he was in God's due time to be the harbinger of Messiah—the forerunner of Jehovah-Jesus. The prophet Isaiah had thus spoken of him saying, “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of Jehovah, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed,” &c. Hence in the gospel he is spoken of as “This is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.” So that we are not left to our own conjecture about John, but have the clearest testimony of divine truth as to his mission. No doubt it needed a man who had long been practically marked out by God for such weighty service, a man too who had learned



experimentally what it was to have to do with Jehovah, and to abide in His ways in obedience to His word. He was a messenger of God to His people—"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." He was not that Light (Christ), but was sent to "bear witness of that Light." (John i. 6, 8.) It is certain then that John had a divinely-given mission, that he was peculiarly fitted for it from his birth by a life of separation to God, and that it had special reference to the coming of Messiah to Israel. In those days no service could be of a higher or more important character. It is not then to be wondered at when the testimony went forth from John, calling on the nation to "repent, for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand," because the Messiah was there, and ready to set it up, that there should have been many enquirers as to who John was. The Baptist declared that the Person, of whom he was the Forerunner, was not only Man, but was also truly divine. "John bare witness of Him, and cried, saying, This was He of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for He was before me;" *i.e.* though Jesus was born of Mary several months after John was born of Elizabeth, and thus came *after* him, yet from being the Son eternally in the bosom of the Father He was before John. Thus, be it observed, the Baptist had the Person of the Son before him, and this testimony of Him he repeats.

Is it any wonder then that the Jews sent priests

and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who art thou?" But John is consciously before the Lord, of whom he can say, "The latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose." He therefore replies at once, "I am not the Christ"—the Messiah. They then asked him, "Art thou Elias?" because the prophet Malachi had declared that Elijah would come "before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord," when He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. John therefore answered, "I am not." There was then another thought in their minds—was he "that prophet"? The Jews had been long ago taught by Moses that a remarkable Prophet would be raised up, and intelligent Jews had conjectured on more than one occasion whether John or Jesus were he; for when Jesus raised the widow's son to life there "came a fear on all, and they glorified God, saying, That a great Prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited His people." (Luke vii. 16.) "Moses truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." (Acts iii. 22, 23.) It is scarcely to be wondered at then, when they saw John, that they should have said unto him, "Art thou *that*

Prophet?" To which he replied in the most decided way, "No." Thus the people were altogether at a loss as to who John could be; so that there remained no alternative but asking him to give them his own account of himself. "Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?"

Now mark how the Baptist replied. He had, as we have noticed, the Person of the Son before him, was full of the Holy Ghost from his birth, had been separated from all that was contrary to God's mind, and therefore had lowly thoughts of himself, and exalted thoughts of Christ. He said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness"—a voice in a wilderness. When again asked, "Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that Prophet?" he says only of himself, "I baptize with water;" and because he had the Person of Christ before his soul he at once testifies of Him—"There standeth One among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose." Again, the next day John seeth Jesus coming, and points to Him as God's Lamb; and further, after again giving testimony to the eternal glory of His Person, though born of a woman, he says he had come baptizing that this blessed One should be made manifest to Israel.

John adds, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God." (John i. 32-34.) What a testimony to Christ, not only as to His Person, but as to the two parts of His magnificent service—the Lamb, and the Giver of the Holy Ghost! Such was the Baptist's bold and lowly testimony, when occupied with the Lord Jesus, by the Spirit's power, and himself out for God in holy separation and obedience.

But John was cast into prison. His circumstances were thus vastly altered, and instead of boldly confessing Christ, he becomes painfully assailed with thoughts of unbelief. So terribly was he pursued, that he could not forbear sending messengers to the Saviour about it. "Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" Now what reply did the Lord give? "Jesus answered and said unto them" (mark His un-upbraiding love and kindness), "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear,

the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me." (Matt. xi. 2-6.) Such was our Lord's gentle and gracious reply to John's message, such was the divine way of lifting up the soul of His servant when cast down through circumstances of trial and adversity. It was the word of the prophet to which Jesus referred His distressed servant, and the Word must ever be the instrument of restoring us when out of the way. (See Isaiah xxxv. 4-6.)

But more than this. Though John had so deeply failed, had allowed carnal reasoning and unbelief so to get the upper hand as to plunge his soul in doubt as to everything true and fundamental touching the Messiah, and must thus have inflicted pain and distress to his Master, yet all this did not take away from His gracious heart one iota of the love and tenderness which he had for John. He therefore touchingly adds, "What went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. . . . Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." And on another occasion, speaking of John, our Lord said, "He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in that light." (Matt. xi. 9-11; John v. 35.) How forcibly this reminds us of the importance of being occupied with the Lord's thoughts of us instead of our own thoughts!

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Thus among other lessons we may learn from the Baptist, we gather that if we would be lowly and kept from thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought, we must be occupied with the greatness and glory of the Son of God. When He is before our souls, we shall fear lest there be anything in our testimony which detracts from His honour, and shall be content with whatever place of blessing or service He assigns us. John was therefore most particular in declaring, "I am not the Christ," and his joy was fulfilled in hearing the bridegroom's voice, though not the bride, but the friend of the bridegroom. It became him therefore to add, "He must increase, but I must decrease. . . . He that cometh from heaven is above all . . . and no man receiveth His testimony." And we may be assured that if we are under the power and guidance of the Holy Ghost we shall be occupied with Him of whom the Spirit testifies, and so desire His honour as to content ourselves with the place of service He assigns us, even though we may have to speak of ourselves as only "a voice of one crying in the wilderness."

But if John was so taken up with Jesus from a view of His personal glory as Messiah on earth, how much more should He be the commanding and absorbing object of our hearts who knew Him as Man in the glory of God—our life and righteousness—the One who died for our sins, rose again for our justification, is now occupied for us before the face of God in heaven, and soon coming to take us bodily there!      H. H. S.

## FRAGMENTS GATHERED UP.

For myself—I speak as a man—I never found peace before God or conscious rest with Him until I was taught the force and meaning of that cry of Jesus of Nazareth—“Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani.” Never, until I understood that He who knew no sin had (then and there on the cross) been made sin for us; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him, could I rest as a sinner in the presence of a holy God. And, as I suppose, it is owing to the distinctive peculiarity of that—His sorrow under the wrath of God—*not being understood* that so many Christians have no settled peace at all.

Our business is to treasure up the Word. It is the Spirit's to bring it forth out of the storehouse and to apply it. Have you renewed your strength to-day out of God's Word? How know you what fiery darts Satan may aim at you? or what will be needed to quench them? One little text held *as God's own word* is often a panoply against infidelity in the day of battle.

In reading the Gospels I am very much struck with the way in which every hour of the Lord Jesus is filled up. There is no “loitering” in the path of the blessed One through the world; no seeking (as we seek) for ease; life with Him is taken up with the untiring activities of love. He lives not for Himself: God, man, have all His thoughts—all His care. If He seeks for solitude it is to be alone with His Father. Does He seek for society? it is to be about His

Father's business. By night or by day He is always the same. On the Mount of Olives praying, in the Temple teaching, in the midst of sorrow comforting, or where sickness is healing; every act declares Him to be the One who lives for others. He has a joy in God man cannot understand; a care for man that only God can show. You never find Him acting for Himself. If hungry in the wilderness, He works no miracle to supply His own need; but if others are hungering around Him, the compassion of His heart flows forth and He feeds them by thousands. Oh that we were more like Him!

What a difference it makes which side the Jordan one lives? How different the climate, fruit, prospects, &c.! When once the Jordan is crossed, then too 'tis the Lord's battles, and not one's own.

The doctrine of the non-eternity of punishment is a thrust of Satan's against the Son of God. If he can make out that the punishment of sin is a thing that can wear itself out—a finite thing—then the work that has met it is a finite work, and the Person who wrought the work is a finite Person. But an eternity of misery can never measure the extent of the work of Christ on the cross, or bridge the distance that lies between the lowest hell due to my sin, and the throne of God, where He has seated Him who now measures my nearness to Himself, even as He measured my distance on the cross.

It is very needful now-a-days to testify that the plough must come before the seed basket.



## “CLEANSED FROM ALL SIN.”

“SHALL we not be perfectly holy *when* we are cleansed from all sin?” This is a question often asked by some who imagine that they can be gradually cleansed from “inbred sin,” until at last there is no sin left in them, and they have reached a state of perfect holiness or sinless perfection.

They quote that precious word in 1 John i. 7—“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin”—and say, “Does not that verse show that we can be cleansed from all sin?”

Of course it does, thank God; and what is more, if you are under the efficacy of that blood you *are* “cleansed from all sin” *now*, and so is every true believer, even the babe in Christ, and that from the first moment that he took refuge in the blood.

“But,” some will say, “if that were the case, if I, for instance, were cleansed from all sin, I should not feel sin in me as I do, and should never give way to temptation.”

To such we would reply, You are confounding the work of Christ *for* you with the work of the Spirit *in* you, and you do not understand what Scripture means by the cleansing of the blood.

Let us therefore look at one or two passages

II.

I.

which explain it, and may God interpret His own word to us, so that we may get rid of our own thoughts, and have the real truth.

Now in Leviticus xvi. 30 we read, with reference to the great day of atonement, “On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to *cleanse* you, that ye may be clean from *all* your sins before the Lord;” and on examining the chapter we find not only that the people did nothing, but that the priest, who did everything *for* the people, did nothing *to* the people; he did not even sprinkle the blood *upon* them, and yet he made atonement for them, and cleansed them, and they *were* clean from all their sins *before the Lord*. Ah! there is the point; they were clean *before the Lord*, not in themselves, and that is just the meaning of the verse already quoted—“the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” It is before the Lord, before a holy God. It cannot mean that we are clean *in ourselves*; for in the very same chapter (v. 9) it says, “If we say that we *have no sin*, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

“But,” you say, “do we never read of the blood being sprinkled on the people?” To be sure we do, and in Heb. ix. x. we see the meaning of it. Did it not cleanse them? Yes, it cleansed them, but in what respect? Did it cleanse their *natures*? No, it cleansed their *consciences*. The blood of bulls and goats could only satisfy for a time, but

the blood of Christ purges the conscience completely and for ever, so that the worshippers *once* purged (no repetition, remember) have “no more conscience of sins.” Mark, it does not say “no more *consciousness* of indwelling sin,” but “no more conscience of sins.” The conscience no longer charges with guilt, because all the guilt has been imputed to the One who died in my stead, and He is risen and gone into heaven “by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption,” and “by one offering perfected for ever” (as regards the conscience) “them that are sanctified.”

The cleansing virtue of the blood may be further illustrated by referring to Numbers xxiii. 21, where God compels Balaam to say, “He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel,” and that at a time when they were as perverse as could be in themselves; but the blood was on the mercy-seat, and God’s eye rested on that blood which spoke to Him of a perfect sacrifice for sin, and therefore He would not allow the enemy to curse, or even to accuse, His people, though He chastened them for their faults as a people who ought to have been as holy in their ways as in their judicial standing. Of course all was typical and imperfect under the law, but now it is absolutely and eternally true that God does not impute sin to those who are under the shelter of the blood of Christ.

But perhaps you will say, “What about Psalm li.

and Ezekiel xxxvi.? Surely we get the thought of being ‘inwardly cleansed from sin’ in such scriptures as these?” Well, it is quite true there is such a thing as inward cleansing; but where that is attributed to the blood it has reference, not to the *nature*, but to the *conscience*, which is only thoroughly cleansed or purged when the blessedness is enjoyed of the man “whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered,” and “unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity”—a blessedness which David described in Psalm xxxii., and longed for in Psalm li., but which could only be fully known when Christ had accomplished the work of redemption.

When, however, the psalmist prays, “Create in me a clean heart, O God,” and when the prophet Ezekiel speaks of what the Lord will do for restored Israel in the latter day, “then will I sprinkle clean water upon you,” &c. (Ezek. xxxvi. 24-27), we have brought before us the cleansing power of the *word of God*, and this is typified by water not only in Ezekiel, but also in John iii., and many other parts of Scripture.

The Word when applied by the power of the Holy Ghost does create in us a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within us. When first a man is brought under the life-giving power of the Word he is born again—“of water and the Spirit;” an entirely new life and nature, holy and sinless, is imparted to him, and those whose

hearts were hard as stone, “alienated and enemies in their minds by wicked works,” are reconciled to God.

This is a very different thing from saying that the *old* nature is purified or rooted out, either all at once or by degrees. Such a thought is foreign to Scripture, in which you cannot find a single instance of any one professing to have attained to a state of sinless perfection, or teaching the possibility of it. On the contrary we read, “I count *not* myself to have apprehended” (Phil. iii. 13); “I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see *another* law in my members.” (Rom. vii. 22, 23.) The old nature remains unchanged and unchangeable, side by side, so to speak, with the new nature—“The mind of the flesh *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, *neither* indeed *can* be” (Rom. viii. 7); “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.” (1 John i. 8.) And indeed the folly of those who have so deceived themselves will sooner or later be manifested, and often has been made evident by an outburst of passion, a display of pride, or a grievous fall.

Do not, however, suppose for a moment that we contend for a constant state of bondage or a fruitless struggle against sin. Far from it. “Sin shall *not* have dominion over you” (Rom. vi. 14); “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.” (Gal. v. 16.) But the flesh, you see, *is there*

to lust; for as long as the Adam-life lasts the Adam-nature remains in us; but when the Christ-life has been grafted into us, and the Holy Spirit has taken up His abode in us, we have liberty and power to cultivate the Christ-nature, and so to have our "fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

Thus by watchfulness, dependence, and subjection to the Word, keeping the *eye* on Christ in glory, and keeping the *foot* on the old man by the power of the Spirit, made good to us through Him who ever liveth to make intercession for us, "whose grace is sufficient" for us, and whose "strength is made perfect in weakness," we may seek to "walk even as He walked," and thus to be as clean through the *Word* in our daily walk as we are through the *blood* "before the Lord."

"In many things we all offend" (though we have no excuse for it), and "there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." (Eccles. vii. 20.) But "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John ii. 1.) And He who washed His disciples' feet still washes our feet to keep us in communion with Him by the constant application of the *Word*, reminding us of the cost at which He has purchased us, even His own precious blood *once* shed, and which never loses its value.

E. B. G.

## BRIEF REMARKS ON PSALM XXXII.

It will assist in the understanding of this psalm to observe that it divides itself into four parts. These divisions are easily remembered, inasmuch as they are marked off by the little word *Selah*. Thus the first ends with verse 4, the second is verse 5, the third embraces verses 6, 7, and the fourth goes on to the end.

The first two verses are introductory. They declare the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, and unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity. Then the way is described by which the soul entered into this blessedness, and the experience it passed through ere this blessedness became known.

And surely we may say there is not an individual beneath the sky who knows anything of true blessedness if it began not with forgiveness of sins! The world would not reckon so. Some would think him happy who had climbed to the highest pinnacle of earthly fame, others that happiness was bound up with the possession of wealth and the power to enjoy it. But such happiness, if indeed it be worthy to be so called, is fleeting, and fades away. It is like the fireworks of a fifth of November night, that sparkle

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and glare for a moment, and then go out in the everlasting dark.

But the blessedness of our psalm is not like that. It is blessedness that not only shall never end, but that grows as the years roll by—a tiny stream at the beginning, that widens into a mighty river, whose waters mingle with the fulness of the sea. Such is this blessedness; for it is connected with the knowledge of God Himself, the Infinite and Eternal.

In Romans iv. we have the Holy Ghost's comment on this very psalm. If you have a Bible within reach, you will do well to lay down this little book and glance for a moment at the first eight as also the closing verses of that chapter. The divine doctrine of justification by faith is there laid down in language of great simplicity and strength. You will there see that the blessedness for which many a soul longs God freely bestows on those who possess not the smallest right to anything of the kind. He is the Justifier of the ungodly, and how could the *ungodly* have any claim to any blessedness from God's hand? Indeed, in seeking to establish a claim, or to make ourselves worthy of this favour, we do but *fight against God*, and attempt, though in vain, to overthrow the doctrines of grace. Therefore, in speaking of our psalm, it is said that David describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness *without works*, saying, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven,



and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

But even when this is recognized every hindrance to settled peace may not be removed. The soul must have to do with God, the living God, and its silence must be broken. Clear views of doctrine are not everything, and so it will be felt if God is dealing with the conscience. All this will be found in detail in the first division of the psalm. "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah." Yes, the psalmist could see when all was over that it was God's hand that was heavy upon him—not in judgment, blessed be His name, but in mercy, and in order to lead him to the point where he would find eternal blessing. No rest by day or by night did God give him. Beneath the weight of a burdened conscience he staggered and groaned, and found no relief. How long this went on we are not told, but on it went till silence was forced to give place to honest, heart-broken confession of sin to God. Then the soul unbosomed itself; it told all out and hid nothing, and the most blessed results followed. "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou *forgavest* the iniquity of my sin. Selah."

And so it always is. The troubled conscience finds no cure till everything is laid bare in the presence of God without reserve. As long as there is any concealment, and the soul refrains from taking its true place before Him, there can be no rest. Is not this the secret of the unhappiness of many with whom God is working? They have never got down on their face before Him, confessing themselves wholly bad and good for nothing. There, however, they must get. God loves them too well to withdraw His hand, though it presseth them sore; but the instant there is confession, there is forgiveness. *I* confessed, and "*thou* forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Thus ends the second division of this most interesting and instructive psalm.

The third division discloses God as our Hiding-place and our Preserver from trouble. In Eden, when innocence was lost, our first parents hid away from God behind the trees of the garden. Their guilty conscience made them afraid of Him, and they wished to hear His voice and see His face no more. Here, when confession is made and forgiveness known, the soul finds a hiding-place *in* God Himself. Under the shadow of His wing we rest and rejoice. This is truly wonderful. Now reconciled to God, and His love known and trusted in, He becomes our Sanctuary, our strong Tower. The floods of great waters shall not reach us there. "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by

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Him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between His shoulders." (Deut. xxxiii. 12.) With songs of deliverance *God* shall now compass us about. Like redeemed Israel on the shores of the Red Sea, we can sing of what God hath done. We celebrate His glorious triumph. His right hand hath dashed in pieces the enemy, and on eagles' wings He has borne us and brought us to Himself. And He who has delivered, doth and will deliver. Songs of deliverance not only do, but *shall* compass us about. He will bring us into His rest; "for whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified." (Rom. viii. 30.)

In the last division we have God as our Guide. "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." We are also graciously admonished not to be as the horse or as the mule, which have no understanding, and need the bit and bridle. No such pillar of cloud or of fire goes before us as went before Israel all the way from Egypt to Canaan. Guidance for the Christian is of a higher order, and involves deeper exercises of heart. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." We need that lamp and light, and stumble we shall in this dark and cloudy day unless we give heed to it. But in addition to the instruction which the sacred oracles afford, we

require guidance immediately from God in the thousand and one circumstances in which we find ourselves from day to day. This He promises to give. "I will instruct, and teach, and guide." What a word for our faith to lay hold of and to plead before the throne! Such a promise His grace has given to us. Who that knows God will think that He will not be faithful to it, or that one of His "I wills" could ever fail?

"MANY SORROWS shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about. Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart." Thus the psalm closes. *Many sorrows*, ah! too many for us to number. "Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup." Many sorrows!—the sorrow of sins unpardoned, of salvation neglected, of heaven lost; the sorrow of eternal separation from the dear objects of their love who have known and loved the Lord; the sorrow of being shut out from God and shut up in hell, where their worm dieth not and their fire is never quenched; the sorrow of remorse—the sorrow of a conscience whose reproaches never cease, of a memory that lets nothing escape. "Many sorrows," unutterable and eternal, "shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about." Amen.

## SATISFIED.

WHEREVER we turn in the world we find dissatisfaction. Sin has created a void in man's heart which nothing beneath the sun can fill. Tens of thousands are busy to-day in the pursuit of wealth and honour and fame; but where is there one among them who is satisfied? Solomon, the wisest and wealthiest of men, discovered that all was vanity and vexation of spirit. (Eccles. ii. 17.) It is said of the great Grecian general, Alexander, that when he had conquered the whole known world he wept, because there were no more worlds to conquer. And you may rest assured that if he had conquered a thousand worlds, the result would have been the same.

Where then is true and lasting satisfaction to be found? The answer is simple—*In Christ*. Yes, dear reader, in Christ, and *in Christ alone*. God has found perfect satisfaction in His Son, and also in His finished work as to the question of sin, which shut the sinner out from Him. Having believed on Him, we are at peace with God, standing in His grace, reconciled to Him. (Rom. v. 1–11.) How rich indeed the portion!

Surely the believer may say, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a

goodly heritage." (Psalm xvi. 6.) It is beautifully shadowed forth in the blessing of Naphtali in Deut. xxxiii. 23, pronounced by Moses, the man of God, "O Naphtali, *satisfied with favour*, and full with the blessing of the Lord." Surely if such is the language employed to convey the blessing of one of the tribes of Israel, an earthly people, how much more forcibly does it express the wondrous and marvellous blessing of the Christian! We stand in the unclouded sunshine of the full and free favour of our God, having access thereto by faith. This is one aspect of our portion in Christ. The soul that knows this will find perfect satisfaction. Like Naphtali, he will be *satisfied with favour*, the favour of God; this grace (Rom. v. 2) characteristic of the present dealing of God, the true grace of the God of all grace. (1 Peter v. 10-12.) And he will be full with the blessing of the Lord.

"Satisfied with Thee, Lord Jesus,

I am blest ;

Peace which passeth understanding,

On Thy breast :

No more doubting,

No more trembling,

Oh, what rest !

"Occupied with me, Lord Jesus,

In Thy grace ;

All Thy ways and thoughts about me

Only trace

Deeper stories

Of the glories

Of Thy grace."

Blessed is the man that can take up the language of the Psalmist, saying, "How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly *satisfied* with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures." (Psalm xxxvi. 7, 8.) And again, "My soul shall be *satisfied* as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips." (Psalm lxiii. 5.)

But how little sense many dear children of God have of the rich blessing which is their portion even now! Occupied with themselves, they measure oftentimes the grace of God by the fluctuations of their own souls, instead of taking God at His word, who dispenses His grace towards us according to His delight and satisfaction in the Son of His love; and hath made us accepted in Him the Beloved. (Eph. i. 6.) And not only so, but in the ages to come He will show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. (Eph. ii. 7.) How sad to see souls always occupied with their low condition, their shortcomings, their failures, their lack of love, &c., instead of rejoicing always in Christ Jesus, and delighting in the riches of God's grace!

It is quite right, of course, to judge ourselves and our ways; but no strength or liberty or joy can be found in *self-occupation*. Nothing but dissatisfaction can fill the mind, even of the believer,

as long as he is occupied with anything or anybody but Christ. May the language then of your soul be, dear reader—

“Taken up with Thee, Lord Jesus,  
I would be ;  
Finding joy and satisfaction  
All in Thee ;  
Thou the nearest,  
And the dearest,  
Unto me.”

David, whose soul-longings after God are so wonderfully expressed in many of his psalms, says, “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be *satisfied*, when I awake, with thy likeness.” (Psalm xvii. 15.) With the light that he had, which was but little when compared with what has come from the lips of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, he longed for the moment when he should be like unto the Lord. “Then,” said he, “I shall be *satisfied*.” Long ago he passed off this scene, and thousands more of the saints of God. Soon the morning without clouds shall have come, and the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with an assembling shout. Soon the trump of God shall awake His sleeping saints, and the whole of the redeemed, whether in the grave or alive on the earth, be caught up together to meet Him, hereafter to appear with Him in glory. It is then that the word of God tells us we shall be *like Him* ; for we shall see Him as He is. (1 John iii. 2.) It is



then that we shall be conformed to His image, every trace of mortality having been swallowed up, and our body of humiliation fashioned like unto His body of glory. (Phil. iii. 21.) Then indeed shall *we be satisfied*, as we see Him face to face, in a way infinitely beyond all human thought. Already—such is God's wondrous grace—a portion is ours in Christ, which *satisfies* the soul that enjoys it; but *this is to faith*. At *that* day—Lord Jesus, come!—*eternal satisfaction* will be ours.

“Then Thy church will be, Lord Jesus,  
     The display  
 Of Thy richest grace and kindness  
     In that day:  
     Marking pages,  
     Wondrous stages,  
     O'er earth's way.”

But now, the Christian, *satisfied with favour*, and awaiting that glorious day, when eternal satisfaction shall be his, is called to a path of faith and faithfulness. This necessarily brings trial and suffering, and sometimes privation in various ways, as in the early days of the Church of God. The apostle Paul, who led the van in this blessed pathway, in following Christ, was exposed to the severest trials, and yet was enabled to say, “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content;” or, as it has been otherwise rendered, “As to me, I have learnt in those circumstances in which I am to be *satisfied in myself*.” (Phil. iv. 11.)

How sad to see Christians, often in a path of ease compared with that of the apostles, dissatisfied with their surroundings, and chafed in spirit under their present circumstances, grasping after the uncertain riches and the temporary glories of this vain and fleeting world! The spring of this is in all our hearts alike; but God would have us occupied with His Son, having Him as our goal and prize, pressing on in the course of faith, and, like the apostle, *satisfied in himself*. We fear that most of us are but poor scholars in this school; but Paul could say, "*I have learnt.*"

Fellow-believer, are you in trial or privation? Forget not that the hand of God is over *every* circumstance—a Father's love tenderly watching over His child—the very hairs of your head being all numbered by Him. (Luke xii. 7.) Nothing can occur to your hurt but what *He knows*. "*Even so, Father,*" the words of our adorable Lord, in His infinitely deeper hour of sorrow, will prove to every heart that enters into them a true and lasting solace when drinking the bitterest cup.

Paul was *satisfied in himself*. Not *with*, but *in* himself. He was not occupied with things around to gather satisfaction from them; had he been so he would still have experienced the utter vanity of all. No, his heart was captivated and enraptured with the Man in the glory, Jesus, the Son of God's love; and satisfied with Him up there, he could joy in the midst of suffering, and be

*satisfied in himself* in the midst of privation here. May we, dear reader, seek to learn this same lesson, that Christ may be glorified in us.

And now, lastly, how blessed to forget ourselves, and to look on to a moment when our Lord Jesus Christ shall have the desire of His heart. In patience He is seated at the right hand of God. Soon will He claim His loved ones as His own—soon the Bridegroom shall claim His bride for heavenly glory ; and He, who is also the King, deliver His chosen people Israel on the earth. Then shall be fulfilled the word of the prophet, “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall *be satisfied*.” (Isaiah liii.) “I am my beloved’s, and His desire is toward me,” says the bride in the Canticles, and nothing short of having His blood-bought people with and like Him in the glory will *satisfy His heart*. “He loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.” (Eph. v. 25.) She is the fruit of the travail of His soul. Wondrous destiny ! The bride of Christ. Now to wait for Him in His patience and share His rejection ; soon to be presented to Himself a glorious Church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing (Eph. v. 27), hereafter to be displayed in glory to this wondering world.

“ Longing for the Bride, Lord Jesus,  
Of Thy heart,  
To be with Thee in the glory,  
Where Thou art.  
Love so groundless,  
Grace so boundless,  
Wins my heart.

## 300 CHRIST'S INTEREST IN HIS SAINTS.

“ When thy blood-bought Church, Lord Jesus,  
     Is complete ;  
 When each soul is safely landed  
     At Thy feet ;  
 What a story  
 In the glory  
     She 'll repeat ! ”

Oh, that every Christian reader of these lines may be found *thus satisfied* in the midst of a dissatisfied world ! Surely, being blessed according to the riches of His grace, and our every temporal need His special interest and care, a dissatisfied Christian is a sorry spectacle indeed. But His object is, that we should morally reflect Himself in this world, who trod every step of His pathway here, a weary but *satisfied Man*. E. H. C.

## CHRIST'S INTEREST IN HIS SAINTS.

Do you think there can be a movement within His heart which has not your happiness as its object ? If your desire is to glorify Him, let your soul be calm, peaceful, happy ; trusting all to Him, whatever may come, knowing that, whatever may be, goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your life, and your habitation shall be in the house of the Lord for ever. (Psalm xxiii. 6.)

Reckon on a power, a love, which nourisheth and cherisheth those who are the objects of it. And in this confidence rest in Him. Remember that the end which He proposes to you is the

same as He has proposed to Himself, even to present you to Himself "without spot and blameless," in order that now your affections may be fixed on Him, and find in Him a source of abundant joy. He desires that now, here below, you should be living as His betrothed.

If you desire that it should be so, it will not be difficult for you whilst looking unto Jesus. Moses did not distress himself about reflecting the glory of God; that was done without his thinking about it, because he had just been beholding the glory of God. Rest assured that all we have to do is to think of Jesus, and to keep close to Him. Take the most common circumstance of life, as in Eph. vi. 5. Supposing I am a servant, and have a hard master. Well, it is not the master I am to look at, but at Christ, and it is Him I am to serve; all will then be made easy to me.

Seek to know what Christ is Himself, in order that His grace may make you such as He is. It is joy and happiness to walk under the light of His countenance, and with the enjoyment of the fulness of His love.

Thou that hast made our heaven secure,  
 Wilt here all good provide ;  
 While Christ is rich can we poor ?  
 Christ who for us has died.  
 O Lord ! we cast each care on Thee—  
 And triumph and adore ;  
 O that our great concern may be,  
 To love and praise Thee more.

## THE PRESENT LOVE OF GOD.

“And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.”—2 THESS. iii. 5.

“THE love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” So runs the witness of Romans v. 5. It is God’s own love to us, not our love to Him—love that towers high above all earthly love, however great. The love of friend for friend may be wonderful, as was the love of Jonathan for David; and the love of a mother for her child is tender and unwearying; but the love of God to us—His own love—is incomparably greater, and is all the more beautiful, in that there was nothing in us to call it forth. He loved us when we were sinners, and gave His own Son to die for us.

Never can we doubt that love as we gaze upon the cross. Love emptied itself there. It gave its all for us—for you, for me.

What an answer is this to Satan’s lie in the garden of Eden! There he succeeded in persuading our mother that God withheld something that would be for her good to have. Oh, what a harvest of sorrow and tears, and anguish and death, has followed that disbelief of God’s love! But that love, suspected and disbelieved in Eden,

has displayed itself at Calvary. How? He spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for us all. It is by His agony and bloody sweat, by His cross and passion, by His precious death and burial, by His glorious resurrection and ascension, we learn the mighty, measureless love of God.

And this perfect love casts out fear. It must of necessity do so; for how could we be afraid of One who loves us with perfect love? Now God's love is perfect, and withal so holy; for He has taken cognizance of our sins, and shown His love in the very thing that has put those sins away. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John iv. 10.)

We would not wish God to think lightly of our sins, nor would He if such were our wish. Sin God abhors, and it is our joy and rest to see that all that was due to us and to our sins has been borne by God's own Son. The cross has put our sins away for ever; and in accents solemn, and yet so clear and sweet, it tells us *God is light*, and *God is love*.

But has that Love which thought of our deep spiritual need, and made such ample provision for it in Christ, withdrawn its eyes from us, not caring to behold us more till we are seen in glory? Oh, no! the very hairs of our head are all numbered. And if not a sparrow falls to the

ground without *our* Father, are we not of more value than many sparrows ?

It is into the present love of God—the love that cares for us to-day—that our hearts need to be directed ; for it is there they may find rest, and nowhere else.

We know no yesterday but the cross, and no to-morrow but the glory ; but then there is to-day—the wilderness and the things that surely come upon us there.

The power of God, like His love, is infinite. He is able to make the rough places smooth, and never to suffer a thorn to pierce our foot. And the knowledge of God's power is the very door by which Satan often seeks to insinuate into the mind a doubt as to God's love. The soul reasons thus : “ If God loves me with a Father's love, why does He not do this or that for me ? Why do my prayers remain so long unanswered ? ”

Ah, believer, it is not because God does not love thee that the answer to thy prayers is sometimes slow in coming, and sometimes never comes at all. God has lessons to teach, which would never be learnt if our will guided His hand. How much the beloved family at Bethany would have missed if Lazarus had not been suffered to go down to the grave ! And what a loss for Paul if the thorn in the flesh had been taken away in answer to his thrice-repeated prayer.

There are many things that may remain a mystery to us on earth. How often the life, which to our view seemed so necessary, is taken away ! while one that might have been easily spared, is left to linger on year after year. God does not explain all this to us. He does not tell us His



reasons, but He asks us to confide in His wisdom and His love. Let us have patience. The night will soon be gone, and in the morning light of that endless day we shall see what is now hid from our eyes.

And if the past could be blotted out, and we began life's journey afresh, and God were to ask us whether we would choose our own path, and fill it up as it seemed best to us, or whether He should choose for us, would we not put it into His hand for Him to choose and lead?

“Choose the path, the way whatever  
Seems to Thee, O Lord, the best.”

Surely faith would say so.

“The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into *the patient waiting for Christ*.” Yes, Jesus is coming again, to gather His ransomed home. In a little while He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Think, believer, of that happy day, and of all the joys with which divine love shall then fill thy overflowing cup. Thou shalt see Him who died for thee, and be in His blessed company for ever. There too thou shalt see again those loved ones whose memories still make thee weep, thou shalt see them in His fair image. And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things shall have passed away.

Then from those cloudless heights thou shalt look back and remember all the way the Lord thy God hath led thee. Then thou shalt see that the hand that ordered everything was a Father's hand, and that His way was better than thy way. Rest in His love, lean on His bosom, till the day break, and the shadows flee away.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. S. M., WORTHING.—Matthew xxii. 30. In considering this answer of the Lord, it will be helpful to bear in mind what the Sadducees and Pharisees believed touching the resurrection of the dead. The Sadducees denied it altogether, nor did they believe in either angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confessed both. The latter, however, taught that if anyone had married two brothers, according to the provision of the law of Moses, she would in the resurrection be the wife of the first husband. The Lord, while asserting the great fact of the resurrection, and showing that the denial of it arose from their neither knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God, corrects the teaching of the Pharisees by stating that in the resurrection that which is spiritual alone remains, and all that is earthly will have passed away for ever. We also know, from Phil. iii. 21, that our bodies will be changed and made like unto His body of glory, suited to those scenes in which we shall for ever dwell.

But this in nowise sets aside or weakens the thought that in that blessed state we shall recognize those we have known and loved on earth, though we know them not in earthly relationships. These will be left behind. Formed in Time, and designed for Time only, they have no place in eternal glory. The recognition of them, however, involves the remembrance of former days, unless indeed we suppose that memory will be a blank, and that the story of earth will be forgotten as much as if it had never been. Thank God, we are not called

to entertain a notion so barren, so dreary, and withal so unscriptural. Can it be supposed that those who sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God will not recognize them? Or is it probable that Moses and Elias when on the mount of transfiguration did not recognize each other? Did not even Dives recognize Lazarus afar off, and how distinguish him from others if there be no recognition? And when Paul wrote to the dear saints at Thessalonica—those precious babes who in Christ Jesus had been begotten by Paul through the gospel—why did he speak of them as his hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing before the Lord Jesus *at His coming*, adding with tender and touching emphasis, “For ye *are* our glory and joy,” if he would not know them from any others of the great company of the redeemed? We believe Paul will have peculiar joy in greeting in the glory those dear believers from Thessalonica; and so with us all, though in varying measures and in features that may differ—

“Or raised or changed His saints will meet,  
 All grief and care removed;  
 What joy ’twill be to us to greet  
 Each saint whom here we loved!”

Many ingredients will be in our cup of joy in that day. The Lord Himself will be the chiefest in an immeasurable degree. He will be everything to every heart for evermore. Himself the enrapturing object of our adoration, admiration, and praise throughout eternity. But there will be other and less exalted joys, all tasting of divine love, and among them, we believe, will be that of recognizing those whom we have known, and who were dear to us on earth.

## “MY FATHER AND YOUR FATHER.”

“Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.”—JOHN XX. 17.

SAVIOUR, when Thine hour of anguish  
On that awful cross was past,  
Where Thy soul was left to languish  
For our sins alone at last :  
Mighty Victor from Death's prison,  
Death despoiling of his prey !  
Oh, the blessed, glorious vision,  
On that resurrection-day !

Seen by her who of love's essence  
Brought to Thee the best she had—  
Brought a breaking heart Thy presence,  
And Thine only, could make glad.  
Tribute sweet, how Thou esteemed it,  
Thou who hadst rejected been !  
In Thine absence Mary deemed it,  
Deemed this world, an empty scene.

Oh, our Master, much it shames us  
That we ever should forget  
How Thy love most fitly claims us,  
Constantly on us is set !  
Guerdon sacred, Thou didst render,  
To Thy “brethren” Mary bore  
That dear message, true and tender,  
Precious then and evermore.

Thou that cup of joy wert drinking,  
*Place and love* with them to share,  
In Thine hour of triumph thinking  
On the objects of Thy care.  
Homeward, upward, now directed,  
“Father,” brought to God so near ;  
By the Father's love protected,  
Guarding them while strangers here.

M. A. W.

## THE SMITTEN SHEPHERD :

HIS WORK, AND SOME OF ITS RESULTS.

IF you will read Psalm xxii., you will find detailed there the sufferings of the Lord Jesus as the smitten Shepherd in the day of His great sorrow. It is a psalm of the crucifixion.

The prophecy of Zechariah, uttered centuries before, was at length fulfilled—"Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: *Smite the Shepherd.*"

There was no voice to arrest the uplifted arm as there had been in an earlier day, when Abraham on mount Moriah lifted up his hand to slay his son.

It was a solemn hour—an hour that stands alone. There had been none like it, nor will there ever be. To that hour the eye of the redeemed shall look back unwearyingly. At the remotest point to which our thoughts can carry us in the far off eternity of the future it shall be as an event of yesterday. It shall stand alone in its solemn glory as long as eternity lasts. Never shall it be forgotten, and every remembrance of it shall fill the heart with adoring wonder.

Many sorrows were in the smitten Shepherd's cup which human hands placed there. Great sorrows which He felt as no fallen child of Adam

ever could. The violence and rage of brutal men pursued Him. Strong bulls of Bashan, as He terms them, beset Him round. They gaped upon Him with their mouths as a ravening and a roaring lion. There dogs compassed Him; the assembly of the wicked inclosed Him; they pierced His hands and His feet. On these we linger not, but hasten on to speak rather of that greater sorrow and of those profounder sufferings which dwarf all others—sufferings which were the result of God's hand being against Him on account of sin—atonement sufferings, without which the whole human family would have been for ever lost.

Men of genius have assayed to throw Calvary on canvas. Their assaying such a task shows how poor and far astray their thoughts of Calvary must have been. A cross, an agonizing form thereon, a dying thief on either side, the mocking priests, the weeping women, and the watching crowd, these they may depict. But where is God? They have left Him out, and He it was who dealt with Jesus there. How could pencil picture *Him* or the darkness, the desolation, the *spiritual* agony of the blessed Lord, when all God's waves and billows went over Him, and when high above the shouts of mingled hate and triumph arose the piercing cry, "My God, my God, why hast *thou* forsaken me?"

Into those solitudes we may not enter. Shrouded in eternal mystery the deeper sufferings of the smitten Shepherd must remain; fathom them no

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mortal can. Standing like children on the shores of that dark, lone sea we may look across the wide waste of waters, but what is beyond we know not; it is hid from our eyes.

From the horns of the unicorns the smitten Shepherd was heard (*v.* 21), and then we see Him on resurrection ground, and hear Him speak of "*My brethren*" and of "*Thy name.*"

Then by Mary of Magdala, who stood weeping at His empty tomb, the risen Saviour sent that wondrous message—"Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." Mine and yours.

And this message in its blessedness far exceeds mere clearance from guilt, and our being sheltered from judgment by the cross of the smitten Shepherd. Thank God, our sins have been put away, and so put away that in respect of them God has been glorified. Let no one question that. He who doubts it, doubts the efficacy of that precious blood shed in death for us at Calvary. On that work alone our eternal hopes depend. How fully God has been satisfied therewith is shown in the resurrection and glorification of Christ. And when the Lord appeared in the midst of His disciples, on the evening of the day on which He arose from among the dead, He saluted them with words of peace—"Peace be unto you," and He showed unto them His hands

and His side. Peace was their portion now, and it is ours no less than theirs—peace made by the blood of His cross. Can anyone bring up the question of our sins again here or hereafter? He who would do so must first impeach the Saviour's finished work, and disprove its atoning merits. "By one offering He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified;" and our sins and iniquities, God declares, He will remember *no more*.

But "*My brethren*" and "*Thy name*" disclose a wider range of blessing, and speak of a place and love which had been His alone, but which He would now share with others. Never had He so spoken of them before. But now that the work of redemption had been accomplished in His cross, He, as Man risen from the dead, associates them with Himself in the closest and tenderest way. Beautifully is this expressed in Hebrews ii., where the Spirit quotes from this psalm of suffering: "For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified, *are all of one*: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren; saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." And in the day of glory that is coming, He will take His place as Firstborn among many brethren. (Rom. viii. 29.) How this tells of our present and eternal identification with Christ, the Son of God's love. How powerfully it appeals to our affections; and what an estimate it gives of that



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atoning work in virtue of which the exceeding riches of God's grace can be thus displayed.

And not only are we before the face of His God and ours as His brethren, standing there in Him, the last Adam, in all the infinite worth of that work which He wrought as the smitten Shepherd, made, as it is said, "the righteousness of God in Him;" but He has declared unto us the *Father's* name, "My Father and your Father." How far beyond deliverance from judgment this carries us those whose hearts have by the Spirit entered into it alone can tell. It cannot be learnt from books, it must be experimentally known. Interesting it is to observe that the very name of "Abba, Father," which the blessed Lord used in Gethsemane, is that which the Spirit puts in the mouth of each believer now. (Rom. viii. 15.) Brethren, what nearness to God is ours! What a place! Ourselves too the objects of the Father's love—loved as Christ is loved. (John xvii. 23, 26.)

But let us not forget that if His place is ours, His relationship as man to the Father ours, the love wherewith He is loved ours, and ours too His glory by-and-by, let us not, I say, forget that He it is who has brought us into it, and that we owe it all to Him who gave Himself for us? His was the toil, His the shame, His the suffering, His the death. If we are the redeemed, He is the Redeemer; if we are saved, He is the Saviour; if we are the sheep, He is the Shepherd; if we

are the many brethren, He is the Firstborn. The glory then of Redeemer, Saviour, Shepherd, Firstborn is His, and His alone. Who can share that glory with Him? None. We love to think that it must be so. Who that knows Him would pluck a laurel from His brow to grace his own? Were anyone so base all heaven would cry him down.

Other streams of blessing follow in this psalm as the fruit of the smitten Shepherd's work. The *seed of Jacob* shall fear and glorify Him, and all *the ends of the world* shall remember and turn to the Lord. It is sweet to think of this. In the day of Israel's restoration Jehovah "will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." (Zech. xii. 10.) Then they will know that He was wounded for their transgressions, and bruised for their iniquities; that the chastisement of their peace was upon Him, and that by His stripes they are healed. (Isaiah liii.) And then will be fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet—"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with *the house of Israel*, and with *the house of Judah*: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt ;

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which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer. xxxi. 31-34.)

From among restored Israel God will raise up His messengers, who shall declare His glory among the Gentiles. (Isaiah lxvi. 19.) Fruitful in blessing shall their mission be. "Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord." (Zech. viii. 22.) But we refrain from entering into this deeply-interesting subject, as it would carry us beyond the limits of our present paper. Our psalm describes these widening circles, which find their centre in the cross of Christ, "My brethren," "the seed of Jacob," and "the ends of the world." Each shall have its appointed glory; for the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. In them all the Lord shall be glorified, and the sufferings of the smitten Shepherd shall be a subject of wonder and praise throughout eternity.

## ALWAYS CONFIDENT.

WHEN speaking of the assurance of salvation the Lord's servants are often met with such answers as, "It does not do to be too sure;" or, "Is it not presumption?" or, "I do not think it right to be so confident." If any accustomed to make such replies should read these lines, we would earnestly beseech them to weigh the passage of scripture where the words at the head of this paper occur, and we feel assured they will no longer speak so foolishly. Let us quote it: "Now He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith, not by sight :) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him" (or acceptable to Him). (2 Cor. v. 6, 9.)

It is the apostle Paul who thus speaks of that which is true of Christians generally, and he shows that all the work and blessing is of God; He is the source and author of it, it is He that *wrought* His people for it, and He who gave and still gives them the earnest of the Spirit. "*There-*

*fore we are always confident.*" What a solid foundation for our confidence to be based upon! Confidence because from beginning to end it is a work of God. Man has no part in the matter. He is perfectly helpless in himself; without strength he can do nothing. But God, who has the glory in view, comes in and fits the poor, weak, human vessel for it. He takes us up in pure grace, puts away our sins, justifies us in Christ, and gives us the Spirit as the earnest of the glory to follow. "Therefore we are always confident." Well may we be. Who can frustrate the purpose, power, and work of God? No one. Satan is a vanquished foe, man is set aside in the cross, and the whole work is of God—a new creation. (2 Cor. v. 17.) How then can the Christian be too confident? Confidence in God is that which honours Him.

"But my difficulty," says one, "is in *myself*; I feel I am such a poor, failing creature that I fear to be confident." Just so, and well you may, as long as you are looking at yourself. If you wait for confidence until you cease to fail you will have to wait a long time; indeed, until you leave this scene altogether. Confidence in God displaces self-confidence. The apostle was *always confident*, because he had learnt to rest always in God instead of himself; and that, dear reader, is a lesson you would also do well to get perfected in.

And mark next what goes along with it—*knowledge*. "Knowing," he continues, "that, whilst

we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith, not by sight).” Not hoping, nor thinking, nor feeling, but *knowing*. “*Always confident, knowing.*” He was longing to be with the Lord, and we should be the same. But how can that be if we are self-occupied and full of doubt and uncertainty? Not that he desired to die, but to be glorified, as he says in the fourth verse: “For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.” He knew that he *might* fall asleep, his spirit passing out of the body into the presence of the Lord in the unclothed state; but this is not the proper and immediate Christian hope. Christ is coming, and mortality shall be swallowed up of *life*, not of death. The Christian should be looking to go up, not down; to go into glory, and not into the unclothed state. We wait “for the adoption, to wit, the redemption” (not the corruption) “of our body.” (Romans viii. 23.)

And then in the eighth verse he confirms his statement—“*We are confident*, I say,” &c. Not a word, you see, dear reader, to bolster you up in your up-and-down state, not the slightest ground for you to have the least bit of confidence in yourself in any way whatever, and not the vestige of an “if” or a “but” to justify a moment’s lack of confidence in God as to the future. God begins, carries on,

and ends His work. He saves, gives the Spirit as the earnest, and fills the soul with confidence and knowledge, removing all fear, and creates a desire in the soul too to be with Christ where He is. He would have us then "*always confident*." Are you?

But perhaps the mind of some of our readers reverts to another passage, where the same apostle says, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." Now, dear friend, we would ask you, before we say a word on this, Do you really want to understand the passage, and to get clear in your soul about it? or do you turn to it, as we fear many too often do, to bolster yourself up in a certain system of theology? If the former, we may be able through grace to truly help you, which is our desire; but if the latter, we fear it will be labour in vain as far as you are concerned. Now, whatever it may mean, the word of God can never contradict itself, so that it cannot contain anything to lessen in the slightest degree the "*always confident*" of 2 Corinthians v. 6-8.

To understand it you must bear in mind that the writer is addressing an assembly of Christians that was allowing varied evils in its midst—an assembly where there was *loud talk* but *low walk*; and he is endeavouring to get at their consciences, and hence applies a principle to himself which he intended to reach them. Take especial note, first

of all, that he is illustrating the Christian course by a race for a prize and a fight for the mastery, saying, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air." Now *salvation* is not a prize, neither do we run a race nor fight for it. Salvation is of pure grace, and every true believer starts with it before he runs the race or enters upon the combat. The prize is additional. We run and fight because we *are* saved, but not *to be* saved or *to keep* saved. But there is an incorruptible crown for those who are successful. Paul had started on the course and begun the fight, so had they. He was saved, and knew it before he started, and was always confident. So here he says, "I therefore so run, *not as uncertainly*; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air." He had *no uncertainty* as to the issue. Mark it well, for you will never understand this passage that troubles so many without it. But he knows that he has to run a real race and to cope with real enemies, though invisible ones. He puts all his soul into it, so to speak, keeping his body under, and bringing it into subjection, "lest," as he adds finally, "that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."



“Ah ! there now,” you say, “there’s the difficult point ; what do you make of that ?” Why simply that he puts it thus, as we have said, to reach the consciences of the Corinthians, whose walk and ways were bad. Many of them were indulging their bodies instead of keeping them under and bringing them into subjection—*preaching to others*, but not practising, and though they came behind in no gift, they had settled down as if there was no race, no fight, no prize, no crown. It was as though he had said, “Take you care that it is a reality with you. You may preach, but what if after all it should turn out to be a mere external thing with you, and you should be a castaway ? Though I am an apostle, and though I have no uncertainty,” says he, “yet I cannot afford to act as many of you are doing, lest after I have preached I myself should be a castaway.” Many a preacher, thought to be a Christian, has turned out a mere castaway. Paul had no fear whatever that he might be one. To allow it for a moment would not only contradict his “*always confident*,” which is impossible, but many other passages of his own and others’ writings. No, it was a powerful, pointed way of reaching the consciences of those whose blessing he so earnestly desired.

It is one thing, dear reader, to cast in your lot with Christians and to preach, but it is quite another to be a sinner saved by grace, running with patience the race set before us, fighting the

good fight of faith, looking for the glory. By grace ye are saved, not by running or fighting; and if saved, God would have you *always confident*. But if any profess, whose life is a denial of their profession, the word of God is unmistakably plain, "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, *is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*" (1 John ii. 4.) Such will surely prove to be worthless castaways. May each believer in Jesus who reads these lines be found *always confident* till that day.

E. H. C.

## DEPENDENCE.

THOU only knowest, Lord, how frail and weak  
Is every step I take, each word I speak;  
How all is failure—that I cannot stand  
Except Thou hold me by Thy gracious hand.

Yet since the longing of my heart for Thee  
Is but the echo of Thy love to me;  
And since it is the hungry Thou dost feed,  
The weary-hearted Thou dost gently lead.

Since 'tis the thirsty Thou dost satisfy  
With living water, and the weak supply  
With strength, on Thee my utter need I rest,  
Through deepest poverty most richly blest.

And if Thou wilt still hold me close to Thee—  
Yet closer, closer yet—then sweet will be  
The pressure of Thy hand, and great the gain  
Of every danger and of every pain

Which makes my soul Thy strength in weakness prove;  
And lean more wholly on Thy precious love.  
My Lord, I thank Thee that I cannot stand  
One moment safe without Thy loving hand.

## THE CHRISTIAN: HIS ARMOUR AND CONFLICT.

Read EPHESIANS vi. 10-20.

THE passage before us is an important one for the Christian. It tells not only where he has to do battle, but with whom the warfare is waged. The Christian course is a scene of warfare, for directly we become Christians we have to fight the Lord's battles. But here let me remark, that when we speak of a Christian we do not merely allude to a man who is called a Christian, but to a man who is a Christian in more than name—one who is really a child of God, and a soldier of Christ.

How does a man become a soldier? Not by buying a uniform, dressing in it, and calling himself one; but by being properly enlisted and enrolled. And when we speak of a Christian, we mean one who has been properly enlisted (born again), and received the Holy Ghost. It is easy enough in this country to take the place of a Christian, and to be called one; but have you ever been to Christ and met God about your sins? If not, your Christianity is only a pretence, and you are self-deceived. (James i. 22-25.) You must be born again, and have a new nature, if you are ever to enter the kingdom of God.

Why did the Lord Jesus Christ come into this

world at all ? Because man's state was hopeless. And yet when He came He found men thinking themselves good, and in no need of a Saviour ; they were so satisfied with themselves that His presence amongst them awakened no sense of need in their souls. In John iii. we have one who stood high in the religious world coming to the Lord, and coming by night too, afraid to be seen seeking Him, and saying, " Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God : for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." Christ's works testified of Himself, and they knew He was from God ; but that was not enough. The Lord turns to him and says, " Ye must be born again." He saw through his religious uniform that he was no real soldier, and said, in effect, You must be properly enlisted.

Have you ever been honest with God ? Have you ever told Him the truth about yourself ? In Luke xviii. we get an account of two men. One of them told God part of the truth, and only a part. What he said was true enough, but he left out all about his own wickedness and sins. He was not honest, and God will have nothing to do with a man that tells only part of the truth ; He will not have dishonesty. The publican was an honest man, and took the ground of a sinner in need of God's mercy ; consequently he was justified.

Now let me enquire, Have you ever been born again ? If not, there is a time coming when you

must meet God about your sins. And the difference between a Christian only by profession and a Christian in reality is this, that if you are only a professor you have yet to meet God, while he who is a Christian in reality, *has met Him already*. If you have not yet met Him about your sins, you will have to do so sooner or later; and if those sins have not been all met and atoned for, God in justice and perfect holiness must cast you into the lake of fire for ever. God will not take any part payment for them. Do not think that you can make up for a part of them, and be forgiven the remainder. You need not hope to pay so much in the pound, for you have nothing to your credit in God's books. Christ had no sins to answer for, yet God's wrath was poured out on Him. The Christian can look back and say, "Thank God my sins were on Him there. He has borne the judgment due to me for them. I believe this, and am justified; I look at the cross, and see Jesus 'delivered for my offences;' I look at the empty grave, and see Him 'raised again for my justification.' So I have peace with God. I stand in grace, and I rejoice in hope of the glory of God." You who have nothing but the *name* of a Christian, there is a time coming when your false uniform will be stripped off, when you will stand before the great white throne in your true colours, when you will "be judged according to your works," and cast into the lake of fire.

We will look for a moment at the new birth, and I will ask you to turn to Genesis i. 1-3. The Lord Himself speaks of it as being "born of water and the Spirit," and Peter tells us that the water is the Word. (See 1 Peter i. 23.) Here in Genesis i. we have a description which, I think, you will find, answers exactly to the history of the new birth in a soul. Nothing ever left God's hand imperfect or in chaos. In the opening verse we read that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and how many ages may have rolled away between that moment and the time mentioned in the second verse it would be impossible to say ; or how the earth came to be without form and void it would be equally impossible to say ; for it is a time of which we have no record. But the second verse pictures what ? A scene of death, darkness, and disorder. By nature we are in exactly the same state. "God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." (Eccles. vii. 29.) When God had completed everything He pronounced it all "very good." But for how long did it remain so ? A very short time indeed, as only in the third chapter we have the woman eating the forbidden fruit, and giving it to the man. So they forfeited their place of blessing, and sin came in, and with it death and distance from God. Then for four thousand years God was dealing with man. With what result ? Only to prove him to be a complete moral wreck, his guilt culminating

in the murder of the Son of God. We get this all illustrated in Genesis i. 2. Then the only trace of life in the whole scene was where the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters, just as souls now are convicted by the Spirit, and made anxious and uneasy. But there must be more than this. God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." Here we have the new birth; the darkness was gone as soon as the word of God entered, and so "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." The sinner, into whose heart light (the knowledge of God) shines, is born again. Has light shined into your heart, and shown you what you are, and shown you also what God is? God divided the light from the darkness, and the gulf between the two is as great as the distance between a saved soul and an unsaved.

The Lord Jesus presents to Nicodemus the same Saviour as there is for us now. Christ is presented as lifted up. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life." Do you see Christ was lifted up for you? Well, the one that looks lives; the light enters, and that is all you want.

Turn to Romans vii. Here we have a struggle often mistaken for Christian conflict; but it is not

so at all. It is a struggle between a renewed soul and law. It is a most extraordinary thing that people read Romans vii., and say, "Well, I never hope to be any better; that is exactly my experience; it is what we must expect as Christians." The reason of this is, that they shut their eyes to the verses that follow. Read verse 23, and you will see it is the language of a man captive to the law of *sin* in his members, or, in other words, his own evil nature. In the next verse he cries out for deliverance, and no sooner cries than he thanks God; and the next thing we hear him saying is, "Hath made me *free*." (Rom. viii. 2.)

Do you know the difference between being *in Adam*, and your standing before God *in Christ*? If you are in Adam—that is, in the flesh—you are under condemnation; but if in Christ—that is, in the Spirit—there is no condemnation for you. The man presented in Romans vii. knows not his standing in Christ, and is determined to come up to the requirements of the law of God, but finds that he cannot. He discovers *sin dwells in him* in verse 17. *I* want to do good, but sin dwells in me; then it is incorrigibly bad. You have two natures—one desires to do good; and the other desires to do evil, and will always be contrary to the law of God. God does not expect you to improve it. He has judged my old nature, and condemned it in the cross. Look at Rom. viii. 1–3. You see you are no longer in Adam-standing; but



your standing before God is in Christ, and sin in you is a condemned, judged thing.

Turn now to Galatians v. 16, 17: "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh," &c. The Spirit of God dwells in me—a believer in Christ. Very well then, what am I to do? I have both the flesh and the Spirit in me; the flesh never gets better, you need not think it. But I have got something stronger than the flesh; I have got the Spirit of God. I am to "walk in the Spirit." How? Why to own Him and live to Him in all the details of every-day life; in everything, no matter how small.

But I do not dwell longer on it; I only wish to show that Rom. vii. is not Christian conflict. Our conflict is with wicked spirits in the heavenlies. Satan has no power over us. We are delivered from him; but we have to be watchful against his wiles. Now what has God given us as Christians? "All spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Satan cannot take them from us, but he will hinder our enjoyment of them as much as he can. He cannot take away our peace, but he may spoil our joy. The difference between the two is simply this: our peace rests on Christ's work; that which can shake the cross can shake the peace it gives, and nothing can do that. But a very little can spoil our joy, even an evil thought; so we want the whole armour of God, that we may possess and enjoy what He has

given us. Not that we are afraid of man, but of the wiles of the devil. We are apt to forget that we have such a subtle, watchful foe, and he may come in to close our mouth for God, and to rob us of our joy in the things of God. We only need to walk with ungirded loins for a very short time, or to forget the breastplate of righteousness, and we will see how quickly he will take advantage of us. "The breastplate of righteousness" comes into all my ways, that I may be perfectly upright and honest with my neighbour, living as before God in my dealings with my fellow-men—in short, perfect honesty; and then "loins girt about with truth" is the word of God applied to the minutest details of daily life. "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace," would be carrying out in our ways the same peace and grace we have got from God for ourselves, and showing the same to others. The man in Matt. xviii. 21–35 had not his feet thus shod.

If we lack any one of these, we shall be easily silenced by the adversary, who will find easy points for attack. Nothing closes one's mouth so quickly as inconsistency. If I want to open it for God, I must be careful to have these three parts of the armour. Then I want also the shield of faith, that I may not be afraid of the face of man. The Lord cannot send or use us to speak to some soul, for whom perhaps He has a message, if we are not using the shield of faith; and we

must have the helmet of salvation, or we cannot speak of it to others. But having all these, we can take up the sword of the Spirit, "the word of God." We can be aggressive. But if we are unarmed, we cannot fight, and Satan will gain many an easy victory. "Praying always" (v. 18)—continual dependence on God; they are all useless without that.

Christ was here, and has been turned out of the world; and now God picks up poor sinners, enlists them in His cause, and sends them back into this world to be missionaries, as it were, in it; to open their mouths boldly for Christ. Is it not a warfare worth engaging in? I would ask you to put on this armour, and to keep it on. Remember, you must be prepared to count all but dross and valueless. A soldier is prepared to lay down his life in the Queen's service, and is not ashamed to own the service he belongs to. Now are you ready to "open your mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel"? You do not need to preach it to *a crowd*; but you can, in a quiet way, testify for Him who hath called you. When anyone is living for Christ, it soon becomes known, and he will be sought when need comes, and solace and advice is wanted in trouble. The Lord lead you into this service for Him.

Beloved reader, see that you are properly enlisted as a Christian—born again, and that your name is written in the Lamb's book of life. M.

## AN EXTRACT.

WHILE Fenneburg was living with Gessner, a poor traveller one day came to the door asking the loan of three dollars to help him on his journey, having expended his money sooner than he expected. As he asked in the name of Jesus with importunity, Fenneburg lent him three dollars, all he possessed even to his last penny.

Some time after, being in great straits, the circumstance of the three dollars was brought to his mind while he was on his knees, and with childlike simplicity and faith he said, "Lord, sometime ago I lent thee three dollars, and thou hast not given them back to me, though thou seest how urgently I need them. I pray thee return them to me without delay."

The same day Gessner brought him a letter containing money, and as he gave it him said, "See, here is the money you advanced." The letter on being opened was found to contain two hundred dollars, sent him by some rich man at the earnest solicitation of the poor traveller. Fenneburg, overcome with surprise, exclaimed, "Oh, dear Lord, there is no saying a simple word to thee without being put to shame!"

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"BUT ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."—JUDE 20, 21.