

Things New & Old,

A

GOSPEL MAGAZINE,

WITH PAPERS FOR THE FLOCK OF GOD.



"Christ is all."—Col. iii. 11.



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Things New & Old.

BEFORE DEATH, AND AFTER DEATH.

“They have Moses and the prophets ; let them hear them.” (Luke xvi. 29.)

IN our Lord’s words concerning the rich man and Lazarus, He brings before us most solemn pictures of great realities both before death and after death. With regard to the present time before death, there are three things to be particularly noted—the man of the world, the believer, and the word of God.

The sketch given of the man of the world is not that of an immoral or malicious person, but of one who has the best he can get to eat and drink and also to put on. More than these things the world cannot give, and his aim is to have the best that it affords for the gratification of his desires. “He was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day.” Self is the object of his heart, not God ; yea, he is “without God in the world.” But all his comforts are bounded by time and sense. At length

the chilly hand of death lays him prostrate, and all his good things are gone, and gone for ever. He dies, and is buried. What is often called “a respectable funeral” is the finishing stroke in the history in time of a man of the world. “The rich man died, and was buried.” To such death is awfully serious, but what must it be after death? How searching are the Saviour’s questions! “What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

The man of faith, however, though in the world, is little known or noticed by it. His heart’s interests lie far beyond what is seen and temporal. Not only does he find nothing here for his soul, but he proves that everything of the world is adverse to it. He is a stranger here. His path is solitary; his sorrows not a few. The waste of those surrounding him, only makes him feel more keenly the poverty and trials of his lot as to this life. But he finds that God is with him, and can turn everything to good account in the most unthought of ways, so that even dogs may give relief by licking his long-neglected sores. He has also learned that it is given unto him in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake. (Phil. i. 29.)

Besides the man of present good things and the man of faith, the Lord speaks of the third thing, the possession of the holy scriptures—

"they have Moses and the prophets." Thus the three leading features of what is found in this present world are: the unbeliever with his "good things," the believer with his "evil things," and the word of God, which speaks of eternal things. The Bible is the condemnation and death-warrant of the unbeliever, and the comfort and stay of the believer.

The Lord then lifts the curtain, and shews the amazing contrast in the state of these two men after death. The needy and dependent man of faith no sooner quits his suffering body, and a heartless world, than he is carried by the angels into the bosom of the father of the faithful. He joyfully proves the truth of scripture that "they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." Sweet resting-place. He is now where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest. He is where righteous Abraham and all departed believers are. How vast the change! Yesterday in suffering at a rich man's gate, worn out with the pain of his many sores, and thankful to have his wounds licked by a passing dog; but to-day his spirit is with the father of the faithful, where all is peace and love. And has it not been truly said that it is far better to depart and be with Christ?

And where is the rich man with all his boasted elegance and luxury, whose burial was only yesterday with such pomp and ceremony? We are

told that in hell (or hades—the place of departed spirits), he lift up his eyes being in torments. No sooner is he there, than he sees the beggar that had sat outside his gate now a long way off, but shut in with Abraham in blessing and rest. How wide the contrast of the state of these souls now; the one in bliss unspeakable, the other in anguish unutterable! Both in hades, the place of departed spirits; but one, like the thief, in paradise with the Lord, while the other is miserable beyond description. How very solemn, and yet how real the picture! We know that if a believer dies, or rather falls asleep in Jesus, he departs to be with Christ—to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

But the unbeliever, alas! is in a very different compartment of the place of departed spirits. On quitting the body, he is at once conscious of being shut out from the presence of God, so that his misery is great. His being spoken of as parched with thirst shews the depth of his anguish. How he envies the man now who was once a poor beggar at his gate! Observe, there is no idea of purgatory here. No: it is exactly opposite, and the most perfect exposure of the utter falseness of the doctrine of purgatorial fire. Every one after death tastes misery or blessing. Let the reader carefully note that this is not the eternal state, for then all will have bodies; and that the Lord here contemplates a people on earth still unsaved

with the word of God in their hands. Besides, we know from other scriptures, that the wicked will be brought from hades before the great white throne for the sentence of their eternal banishment from the presence of God, and to be deservedly cast (with death and hades) into the lake of fire. Let not the reader fail also to note there is no annihilation here, and no possibility of ever getting from the place of misery to the place of blessing. When the lost soul prays, as he never did before, saying, "Father Abraham have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame; Abraham said . . . Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence." No language could more clearly shew the impassable distance between the saved and lost after death, or the utter impossibility of one who dies in his sins ever being where Christ is. What remains for such is to be brought up at "the great white throne" at the close of the millennium, when the heavens and the earth will have fled away, and receive the final judgment, and their sentence of banishment to the lake of fire. All that appear there for judgment must be for ever lost, because, having refused salvation by grace, they will be "judged every man according to their works."

But another most affecting part in this appalling scene after death, is, that the lost one thinks of his relatives still living on the earth. He implores Abraham to send Lazarus to his father's house, "for," said he, "I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." The infidel sometimes taunts the Christian, by saying, "We know nothing about what is after death, because no one has ever come back to tell us." But the Saviour, who knew all things, has told us. And one thing is clearly made known—that there will be no infidels after death—all will be real then. Purple and fine linen are of no value there; even the lost will realise then the priceless worth of souls. If there will be one longing in such after death, it will be that their sinful relations on earth might hear the gospel, believe, and not "come into this place of torment." But they have the gospel. They possess the Bible which contains it. "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them."

Observe, it does not say, they have religious teachers, or religious privileges, or duties—but they have God's word, and their responsibility is to hearken to it. As saith the prophet, "Hear [not do, but *hear*], and your soul shall live." As the Saviour also said, "He that heareth [not feeleth, or giveth, or doeth, but *heareth*] my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath everlasting life."

They are to *hear* Moses and the prophets. But,

says the lost one, "if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." And Abraham said unto him, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." How very solemn! But so it is. For faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. No, not even seeing a man rise out of his grave would convert a soul ; it must be by hearkening to, and receiving into the heart, the word of God. "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them."

Now what does Moses say? Does he not by types and shadows, and also by the plainest statements, shew that salvation is alone by Christ, and through His precious blood? Does he not plainly say, "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul?" Was not the blood of the lamb the only shelter from the judgment of the destroying angel throughout the land of Egypt? Did not Aaron make atonement for the sins of the people by carrying in the blood of the sacrifice, with burning incense, inside the veil? Did not Abel's sacrifice of the firstlings of the flock so plainly set forth the sacrifice of Christ, that we are told that the Lord had respect to Abel and to his offering? And was not Cain rejected because his offering did not set forth the sacrifice of Christ—a life laid down for others? Again, was not the leper pronounced clean when sprinkled with the blood? We might multiply quotations to shew the constant testimony

to the infinite value of the one offering of Christ from the books of Moses. Now let us look for a moment at some of the prophets. Hearken to Isaiah, who says, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all. He hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." And to shew the sin-cleansing efficacy of the blood of Christ, the prophet says, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Again, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins." Now what figure could more completely shew the thorough blotting out of sin, as gone for ever, than that of the cloud; for where is the dark cloud we saw yesterday? Is it not gone, and gone for ever? You will never see it again. As the prophet Jeremiah plainly states, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer. xxxi. 34.) Again, we hear Isaiah saying, "I, I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Hezekiah also said, "Thou

hast, in love to my soul, delivered it from the pit of corruption ; for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back." (Is. xxxviii. 17 ; xlivi. 25 ; xlvi. 22 ; liii. 5-12.) Another prophet says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." (Ps. ciii.)

In this brief glance we see how clearly and fully Moses and the prophets point out the only way of salvation. It is no marvel, then, that it was said, "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them!"

And now, dear reader, you have not only Moses and the prophets, but the testimony of our Lord Himself also, and of His apostles. You know, too, that One has risen from the dead, has been seen alive again by many infallible proofs, and has commanded that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations. And what effect, dear reader, has all this had on you? Has the word of God, which speaks of the finished work of Christ, persuaded you? Have you heard God's word? "Hear, and your soul shall live!" God speaks, and Christ has declared that the scripture cannot be broken. You have not wonderful things to see, or marvellous experiences to pass through, or many things to do, in order to be saved ; no,

"Jesus did it, did it all,
Long, long ago."

Then hearken to Him who was delivered for our

offences, and was raised again for our justification. Let His infallible word, which will never pass away, have its due weight upon your soul ! Listen attentively to Him who said that His blood was shed for many for the remission of sins. Oh think of His sinner-loving heart, who, with open arms, could most touchingly say, "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest !" Come then and be saved !

Thank God, dear reader, that you are this side of death, where God's word of forgiveness of sins by Christ sounds on all sides ! Thank God you are not where that rich man was crying out for one drop of water to cool his parched tongue ! What deep mercy has spared you to the present moment ! Do think of this; and also consider what an immeasurable distance there is now between you, a sinner in your sins, and the infinitely holy, sin-hating God. Still His word is that He delighteth in mercy, that He saves sinners to the praise of the glory of His grace. Listen, then, not to your own thoughts, or to the doctrines of men, but to the word of the living and true God. "Hear, and your soul shall live."

" O, poor sinner, do not doubt,
Christ will never cast you out.
If you come in simple faith,
Just believing what He saith ;
If you wish for peace and rest,
You will find it on His breast."

H. H. S.

ORIGINAL SIN ;
OR, THE FALLEN NATURE OF MAN.

To ONE accustomed to read the scriptures, the words, "original sin," have a strange sound. There is not only not such an expression in scripture, but also, strictly speaking, it is not a correct expression. Original sin would imply sin as the original condition of a creature as created; indeed it would charge it as the work of the Creator. We need scarcely say this is not the case.

Even as to Satan, this was far from being so. He is described under the figure of king of Tyrus, thus: "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God. . . . Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. . . . Thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God. . . . Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness," &c. (Ezek. xxviii. 12-17.) Whether we look, then, at Satan, or at man, both were perfect as created of God. Satan used his very beauty and perfection for his fall.

We will now look, not at Adam as originally a sinner, but at the way in which sin was introduced by Satan; or, the way by which man became a sinner.

In Genesis we have no account of the creation of Satan or of his fall, but how he deceived the woman, and thus introduced sin and evil to the human race.

Here we would notice, as has often been observed, that it was not God that gave up man for the trifling thing of eating an apple; but just the opposite, man gave up God for an apple, on the ground of what Satan said: or, in other words, the woman listened to, and then believed, Satan the father of lies, and distrusted God. The serpent suggested unkindness in God, that He was withholding what was for man's good. The woman listened to this foul lie. Then the serpent, point blank, denied the truth of the word of God—“Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil.”

The woman believed Satan; sin thus entered—it conceived, and brought forth all its fruits. She lusted for the fruit: she took it, she ate; and she gave to Adam, and he did eat. Oh, how terrible the consequences! They were naked—they knew it. ~~They might try to hide it from themselves~~—they could not hide it from God. They had given

up God for the lie of Satan, and they were afraid of God. They tried to hide themselves from God. But had God given them up because they had so sadly sinned? Nay, He came to seek them, He said, "Adam, where art thou?" Nay, it was not until God had given the germ of the promise concerning the *woman's seed* in the sentence on the serpent; and not until the Lord God had made coats of skins, and clothed them, both Adam and his wife, that He then really drove them forth from the garden of Eden. "So he drove out the man: and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden, cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." That is, it was real mercy thus to prevent man, in his now fallen, sinful state, from eating of the tree of life, and living for ever.

Surely we must see, however man had sinned against God, yet God is love, and what God did to man was love; but not love at the expense of righteousness. What a change in Adam! And notice, there was no promise of any improvement or restoration to Adam. What promise there was, all pointed to the Seed of the woman.

Here, then, is God's account of the fall, and the introduction of evil into this world; and there is no other account in existence worthy of a moment's notice.

Neither can it be denied that the whole human race is in the very sinful state here described. The

same distrust of God, the same doubt as to His goodness to man, the same effort to hide man's shame and sin from God, and the same tender love of God come down to seek him, saying, "Where art thou?" And though God has devised, and is righteous in providing, a perfect covering for man, yet it is a fact that man in his natural state, as descended from Adam, is not in Eden; he is driven out, and he, as a child of Adam, cannot live in the body for ever. "Dying, thou shalt die;" and dying, he does die. This is, to say the least of it, a remarkable fact, that the account given to us in Genesis exactly describes the condition of the whole of Adam's posterity, or the human race.

How is this? Another scripture will explain. "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. v. 12.) It is not correct to do as some do, alter the end of this text, and say, "in whom all have sinned." "For that all have sinned" is the unanswerable proof of the extent of the fall. Sin, then, was not man's original condition; but we have seen how it entered into the world, and we have seen, as to man, how death came by sin. It is also a fact that death so passed upon all men; and all the wisdom, and efforts, or unbelief of the whole world, can neither do away with sin, nor shut the mouth of the all-devouring grave. Every policeman, and every funeral we meet, is a proof of this—nay, almost every thing

and person you meet is proof of this. The doctor, the magistrate, the mourning dress, &c., all tell of sin and death.

And what are all the places of man's amusements, but proofs of his desperate effort to hide from God? And what are all the efforts of these same men to work out some sort of a religion to cover their sin and shame? Is it not the story of the fig-leaves over again? Oh, that men did but know the love of Him who still says, "Where art thou?" Yes, the God of love, who is rich in mercy to such as were "fulfilling the lusts of the flesh and of the mind, *and were by nature* the children of wrath, even as others." (Read Eph. ii. 2-4.)

What is man's state by nature (called the flesh), that in which he is born? Let another inspired writer answer: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Ps. li. 5.) We have seen how sin came into the world, how it passed upon all men; we know, too, that all have sinned—this proves it is so. But here, in this psalm, we have the exact statement how it affects us at our very birth.

Now the law could not improve this sinful nature, called flesh. "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death." "For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin." Such, then, is

the result of Adam's sin to Adam's race—such is the sinful condition of every child born in this world. Such have we all found it to be as we have grown to years of knowledge. Such we are born, such we are by nature. To say it is not so, is a most serious fundamental mistake.

What is meant, then, by the term, "original sin," is not that man was made, or created, a sinner, but that, having become a sinner, all his posterity are born in sin—sin is their very nature. We will use the expression in this sense.

Now it is evident this cannot mean that we have committed sins before we were born, which would be impossible and absurd. That is a thought evidently connected with the old Eastern idea of transmigration of souls.

We now, with these remarks, ask attention for a moment to that strange delusion, that original sin is washed away in baptism. First, the child is baptised for the remission of *sins* it never has committed. Then it is held "that all that which has the true and proper nature of sin" is taken away by baptism; and thus the baptised are made innocent, immaculate, pure, harmless, and beloved of God, heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ. It is almost impossible to believe that the professing church could have fallen into such error—but it did, and also cursed all who did not agree with this strange delusion. It could not, however, be denied that, when the child grew up after baptism, a sinful

nature—call it what we will—still existed ; but the professing church flatly contradicted the word of God, and said that though the apostle called it sin, yet it [the church] did not understand it to be properly sin in those *born again* by baptism, as they called it. (Rom. vii. 8.) See the full statement in Council of Trent, sec. v. 5. This was pretty bold work, to curse all who said what the apostle taught was true.

That all children dying in infancy are saved, is certain ; for Jesus came to save them, and of such is the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. xviii. 10, 11.) “For the Son of man is come to save that which is lost.”

But we must go a little further than this delusion of the dark ages of baptismal regeneration ; and ask, Do the scriptures teach that in truly being born anew, original sin, or the sinful nature in which we are born, that that has the true and proper nature of sin in us, is taken away ? Where is this taught ? Does the Lord, when speaking of the new birth, say that which is flesh is taken away, or improved, or made pure ? He says the opposite : “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” And the apostle distinctly recognises this evil nature—the flesh—in the believer. “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh : and these are contrary the one to the other : so that ye cannot [or may not] do

the things that ye would." It may be said, This cannot possibly mean that the believer, who is born of God, still has sin in him! The apostle John says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Does it not, then, follow, that if we say sin was taken away by baptismal regeneration, and that we—the baptised—have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us? Nothing can be more certain than that if we hold that doctrine the truth is not in us.

But is it not equally so if we hold that the death of Christ, or the work of the Holy Spirit in being born anew, has taken away original sin, or our sinful nature, and that therefore we have no sin? In this case also the truth is not in us, equally as in the former case. We are assured that many who understand pretty clearly that we have forgiveness of *sins committed*, through the blood of Jesus; yet are in great confusion as to original sin, or sin the root in us. We know the common thought is, that in some way this root may be pulled up, sin may be eradicated, so that the sinful flesh is changed, and made holy—yea, in some sinless. There is no such thought in scripture, no such fact in experience down here. If we say so, we simply deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. Nothing is more common than this mistake, that the new birth means a change of the old man; or, if not so, that *sanctification* will perfect the change,

and altogether change the original sinful nature in which we were born. What a sad mistake! Does not the man who is born of God find that nature still in him? though he can say, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind," &c. Here, in the quickened soul, there are two distinct natures. And the lesson must be learnt, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not."

And cannot the law, or our efforts to keep it, help us in this dilemma, when we find, after all, there is still sin in us? Not in the least. "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence" (or lust). What pen can describe the misery of thousands thus seeking in the flesh to keep the law; or, by the law, as a rule of life, seeking to improve the flesh? "What, then," said a person the other day; "Is sin still *on* the believer all his life here, after Christ has died for him, and he is born of the Spirit?"

Let us look into the scriptures for the remedy and the answer.

C. S.

You never really get rid of yourself except in the presence of God.

BRIEF NOTES ON KEEPING THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.

EPHESIANS IV. 3, 4.

WE are enjoined to be “endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” or “to be giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace.” Now what are we to understand by keeping this unity? What is it? Before, however, we look at what it is, it may be well to consider what it is not.

1. Keeping the Spirit’s unity is *not merely a congregational union*. There may be considerable oneness of mind and judgment with Christians who compose a particular congregation, which, after all, may be only independency; or, one congregation choosing to act independently of all other congregations of Christians. The Holy Spirit dwells in, and acts in, the church,* all over the world. There is really nothing between independency and keeping the Spirit’s unity.

2. It is *not a sectarian union*, or acting together on a sectarian principle, even if all the saints in the world were on such ground.

* The word church is used in scripture for the body, as “the church which is his body” (Eph. i. 22); and also for the professing church, or the church looked at on earth as the place of corporate responsibility, as the church of the Laodiceans, the church of God which is at Corinth, &c.

3. It is *not a union of sects*, however many of the sects, as sects, were congregated together and acting together.

4. It is *not always proved by unanimity*, however much it is desired; for the Corinthians seem to have been unanimous in keeping in their midst one defiled with flagrant evil; and were evidently not unanimous in putting away from among themselves the "wicked person." (See 2 Cor. xii. 20, 21.) It is not a question of majority, of minority, or of unanimity, but What is the Lord's mind? What is the path marked out by the "One Spirit"?

5. It is *not merely union*, even of the best kind; for are not all saints, however erring, for ever in living union with each other and with the Lord?

6. It is *not anything short of unity*—a unity which can be kept only by those who are members of "One body" of which Christ in heaven is the Head. When we read in Malachi iii. 16 of those who "feared the Lord" "and they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels," the prophet is speaking of a God-fearing remnant of Jews, not of the members of "one body"—the assembly. Neither are "fellows" the same as members of one body. Again, "brethren" dwelling "together in unity" will have its fulfilment in millennial times of Israel's blessing on earth—a unity of brothers—not the member-

ship of one body, God's present order of blessing. This the nation of Israel never will be. There is *one* body. The idea of "twelve tribes" is very different from that of "one body." (See Ps. cxxxiii. ; Heb. i. 9 ; Eph. v. 30.)

Now let us consider what keeping the Spirit's unity is.

1. *Saints only can keep it.* Such are exhorted to walk worthy of the calling wherewith we are called endeavouring to keep it.

2. This unity is to be *kept, not made.* Those who attempt to *make* it shew that they do not *keep* the Spirit's unity which has been made.

3. It is not merely *union*, but *unity*—"One new man," formed of members on earth united to Christ the Head in heaven. So *one*, that Jesus, the glorified Man, could say to a hater of His members on earth, "Why persecutest thou **ME?**" Observe, not "*mine*" merely, but "*me*;" and the Holy Spirit speaks of such *now* as "*members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*" Again the *unity* is formed and energised, and all the members taught, led, and acted on, by "*one Spirit.*" The "*one bread,*" or loaf, on the Lord's Table, shews it to be the Lord's mind that this unity should be expressed "*till he come.*" (See 1 Cor. x. 17.) It is blessed to know this!

4. It is *of such a spiritual nature* that it can only be kept "*with all lowliness and meekness, and long-suffering, forbearing one another in*

love." There is no room for carnal weapons. When this unity is truly kept, it will be in the uniting bond of peace. What a precious bond! Those who are walking proudly and in self-will cannot therefore be keeping this unity.

5. It is *a holy unity*, for the Spirit is "holy." Nothing therefore unsuited to Him, who is "the holy and the true," can be consistent with keeping the Spirit's unity. Separation from evil is therefore imperative. "Let him that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." (2 Tim. ii. 19.)

6. It is *according to the truth*, for "the Spirit is truth," and He guides into all the truth. Keeping the Spirit's unity therefore excludes everything contrary to "the truth."

7. It is a unity which comprehends nothing less than *every member of the "one body."* Practically it considers every saint in Christ Jesus, and is associated with all who are endeavouring to keep this unity. It cannot, therefore, be sectarian, however it may appear to be so. Such love all saints, pray for all saints, and would walk with all saints, if they could do so according to the truth.

8. It is the *Spirit's unity* because the path and power of keeping it is by one Spirit all over the world, wherever saints are. "He that hath an ear" is therefore enjoined to "hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," or assemblies. In keeping this holy unity then the action of "one Spirit" is recognised, and practically owned,

wherever two or three are gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus own His presence and the Holy Ghost sent down. Wherever in this way a case has been judged it is not judged elsewhere, but the judgment of those who have thus judged it is accepted as owning "one Spirit."

It is important to distinguish between purging out and purging from. In the normal state of the church when all who believed were together, and all outside were unbelievers, it was said "purge out;" but for a time of ruin—a great house—when all kinds of evil have been associated with the name of our precious Lord Jesus, the faithful are also told to "purge from." (1 Cor. v. 7 ; 2 Tim. ii. 19-21.)

9. *The path in thus "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" must, therefore, be connected with practical separation from those who are acting contrary to the truth, and holiness, and ways of the Spirit's unity.* We may cross the street to greet one whom we believe to be a member of the "one body," and so far be endeavouring to keep the Spirit's unity, even though his sectarian ways forbid us going with him further.

Communion with the Lord through His truth will guide us as to these things, and every other act, for the glory of God.

Those, therefore, who are intelligently keeping

the Spirit's unity recognise that the same Holy Spirit as a divine person dwells in every child of God all over the world, that all have access unto the Father through the Lord Jesus by one Spirit, and that God dwells through the Spirit all over the earth where the Lord's name is professed —the house. They gladly own all true believers on earth united by one Spirit to Christ in heaven, as members of one body, "one new man;" and, while doing so, wait "for God's Son from heaven"—the "one hope" of our calling. It is impossible, therefore, to own two or more companies of saints in any place who are not in fellowship as according to the truth, for there is "*One body*;" or to own different ways of dealing with the same matters in discipline for there is "*One Spirit*;" or to hold diverse hopes, for there is "*One hope*." A lowly mind, and waiting on the Lord in meekness are needed to enable any to receive, hold, and act out these things. "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way."

(Ps. xxv. 9.)

H. H. S.

Some of the marks of the power of the Holy Ghost in an assembly of saints gathered in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ are: worship, gifts developed, saints agreeing together in the unity of the Spirit, earnestness, fervency, unselfishness, caring for others, love to souls, fellowship in the gospel, and taking the place of rejection with Christ.

CORRESPONDENCE.

1. "W. H. R.," Luffenham. The word translated "*perish*," in 1 Corinthians viii. 11, is the same as the one in John x. 28—"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never *perish*." It is also often translated "lose," or "lost," as Mark viii. 35; Luke ix. 24, &c. The difficulty disappears when we notice that 1 Corinthians viii. 11 is a question, while John x. 28 is a positive statement of the Lord. This makes all the difference. The apostle does not say that the weak brother for whom Christ died shall perish; that would be to contradict the Lord Jesus. He says, as it were, Are you, who know that an idol is nothing, going so to act as by it to lead a weak brother into sin, and to have a defiled conscience? So far as you are concerned, is it nothing to you that, through your ways, a weak brother should perish? The security of that brother, as stated by the Lord in John, did not alter their sin—in fact it was sinning against Christ, who died for that weak brother. It would be quite as bad on their part as if he had perished. When we remember the fearful power wicked spirits, or demons, had through idolatry, it was a most sad thing to bring a weak brother under such dangerous influence. We are quite certain the sheep of Christ shall never perish. We are told so.

The other question, as to the meaning of the words, "Who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe" (1 Tim. iv. 10), is very interesting. The Saviour-God is such to all men, as Preserver or Provider. As another has said, "the apostle had faith in the living God, who, by

His providence and supreme power, governed, preserved, and took care of all men, and especially of those that believed."

2. Kingston-on-Thames. It is wonderful how blessedly God opens up the scripture to the hearts and understandings of those who look to Him in prayer, and expect to be taught by the Holy Ghost. The natural mind is competent to understand earthly things, but "the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God." Our very difficulties, then, are often the occasions whereby we may learn more perfectly our entire dependence on the Holy Spirit, in order to be guided into the truth.

With regard to fasting, in Mark ix. 29, we see no reason for not regarding it as abstaining from taking our usual food; as also in Matthew vi. 16. It seems to us that such are so intent upon obtaining from God what they are seeking, so sensible, too, of their unworthiness, that taking their necessary food for a time is laid aside, to be thus wholly given up to special waiting on God. Would that there were more of this earnestness of soul in thus dealing with God! Blessed results, no doubt, would follow.

3. "B.," Collumpton. A full reply to your question will be found in our paper, in this number, on "Before Death, and after Death." We cannot see the shadow of a reason for supposing that the rich man in hell, or Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, can refer to anything now going on in the world.

4. "W.," Stamford. A faithful servant will always take deep interest in the affairs of his employer. But it is the Christian's privilege to pray about everything, to be careful for nothing, and to be thankful for anything. If he keep his place as

a servant, according to the instruction of holy scripture, and seek grace from God to glorify His name in it, so as to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, he will find wisdom and help given him to meet the various details and circumstances which arise. It is wonderful how God blesses those who honour Him in prayer and faith.

5. Crewkerne. The contributions at the Lord's table are generally used in ministering to the need of the poor members of the body of Christ, after the necessary expenses of the room are deducted. If, however, it be thought better in some places, under certain circumstances, to use it for the Lord's work in general, we see nothing contrary to it in scripture.

6. Near Grosvenor Square. Those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, do so, first, because of urgent necessity, for they know, if they do not they must be lost for ever; secondly, they know Christ Jesus as the One they look to—the Object of faith; thirdly, they do so because they believe God, that He is the only Saviour. Such know they have salvation, because God says so, and they believe God.

You come to God when you approach God through His Son, who died on the cross to save sinners, but is now risen, ascended, and glorified at His right hand. It is sweet to know that "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." Our earnest prayer is that God may soon give you joy and peace in believing.

7. "B.," Helensburgh. We fear that the limits of our Magazine forbid our engaging to insert the paper you have so kindly sent.

Several answers to Correspondents stand over for want of space.

ORIGINAL SIN ;
OR, THE FALLEN NATURE OF MAN.

No. II.

OUR friend's question was this—"Is sin still *on* the believer all his life, while he lives here?" What is the answer of scripture? If sin be still *on* him he is eternally lost, for there can be no more offering for sin; and without shedding of blood there can be no remission of sin. (Heb. ix. 22.)

Sin, or the flesh, the old nature, is still *in* him—he is deeply conscious of this. The scripture does not say, Blessed is the man *in* whom there is no sin; but, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Rom. iv. 8.) If sin, then, is still *in* the believer, how is it true that it is not *on* him? In other words, if sin, as a fact, is *in* the believer, how is God righteous in not reckoning it *on* him, or to him? This is not the question of God forgiving our sins for Christ's sake, but the deeper question, How has God dealt with what we call original sin, the root of all the sins? We do not read that He has, or does, forgive this, the flesh, or sin in the flesh. What then? Did not Jesus die to put away sin? Truly the word says that "he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." "Behold the Lamb of God,

which taketh away the *sin* of the world." "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." Most surely that work is accomplished on the cross by which all this shall be effected. But to see the full effect in result, we must wait for the new creation—the new heavens and the new earth. Is sin put away from the world? Are the works of the devil yet destroyed?

Now as to the believer. First, it is all-important to know the ground of the righteousness of God in not *reckoning* the sin that is in us. It has been not forgiven, but judged; condemned, according to all the claims of infinite holiness, and righteous wrath against sin. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. v. 21.) "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin [or by a sacrifice for sin] condemned sin in the flesh." What wondrous grace this is to us, and what righteousness! Since my *sin* has been condemned in the person of my Substitute, it cannot in righteousness be reckoned to me, or on me. Thus is that word fulfilled, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

Now, if we see that sin has thus been judged in the person of our Substitute, the Son of God in the likeness of sinful flesh, we see that God does not reckon it to exist before Him: then we can say,

“I am crucified with Christ ; nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

Can you look back at the cross, and not only say, He was delivered for my offences—sins which I have committed ; but can you also say, “I am crucified with Christ”? Then will you also understand that word, “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom. vi. 3–14.) This, then, is how scripture deals with sin, the root, or evil nature. It is there. It is not changed. The Lord says, “That which is born of the flesh, is flesh ; that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit.” That which is born of a sinful nature remains a sinful nature. Why is it not condemned in me? It has been, in my Substitute. “I am crucified with [him] Christ.” It is not on me, though in me—cannot be imputed to me ; because I am not reckoned alive in the flesh, or sin, but dead with Christ, and alive to God,

If Christ, then, bare our sins, was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification ; and if sin, the root, has also been condemned, and we accept this judgment of death on the old man, as an accomplished fact ; what is there left to *judge* or *condemn* in those who are dead with Christ, and in Him alive to God? Plainly

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." (Rom. viii. 1.)

Sins all forgiven, to be remembered no more. Sin not imputed. And all this eternal redemption, immutably the same. If this is not so, if either a single committed sin, or the sin still in us, be reckoned to us, how can we be saved? or, in that case, how could it be true that the worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins? (Heb. x. 2.) Are we not quite conscious that we do sin, and that we still have sin in us, and that we need the mighty power of God to keep us every hour? How is it, then, that we have no more conscience of sins—that is, that sins are no more between us and God? Because we are justified from sins by the death and resurrection of Christ. We are dead with Christ. Thus sins, and sin, can never be imputed unto us. And in no other way could we understand those remarkable words: "But 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." This is the truth which has been lost for centuries. The two things are equally true. Whilst Jesus sits there, the believer sanctified through the offering of His body is thus perfected here. That is, as to sin being reckoned to him, or on him, or on his conscience, between God and his soul, the Holy Ghost bears witness that God will remember

his sins no more. Oh, blessed witness of the Holy Spirit ! Why should we doubt Him ?

It is in this sense we understand, if in the light. " But 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." That is, it is not that sin is eradicated, that we can say we have no sin as a fact : if we do, we deceive ourselves ; but that sin is not imputed to us. The context proves this. (1 John i. 7.) Indeed we have distinct instruction, both if any man sin, and also on the confession of our sins, forgiveness and restoration. We will look, however, a little further into the question of sin, the fallen nature.

If, says the inquirer, grace has so abounded, both over our sins and over sin ; if salvation is so entirely the work of Christ ; would not this make us indifferent about sin ? Is it so even amongst men ? If a friend has shewn you great kindness in deep distress, does the depth of your need, and the vastness of the unexpected kindness, make you the more indifferent about pleasing him ? Nay, is it not the opposite ? Does not the half-and-half gospel which men believe only produce half-hearted obedience and lukewarmness to Christ ?

If a sinner is brought, through grace, to believe that God has loved him from eternity, given His Son to die for him whilst he was a sinner, that there is now nothing between his soul and God,

that God loves him with infinite and everlasting love—will not the effect be, that he loves God because God first loved him?

And more, the scripture says, “How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” It may be said that death alone is not power. Quite true; but we are dead to sin, and *alive* to God in Christ, that we should not serve sin; that it should no longer be our master. That we should yield our members unto another master, even unto God, as those that are alive from the dead. On this follows the great delivering truth, “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” As born of the Spirit, we learn, in one way or other, the terrible nature of “the law of sin which *is* in my members.” But now, having the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, we are free from the law of sin and death. Therefore, though the flesh is still in us, we are not debtors to it, to fulfil its lusts, or to live after it. The flesh is still there, for it lusteth against the Spirit; that is, against the Spirit of God dwelling in us. “I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.” (Gal. v. 16, 17.) Thus, whilst we see distinctly that the power of deliverance is the law of the Spirit of life, yet these scriptures plainly imply that the flesh is there, and unchanged, though no longer master.

There is one point more. Many a reader will

say, This is very different from what I have been taught. I thought our old sinful nature, or original sin in us, that in which we were born, had been done away somehow, either by baptism, regeneration, or sanctification—when shall we be pure and sinless, have no sin? Is our own death to do more for us than the death of Christ?—more than our redemption?

This shews most sadly the effect of the loss of the true knowledge of the coming of the Lord, without which we cannot hold the true, complete gospel of God. Death is made the great event, the climax of the Christian's hope, in modern teaching. Not so in scripture. To be absent from the body, and present with the Lord, is far better. But are all the effects of sin actually gone in death? Death is the effect of sin, by sin it came. Is the day of our death the day of our redemption, for which we hope? Is it in death that we shall be like the risen and glorified Christ? As to our bodies, we could not be more unlike His body; His body incorruptible in glory, ours a loathsome mass of corruption in the grave. No, it is not for death that we wait as the day of our redemption from original sin, and its effects. No, the very opposite, we are “waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our body.”

Let us, then, pass on to that glorious consummation, the resurrection of those that are Christ's at His coming. To faith redemption is sure. We

are sealed by the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption. (Eph. iv. 30.) But it is not until that blessed day of redemption that the full results of redemption will be seen in us. Never till then shall we bear the image of the heavenly. When we see Him, we shall be like Him. Can any one in this present state say that he is sinless as Christ is pure? He would only deceive himself, and the truth would not be in him. Then, oh, blessed fact! we shall be pure, as He is pure—we shall be like Him; and he that hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself, as He is pure. Away, then, with the mistaken thought that our death will do more for us than the death of Christ. We have no right to look for death at all. We may not have to die, but be alive when He comes. But shall we not, when we in His glory shine, ascribe it all to His death on the cross? Yes, and onward still; when the untold numbers are saved, and sealed during days of tribulation; yes, and the teeming multitudes of millennial days, when scattered Israel shall be born in a day; yea, when the new heavens and the new earth shall appear.

“Where God shall shine in light divine,
In glory never-fading.”

Then, and now, would we ascribe

“Glory, glory everlasting,
Be to Him who bore the cross.”

No pen can describe, no tongue can tell, the

full results of the cross of Christ. God has surely proved His acceptance of that infinite atonement in raising Him from the dead. Now, there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ. Sins forgiven, sin judged, and we justified from all things. And soon, very soon, to see Him, and to be like Him, when He appears. "Behold the bridegroom." He says, "Surely I come quickly." Every desire of the heart will be far more than realised in that blissful moment. Then shall we be actually perfect in the fullest sense at the resurrection from among the dead. For this, may we, with the apostle, be able to say, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." He did not press on to attain to death; but, any way, by death asleep in Jesus, or alive when He comes; that in any way he might arrive at it, or, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead." (Phil. iii. 11.) Then shall sin and its effects with us be no more. For the present it is not imputed to us. We have also the delivering power of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and we wait for the coming of the Lord.

C. S.

Keeping the Spirit's unity is not *confined* to the truth of the "one body;" but when any of its members go on together with the "one Spirit," then its unity is being so far kept.

LOOKING UP INTO HEAVEN.

WHEN a believer is full of the Holy Ghost, where will he look? and what will mark his testimony? We are told that 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." (Acts vii.) Thus we learn that the Holy Ghost led him to look away from his present trial to the Lord Himself, where He now is in the glory of God. He was thus led by the Spirit to gaze stedfastly on that blessed One who loved him and gave Himself for him. He was occupied with the glorified Man who a short time before had suffered at the hands of His betrayers and murderers, who no doubt was strengthening His servant's faith, and encouraging his heart, by presenting to his view a martyr's crown. It was not now Stephen remembering a finished work done for him on the cross, blessed as it always is, but occupation with the Person who had done the work. Thus the Spirit of God directs us to look to Christ in glory.

Stephen's testimony to others, therefore, was concerning this wondrous Person who now filled his soul's vision, occupied every faculty of his mind, and filled every chamber of his heart. He was absorbed with the Lord Himself, so that he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God."

Of what else could he speak at such a moment, but the glorified Man? What a testimony! It was not abstract doctrine, however true, or important in its place; but what he saw and was occupied with, was the Lord Himself.

We read also of Barnabas being "a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," and what was his testimony? Like the martyr we have been looking at, he could only speak of Him who was the chief treasure of his heart. "He exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto *the Lord*." (See Acts vii. 55, 56; xi. 23, 24.) How true it is that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Occupation then with Christ glorified is certainly the Object to which the Holy Ghost directs us, and the One He leads us to commend and minister to others.

On referring a little further to scripture, we shall find that the secret of our walking as Christ walked, of growing in grace, of sustainment in the life of faith, and of joy—blessings which we all so desire—are realised in personal intercourse and communion with Christ glorified.

The effect of Stephen's being taken up with Christ in heaven, in all the attractiveness of His grace and glory, was that he acted like his Master, and that under the most trying and distressing circumstances. The suffering martyr was able to pray for those that hated him and despitefully

used him—"He kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." We also find that when the stones of his cruel murderers were rolling in upon his body and crushing him to death, he quietly and confidently committed himself to the Lord, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" Thus the suffering servant on earth looking up stedfastly into heaven, and occupied with the Lord Himself, was able in measure to walk as He walked, who when suffering all the agonies of the cross, prayed for His murderers, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," and also closed His path of suffering with "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." What then can be more plainly taught than that if we would manifest the ways of Christ on earth, we must be taken up with Him who is now on the right hand of God?

Making spiritual progress, or growing in grace, is also connected with beholding Christ glorified. We most thankfully *remember* that He was on earth, and delight to *call to mind* all the grace manifested in the death of the cross, and know also that He hath left us an example that we should follow His steps; but we *see* Jesus where? "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.) The veil was rent, the heaven opened, Jesus rose from

among the dead, and entered into heaven itself by His own blood, so that all distance was removed between us and God, and title given us to stand in the presence of God in acceptance and nearness for ever. There we see Jesus. There we behold Him without a veil. There is now nothing between. We come boldly to the throne of grace. There we have to do with the risen, ascended, glorified Son of man, while waiting for Him to "come again." The effect of our being occupied with Him there by the Spirit, as He is made known to us through the scriptures, is that we become more and more changed according to His own mind. "We all with open [or unveiled] face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii.) Thus we have seen not only that the Holy Ghost directs us to look up to a glorified Christ, and occupies us with Him, but also that then our ways will be like His ways, our testimony be of Him, and our progress will be according to His own mind—"from glory to glory." How encouraging to our hearts to look up to Him!

The secret too of sustainment in the trials connected with the life and walk of faith is having to do with the ever living Sustainer. There is One, now in heaven, who has been here, and passed through sorrows and temptations, who, though verily and truly God as well as man, yet emptied

Himself, took a servant's form, and trod perfectly the path of faith from first to last. He was the Beginner and Finisher of faith, and at last sat down on the right hand of the throne of God. It is to Him, the Forerunner, we, who are running the race, are exhorted to look ; to look away from every other object to Him, with the eye fixed on Him, who has gone through the path perfectly, and knows all its difficulties, temptations, and trials. This ever-living, ever-loving Jesus on the throne is then our Sustainer for every step of the way. It is well for those who thus look off unto Him !

Christ glorified is also the unfading, and un-failing Object for our hearts—"whom having not seen ye love." Yes, there is One in the glory who has attracted, comforted, and satisfied our hearts. Oh how He loves ! We see in Him eternal excellencies and beauty which eclipse, every other object. "We love him, because he first loved us ;" and not only so, but we love Him for what He is in Himself. As we often sing—

"Jesus, Thou art enough
The mind and heart to fill."

Being thus occupied with Him, our hearts are filled with joy. We remember His finished work upon the cross, and have *peace*, we look up to Him in the glory and are filled with *joy*. "Then were the disciples glad when *they saw the Lord.*" Look-

ing up and gazing by faith on a Person whom we have never seen and cannot see, and yet knowing Him so well—His worth, beauty, perfections, moral excellencies, official glories and fulness—as to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

What never-failing springs and resources we have in Christ! What an ever-flowing fountain of refreshment and comfort! Gladly we flee to Him in time of trouble for *relief*, but what do we know of Him as an unending source of delight for our hearts? Would indeed that we could say more of His manifesting Himself to us, of the hearty and deep-toned joy we find in personal intercourse and acquaintance with Himself! Then obedience, testimony, fellowship with Him in His rejection and present work on earth, as those who look for His coming, naturally, as it were, flow out. O to know increasingly the blessedness connected with looking up into heaven, and beholding Jesus there till we hear the shout! How soon He may come for us! What a moment that will be when we actually see His face! and then

“For ever to behold Him shine!
For evermore to call Him mine!
And see Him still before me;
For ever on His face to gaze!
And meet the full assemblèd rays,
While all His beauty He displays
To all the saints in glory !”

H. H. S.



WALKING WITH THE LORD.

THERE is a very solemn truth in these words of Jesus, " All that the Father giveth me shall come to me ; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." This is so, as it regards the salvation of the soul. Man will not come to Christ ; he will do his own will, and that will is sin. But there is another sense in which this is true ; " No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him : and I will raise him up at the last day." We shall see in the next verse that it is written, " And they shall all be taught of God." (John vi. 37, 44, 45.) This is a wonderful promise to those whom the Father draws to Christ. " THEY SHALL be all taught of God." Jesus spoke further on this subject. " And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." (Ver. 65.) There is then a coming unto Jesus : that no one can take, unless it be given him of the Father. Any other position, a man can take according to his own choice, or will. He can be a Romanist, or a Protestant, a so-called Churchman, or a Dissenter—he can join any of the divisions of Christendom. But Jesus says, " No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." And, in contrast with all the error and discord of men, it is written of

such, "They shall be all taught of God." They are taught of God to be gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

No doubt this is very separating truth. It is a searching question, Have I been thus drawn to the Lord Jesus Himself? Has this high privilege been given in richest grace unto me of the Father? Is there such a reality in these days of division? There is such a position distinctly pointed out in the very last days of Christendom. In the revelation of the Lord's judgment of Romanism, and of Protestantism as it now is. (Rev. ii. 18-29; iii. 1-6.) The Lord reveals Himself also to a feeble company or remnant, as He that is the *holy* and the *true*. He says, "Thou hast a little strength, and hast not denied my name." And this remnant is told, "Behold I come quickly; hold that fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." This is not gathering merely as a multitude professedly to Jesus; but it is holding fast the testimony of **HOLINESS** and **TRUTH**. To hold His name, or bear His name, with unrighteousness, would be to deny Him who is the *holy* and the *true*.

This position then in holiness and truth is to be held fast until the coming of the Lord by those to whom *it is given of the Father*. We have said before this is separating truth. It did separate. There was a crowd apparently gathered to Jesus and walking with Him. "And he said, Therefore

said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." We have seen this again forty years ago. A testing time came whether the testimony should be to "he that is holy, and he that is true." And "from that time many of his disciples walked no more with him." What a warning fact this is to all professedly gathered to Him. Oh how many that turned aside then, and since, walked no more with Him.

From time to time profession is tested. Has not such a moment again arrived? Oh how many that one might have thought would have walked with Him, until caught up to meet Him in the air, are being turned aside from Him that is holy and true! We do not here speak of the question of salvation; but of that unspeakably blessed position of walking with Him and gathered to Him in holiness and truth. Oh let such remember those words, "WALKED NO MORE WITH HIM." Some may be deceived by fair words, and turned aside for a moment, and will be restored. But does not the heart of Christ feel the perverse things said to lead away disciples? Let such ponder that verse in the prophets, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their

own eyes, and prudent in their own sight." (Isa. v. 20, 21.)

Some who read these lines may be tempted to say, "that the highly privileged place of being gathered to Christ the holy, the true, is all gone and lost, and that there is nothing left but the individual salvation of God. We might as well give up all else, there is nothing left of that blessed position we once knew." Ah, doubting ones, listen not to Satan. Has not Jesus said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"? (Matt. xviii. 20.) Is not this as true now, as if the whole church of God was gathered together as at the beginning? Surely His blessed presence in the assembly is enough, both for authority and blessing, however few, even if two or three are gathered unto Him.

Jesus has now a word with us all. He says, "Will ye also go away?" If the reader has been drawn of the Father from all the divisions of men; if it has been given you of the Father, to come unto the holy and the true; if you know Him, and are really not gathered to the multitude, or to men, but to Christ; then surely your reply must be that of Simon Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." If gathered amid the redeemed myriads around the Lamb in the glory, would you then depart from Him? Is not His presence as real to

faith now as ever it was, where two or three are gathered together in His name?

May we not only enjoy this wondrous position as given to us of the Father; but may He grant that we may answer to it in holiness and truth. Is there any wonder that Satan should seek to mar, and destroy, if he could, that testimony so dear to the Father's heart? The Father has restored this privilege of being gathered to Christ; may we hold it fast in the peace of His presence; and to any who are tempted to turn aside we would press those solemn words, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." Oh, beware of ceasing to walk with the Lord.

C. S.

OUR STANDING AND STATE.

It is most precious to the Christian to remember that, whatever else may change, his *standing in Christ*, through the exceeding riches of the grace of God, remains always the same. Founded as it is on the everlasting efficacy of the work of the cross, and effected by the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, nothing can possibly shake his nearness and acceptance in Him. The believer's experience may be pleasant or painful; his circumstances may be prosperous or adverse; he may be at one time in the sweetest, happiest enjoyment of fellow-

ship with the Lord, and at another time distressed and humbled under the buffetings of a messenger of Satan ; but all through, his standing in Christ is unmoved—he is unchangeably accepted in the Beloved. With other believers he is entitled to say, “ In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.” (Eph. i. 7.)

Such is the unalterable character of the *standing* of the believer. He is a new creation *in Christ Jesus*. But his *state of soul* is another thing, and it is well to distinguish between them. A christian servant-girl once said to the writer, “ I am sorry to say, sir, that my *state* does not agree with my *standing*.” In this remark she was only expressing the minds of many more. In one sense, if our *state* were as perfect as our *standing*, we should be practically perfect ; but, in another aspect of the subject, we judge it cannot but be very displeasing to the Lord when our state of soul is very contrary to the mind of Him who is our life and righteousness—the Holy and the True—in whom we are always seen by God as He is. To hold high truth, and to go on contentedly with a low walk, cannot but grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption. And yet it cannot be controverted that this is a striking feature among Christians in our day. Now what is to be done ? We cannot certainly give up the most blessed truth of our standing,

and oh, the endearing relationships with the Father and the Son, into which divine grace has brought us, and made known to us by the Holy Ghost ; but should we not consider how far these relationships and our present *standing* are so apprehended by us as to produce that *state* of soul which such marvellous grace must necessarily effect in us ? How true it is that we love Him because He first loved us !

H. H. S.

FULL DELIVERANCE.

ONCE I stood in condemnation,
Waiting thus the sinner's doom,
Christ in death has wrought salvation,
God has raised Him from the tomb.

Once I was to God a stranger,
Filled with enmity and fear ;
He has rescued me from danger,
Love revealed and brought me near.

Now I see in Christ's acceptance
But the measure of my own ;
He who lay beneath my sentence,
Seated high upon the throne.

Quickened, raised, and in Him seated,
I a full deliverance know ;
Every foe has been defeated,
Every enemy laid low.

Now I have a life in union
With the risen Lord above ;
Now I drink in sweet communion
Some rich foretaste of His love.

Soon, O Lord ! in brightest glory,
All its vastness I'll explore ;
Soón I'll cast my crown before Thee,
Whilst I worship and adore.

CORRESPONDENCE.

8. "K.," North Devon. When we think of the tone of your letter, which we replied to in our last November issue, and read the one which has just reached us, we cannot but thank God with our whole heart for His abundant mercy. For what service we have been to you, we can only prostrate ourselves before the Lord, and give Him all the glory. For the sake of our readers—who have joined with us in prayer, and will now mingle their thanksgivings with ours—we transcribe an extract from your letter. "It is with a heart full of joy and gratitude that I write these few lines to tell you that God has indeed answered prayer, and granted me a full sense of pardon for the past, and has given me grace and strength to withstand the temptation I had yielded to so many times. O may I ever be kept humble and watchful for the future. I can see now why I failed. Though I have been for some time praying the Almighty to help me, I had not faith to believe He would hear me, and have been trying to stand in my own strength, and of course have failed. Not only has the Lord restored me, but has allowed me to be the humble instrument of leading several others to Him. It has made me deeply thankful, and very much ashamed at the same time, to think I have known the Lord so many years, and yet never tried to speak a word for Him before. Will you, please, still remember me in your prayers, that I may grow daily in the grace and love of God, and strive to lead others to Him? With deep gratitude for your help," &c.

9. "A. M.," Glasgow. We recommend you to write at once to the author.

10. "J. C.," near Stonehouse. We do not believe you could possibly have any more real influence in stemming the awful tide of intemperance, by walking contrary to the word of God, or by adding to it. If all temperance societies are indirect opposition to that command, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," &c. (2 Cor. vi. 14, 15), and, as they are open to all, they clearly are thus composed of believers and unbelievers: it follows then that it cannot be right, under any circumstances, to disobey God. And further, if even the society were formed and composed only of Christians, would not this be adding to the word of God? If we go back to that which was in the beginning of Christianity, as set up of God, can we find a trace of any society but the one assembly of God? We find the Holy Ghost baptised all believers into the one body of Christ, and we seek in vain for any other society as of God. (1 Cor. xii. 13; Eph. iv. 4.) Further, if we examine that epistle which especially describes these last sad days of Christendom, is the instruction there that we should join in society with the unconverted to improve the world? If you will read 2 Timothy ii. 19-22, you will find it teaches the very opposite. "If a man therefore purge himself *from these*, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." Surely purging himself from is not joining in a mixed society. It might look to the natural man far more likely for Lot to be useful by joining the society of Sodom.

11. "Inquirer." Scripture informs us that the Holy Ghost dwells in the body of the believer. (See 1 Cor. vi. 19; Gal. iv. 6.) He is first

brought by the Spirit to the Lord Jesus Christ as a sinner to a Saviour, and thus becomes a child of God through faith; then the Holy Spirit is given to him as the seal and earnest of the inheritance, &c. The church on earth, looked at in the place of corporate responsibility to the Lord, and in failure too—the house of God—is also the temple of the Holy Ghost. (See 1 Cor. iii. 16; 1 Peter iv. 17.)

12. Whitby. It seems to us not well to speak of passages being parallel in the word of God. We may be quite sure that every part of scripture has its own peculiar significance. There is much teaching concerning Christ in the Book of Proverbs; in fact the scriptures generally testify of Him. In Proverbs viii. “wisdom” speaks, and Christ is revealed elsewhere as the “wisdom of God.” In chapter i. of John’s Gospel we have the personal titles of Christ as the Word, Son of Man, Son of God, &c., but His relative titles of High Priest, Head of the church, Bridegroom, and others are not revealed there.

13. “T.” Bristol. The place of women in the assembly, and in service, has often been referred to in former numbers of this Magazine. We would now only remind the inquirer of one scripture, “I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.” (1 Tim. ii. 12.) The precepts of the word of God, and the examples there given of godly women, provide abundantly for the highly honoured place of women in the Lord’s service.

14. Collumpton. No doubt the leprous house teaches us most valuable lessons in dealing with sin in the assembly. What you say about an Israelite being prohibited from being in a *suspected* house we believe to be very important, as also

scraping the walls after the leprous stones have been removed. But these points have been taken up by us more fully than is practicable in this serial, in a little volume entitled, "Peace and Communion," published by Broom, London.

15. Stourport. Such questions as to the need of musical instruments in worship, would never arise, if the scriptural distinctions of dispensations were seen. When Jehovah saved the children of Israel from Egypt, and brought them through the Red Sea and the wilderness into Canaan, He took them up as a people in the flesh, gave them the law, and promised them a place of greatness in the world. As types, they read us many precious lessons. Worship, however, was then of a fleshly kind, so that damsels playing the timbrel, and David playing the harp were quite consistent with their calling and position. But when Jesus came into the world and was rejected, He spoke of the necessity for the new birth, and gift of the Spirit, and also of the entire change in the character of worship. It was no longer worshipping in Jerusalem as it had been, but "the hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth." (See John i. 10-13; iii. 7; iv. 21-24.) In 1 Corinthians xiv. 7, 8, the Spirit, by the apostle, is only using a figure to shew the necessity of those who speak doing so in words easy to be understood. Doing things decently and in order must always be carried out consistently with the principles of the dispensation. When the church has been taken to glory at the coming of the Lord, and Israel is again taken up and brought into their promised blessing in the millennial earth, it will be quite consistent for them to have a magni-

ficient temple, to keep feast days, offer sacrifices, and sing praises again to Jehovah "with the timbrel and the harp." The great truth of Christianity is that the Holy Ghost has come down from Christ in glory to abide with us for ever, in virtue of our accomplished redemption, so that everything now to be acceptable to God our Father must be in the Spirit. Hence in the chapter to which you refer, it is said, "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."

16. "B." Scripture clearly makes a difference between "purchase" and "redemption." Wicked men—false prophets—are spoken of as "denying the Lord that *bought* them." (2 Peter ii. 1.) A slave may be *purchased* and be a slave still, only having changed masters; but a slave *redeemed* is no longer a slave. The field (the world), in the parable of the treasure hid in it, has been bought, and Jesus as man is Lord of all, but all men are not redeemed. A Christian is both bought and redeemed. To such it is said, "Ye are not your own, but *bought* with a price," and "in him [Christ] we have *redemption* through his blood." (1 Cor. vi. 20; Eph. i. 7.)

17. Newfield. Scripture says that Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, and that God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son, &c. This surely does not imply that Christ, who is God, does not love the world; but that His heart was specially set on that object which is in peculiar relationship with Himself, and which He will by-and-by present to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

18. "A. U." We should never expect to know

the will of God by looking at men, even Christians, and analysing their differences. We have in the word of God that which we can trust, and is sufficient for us under all circumstances. To it faith always turns, and the heart, by grace, is always subject. There we have that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ is the only centre around which the Holy Ghost gathers Christians, and, when so gathered, He is in the midst who has redeemed us, has sent down the Holy Ghost, is Head of His body the church, is soon coming to receive us unto Himself, and meanwhile would have us walk individually and collectively in ways suited to Him who is holy and true. We know it is His mind that we should depart from iniquity, be separate from vessels to dishonour, and be with them who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Diotrephes, in 3 John 9, was not doing this, but, in pride and self-will, casting out the apostles themselves.

19. Margate. You will find your questions in reference to Hebrews vi. answered in a tract entitled, "The Young Believer's Difficulties," published by Morrish, London.

20. "R. S." Sharpness. "Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected," &c. (Luke xiii. 32.) Herod had no power against the Lord until His work was done. And though He should go up and die at Jerusalem, yet on the third day in resurrection He should be perfected. (John ii. 19.) It is blessed to know it is also with the Christian. Herod, or the world, may hate and seek to kill him, but neither can do this until his work is done; and if they put him to death like the Lord, he will soon be perfected in resurrection.

SINS PURGED, CONSCIENCE PURGED, AND WORSHIPPERS PURGED.

"When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." "The worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins." (Heb. i. 3, x. 2.)

It is a marvellous fact that the Son of God has purged our sins. In this work He was perfectly alone. He did it by Himself. No one else could have done it; no one throughout God's universe was either competent to do it, or willing to do it. But, blessed be His name, He willingly and lovingly came to seek and to save that which was lost. It was the divine will that sins should be purged, that sinners should be saved; and Jesus said, "Lo I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God." This necessitated the cross on Calvary. Not a sinner could be in the glory, unless his sins were righteously judged, and divine justice was perfectly satisfied about them. This is why God sent forth His Son. This is why He was made a little lower than the angels. This is why He, by whom the worlds were made, became flesh, and dwelt among us. He was made of a woman, and born of a woman, that, by the suffering of death for our sins, He might glorify God and redeem us.

It was necessary then that He should be the Sin-

bearer, and suffer that judgment of God which we deserved in order that our sins should be purged. It was the most solemn hour in the whole period of time within the compass of God's universe. The Son of God was found here in the likeness of sinful flesh. Man verily, perfect man, as well as most truly God; this sent One was in due time delivered up for us all, so that we are instructed in the scriptures that He was delivered for our offences, that He actually bore our sins, suffered for sins, died for sins, and in this way purged our sins. Thus our sins were so righteously judged, so fully dealt with according to unsparing holiness, that when He bowed His head in death upon the cross, He said "It is finished." He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; yea, it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him, and so to put Him to grief and to forsake Him as bearing our sins, that in unutterable agony He cried out "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It is then the astounding fact of the Son of God having had our iniquity laid upon Him, and suffering in consequence all the righteous vengeance of God due to our sins, that they are purged, so that as a prophet said, "with his stripes we are healed." And not only did He drink up and drain to the dregs the cup of infinite indignation and judgment which we deserved because of our sins, but it is also most profoundly and blessedly true that in all the unspeakable distress, brokenness of heart,

desertion, and agony which it brought upon Him that He fully honoured and glorified God. On that cross of unequalled pain and shame, His perfect love to the Father and to us, His entire surrender of Himself, His delight in the will of God, His unwavering faith, and obedience unto death *even* the death of the cross, were most pleasing to God, and for His eternal praise and glory. How truly then could the holy Sufferer say when under the shadow of the cross, and yet in spirit beyond it, "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (John xvii. 4, 5.) In the grave question of our sins being purged (the most solemn and momentous exercise which ever occupied a soul on earth), we see how fully the marvellous work has been wrought without the least compromise of one of the divine attributes, or the least omission as to meeting our deep need. For not only did the Son of God in death upon the cross magnify the love, holiness, grace, justice, truth, and faithfulness of God, but our sins were so strictly and unsparingly judged, that the Holy Ghost points to Him risen and ascended, and tells us that "after he had purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." There never was a sacrifice offered before that purge.

sins for ever from the eye of God. Not all the blood of bulls, and lambs, and goats which were ever sacrificed could do this. We read that "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins," but that "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Is it any wonder then that we are told of the Son, who made all things, and upholds all things, that after "he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high"?

The purification of our sins then took place on the cross more than eighteen hundred years ago, and there will never be another such work. "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins;" forgiveness of sins is now known when we believe, and we see the One who did it now in heaven on the right hand of God "crowned with glory and honour." Blessed resting-place for the soul that can look up to heaven and say, "There's the One that purged my sins!" How truly when looking back on His death on the cross we can say—

"Thy thirst for our salvation,
This made Thee come to die;
O love beyond all measure,
Wherewith thou didst embrace
The victims of the pressure
Of sin and its disgrace."

It is when the efficacy of the death of the Son of God is believed, being brought home to the sin-convicted soul by the Holy Spirit, that the con-

science realises its peace-giving power. It is clear that in ordinary business a man might be greatly distressed at meeting a creditor to whom he owed a large sum of money and had no means of paying it. It is equally clear that supposing a kind friend had interfered and paid the debt for him, and he knew it not, it would not be the least relief to him; he would still have the same fear and dread of meeting his creditor. But, on the other hand, when he heard the good news that another person had, in the truest love and compassion, freely paid his debt and also shewn him the lawful receipt for all demands, what relief would it give, what rest and peace would it impart to his sin-burdened soul! Would he then be afraid to meet his former creditor? Would he not boldly hold intercourse with him as if nothing had ever been between them? And if he heard the very one to whom he had been so heavily indebted say, "I have nothing against you, all is cleared away, all has been justly settled, and I have moreover given you a share of my large possessions," what a marvellous change would it produce in his feelings, purposes, and prospects! But all this relief of conscience, and all the kindness of the former creditor, fail to illustrate the way in which the conscience of the believer is purged, or to set forth the fellowship into which we are called with the very One we had so dreaded, and only thought of as an angry Judge.

The distress of a sin-convicted soul no one knows but those who have had to do with God, and hold themselves accountable to Him who is holy, and of purer eyes than to behold evil. The consciousness of being exposed to the wrath of God, of justly deserving at His hands everlasting indignation and anguish for having sinned against Him, and seeing no way of escape, is connected with such heartfelt misery as no human language can describe. Such have indeed an evil and an accusing conscience, which no dead works or ordinances of any kind can cleanse. But when such learn on the authority of God's word, by the Spirit's teaching, that Christ Jesus has made purification of sins by His own death and blood-shedding on the cross for every one that believeth, then the first ray of hope rises on the desponding soul; and when he ponders the work of the cross, and the perfections and glory of the Person who did it—when he hears and receives the testimony of God as to its sin-atoning and sin-cleansing virtues, then he sets to his seal that God is true, and realises as a precious fact that he himself is cleansed from all sin.

What a moment of indescribable peace and comfort the soul then knows! Having learnt that God in righteousness must condemn sin, and having welcomed the precious truth that He gave His own Son to bear our sins, and the judgment due to them, in order that we might be

without sin and whiter than snow in His presence; having believed the divine testimony, that Christ was thus “delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification,” he soon finds himself in the very presence of God reconciled and cleansed by His most precious blood. Now, like the poor debtor, he rejoices that another, in pure mercy, paid all his debts for him, and though he be a poor trembling believer, he knows that he is by Christ justified from all things.

He has now a purged conscience. By the precious blood of Christ, brought home to his soul by the Holy Ghost, and received in faith in its all-cleansing efficacy, on the authority of the word of God, his heart is sprinkled from an evil conscience. This is much more than a *quiet* conscience, he has a *purged* conscience, for he is wholly set free from guilt in the very presence of God. Many, we fear, are lulled by false religiousness, in various deceptive forms, into a *quiet state of mind*, but a conscience *purged* by the blood of Christ is a very different thing. Before this is known, many are going on practising dead works, vainly promising themselves to make, as they say, “a good end at last.” They are always hoping to be right, which proves they are not. They perform “dead works” to save themselves. But when the cleansing efficacy of the blood of Christ is known on the conscience, they are delivered from “dead works,” and delight to praise and honour Him who has

washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and His Father. Hence we read, “ How much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” (Heb. ix. 14.) So truly is the conscience cleansed, that such “ have no more conscience of sins.” Having had the conscience “ once purged,” they never know again, as they did before, the intolerable load of a sinner’s guilt before God. Troubled in conscience as saints they may be on account of falls and failures which have been dishonouring to God our Father, and so having lost communion with Him. But if such confess their sins, He is faithful and just to forgive them their sins, and thus give them restoration to communion again. The truth is that those who believe in the Son of God are no longer looked at by God as rebellious sinners in their sins, but are justified persons, children of God, objects of the Father’s changeless and eternal love. So infinite is the efficacy of the blood of Christ on the conscience, that we are told that by one offering we are “ sanctified” (or set apart for God), and “ perfected for ever.” (Heb. x. 10-14.)

Thus we are brought into the very presence of God, to find every question as to our title to be there for ever settled, and to have “ no more conscience of sins.” Then we know that the One who

"purged our sins" went into heaven itself by His own blood, and this bows our hearts with adoring worship and thanksgiving. Being "purged worshippers," we can offer unto God, by Christ, the sacrifice of praise continually, giving thanks to His name. There we can "rejoice in the Lord always," and worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Happy are those who so simply receive the testimony of God as to the work of His Son, as to know that they are "worshippers once purged," and have "no more conscience of sins."

What unspeakable blessedness we are brought into through the blood of Christ! Sins judged, and dealt with in divine righteousness, according to the holiness of God, in the person of His Son instead of us! The conscience, too, so purged as to be before God—in the light as He is, in the light—in perfect peace. Not a question remains unanswered, not a doubt that has not been fully removed, not a fear that has not been completely cast out, God also giving us His own testimony to the value of the blood of His Son that it "cleanses us from all sin;" that where remission of these is there remaineth no more offering for sin, that by one offering He hath "perfected for ever them that are sanctified," and their sins and iniquities He will remember no more. What liberty also to be now inside the vail in the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus, where He always appears before the face of God for us!—H. H. S.

CONVERSATIONS.

No. 1.

"How is your daughter, Mrs. H.?" we inquired the other day, addressing the mother of a young woman apparently far advanced in consumption.

"If anything she seems a little better, but the disease is so deceptive," was the reply.

"She may, then, not have long to live here; do you feel quite sure that she is saved, and, having redemption, that she is fit to depart and be with Christ?"

Mrs. H. said "Well, I hope so; she has long been trying to prepare herself for heaven."

We replied, "Jesus died for those who have no strength to prepare themselves, 'for when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.'"

"I mean," said Mrs. H., "she is doing her best to make herself fit for heaven."

"That is a very serious and common mistake. To set Christ aside: to say, as it were, Christ professed to come down from heaven to save sinners. He professed to redeem sinners by His blood. He died for our offences, and was raised again for our justification; and that He hath perfected for ever those who are sanctified by his one offering. Do you mean that your daughter

is treating Christ as an impostor ; and that she must do her best to fit herself for heaven ?”

“ I never saw it in that light before,” said Mrs. H. ; “ why I have been taught otherwise ever since I was a child in the Sunday-school. Old Mr. L., you knew him, used to tell us how we must strive to make ourselves holy and fit for heaven. And all the preaching I have ever heard has been about what *I was to do*, to fit myself to die.”

We replied, “ We will take this illustration. If you had been a slave, in the West Indies or elsewhere, and a kind friend had paid a great sum for your redemption, to set you free—not for a week, or a year, but for ever ; and if that friend sent you the joyful news of your emancipation from slavery, and then, instead of believing the good news, you continued to cry, ‘ O miserable slave that I am, who will have mercy on me and buy my redemption ! ’ or if you said, ‘ I must try my best to earn enough to purchase my redemption from slavery ; ’ would not this be treating the friend who had paid the ransom as if he were a deceiver, and would you not make him a liar ? Yes, all the while you did your best, as you call it, you would be treating your friend as an impostor ! Oh, have we not all so treated Christ ? ”

“ Well to be sure,” said Mrs. H. ; “ I never saw before how wrongly I have been taught.”

“ Yes, you would be saying to your kind friend,

'I do not believe your love to me ; I do not believe you have done what you say ; I must do my best to do it myself.' Is it not like saying 'I do not believe God so loved me, as to give His Son to die for me. I do not believe Jesus came from heaven for the purpose of saving me, of redeeming me. No, He has not finished the work on the cross. I have to do it, and I must do my utmost to do it. And I hope I shall do it. I hope I shall be fit to die, and go to heaven at last.'"

"I could not have thought it was so simple," said Mrs. H. ; "I never saw it before."

"This reminds us of the conversion of a coachman where we were staying lately," we said ; "it was a very remarkable incident that God was pleased to use." A preacher was relating it as follows : A gentleman had two little pups given him of some valuable breed, but both remained blind, and did not open their eyes. The owner ordered his man to drown the two blind pups. The man did so. But on his return he was very much troubled and agitated. The master said, 'Well, have you drowned the pups?' 'Yes,' said the man, 'I have, but I shall never drown a pup again whilst I live. No never, sir !' 'Why, what was the matter?' 'Oh, sir, they both opened their eyes as they were going down, I shall never forget them.' 'Ah,' said the preacher, 'how dreadful for a sinner never to open his eyes until he is going down to endless woe !' God

shewed the coachman that he was like the blind pups, both his eyes closed, and going down, down. He became so alarmed that the incident was used in truly awakening his soul. The rich man in Luke xvi., we may judge from the context, was a well-to-do Pharisee ; a religious worldly man. But both his eyes were shut until he went down into hell ; and there he opened his eyes being in torments. It is a mercy, Mrs. H., to have the eyes open before we go down."

"It is indeed very sad to have our eyes so closed all our life."

"Yes, if we set Christ, and His eternal redemption aside, then we must take the place of miserable sinners ; ever praying for mercy, but never knowing that our sins are forgiven ; ever struggling and doing our best, as we suppose, but never knowing that we have eternal life, never enjoying the certainty that we have redemption. Now look at the contrast. Hear the words of those who do believe the love of God ; who do know that He has been glorified by the death of their precious Substitute on the cross : ' Giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.' (Col. i. 12-14.) What blessed certainty every sentence

breathes. Is it not a wonderful contrast with the misery and uncertainty of all those who have set aside the eternal redemption once accomplished by Christ, and are now vainly trying to do their best to fit themselves for heaven?" We left our aged friend to meditate on these words.

This paper may be placed in the hands of some who have never known this marvellous grace of God. Are both your eyes closed in blindness? Is all darkness and uncertainty? Are you vainly trying to earn your own redemption? Are you determined to go on crying for mercy, and ever rejecting it? Oh, reflect, lest you open your eyes as you are going down! What a ransom has been paid! What a redemption has been wrought for all who believe God! Everlasting emancipation is now proclaimed. "Be it known unto you that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe ARE justified from all things." "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

C. S.



What is eternal is our portion, and Christ fills it.

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT.

(READ ACTS XXVI.)

A very remarkable man is introduced to us in this chapter; and, still more remarkable, a heavenly vision was given to that man.

"Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself." Thus we have the man's own account of himself and of the heavenly vision. He stood in the presence also of those who knew him well. "My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews . . . that after the most straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee." He was well known as a well-educated and strictly religious young man when in Jerusalem, a disciple of one of their venerable doctors. He was a great ritualist, and had carefully observed every ceremony prescribed in the law of God—"Touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless." Here was a very model of a ritualist, a blameless ritualist. No man can have a greater right to trust in that religion of the flesh than he had, as he shews in the third chapter of Philippians.

Yet this strictly religious ritualist was the greatest possible enemy of Christ. He was, even by his own account, filled with madness. He says, "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do

many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth; which things I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison . . . 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."

Is not this a striking lesson? A man may be strictly religious as to all outward observances of ritual and ceremony, and his moral walk be blameless. The early dawn may find him at the mass, or holy communion, every ceremony of his church may be scrupulously observed, every prayer in his prayer-book constantly repeated; he may be a highly polished, well-educated student of the greatest religious doctor; and yet from this lesson we learn, he may still be filled with madness against the true saints of God; and a thoroughly blind rejecter of the great salvation of God.

There can be no mistake about it, for this is the account which Paul gives of himself. He was in this very state of mind as he went that day to Damascus. He says, "At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me." He heard a voice speaking unto him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutes thou me?" Yes, the strictly religious Pharisee is a persecutor of Jehovah-Jesus. What a discovery

to him ! He said, "Who art thou, Lord ? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." He does not say, Why persecutest thou my saints ? But He owns them as part of Himself. What perfect identification ! What was done to them, was done to Him. Who could have thought that this blameless ritualist could be the mad murderer of the saints of God, the direct enemy of Christ ! How many such have there been since that day ? How many would be such, even now, had they the power !

Other chapters of the Acts tell us of the amazement of this man, and the three days of deep exercise of soul, as he passed from darkness to light. Let us note this well. The highly educated, strictly religious man, until he passes from darkness unto light, is in darkness, and the very power of Satan.

Jesus, in the heavenly vision, now speaks to this man : "But rise, and stand upon thy feet." This very man is the chosen witness—His servant ; and He sends him to the people, and to the Gentiles, "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may RECEIVE forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified, by faith that is in me." He who had thus been in darkness is the chosen instrument to turn others from darkness to light. Henceforth, at whatever cost, this was his service and joy.

"Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision: but shewed, first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." What a witness! What a ministry! What a revolution had now taken place in the mad persecutor! Yesterday he hated the name and doctrine of that Man who had been nailed to a gibbet; to-day he had seen him in brightness above the sun. Yesterday he was the zealous champion of ritualism; to-day he has learnt that the ritualists of Jerusalem are in the greatest possible darkness and ignorance of God. He must now go forth the witness of a risen and glorified Christ. He is a poor weak vessel, but he receives his commission from the Lord, and he obeys the heavenly vision. Nothing but the power of God could sustain a man in such a position. The whole world against him; the whole world in darkness, and opposed to God—none more so, nay, none so much so, as the priests and Pharisees. Is it so now? We shall see.

What was this Saul doing in the days of his darkness? He was seeking to work out a righteousness of his own, by ritualism and works of law. The heavenly vision turned all this into loss, and dung in his sight. (Phil. iii. 4-10.)

What were all his teachers and companions in darkness doing? He tells us. He says they

sought not righteousness by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. ix. 32; x. 3, 4.) Is it not a deplorable fact that this is still the condition of thousands around us, seeking and hoping to be righteous before God some day by religious observances and works?

Let us now notice two things which follow, or are the result of being turned from darkness to light. "That they may RECEIVE forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." It is not that they may hope at last to obtain forgiveness of sins, but receive forgiveness of sins. If merely hoping for it, I am still in darkness. If in the light, I have it. This is very distinctly put in 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." This does not say, if we sin, we have a fresh application of the blood to cleanse us from that sin. No, the effect of being in the light is to give our souls the blessed certainty that the blood of Christ has once and for ever put all our sins judicially out of the sight of God. Have we fellowship in the light in this blessed fact? Those in darkness never can

know it. It can only be known, and is known, by those turned from darkness to light. It is one thing to write, or read, this. But do you and we know this blessed fact true of every child of God? "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." (1 John ii. 12.) Yes, surely those who are turned from darkness unto light "receive forgiveness of sins." If you cannot therefore say you have received forgiveness of sins, is it not certain that you are yet in the dark?

If you trace in the Acts how Paul obeyed this heavenly vision, you will find he preached this very forgiveness of sins through the death and resurrection of Christ; and declared in the clearest terms that all who believe are justified from all things. (Acts xiii. 38.) And mark, this is not through any works, or sacraments, or observances, but through Jesus. If forgiveness of sins is preached through penance, repentance, or works of any kind that we have to do, when may we expect to obtain it? But if preached through a work already finished; through Jesus who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, then the moment we believe God we are forgiven, we are justified, we have peace with God. This is just the point of truth so important. Repentance there must be; turning to God there must be from dumb idols, from a wicked world. But is this in order that the ransom may be paid?

Did we ever ask God to send His Son to die for our sins, the Just for the unjust? Such a thought never entered the mind of man—it was wholly of God. It was pure grace, unmerited favour.

If you were a slave, as we have before said, and the person you had avoided as an enemy paid the price of your redemption, and sent a messenger with the good news; should that messenger tell you, that if you would repent, and be sorry for your conduct, then he who had sent him would pay the price of your redemption, and set you free? This would alter the whole thing. It would deny that the ransom had been paid; would it not? The very opposite was how Paul acted. He says, “Despisest thou the riches of his goodness not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” Oh, think of the ransom paid first—think of the redemption accomplished first. This the apostle preached, and then commanded men to repent. I do not repent that Christ may die for me, but because He has.

If turned from darkness to light, not only have we *received forgiveness*, but *inheritance* among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me. In the light, and made meet for the inheritance with saints in light, we can therefore give thanks to the Father who hath made us meet. Those who are in the dark will hope by effort and works to make themselves meet. We can also give thanks to Him “who HATH delivered us from the power of

darkness, and HATH translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." If in the dark, you are hoping to do your utmost to deliver yourself from the power of Satan, or darkness; and you hope you may, after the day of judgment, be in the kingdom of His Son. If in the light, you know Him "In whom we HAVE redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." If in the dark, you are like the poor slave who rejects the kindness of the friend who has paid the full price of his redemption from slavery, and says, I must do my utmost to purchase my redemption.

How truly blessed thus to give thanks! May it be the happy portion of every reader of this paper.

C. S.

CHRIST—GOD AND LORD.

JESUS the holy,
Seated victorious,
By God the glorious
 Made Christ and Lord.
Heaven's light and centre,
Centre of blessing,
Centre of worship,
 By all adored.

Choirs of blest angels
Thy throne surrounding,
Ever resounding
 " Praise to the Lamb."
Joy in beholding,
Ever unfolding,
In Thee the glories
 Of the "I am."

Cherubims, wondrous,
Living ones ever,
Ceaseless in service
 Worship Thee, God!
With voice unwearied,
Ever acclaiming,
Ever proclaiming
 Thy praise abroad.

And Thy redeemed ones
Standing yet nearer,
To Thy heart dearer
 Than any there;
Sound forth the story
Of highest glory,
Thee their Redeemer
 Glad to declare.

Like many waters
On the shore breaking,
Echoes awaking
With ceaseless roll ;
High rise their voices
In anthems swelling,
Praise, that comes welling
Up from the soul.

Their crowns of glory—
Crowns everlasting—
Willingly casting
Down at Thy feet ;
Worthy, Thee only,
Ever attesting ;
And manifesting
Gratitude meet.

Jesus our Saviour
We too now worship,
Our tribute likewise
We now accord ;
We too now know Thee,
We too now love Thee,
We too now own Thee,
Christ, God, and Lord.

Jesus the God-man ;
Christ, the exalted,
Honour'd and glorified ;
Son of our God ;
Thou in the bosom
Of God Thy Father,
'Mid heaven's rich blessedness
Hast Thine abode. .

Thou in that bosom
As a divine One—
One of the Trinity—
E'er didst abide ;

And now as human
There hast Thy dwelling
There in the Father's heart,
There by His side.

Who should e'er tell us
The infinite gladness
Known to the Father-God,
In that last hour,
Of His receiving
Into His glory,
Christ, His victorious One
Raised by His power.

Christ who in weakness,
Christ who in sufferings,
Magnified, glorified
Him on the earth ;
Jesus, who dying
Sinners to ransom,
Honour'd His justice,
Gladden'd His heart.

What the rejoicings,
With wonder blended
'Mid all th' angelic host
When as Thine own,
Seeing Thee seated
Radiant in glory—
Godhead in manhood clothed,
Heaven's high throne.

We, Thy blood-bought ones,
With note harmonious,
Hearts in full sympathy,
Strike to the chord ;
As faith beholds Thee,
Man, in the glory,
And our souls worship Thee,
Our and heaven's Lord.

R. H.

CORRESPONDENCE.

21. "R.,"
Beaconsfield. We certainly could not advise the Revised Version of the New Testament to be used instead of the Old Version. Some corrections have been made which are valuable, and have been long used by all well-taught Bible Students. We regard it on the whole as the production of men who may be scholars but without knowledge of God's mind, and, as you will observe in the preface, without any acknowledgement of the Holy Ghost. It is not then to be wondered at that it contains many serious mistakes. One of the most competent critics we know says, "I believe that a person who takes it up for his daily use will injure his own soul." Your letter we regret to say was mislaid, which must account for its not having been answered before.

22. Alpha. "I suffer not a woman to teach" is as plain an expression as can well be used, and means just what it says. For aged women to be exemplary in conduct, to be teachers of good things, to teach the young women to be sober and to love their husbands and children, &c., is more, we judge, the giving of counsel to individual cases as may be needed, than taking formally the place of a teacher. (Titus ii. 3-5.)

23. "C.,"
Abingdon. The reason why the Gentile believers were to abstain from meats offered to idols according to the testimony of the Holy Ghost and of the assembly, in Acts xv., is rather explained in 1 Corinthians viii. It was not that the idol was anything but a senseless block of wood or stone. Meat therefore offered to it could not possibly be changed in itself, and was in nowise different from

other meat. But to eat it, or to induce others to eat it, as a thing offered to an idol would be sin. Idolatry sets aside God. Moreover "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink ; but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xiv. 14-21.)

Not only Gentile believers, but all men are forbidden to eat "blood." "Things strangled" have blood in them. "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." (Gen. ix. 4.)

1 Timothy ii. 9, teaches Christian women to avoid the costly adornments and fashions of the world, and that their deportment and dress should be with modesty and sobriety, fearing God, and practising good works.

To walk in the light is to be in the presence of God who is light, and where the blood of Jesus which cleanseth from all sin has brought us. Here too, it is that we have fellowship one with another. (1 John i. 7.) If there be disobedience, and the putting away of a good conscience, how can there be walking in the light? Can there be the sense of being in the light until in self-judgment such go into God's holy presence, who is light, where Jesus Christ the righteous is our Advocate, and the propitiation for our sins? "If we say we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." (1 John i. 8.)

This is not "walking up to our light" as people say. It is really having to do with God who is light. In the light there is no darkness, and therefore no uncertainty. As long as a person is walking in darkness, he knows not where he is going, there is constant uncertainty as to the future ; for he that walketh in darkness knoweth

not whither he goeth, because darkness hath blinded his eyes. (1 John ii. 11.) But when in the light, as He is in the light, we know Jesus the Lord is there our life and righteousness, that He went into heaven itself by His own blood, thus giving us title to be for ever in the presence of God without a spot on the conscience. There, too, the Spirit of God gives us to know that "our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." Our having "the flesh" in us need not hinder our fellowship, but if we walk after the flesh, and thus sin, it positively hinders our fellowship. But, through the advocacy of Jesus Christ the righteous with the Father, who made propitiation for our sins, we are taught by the Spirit to judge ourselves, to "confess our sins," and we are forgiven, cleansed from all unrighteousness, and our fellowship restored. How richly and blessedly God in His grace has met us! Happy are those who know consciously what it is to walk in the light as He is in the light, where grace has brought us, which surely ought to be the experience of every child of God!

24. "B.," Dublin. No doubt the injunction for the sick to call "the elders" is how God would have His saints act in cases of bodily sickness. But how little is it regarded in the present day! We have known most blessed results when it has been acted on. It is well however to observe that the sick one is to *call* the elders of the assembly. This is faith on the part of one sick. On the other side, the elders should go in faith, and pray in faith over him; and the promise is that the prayer of faith shall heal the sick, that the Lord will raise him up, and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Sometimes the

excuse of unbelief is that the church is in ruins, and there are no officially recognised elders now. This is quite true; but are there not those who have some qualification for eldership, though not officially appointed by an apostle, or his delegates, because we have none? Cannot the sick then call for such? It may be, however, when sent for some may hesitate to go, or, as we have known, decline to go, saying they could not go in faith. But does not all this shew how both on the part of the sick, and those who pray over him, it should be all done in faith?

Whether “anointing him with oil” was literally the use of oil as a remedial agent, or only stated to warrant our using remedies in cases of sickness we cannot say. At any rate, it is quite clear that this passage does not mean send for a priest that he may anoint, but send for “elders” and let “them” anoint. There is no thought here of confessing sins to a minister, or any official person, but of ministers and all confessing faults “one to another.” (James v. 13–16.)

25. “W. C.,” Durham. “Behold I stand at the door and knock,” &c., is certainly the Lord’s word to the assembly at Laodicea, and appeals to them to open the door. It is sometimes used as a gospel text by those who are not accustomed to expound scripture, or, alas! to read the Bible through with the view of knowing, and being subject to, God’s mind.

Adam was clearly innocent. Holiness implies separation from evil, and until he sinned there was no evil to be separated from. We are commanded to be holy, and to follow holiness, because we are in relationship to God as His children, and are surrounded with all kinds of evil.

26. "H." Oxford. It is well to keep strictly to scripture when speaking of the great mystery of the sufferings and death of our adorable Saviour. What his righteous soul passed through when he cried out " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?" we are not told, and, perhaps, if we were told, we should be unable to comprehend it. Enough is recorded for our profit and blessing, through God's abundant grace. His name be praised for all that He has revealed concerning the death of His beloved Son for our comfort and peace.

27. "A. B." Suffolk. We see no connection between 1 Corinthians xii. 13, and Acts viii. 36, 37. The former shews how the body of Christ, the church, was formed ; while the latter is water baptism. They are two very different things. The "one baptism" in Ephesians iv. 5, is, we judge, water baptism. We heartily thank the Lord for the profit you speak of having derived from this little magazine.

28. "A." Hull. Matt. xviii. 11, is retained by some authorities. Paul is certainly "present with the Lord," though waiting for His coming to have a glorified body. (1 Thess. iv. 16-18.)

29. "G." Shrewsbury. The Lord be praised for the soul-refreshment and comfort you mention through our replies ! We have little hope of brethren who are engaged in the Lord's precious service going on happily together, unless they are accustomed *to go before the Lord together about the matters which may exercise them.* Next to being alone with God, we know nothing more important. Let not beloved brethren expect to glorify God with one mind and one mouth, if going thus before Him is habitually neglected. (Rom. xv. 5. 6.) How truly He is the "God of patience!"

THE WANDERERS RESTORED, OR JESUS IN THE MIDST.

THERE can be no doubt that the last days of difficulty and perplexity are present realities. You meet a friend, and almost the first word is, "What a state of confusion everything is in!" his face as well as words seeming to say, Everything is gone. Some have been expecting the universal spread of Christianity, and the conversion of the world; others, who have long seen the unscripturalness of such a thought, have been expecting there may be, some great display of the church in its unity on earth. Instead of which, they find division and sorrow, through the perversity and obstinacy of men. Such become greatly discouraged, and have real sadness of heart.

Thus, if we turn to Luke xxiv., we shall find a picture of the things that are happening in our very days. We know the church, or assembly, was not yet formed, for the Holy Ghost had not yet come to form it. But the company then gathered at Jerusalem was the very company which was afterwards baptised by the Holy Ghost when the church began.

We find, then, two *of them* with their backs on Jerusalem—on the assembly there, and their faces toward Emmaus. They were not going far away, about six miles. Now what was their condition,

or state of mind? They were entirely occupied with the things that had happened. Intellect was at work, and they reasoned. There does not appear to be any wilfulness or stubbornness in their conduct; but they were very sad of heart, and sorely perplexed.

Let us remember they were of the company at Jerusalem, but not in their place. They were walking away, as if all was over and lost. Things had turned out very different from what they had expected, and they were sadly disappointed. Is not this a picture of many in this day? They are of the church of God, the assembly; they are members of the body of Christ, but as to their position, they are so sad, by reasoning about the things that have happened, that, though of it, "*two of them*" yet, as we have said, are walking with their backs on the assembly, and their faces toward Emmaus. Did the Lord forget these two wanderers, as they talked together of all these things which had happened? No; it was whilst they thus communed and reasoned Jesus Himself drew near, and went with them. Now what is really the matter with souls in this state is just as it was with them—"Their eyes were holden that they should not know HIM."

How tenderly He inquires of their sadness! Does He not feel the same now? Is His love changed? May we not say, "Oh, teach me more of thy blest ways"? There was little intelligence

in them, and their faith in His resurrection was very weak. How tenderly He listens to every word ! One thing He did rebuke was their slowness of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken ! "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." And may not the wandering, sad hearts be rebuked in this matter now ? Oh, for the tender love of Christ to open up the scriptures, and shew that not a single thing is now happening that has not been distinctly foretold in scripture. Yes, all our disappointment and sadness of heart arise from not knowing the scriptures. They were ignorant of the scriptures, and they knew not Him.

And now they want to turn in, and settle down for the night ; a little independent company, or, if you please, individuals, away from the assembly. Oh, the love that could not give them up ! Though He shewed His disapproval of their step, He opened to them the scriptures, and their hearts did burn, though as yet their eyes were closed. But what a change when their eyes were opened, and they knew Him ! "They rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them." What a picture ! Whilst our souls are in that moral state not to know the Lord in the midst of the assembly, our backs are sure to be turned to Jerusalem. And the moment we truly know Him,

the face is immediately turned towards the assembly. Wonderfully does this picture illustrate the condition of many of the children of God at this time. Doubtless many are sad of heart, and sorely perplexed with all the things that have happened, who never yet knew the sanctuary of deliverance revealed in this scripture. They reason in vain ; their thoughts turn to convocations, alterations in ecclesiastical law, questions of so-called church and state. They are distracted with the discord, jar-rings, and divisions on every hand, but are as blind to the true deliverance from these billows of human tumults, as these two sad hearts were blind to the One who so gently opened unto them the scriptures. Others who have walked with Him have been turned aside ; not only those who, in wilfulness, have sought to lead disciples after them (Acts xx. 30), but such as have, like these two sad hearts, been so occupied with men and things, that they have lost the power of discerning the Person and mind of the Lord. Oh, that such might dwell on the love of the Lord to these two wanderers ! Would He not take you to the scriptures, and shew you that all that has happened was foretold ? Ah, He would not merely make our hearts burn by His own precious ministry, but He would open our eyes to know Himself. And we cannot know Him but we soon become attracted to the assembly, His body. Is there anything on this earth so dear to the heart of

Christ as His church? Does not the Spirit of God begin to move the heart of the reader to arise, and go back to the assembly?

Oh, meditate on that infinite love to the church, and you will soon find yourselves on the way back. We cannot know Him without loving that which He loves; and though there may be little intelligence, yet we shall soon find ourselves where He delights to reveal Himself in the midst.

And soon they arrive at Jerusalem; weariness, and sadness, and disappointment all left at Emmaus—all uncertainty is now gone. The Lord is risen indeed, is the certainty they find in the company gathered together. And the two returned ones are ready to tell their story of deliverance from sadness and disappointment, "how he was known of them in breaking bread." Is it not sweet also in our day to have returning ones tell the story of restoring love? This touched the heart of Jesus; "*And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.*" Surely this was as superior to the earthly sanctuary, the worldly temple, with its priesthood and ritual, as heaven is to earth. What is a worldly sanctuary, with all its crowds and ceremonies, if God is outside it, and the Lord is in the midst of the little company gathered together; and now, in our day, the members of the body of the exalted Christ?

Have we been gathered to Christ, the Holy and

the True? And are those who had wandered in sadness, a little way from the assembly ground of the twos or threes gathered together unto His name, being now restored by Him? Is it still true that, apart from all worldly sanctuaries, human priesthoods, and carnal ordinances, set up of man, Jesus Himself is in the midst of those gathered to Him? And does He still speak those precious words to those so gathered, "Peace be unto you"? Can we not hear, above the roaring tempest of human discord, those tender words, the very voice we know—"It is I, be not afraid"?

It is indeed very blessed when He first speaks peace to the conscience through His precious blood—"It is finished;" "Peace unto you." Eternity will never unfold the infinite debt of love we owe to Him for this character of peace.

But let us see Him, and hear Him in the midst of the company gathered in the upper room. Ah, they were even afraid of the religious world outside, so the doors were shut. What a contrast with that religious world! It had antiquity, and everything to please the ear and the eye. Shall we say they, the little company, had *nothing* but Jesus? The fulness of the Godhead stood bodily in their midst risen from the dead—the Head, and the beginning of the new creation. Where are you, reader? with the religious world, or with Jesus Himself? He speaks in the midst of those gathered to Himself. Truly He is not now

present in body. But is He not as really present in Spirit? They were afraid. Yes though it is unspeakably blessed, yet it is an awful moment when the soul is first separated from earthly religion and brought into the very presence of the risen Lord. He says "Peace unto you." What pen, or tongue, can tell the wondrous peace His presence and His words give, in the midst of those truly gathered to Himself? Peace in every sense: both to the conscience, and to the heart.

Now since He is risen, since He is present, since He says "peace :" how searching the question He put to them, and to us! "Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?" Troubled ones, what do you answer to the Lord? Why are ye troubled? Do you say we are troubled about our sins? He has borne them on the cross: He shews you His hands and His side. Do you say we are troubled about the confusions and divisions in the professing church? But, He says "peace" in the midst of those gathered to Himself. Nothing can ever break that peace. All the things that trouble you vanish in His dear presence. No need of parliaments, convocations, to legislate or decide in His blest presence. No need of altered prayer books, or learned doctors there—oh, the simplicity, the reality of His presence! But no man can come there truly to Him, unless the Father draws him. It is hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto

babes ; and from every stormy wind that blows, He gives perfect rest. " Peace unto you." Satan's greatest effort is to keep souls from being gathered thus to Christ. It may be said, But has not Christ now gone up to heaven ? Quite true ; and has not the Father sent down the Holy Ghost ? Does He not abide with us to the end ? How little this is believed !

And it may be asked, But is it not all over now ? Have not difficulties arisen, and is not this blessed testimony to the Person of Christ all lost ? Oh, beware of staying too long at Emmaus. What is lost ? Is not Jesus Himself as truly present in Spirit now as at the very moment He was bodily present in the upper room ? Is not the unspeakable peace of His presence just the same ? Is not the Holy Ghost as truly present to take of the things of Christ as at the beginning ? Why then are ye troubled ? Difficulties may arise, you say, or have arisen. There are no difficulties where His presence is truly owned. Disown His presence, and we have nothing but the human intellect !

There is always danger in reasoning about the *things* that have happened. These two had the letter of scripture for expecting the setting up of the kingdom. They had not spiritual discernment of the times, and hence were greatly disappointed. Some have trusted and expected the testimony to be something to be seen in the world, but if we

have the mind of the Spirit, what can we expect beyond the sure promise of the Lord? "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." It was not at Emmaus that He said, "Peace unto you," but in the midst of the little company gathered together at Jerusalem, the foreshadowed assembly. Yes, all is perfect peace in His presence; whilst all is perplexity and sadness with those who have turned their backs on the assembly. May the Lord teach us more of His blest ways in seeking the sad hearts who have wandered to Emmaus. And may He ever keep us satisfied with Himself.

C. S.



THE SALVATION OF GOD.

THE holy scripture declares, again and again, that "Salvation is of the Lord;" that it is an act of pure unmerited mercy on the part of God. This fact supposes three things as regards man: first, that he is a guilty sinner (Rom. iii. 23); secondly, that he is lost (Luke xix. 10); thirdly, that he is perfectly helpless, save to own that he is helpless, and look to another to save him. (Rom. v. 6.)

"Salvation is of God," then, not of man. Man has committed sins, but he cannot atone for them; man has acquired a guilty conscience, but he can not purge it; man has offended the God of heaven

and earth, but no “present” of his will appease Him; man has gotten away from God, but of himself cannot return; man is Satan’s slave, but he cannot redeem himself; man is under the power of death, but he cannot break its power; man’s doom is the lake of fire, and the stream of time but carries him on day, after day, to that eternal portion his sins deserve.

But, blessed fact! man may be saved: “Salvation is of God.” God willeth not the death of the sinner. “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Tim. ii. 3, 4.) What blessed news for sinful man, a helpless wretch in Satan’s grasp! Reader, you may be saved! Let that fact sink down into your heart. You are lost now, but you may be saved, and saved now ere the judgment of God falls upon this guilty scene.

God’s salvation for lost and ruined man is a full, complete, and eternal salvation, a salvation that suits His blessed heart of love, and which shall be to His eternal praise. Oh, unsaved reader, fix your eye on God, the source and provider of the salvation which alone can save you from eternal banishment from His holy and blessed presence.

But a word or two on this great salvation. It is more wonderful and glorious to me, the more I think of it.

First. My sins, what has God done with them?

I am a sinner, and cannot atone for them ; how has God disposed of them ? The alone answer is, Jesus " his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." (1 Pet. ii. 24.) Again, " He [Jesus] was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and with his stripes we are healed the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Is. liii. 5, 6.) As a believer I am pardoned of my sins and cleansed of them. (See Acts x. 43 ; 1 John i. 7.)

Secondly. But my standing in the first Adam troubles me ; and if my sins have been put away and forgiven, how shall I look upon the " old man," and the wretched workings of evil within ; is there no judgment for this ? Yes, solemn thought, there is judgment for sin in its every phase, whether sin within or sin without ; whether the tree, or the God-dishonouring fruit it bore.

But how ? " Our old man is crucified with Christ." (Rom. vi. 6.) " God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and by a sacrifice for sin, condemned [not improved] sin in the flesh." (Rom. viii. 3.) " He that is dead is freed [more properly, " justified "] from sin." The believer is to " reckon himself to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. vi. 11.) Thus the believer is delivered from his old Adam connection by the death of Christ, and what he realises to be so evil

within has been condemned and judged in the cross, and he is privileged to reckon as God reckons, and walk "in newness of life," and as "alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Thirdly. But has the law no claims on those who are under it? Yes, but how are such delivered from it? "My brethren, 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." (Rom. vii. 4.) "I through the law am dead to the law [it has killed me], that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life I now live in the flesh [the body], I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. ii. 19, 20.) Such then are redeemed from the law and its curse, and set on new ground before God. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ: that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." (Gal. iii. 13, 14.)

Fourthly. But if the believer has lost his old standing in Adam, and been delivered from the law, which applied to him there, has he no new place? and is it not one of divine security?

The scriptures furnish us with a full and blessed answer. "But now, IN CHRIST JESUS, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." (Eph. ii. 13.) "*In Christ Jesus,*" is the definition of the Christian's place before God ; and as to condemnation, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are IN Christ Jesus." (Rom. viii. 1.) The believer "hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life." (John v. 24.)

As a believer my sins were borne by Jesus ; He died to sin once ; He was made a sacrifice for sin, and sin in the flesh has been condemned ; our old man was crucified with Him; I am crucified with Christ, by the law dead to the law, nevertheless live, yet not "I," but Christ lives in me. "*In Christ Jesus,*" the risen One, I live, am accepted, He being the measure of my acceptance, and because He died for me, and I died with Him, I am free from all condemnation.

I look up into heaven and see a Man upon the throne of God, the One who hung upon the cross and died beneath the weight of all my sins and the judgment due to them ; and by faith, as taught by holy scripture, I can say, I am in Him there, I am accepted in the Beloved of God, I have a life and standing in Him that forbids the thought of condemnation being my portion. And He tells me that to His sheep He has given eternal life, and none shall pluck them from His blessed hand.

Thus divine acceptance and eternal security are mine through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Fifthly. As to the believer's walk, his responsibility and privilege is to walk as He (Jesus) walked. "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." (1 John ii. 6.) "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments." (1 John v. 2.) "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John xiv. 15.)

Sixthly. But more, when the Lord Jesus comes our salvation will be complete, and not before, for the "God of all grace has called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus." (1 Pet. v. 10.) The bodies of the saints are mortal and corruptible bodies still; so we wait for "the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." (Rom. viii. 23.) Our souls are saved, our sins pardoned and blotted out through the death of Christ; we have lost our standing in Adam, and, through His resurrection, we have gained a new standing in Himself, the last Adam, the second Man, the Head of the new creation, sheltered and exempt from all judgment and condemnation; kept by the mighty power of God. And now the next thing we are to look for, though in a scene where there is properly tribulation and deep exercise of soul for the one who walks with God, is the coming of the Lord, the redemption of the body, and the eternal glory of God.

Seventhly. Wondrous thought, too, this may take place at any moment. "Behold, I shew you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the *dead* shall be raised incorruptible, and *we* shall be changed." (1 Cor. xv. 51-57.) Man says, We must all die; scripture says, We shall not all sleep. If the Lord came to-day, believers living on the earth would not die, they would be changed; and with the sleeping saints raised from the dead, be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so be for ever with the Lord. (1 Thess. iv. 16-18.)

As to the body, the word of God says, "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." (1 Cor. xv. 53.) And more than this, "Our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, THAT IT MAY BE FASHIONED LIKE UNTO HIS GLORIOUS BODY, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Phil. iii. 20, 21.)

Thus, with a body like His own, His companions for eternity, we are to inherit the eternal glory of God, and be to the glory of His grace. This is God's salvation, and nothing short of it is. A.



“MY JEWELS.”

MALACHI III. 16-17; JUDE 20-25.

In a day of closing darkness,
 When the outlook is so black,
 When the hearts of men are failing,
 And the feet of saints turn back,
 When corruption spreads her mantle
 O'er the minds, and ways, of all,
 When the violent doth prosper,
 And men's passions rise and fall.

Then, amid the gloom and darkness,
 Shines one feeble ray of light—
 Some, who feel and own the ruin,
 Seek by faith to walk aright ;—
 Some, who fear the Lord of glory,
 And who think upon His name ;—
 Some, who often speak together
 Of His glory and His shame.

Some, who often round Him gather,
 To exhort, and sing, and pray,—
 Some, who prove amid the darkness,
 They are children of the day,—
 Some, who wait a coming Saviour,
 And who long, His face to see,—
 Some, who wait their hope's fruition,
 Till conformed to Him they be.

God, who dwells in heavenly glory,
 He beholds this feeble few,—
 He records in His remembrance
 All the sorrows they pass through ;—
 He discerns each true affection,
 And declares, “they shall be mine”
 When I gather up “My Jewels,”
 These shall in My presence shine.

G. W. F.

POSITION, CONDITION, AND TESTIMONY.

(JOSHUA V., VI.)

To the soul that is born of God, perhaps few things are of more importance than having the consciousness that he is occupying the *position* on earth during our Lord's absence which is according to His will. The scriptures abound with clear lines of instruction as to this. Not only have we apostolic testimony for the time when the church was set up on earth, and the order and godly ways it should maintain, but even the present time of ruin and departure is contemplated, and the path for the faithful clearly pointed out.

As to the *position* we should occupy in these last days, is it likely we should be competent to discern and hold our true place on earth, unless we have taken the place and relationships He has graciously given us in His own presence? As long as there is hesitancy and uncertainty as to this, how can we be responding to it in the ways of holiness and truth marked out for us while passing through this Christ-rejecting world?

When the children of Israel took possession of "the land" under Joshua, their *position* toward Jehovah, toward their brethren, and toward the Gentiles, became clear enough. They found also, when there, the amplest provision for the sustainment of their *condition*, and also for the

testimony they were called on to bear. All was of an entirely new order, and could not have been known before they were in the *position* beyond Jordan, which God in His sovereignty had given them.

The believer now, by grace, has been quickened, raised up, and made to sit in heavenly places in Christ. He is thus on the other side of the Jordan of death and judgment. Having died with Christ He is risen with Christ, alive in Him for evermore, and united to Him by the Holy Ghost sent down. Thus he is blessed in heavenly places in Christ. There he is always "complete in him." We are now therefore not in the first Adam, not in the flesh, though alas! the flesh is in us, not in our sins, not under law, and not of the world, but in heavenly places in Christ, and loved by the Father as He loved Jesus. The believer has no other position before God. When he takes this place of nearness, acceptance, and blessing, he, as it were, enters into "the land" which typified our present position in heavenly places. Such then are conscious not only of eternal security and blessing, but also of being separated off *to* God, and therefore should be *from* everything which is contrary to His mind.

Until this marvellous calling and standing is entered upon and enjoyed, how is it possible that we can walk worthy of it? If the believer is not consciously near to God, he will be struggling to

get near ; and if he does not see that he is “accepted in the Beloved,” he will be hoping to be accepted. He is not standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.

If he does not know that he is now a child of God, how can he walk as a child ? If he does not realise the truth that he is a member of the body of Christ, how can he be “holding the Head,” walking according to his relationship with every other member of the “one body” and standing apart from every principle which denies it ? If he does not apprehend the fact that the Holy Ghost dwells in him and in every member of the body of Christ, and that it is the power for all godliness, how can he be hearkening to what the Spirit saith, and be giving diligence to keep the Spirit’s unity ? It is when the Christian has entered upon and enjoys his present standing and relationships in heavenly places, when he holds the Head, and owns the Holy Ghost, then open worldliness and spurious Christianity are alike distasteful to him, and he finds that he has a place on earth of service and testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ. Such will find no difficulty in concluding that they should withdraw from moral, ecclesiastical, or doctrinal iniquity, and purge themselves from vessels to dishonour, or whatever is unsuited to the name of Him who is “the holy and the true.”

As we have before observed, when the children of Israel got into the land they found the fullest

provision made for their *condition*; and after all, a position however orthodox, will be a poor thing if it be only regarded in the way of outward observance. We are told "they did eat of the old corn of the land." This sets before us Christ in the heavenlies, which those who take their true place there, find to be the constant joy and strength of their hearts. Such become then occupied with a glorified Christ; and we may be quite sure that no child of God is in his right *position*, or in a healthy *condition* who is not thus taken up with the glorified Son of man. Now he can speak of "having nothing and yet possessing all things." Now he looks back on the cross, and remembers Him who died there, and he looks up into heaven and beholds with unveiled face the glory of the Lord. Looking back on the cross he is reminded that he has put off the old man, that he has crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts, and there too he is reminded that on it all his blessings both now and for ever are founded. But gazing by faith on Christ in the glory his soul is feasted, his heart gladdened, his faith sustained, his strength renewed, and the bright hope of the Lord's coming makes him feel superior to everything here. Trouble he may have, and battles he may have to fight, but the Lord is his strength and salvation, and gives him comfort and encouragement in the conflict.

Does the christian reader know what it is to be

enjoying this new *position* of nearness and acceptance in the heavenlies in Christ? If not, may you now by faith accept it from the Lord, who declares, that, however feeble your faith, yet by His grace, having Christ crucified, risen, and glorified as the object of your heart's trust, you are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. There too Christ is your present strength and sufficiency. Happy are those who are "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might;" who seek to walk and act in the wisdom, power, and all-sufficient grace of Christ. Such feel their weakness, no ones feels it so much; but they search the word for God's testimony concerning Christ, and daily find Him to be like "the old corn of the land" to their souls. Without this daily renewing by feeding on Christ through the scriptures, by the power of the Holy Ghost, how can we be in that *condition* or state of soul which is pleasing to God? Would the children of Israel have been enabled to fight the battles and walk in the ways which were appointed them by Jehovah, had they neglected to feed upon "the old corn of the land"? How needful then it is that our souls should be occupied with our Lord Jesus Christ! Even to the apostles our Lord declared "Without me ye can do nothing." He therefore said unto them, "Abide in me," for He Himself is the only source of fruit-bearing. May we then cleave unto the Lord, as having all resources for

service, testimony, and for all fruit-bearing in Him, being assured however clear we may be as to our true position, if personal intercourse and communion with the Lord be neglected—"the old corn of the land" not eaten—that condition will inevitably be lacking which produces true *testimony*.

The *testimony* therefore which is suited to the believer flows out of a true *position* and *condition*. How could any one testify of the world that its works were evil if he were practically of it? Or, how could a person contend for the absolute authority of scripture, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the source of all true gifts for ministry of the word, and that the Holy Ghost's presence on earth is the power of all godliness, if he himself were accrediting the systems and traditions of men, and acknowledging to human credentials and official trappings?

But we have a testimony to bear. Jesus said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words." (John xiv. 23.) John was banished by the haters of the truth to the desolate island of Patmos, "for the word of God, and for the *testimony* of Jesus Christ." (Rev. i. 9.) Timothy was enjoined by the apostle Paul "not to be ashamed of the *testimony* of our Lord," and to "hold fast the form of sound words." (2 Tim. viii. 13.) If the question be asked, "Who is sufficient for these things?" The answer is, "Our sufficiency is of God."

In tracing a little the ways of the children of Israel after they had taken possession of the land, after they had been circumcised (to us putting off the body of the flesh in the death of Christ), after keeping the passover, thus acknowledging all their blessings were founded on the blood of the Lamb, and after having eaten of "the old corn of the land," their *testimony* was marked by obedience to the will of God, by accepting the place of separation and rejection, and by caring for souls. No *testimony* can be according to God that is not in obedience to His revealed will. We are enjoined to be "as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance," &c. (1 Pet. i. 14.) To keep in our hearts and carry out in our lives the words of Jesus, characterises those who love Him. And we may be sure, if we are simply doing the Lord's will, it must certainly lead us into the path of separation from the world, and into the place of its rejection. By the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, the world is not only crucified unto us, but we are crucified unto it. The will of God was that the people of Israel should take their place outside the doomed city of Jericho, and it soon became apparent they were not of it, but in closest association with "the ark" outside it. The believer, too, is taught that he is not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world ; and as certainly as he is in heavenly places in Christ, so is Christ (whom the

ark typified) with those who are in obedient testimony for Him on earth, looking for judgment coming upon this doomed world, as pronounced by Him who said, "Now is the judgment of this world." As surely as "the ark" was with the children of Israel, so truly is Christ in the midst of two or three who are gathered together in His name. If they were told to be silent, and merely walk round about the city once, they did it. If they were told to sound the trumpets of rams' horns, they did it. If they were told to "shout," they did it. If they were told not to covet the Canaanites' wealth, or the Babylonish garment, they had to reap the bitter fruits of one of their company being disobedient. And so now the principle is the same; obedience to the word of God is always connected with blessing, but disobedience with sorrow; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap; he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption," &c. (Gal. vi. 8.) It is a point never to be forgotten that God acts in government as well as in grace.

The testimony in men's account may be mean and poor as the blowing of a ram's horn, or as small as a quiet walk round about the city; nevertheless, it was the place of separation from the doomed city, and obedience to Jehovah's will. Their lines of service were ordered for them. They cared too for souls. A harlot and her household and kindred and all that she had, sheltered in the

house marked by the scarlet line in the window, were objects of their solicitude ; and Joshua commanded the two spies who had set before her the only way of escape to bring them all out, that they might be safe from the impending and desolating judgment. And so it was.

May every child of God who reads these lines learn that our faithful *position* on earth is connected with our acceptance of our true place in heaven, and that all *testimony* according to God is connected with that *condition* which results from personal intercourse and communion with the Lord Himself !

H. H. S.

“ REJOICE EVERMORE.”

It is the Lord's mind that His children should now, even in this world of sorrow and death, be happy. He has not only *created* us in Christ Jesus, but we are *blessed* with all spiritual blessings in Him, and the Holy Ghost says, “ Rejoice evermore,” “ Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice.”

The *source* of our happiness, then, is the Lord Himself, and the *secret* of happiness is believing on Him whom we see not. (1 Pet. i. 8.) The *measure* of happiness we are entitled to enjoy is as unlimited and boundless as glory itself, “ joy unspeakable and full of glory.” Jesus desired that we might have His joy fulfilled in ourselves, and scripture is written that “ our joy may be full.”

CORRESPONDENCE.

30. "C. T." Jesus said, " 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.) Again, we read that " God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son [or in the Son], by whom also he made the worlds" (Heb. i. 2) ; so that we are taught that the Son was with the Father before the worlds were framed, for God made them by the Son. We have thus His eternal Sonship as before the worlds, and His eternal Godhead in making the worlds. We are taught that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world ; so that it was the Son and not the Father who came to save the lost, though in dying for sinners He did the Father's will ; thus shewing distinction of Persons in the Father and the Son. And so the Holy Spirit, who is called God, and manifests divine attributes, is sent by the Father and also by the Son. Moreover, the Holy Spirit, though on earth as sent down from heaven, is also a distinct Person. He did not send the Son, or die for us like the Son ; but, though distinct in personal actings, and each manifesting divine attributes, yet it is clearly revealed that there is only one God. This the Spirit of God alone can reveal to the soul, and He will do so to such as can receive His word as a little child ; for He hath hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hath revealed them unto babes. " No man knoweth the Son but the Father ; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." (Matt. xi. 25-27.)

31. "S., Ipswich. There is only one society

for the Christian recognised in scripture ; it is the church of God. No membership of anything else is there found for the Lord's people besides "members of Christ." "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." This positive side of divine truth should be enough to deter us from becoming a member of anything else. But we have more than this. We are solemnly charged to keep in a path of separation from unbelievers. This is a sufficient answer to the question as to co-operative and all other societies, where members are made up of both saints and sinners. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers ; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ? and what communion hath light with darkness ? And what concord hath Christ with Belial ? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel ? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols ? for ye are the temple of the living God ; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing ; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. vi. 14-18.)

32. Margate. We heartily praise God for the blessing you speak of through this little serial. The "whole armour of God" is described in Ephesians vi. 14 and following verses. By faith we put it on, and use it when in conflict with wicked spirits who seek to hinder us from standing in heavenly places, where the grace of God has set us in Christ. We may therefore call this armour our *battle garments*. Putting on the

Lord Jesus Christ is spoken of in Romans xiii. in order not to make provision for the flesh and its lusts ; such, then, are consciously in Christ, and not in the flesh. The breastplate of faith and hope, and helmet of salvation, might be called our *testimony garments*, for faith, hope, and love are the three cardinal points of Christianity. Whereas the putting on as the elect of God, holy and beloved bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, forgiving, and, above all, loving, which is the bond of perfectness, we might speak of as our *walking garments*.

Christ being of God made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption (1 Corinthians i. 30), is blessedly true, through the grace of God, of every believer.

33. "A Sinner." The person you describe is unquestionably taught of God, born of God, and therefore one of God's elect ; because, as you say, she takes her place before God as lost, believes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and the true Object of faith. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." (1 John v. 1.) And again, "As many as received HIM, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name ; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John i. 12, 13.) It is equally true that such have died with Christ and are risen with Him. But peace, and the enjoyment of the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free may not be known. For these precious blessings to be realised the soul must be led of the Spirit to take its place before God in virtue of the atoning blood of the Son.

RETURN ! RETURN !

"O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God ; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity."—HOSEA XIV.

THESE words were the utterances of the prophet of Jehovah to His ancient people, Israel, at a time when He was about to deliver them into captivity because of their long-continued rebellion and idolatry. When the people really repent, and return to Jehovah, and acknowledge their true Messiah, then this chapter, and many others, will have their gracious accomplishment. Before that, this same prophet informs us, that "the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim ;" [in fact as they now are, without a false god or the true God], and "AFTERWARD shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king ; and shall fear Jehovah and his goodness in the latter days." (Chap. iii. 4, 5.) The former of these verses is being accomplished at the present hour ; for the latter verse to have its fulfilment we wait for the coming of the Lord, when, in a state of repentance, they will say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

The testimony of Hosea literally applies to the Jewish people, and every part of it shall yet have its accomplishment in all the magnificence and mercy of the prophetic utterances ; but we shall use it now as illustrating the “ministry of reconciliation” now preached to every creature under heaven, the way in which a sinner is reconciled to God, and some of the blessed results.

The *state of the people* is remarkably described—they had fallen by their iniquity. By their sins they had destroyed themselves. In making molten images of silver, and idols, according to their own understanding, they had sinned “more and more.” Yet God did not give them up. The cry of the prophet was, “O Israel, return unto Jehovah thy God ; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.” And so an apostle, in unfolding the glad tidings to be preached to every creature, not only declares that all have sinned, and that all are under sin, and guilty before God, but still he cries, Return, Return—“be ye reconciled to God !” If sinners are saved, it can only be by having to do with God, the God of all grace.

The *way of return* is also clearly marked out. The prophet almost puts words into their mouths suitable for them to utter. He says, “Take unto you words, and turn to Jehovah ; say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously.” They were to approach God with confession of

their sins, and reckon upon Him who says, "Return," to receive them graciously. And so now It is sinners God saves, and saves them as sinners, and because they are sinners ; "For God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." The prodigal's way of return was, "I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight." Peter's confession was, "I am a sinful man, O Lord." The centurion declared that he was not worthy that Christ should come under his roof. The Syrophenician woman took her place as a dog which looked for a crumb to fall from her Master's table. The prophet when brought into a deeper sense of the reality of having to do with a holy God, said, "Woe is me ! for I am undone ; because I am a man of unclean lips." And when a soul considers that he must give account of himself to God, that he must sooner or later, have to do with God, who knows all things, and is of purer eyes than to behold evil he cannot but be conscious of how unfit he is for the presence of One who is so perfectly holy. The gospel is a message from God—the glad-tidings of the grace of God ; it tells of God's compassion and mercy to men in their sins, and calls upon them to return to God, to have to do with Him who is able and willing, and ready to save. The ministry of reconciliation is, "Be ye reconciled to God."

If anything can subdue the enmity of th

human heart, and give it confidence in God, whom he now so dreads, it is seeing that God provides the Saviour in delivering His own Son for our offences, to bear the judgment due to them in the death of the cross, and in virtue of the everlasting efficacy of His atoning work, is now sending far and wide the ministry of reconciliation, saying by His servants, “we pray in Christ’s stead be ye reconciled to God.” Do you, reader, know what it is thus to have to do with God, to go before Him as a sinner confessing your sins, thus counting on God to take away all iniquity, and receive you graciously? Be assured there is no other way of matters being really made up between you and God, no possibility of being “reconciled to God,” but “by the death of his Son;” for the death of Jesus is the only answer to the righteous claims of God for the sins of those who are saved.

How simple, and yet how magnificent, is this holy and gracious way of a sinner’s being reconciled to God! No demands, reader, are made on you. It is God who, in such infinite grace, has made the way, and, oh, at what a cost! It is God who sends the glad tidings of the way of reconciliation! It is God who has bidden His servants to cry, “In Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” It is the grace of God which brings salvation! It was God who delivered up His own Son “for our offences,” and was “raised again for our

justification." It is God who is the Justifier of all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ! Have, then, to do with God. Return! Return! "Take with you words, and say, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously ;" and thus approaching God through the death of His Son, you will be pardoned, reconciled, and justified from all things. Oh, what a precious message is the "ministry of reconciliation!"

When a person has thus really had to do with God, he has necessarily renounced confidence in an arm of flesh. Though formerly, in time of difficulty and trial, he had made some visible helper his resource, he does so no longer, because he now knows the living God. He says, "Asshur shall not save us." He has done also with his own contrivances, and abandoned his own ideas of escaping danger—"We will not flee upon horses." Neither have the idols that men invent and worship any longer a hold upon him, for this acquaintance with the true God has delivered him from every false god : "Neither will we say any more to the works of our hands, Ye are our gods." Yes, the death of the Son of God upon the cross has told him of the compassion, and grace, and goodness of "the only wise God," so that he no longer doubts His love toward the helpless and needy soul that approaches Him through the death of His Son, "for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy."

Now let us look at some of the results of thus being reconciled to God.

1. PEACE and ASSURANCE. Such have their sins forgiven, and are assured of it. "I will heal their backslidings" was the prophet's word to Israel; while an apostle declares that, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." *Peace* with God is always founded on the blood. Hence we read, "Having made peace through the blood of his cross;" "Being now justified by his blood." But *assurance* is communicated to us by God's word; so that we are told that the sinner, by believing on the Lord Jesus, is justified from all things, has remission of sins, is born of God, has eternal life, is a child of God, and is also brought into other marvellous blessings and relationships. How can any one who has been reconciled to God by the death of His Son doubt, then, that he has eternal life, present forgiveness of sins, &c.? (See Acts xiii. 39, x. 43; 1 John v. 11-13; Gal. iii. 26.) Then the prophet assures the returning ones that all is well, that God is no longer angry with them, and that they are objects of His love. "I will heal their backslidings; I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from them." Let it never be forgotten that assurance of salvation, though founded on the finished work of Christ, is communicated to us *always*, by the Spirit, through the unalterable word of God.

2. WORSHIP. The soul that has returned to God, and is reconciled to Him by the death of His Son, finds that his happiest moments are when consciously in His presence. Having received the Spirit of adoption, and having known that Jesus said concerning His own disciples, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God," he has to do with God in the endearing relationship of Father. This bows our hearts in worship. We cannot but give thanks ; we cannot but praise and adore our God as "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort." If the prophet declares that the returning ones of God's earthly people will be constrained to say, "so will we render the calves of our lips," how much more will His own children now worship the Father in spirit and in truth (for the Father seeketh such to worship Him), and as a heavenly people, exultingly cry out, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ!" (Eph. i. 3.) Is it, therefore, any wonder that we are enjoined "By him to offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name"? (Heb. xiii. 15.)

3. OBJECTS OF GOD'S BLESSING. Brought into the favour of God, and accepted in the Beloved, the believer should reckon on God's blessing being upon him, and with him. It is for our consolation to know that the Father Himself loveth us, and

that even as He loves Jesus. This, too, He would have us know and enjoy, for Jesus said to the Father, "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." If, then, the promise of Jehovah to returning Israelites is, "I will be as the dew unto Israel," the power of fruitfulness and blessing, how much more may those who are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ," count upon His richest and best consolations and blessings!

4. GROWTH. As new-born babes we are exhorted to desire the sincere milk of the word, that we may *grow* thereby; to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. While our new-creation standing and acceptance in Christ always remain the same, there is progress in divine knowledge, and in the believer's devotedness and walk. His faith may grow exceedingly, and his love abound. His service also may grow in extent from five talents to ten, and its quality be more according to the Lord's mind. It is said of Israel, "he shall grow as the lily;" so, as we really grow in grace, we shall choose the lowly path, care less for the approval or disapproval of men, and more and more manifest the purity and spotlessness of the lily. We shall thus be more rooted and grounded in love, and by taking deeper root downward in the springs of divine grace and truth, we shall bear fruit upward,

our branches will spread outward, so as to be able to offer protection and shelter to others. Then there will not be unevenness and crookedness in the Christian's walk, his beauty will be as symmetrical as "the olive-tree," and his savour of Christ be like the fragrance of "Lebanon." He will grow, not as the oak, but as "the vine," in the constant consciousness of weakness, and need of clinging to another for support, so that he dreads the idea of independence, and knows his utter helplessness if left for one moment to his own resources. More and more he learns the divinely-taught lesson, "From me is thy fruit found." Happy indeed are those who have hearkened to the ministry of reconciliation, who have returned to God, and known what it is to be "reconciled to God by the death of His Son!"

Should these lines fall under the notice of any true believer who keenly feels the smart of having wandered from the Lord, and has been, perhaps, decoyed by Satan into bye-paths of sin and folly, we beseech such to listen to the words at the head of this paper : "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity ;" then the One against whom you have so sinned will graciously meet you on returning, saying, "I will heal your backsliding ; I will love you freely." Can anything be more encouraging? Hearken also to the gracious words of God by another prophet: "Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith

the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you ; for I am merciful, saith the Lord. . . . only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God." (Jer. iii. 12, 13.) May the words, too, of an aged apostle bow thine heart before God : " If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Return ! Return ! " Draw nigh to God" with full confession, and be assured that " he will draw nigh to you." Return ! Return !

H. H. S.

ANANIAS; OR, SATAN'S FIRST ATTEMPT AGAINST THE ASSEMBLY OF GOD.

(Acts v.)

WE would ask the attention of the readers of this little magazine to some striking contrasts in connection with this very solemn case of evil. At that time the assembly was composed of believers. " And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul." They had heard and believed the glad tidings of forgiveness of sins. They had repented, and were baptised, and they continued stedfast in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. The Lord had added them together, and thus the assembly, or church, had been formed.

And they thus added together were the church, or assembly. (See Acts ii. 29-47.)

They were then the assembly that believed, and were of one heart and of one soul. This was the church as formed, and baptised by the Holy Ghost. (1 Cor. xii. 13.) It was seen thus in its unity, in faith, and the power of the Holy Ghost; and the effect, or fruit of faith was truly marvellous. “Neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.” Still further was the fruit of faith manifested in the selling of their possessions, and bringing the price of the things sold, and laying it at the apostles’ feet. Such was the assembly as formed by the Holy Ghost. “BUT a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife.” Yes, in contrast with the company of believers—not said to be one of them. “*A certain man;*” not a word as to his being a believer. Nay, as a man he seeks to join himself to *them* by works. Works first—just what a natural man always seeks to do. He “sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles’ feet.” Now, as this is the first attempt of Satan to introduce evil into the assembly, by a certain man, thus to join himself to them, it surely demands our closest attention.

What had he done? Just what many now seek to do. He makes a profession that in outward appearance imitates the fruit of faith. At that moment the effect of faith was very striking: the selling of possessions, and laying the price at the apostles' feet. Very well, he does this—he sells his possession, and becomes *like* those whom the Lord had added, but he kept back part of the price. There is no evidence that he truly recognised God, the Lord Jesus, or the Holy Ghost on earth in the assembly.

It was a wonderful imitation of faith in thus seeking to join himself to them. No such terms or conditions had been propounded, but he acts as though there had. He saw the fruits, or effects, of faith, and he thought by falsehood to obtain a place in the assembly. How terribly all this is exposed! “Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?” Who would have thought that this apparently religious act was the very work of Satan—his first effort to introduce evil into the assembly of God? Strange that this has had so little attention. How often we consider the way in which Satan introduced evil in paradise; but here is the assembly, the dwelling-place of God on earth, and here is the first great attempt to introduce evil into it.

God acts by His servant, Peter, in government, and in this case death was the immediate penalty

of thus seeking to lie to the Holy Ghost in the assembly. What a contrast, then, this certain man and his wife present to the assembly of believers. In the one case the most wondrous display of works, the fruit of faith; in the other, Satan deceiving the man, and leading him to seek entrance by works and falsehood which are most dishonouring to God, and can only be condemned as wickedness.

We would also call attention to the Lord's work, and to Satan's work. The Lord added believers together by the Holy Ghost. Satan sought by deception to get a certain man and his wife *joined to them*. Solemn question, dear reader: Have you been added to the Lord, and thus form one of the assembly of God? Are you quite sure it was the Lord? Does the world see in you the fruit, the effects of faith, in a holy life? Or, has Satan deceived you, by leading you to join yourself to the assembly, or the professing church of God, by works? If still a stranger to God, His righteousness in justifying you from all sins, and seeking to join yourself *to them* by works, you know, like this very certain man, you have kept back a part of the price. Ananias desired to be thought very religious. Have you had this thought? What a deception of Satan! Oh, how many in this day have joined themselves to the professing church on this very principle of Satan! How many may be seen at what is now called holy communion!

and what apparent devotion one day a week, and a few other times in the week, and in other ways apparently very devoted. But see them devouring the most trashy novels, or spending hours of indolence. Thou also hast kept back part of the price. Yes, let us remember this first lesson of Satan's effort against the assembly, the church; that it was by seeming good works to introduce evil. God exposed this, and judged it, surely for our instruction. This would enable us to detect much of Satan's work from that day to this. He was a liar from the beginning, and, as in this case, so we shall find the work of Satan is always marked by a lying spirit. Is it not a solemn thing to lie in connection with the assembly of God?

Is not every attempt to come to God, or to join His people, on the principle of our own works, a lie? Are we not sinners, guilty sinners, deserving hell? To come to God, then, on the ground of being very religious, or very holy, is it not a lie? Have you ever come to God, owning what you are, and all that you have done?

In how many ways may a certain man keep back part of the price of what he professedly gives up? How little of counting all our best things but dung! A man may give up his ecclesiastical position, and connection with what is contrary to Christ; he may seek to join himself *to them* that are truly gathered to Christ, and still keep back a part. Yea, for years he may be his

own centre, his thoughts wholly occupied with his work. But let a time of testing come, and, to the surprise of many, that man will soon be turned aside. So of the world, intellect, &c. If intelligent faith has not produced as fruit a full surrender to Christ, failure and sorrow are sure to come.

Let us return to the contrast. In the sight of God grievous evil had presented itself; deception and lying in the very assembly of believers who "were of one heart and of one soul." All looked well, possession sold, money laid at the apostles' feet; but there was deception—a part was kept back. Is it not the same when perverse men have come in, that is, perverting truth by keeping back a part of the facts in any case? Let us not forget that this is the very mark left on the first attempt of Satan to corrupt the church of God. It may be said it is nothing, no doctrine of Christ is attacked. Did God regard this as nothing? How awful the judgment on Ananias and on Sapphira his wife!

What, then, were the effects of this evil in the assembly, and God's judgment of it? Several most striking effects. "Great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things." This is sure to be one—the first—effect where God exposes and deals with evil. There will be deep searching of heart, individually and corporately. Then follows a remarkable display of the power of God; and if there be real self-judgment,

this will always, in its measure, be the case. Signs and wonders were wrought among the people. We may here notice a very peculiar parenthesis, from the word "and," in verse 12, to the end of verse 14. Let us first see how the narrative runs on, and then return and examine carefully the parenthesis. Signs and wonders, then, were wrought among the people, "Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits; *and they were healed every one.*"

Now is not this most remarkable, and very encouraging? A shocking spirit of falsehood is detected in the assembly, and it is judged and put out; or, in our day, we may have to purge ourselves from it. (2 Tim. ii. 20, 21; iii. 14; iv. 1, 2.) What may we learn and expect from Satan's first attempt? If we are with the Lord, we may, instead of hanging down our hands, expect signs and wonders, souls blest on every side, sin-sick souls, and them that are vexed with unclean spirits restored. "They were healed every one." What a complete victory this was over Satan! May we never forget it, but have faith in God, and an ever-increasing love to souls!

We will now turn to the still more striking

lesson of this parenthesis : (" And they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them ; but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.") Thus the purging out of this terrible evil of falsehood not only produced great fear, but great boldness. " They were all with one accord in Solomon's porch." Oh, for more fear of evil, and boldness for Christ ! What present lessons these are ! The next most important truth seems at first sight a contradiction. " Of the rest durst no man join himself to them." " And believers were the more [or, were more than ever] added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." Here the all-important difference between a man joining himself to them, and being added to the Lord, is brought out in striking contrast. The whole church was *then* together in the unity of the Spirit; now, a few here and there are gathered together to the Lord. The principle is the same. Clearly the judgment of evil put a stop to, prevented, what Ananias had sought to do—join himself to them. Yes, it stopped *men* from joining the church, or assembly. This is still the case, no doubt. How can we, they say, join such a company as that ? why, they have had such evil in their midst, and such falsehood, and they have had such a to-do; what they call putting out evil, or separating from it. The

fact is, these persons durst not join themselves to them ; they dread the holy discipline of the assembly, owning the presence and authority of Christ. "Of the rest durst no man join himself to them." Did this in the least stop the work of the Lord ? Far from it. "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." This is assuredly most encouraging to any that are truly added together—two or three gathered together to His blessed name, as He said. (Matt. xviii. 20.) Is it not a mercy that certain men are thus prevented from joining themselves *unto them*, men deceiving, lying unto the Holy Ghost ?

Let us remember the Holy Spirit is as truly present as when evil was thus solemnly judged in the case of this certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife. Satan can imitate the fruit of the Spirit in part. And oh, how he can quote scripture to back his wicked designs ! We see how, in this case, his leading Ananias to imitate piety, with lying deception, was judged of God. And in the Lord's temptation we also see how He met the adversary's quotation of scripture. Yes, scripture may be quoted and perverted, and a sad spirit of falsehood be developed in the assembly. The Lord comes in—it may be in judgment—men may be deterred from joining themselves to them ; yet, so far from this hindering the real work of the Spirit, may we not count on blessing abound-

ing all around, and believers being more than ever added to the Lord? No doubt such as have *joined themselves* to the twos or threes gathered to Christ will drop out of rank. May the Lord's weak ones go on strong in faith! Is there not a striking likeness between this *first effort of Satan* to corrupt the church of God, and the very last he has made in these days, probably the last of the church's existence on earth before the coming of the Lord? Never was there a more needed time to walk by faith. God is working His own gracious purposes in the midst of human failure. May the reader beware of taking a false position, if not a believer; and this, not only as to salvation, but also of taking the place of joining the assembly, or of professing to own the Lord present in the midst, if you do not believe it. God will have truth and righteousness in His presence.

We have only suggested a few thoughts—we believe from the Lord—on this important scripture to believers at this present time. May the Lord lead the reader to meditate upon them, in dependence on the Holy Ghost. Nothing could be more solemn as a warning, or more fitted to encourage the Lord's people, whether in gospel work to the multitude, or His assembly, for, notwithstanding all that has happened, believers shall yet be added to the Lord more than ever.

C. S.



THE HOLY GHOST.

No. I.

"Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? . . . thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."
 (ACTS v. 3, 4.)

AT a Bible-reading, some time ago, the question was asked, "Where is the Devil?" Some one immediately replied, "In hell;" and when another question was asked, "Where is the Holy Ghost?" the answer given was, "In heaven." Now it need scarcely be said that neither of these answers were correct. The fact is that persons, even Christians, are so accustomed to think and speak about spiritual things without considering what the real truth is as revealed by God in His word, that the most unscriptural and extraordinary notions are widely circulated in Christendom which are not only wrong, but sometimes dead against the truth of God. As to Satan, he is not yet shut up, but he will be. Instead of being under confinement, he is "going to and fro in the earth;" he is not omnipresent, "but walking up and down in it." Peter says, "Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Yes, he is still "the accuser of our brethren," "which deceiveth the whole world," and "the wolf which catcheth . . . and scattereth the sheep." And as to the Holy Spirit, though He be a divine Person and therefore everywhere present, yet nothing is

more clearly revealed in scripture than that He came down and took up His abode in God's people on earth, on the day of Pentecost, to abide with us for ever. And the more we search the scriptures on the subject, the more we shall be assured that the gift of the Holy Ghost consequent upon an accomplished redemption is the characteristic truth of Christianity.

Is it any wonder then that it should be so perverted and denied by our subtle adversary? Is it not most distressing to hear of some denying that He is God ; of others praying that He may be sent down ; others pleading for a greater measure of the Spirit, a fresh baptism, and a pentecostal blessing? All these points, and many more concerning the Godhead, personality, indwelling, and operations of the Holy Ghost we hope briefly to consider; but we are assured that most of the other errors arise from not knowing Him as a divine Person, co-equal with the Father and the Son.

In the text at the head of this paper He is distinctly and unmistakeably called *God*, and a Person capable of being lied to. Hence He is sometimes called "the Spirit of God ;" and the things of God knoweth no man but "the Spirit of God." He has then *eternal* attributes, for He is "the eternal Spirit." Before the earth and the heavens were formed, the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the chaotic waters ; and we are told that "by his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens."

(Job xxvi. 13.) Who could be truthfully said to be “eternal” but “the high and holy one which inhabiteth eternity”?

Is not *eternal* one of the attributes of Godhead? In truest harmony with His Godhead qualities, and co-equal with, and acting together with the Father and the Son, He is called “the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father,” and also “the Spirit of his Son.” (John xv. 26; Gal. iv. 6.) Besides, the Spirit is so constantly called “*Holy*,” which is a term emphatically applied to God. “I am holy.”

Again, we read in Peter concerning the Old Testament scriptures that “holy men of God spake as they were moved “by the *Holy Ghost*.” Paul also declared, “Well spake *the Holy Ghost* by Esaias the prophet,” and yet we are told that it was “*the Lord God of Israel*” who “spake by the mouth of his holy prophets;” and Isaiah in this same scripture says it was the Lord (Adonahy, Lord in plurality of persons) who gave him the word to say. (2 Peter 1; Acts xxviii. 25; Luke i. 68; and Isa. vi. 8, 9.) Is it possible to have clearer testimony to the Godhead of the *Holy Ghost*?

We read too of His *omnipresence*, “whither shall I go from thy Spirit; or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell (hades), behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even

there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." (Psalm cxxxix. 7-10.) His omnipresence is further shewn by His dwelling in every child of God all over the earth, and giving to each, in every part of the globe, access unto the Father through the Son. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son unto your hearts, crying Abba Father." "For through him we both [believing Jews and Gentiles] have access by one Spirit unto the Father." (Gal. iv. 6; Eph. ii. 18.)

His *omniscience* is also clearly set forth in scripture where we are told that "he searcheth *all things*, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. ii. 10.) Who but a divine Person could search the deep things of God? Again, who would be competent to teach *all things*, unless he knew all things?

His *omnipotence* is constantly witnessed in raising sinners, dead in trespasses and sins, into spiritual life; as it will be by-and-by, when "he that raiseth up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. viii. 2, 11.) Who but One who is Almighty could take of the things of Christ and shew to every child of God, and help and minister the truth by every gifted servant of the Lord continually? Who but one of Godhead qualities could be said to abide with us *for ever*, to guide into *all* the truth, bring *all* things to our remembrance whatsoever Jesus had said? And of whom could it be said but of One acting in

conjunction with the Father and the Son? “*All things* that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that he shall take of mine and shall shew it unto you.” (John xiv., xvi.)

Sovereign actings are further characteristics of “the only wise God,” who acts according to the good pleasure of His will. It was the Holy Ghost who said, “Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost departed.” Again, “They were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia They assayed to go into Bithynia; but the Spirit suffered them not.” And further in relation to certains piritual gifts, they are distributed by the Spirit’s sovereignty. To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit” “But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased him.” (See Acts xiii. 2, 3, xvi. 6, 7; 1 Cor. xii. 8–18.)

We trust that enough scripture testimony has been brought forward to shew the Godhead of the Holy Spirit; so that we can easily understand why those who had connected themselves with God’s assembly and had said what was false, were spoken of as having lied not to men but to God. Ere this the Holy Ghost had come down, and the assembly was the habitation of God through the Spirit.

H. H. S.

CORRESPONDENCE.

33. "B.," Kingston. Perhaps no erroneous doctrine has been more detrimental to the souls of God's children, than that those who compose the church of God will have to pass through "the great tribulation." Such a statement subverts God's revelation of the church as the body and bride of Christ, reduces the heavenly people to Jewish associations, and robs them of the watching and waiting attitude for Christ to come at any time. Such, more or less, merge into a political view of the Lord's coming by looking for events instead of Himself, in short for antichrist instead of Christ. Thus the affections, conscience, and hope of the soul become seriously damaged by it.

Nothing can be clearer in the Lord's farewell address to His disciples before going to the Father, than that He left them by giving them the blessed expectation of soon seeing Him again. Between the coming of the Holy Ghost, and His return from heaven, He did not put a series of events to be fulfilled; so that we are told that the early Christians waited for God's Son from heaven.

The part of scripture that has been perverted to give a colour to the doctrine is Matthew xxiv. But a brief glance at it will suffice to shew that the "coming" referred to by the disciples, in their questions to the Lord, was not His coming *for us*; but His coming *to Jerusalem* when we come *with* Him, and every eye shall see Him coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (See Matt. xxiii. 39, xxiv. 3.) That those there mentioned who will go through the tribulation are "his elect," is true enough, and a term applied by

Isaiah to the blest remnant of the Jews: but the reference to "the sabbath day," "Judea," "fleeing to the mountains," "flesh" saved, "the abomination spoken of by Daniel the prophet," the "great tribulation such as was not . . . no, nor ever shall be," also spoken of by the same prophet, its being preceded by the preaching of "the gospel of the kingdom of God," not of the grace of God as now preached, and other points, clearly mark it out as the time of "Jacob's trouble," he will have to pass through and be brought out of; and "the hour of temptation," coming upon all the world, from which the Lord promises to save us. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from [or out of] the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth." (Rev. iii. 10.)

It is interesting to observe that when our Lord referred to His rejection by the Jews—Judah and Benjamin—He said, "I am come in my Father's name and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name [the antichrist] him ye will receive." (John v. 43.) This we know from other scriptures is how the unparalleled tribulation will be brought about, and in retributive justice, the very tribes which rejected the Messiah will go through it. The ten tribes will not be gathered together till after this, when the Lord actually comes out of heaven. (Matt. xxiv. 31.)

34. "E. G. K.," Sheffield. Nothing is more plainly taught in scripture than that the believer on the Son of God has present possession of eternal life, and that he should know it. Let us simply hearken to what God says to us about it. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." Jesus said, "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 [judgment]; but is passed from death unto life." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life." (John iii. 36, v. 24, vi. 47.) And again, "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life;" observe,—*hath given* to us eternal life—"and this life is in his Son. 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. 10-13.) And further, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col. iii. 3, 4.) The activity also of this life which is given us is also spoken of, as, for example, "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." (1 John iii. 14.) Now we ask, Can any language more forcibly convey the truth that the believer on the Son of God has already the present possession of everlasting life? It is not a mending of the old nature, but receiving from God a new nature—eternal life. There is no uncertainty as to this. "God hath given to us eternal life," and we are to know that we have it.

If it be said there are scriptures which contradict this, we cannot for a moment admit the statement. That there may be difficulty in the minds of the uninstructed in divine things, in explaining some other scriptures consistently with this view is another thing; but scripture never contradicts itself. It is God's word, and to those who wait

on Him to reveal His own mind by the Spirit through the scriptures, the *apparent* contradictions become only the occasions for the Spirit of God to unfold more fully and profitably to our souls, “the deep things of God.”

If it be said that eternal life is looked at in scripture as that for which we *hope*, no one could contradict it; for we read, “in hope of eternal life,” and Timothy is admonished to “lay hold on eternal life,” as if our having eternal life was an entirely future thing. And so it is, as to our bodies, when the fullest accomplishment of it is the question. For we are objects of God’s grace and salvation as to spirit, soul, and body. Now by faith our souls are the sphere of divine and gracious blessing, so that, as to our souls, we have eternal life, present salvation, and redemption; but, as to our bodies, we wait for the Saviour to change our vile bodies, and to fashion them like unto His glorious body. We look forward then to have “the redemption of our bodies.” It is in this sense we understand our having at “the end everlasting life.”

If, then, Christ is your life, you have eternal life. This is not merely being sure of it at some future time, but as to your soul you are born of God, you have the present possession of everlasting life; and everlasting surely does not mean for a day, or a year, but for ever. It is Christ in you, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Faith lays thus hold on eternal life, is conscious of having to do with what is in contrast with what is temporal. Timothy was therefore not only enjoined to flee from the love of money and such like, but to “fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life.” But more on this and your other questions in our next issue, if the Lord will.

G O D B E S E E C H I N G.

2 CORINTHIANS V. 20.

IN the gospel “all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ;” and this is true in its fullest sense, even a new creation, as may be seen in the preceding verses. “Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new, and all things are of God.” The *purpose* of God in sending His Son was not to judge and condemn men for their sins—He was in Christ, not imputing their sins unto them. He will send Him to judge, for all judgment is committed unto Him. “He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” Yes, that same event, which no man can deny, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead, gives assurance to all believers of their justification, and to all others of their judgment.

If we trace the path of the sent One from heaven—yes, from the stable at Bethlehem to the cross, outside the gate of Jerusalem—we never find Him imputing the trespasses, or sins, of men to them. What a sight! God manifest in the flesh—not imputing, but on His holy path to bear

their sins on the cross. He could say to the sinner at Sychar's well, "Give me to drink." He found His joy in her salvation ! Fount of eternal love. Far more welcome to His heart were the tears of that woman in the city, which was a sinner, than all that the cold-hearted Pharisee could set upon his table. Deeper joy to Him to say unto her, "Thy sins are forgiven; thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." But is it not too late for a dying thief to look to Him, in the very agony of death? Must not his sins be imputed to him, and he be judged to everlasting woe? No, he looked, and lived. His dying eyes were opened to see the Son of God in the very act of making reconciliation. Did Jesus turn a deaf ear, and say, Too late? No, as He bare the sins of the dying thief, He said, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Oh, how tender the invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Yes, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Thus, whilst the reconciliation by the death of Jesus revealed the righteousness of God, it also manifested the love of God, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

How utterly contrary is all this to man's thought of God! From the moment man listened to the

lie of Satan, he has been afraid of God. He still, with all his fig-leaf apron-making, hides from God in fear; however he tries to cover himself with his own works, he is still conscious of his nakedness, and afraid of God.

But God does not leave man in his fear and nakedness. He might have done, as He has left the fallen angels. Yes, he might have left us to everlasting darkness; but God so loved. Do ponder this fact—God is love. It is not that He will so love us if we deserve His love, or if we love Him. You cannot love a person you do not know. You must know Him as revealed in Christ. Then you will love Him, because He first loved us. No person finds so much difficulty in believing the gospel of the grace of God, as those who have spent years of oft-repeated prayers for God to have mercy on them. A sort of thought that if they can only move the heart of God to love them, they may hope to be saved at last. This is terrible darkness. Suppose a child has left her home, and her parents are entreating her to return, assuring her of their unchanged love, and, instead of returning, she sends hundreds of letters, begging for mercy, and to be allowed to return.

“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though Christ did beseech by us, we pray in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” Have you ever thought of this—God beseeching you to be reconciled to Himself? Surely this is now

altogether different from the time when the Jew, shut out by the veil from the presence of God, must stand at a distance afar off, crying for mercy, or the mercy-seat. The veil is now rent—yea, the very ground on which God now beseeches is this—“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin ; that we might become the righteousness of God in him.”

Has not God thus shewn even more than mercy in perfect righteousness ? He now beseeches sinners to be reconciled to Him. Thus to spend years after this in praying God to have mercy, is spending years of doubt and unbelief. Yea, it seems very much like saying God has not shewn mercy. Is it not saying Christ has died in vain, and you want God to do something else to shew mercy to you ? If God gave His Son to be made sin, a sin-offering for us ; if God is glorified by that death, and has proved His acceptance of the atonement for our sins by raising up Jesus from the dead—and further declares to you, “that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things ;” after all this, are we still to go on praying in unbelief ?

Do you say, How am I to know that I am reconciled ? Why God beseeches you to be. If you believe Him, clearly you are reconciled, and justified from all things. He says it is so ; what further evidence can you require ? Would you

approve of that erring child saying, I cannot believe my parent ; he beseeches me to be reconciled ; he assures me of forgiveness, such forgiveness as to remember my sins no more ; but I do not believe him ? Would not this be insult added to injury, no matter how many letters she wrote, begging for the mercy which she would not receive ? Nay, would not each of such letters be an insult to a parent's heart ? Oh, beloved reader, will you continue thus to treat God ? Not a single thing has to be done—"It is finished." The very work of expiation on the cross is done—Jesus has been made a sin-offering ; God has raised Him from the dead. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name WHOEVER believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Do you say, When shall I come to God who thus beseeches ? "COME now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Will you still reject ? Would you like to remember those words, "COME now," when for ever too late in everlasting woe ? You must come now, and be reconciled, or hear that terrible word, "Depart." We beseech you, then, in Christ's stead, come now. Why doubt ? Why delay ? Why reject such wondrous love ? Oh, come to the arms of Jesus ; He says, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh

to me I will in nowise cast out." Do you say, Is it not a proper thing for me to do, to continue crying for mercy? Did not blind Bartimæus cry for mercy? True, he did; but when Jesus commanded him to be called unto Him, did he then continue at a distance crying for mercy? No; "casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus." Oh, we beseech you in Christ's stead, cast *away* the garment you have been making so long, come at once to Jesus—come now. Did Jesus command him to continue crying for mercy? Oh, hearken to His precious words, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" How simple and confiding the reply—"Lord, that I may receive my sight." "And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith HATH made thee whole." No delay, no vain repetition of prayer. "And immediately he received his sight." What was the effect? "And followed Jesus in the way."

Have you ever really felt your need of mercy? Do you feel it now? Then "be of good comfort, rise, he calleth thee." God grant you may come now—receive your sight, cast away your old self-righteousness, and from this day follow Jesus in the way.

C. S.

"The secret of peace within, and of power without, is being only and wholly occupied with good."

THE LACE OF BLUE;
OR,
THE PRIEST WITH URIM AND
THUMMIM.

IF we turn to Nehemiah vii. we shall find that one sad effect of seventy years' captivity, and mingling in Babylon, was this—that many of the children of Israel could not find their register. “And these were they which went up also from Tel-melah, Tel-haresha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer; but they could not shew their father’s house, nor their seed, whether they were of Israel.” “And of the priests: these sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but it was not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood. And the Tirshatha [or ruler] said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things till there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim.”

Has there not been a very similar effect produced by the eighteen centuries of the church’s captivity and mingling with the world? The great mass are in the indifference of profound sleep. But there are not a few awakening to search and inquire; and what would they give to be quite certain they were the children of God, and that their names were written in heaven! A lady said the other day, after the preaching, “Oh, how can

I get to know with certainty that I am saved—that I am really a child of God?"

Just as there were many of the priests in this sad dilemma, so there are many who are quickened souls who are the children of God, and yet cannot find their register. These never enjoy the most holy things of certainty, acceptance, and worship.

Since these things, then, were written for our instruction, what may we learn from the words of the Tirshatha, "that they should not eat of the most holy things until there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim"? There can be no question that the priest was a type of Christ, and therefore the lesson to be learnt is this—that we could never find our register in heaven, until He, our Priest, stood up with Urim and Thummim. And before we turn to Exodus, to meditate on Christ as set before us in the type of the high priest with Urim and Thummim, let us note carefully that Jesus is our High Priest, having first accomplished eternal redemption for us. Not as He was on earth, "For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest." "We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." (Heb. viii.)

Now we will turn to Exodus xxviii. What a picture of that same Jesus raised up from among the dead—our great High Priest! Notice the garments. (Vers. 4-6.) The body prepared for Him. The same materials as those found in the

veil, that is to say, His flesh ; but with one addition—the gold. “ And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen. And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine-twined linen,” &c. The same Jesus, the same pure, holy, heavenly, righteous One ; but gold added divine righteousness accomplished, subsisting. We see Him, the gold, our divine subsisting righteousness. Blue, the Lord from heaven ; purple and scarlet, Lord of lords, and King of kings—all royalty, Jewish or Gentile, shall find its centre in Him ; fine linen, the spotless One, without sin.

“ The curious girdle of the ephod which is upon it shall be of the same.” It is all Himself ; of the same glories and excellencies of His blessed Person. And now as to the names of the children of Israel. They must be engraved, not written so as to be obliterated ! No, never. Engraved in onyx stones. Over and over is this instruction given, and how secure they must be set in ouches of gold ! No rubbing out ; no getting loose. Names engraved, and set in gold—set in divine righteousness. And where are they to be placed ? Where the same blessed Shepherd places the lost sheep—on His shoulder. Kept by the power of God. Chains of pure gold. Not only placed there in security ; but now look at that wondrous breastplate to be placed on his heart. Each of the materials again set forth, the same great High

Priest passed into the heavens—gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine-twined linen. Look at those twelve precious stones set in gold. “And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet ; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes.” And then what chains and rings of gold—how secure the fastenings must be ! Yes, chains of *pure* gold—the righteousness of God revealed—and rings of gold (no hooks and eyes), but everlasting righteousness in subsisting, everlasting love ; yes, every word is a golden link in the believer’s security. Engraved on the heart of our great High Priest, bound in divine, everlasting love. “And they shall bind the breastplate by the rings thereof, unto the rings of the ephod, with a LACE OF BLUE, that it may be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod.” Blue is the heavenly colour. What a thought!—yea, what a fact!—the believer is tied, is bound on the heart of Christ with a heavenly tie—the lace of blue ! What God joins together, let no man put asunder. It is all the work of God. Has He not thus blest us in the heavens in Christ ? (Eph. i. 3.)

“And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually.

And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and Thummim ; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart when he goeth in BEFORE THE LORD : and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart BEFORE THE LORD CONTINUALLY." Thus God explains to us, and assures us, that whilst our high priest is in His presence, our names must be on His heart for a memorial *continually*. They are bound there. He cannot be there without them. God has tied them there with a lace of blue, that they may not be loosed. What a memorial, too, of how He has borne our judgment! In this breastplate were placed the Urim and Thummim—light and perfection. The radiance of that light could not shine on Aaron, without shining on every name in that breastplate. The radiance of the glory of God cannot shine on our exalted High Priest without shining on every name engraved on His heart, and that also continually.

But how am I to know that my name is registered there, is engraved on the heart of my great High Priest, in heaven? Let us first examine as to the Urim. If we read carefully 2 Corinthians iii., we find the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished. Their minds were blinded. "But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their hearts." This must be the case if we are under law. Can any man approach the light of the pre-

sence of God on the ground of his responsibility? Surely the light must crush us with condemnation. If, then, you are still under law, you can only find condemnation. On that ground no man can find his register! If under the administration of law, the veil is on the heart, and we are blinded. How different with believers. "But we all, with open [or unveiled] face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." This, then, marks a believer—an unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord.

"But if our gospel be veiled, it is veiled to them that be lost. In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light [radiancy] of the glad tidings of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Thus the Urim, the *light*, or radiancy, of Jehovah, that shone upon the breast-plate of the high priest, was a striking type of the radiancy of the glory of Christ. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light [radiancy] of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." We can thus understand why Satan, by his ministers, should have been so diligent to place souls under law; it is to blind them, to put the veil on the heart. It is not here a question of God's acceptance of my works, or of my person. "For we preach not ourselves, but

Christ Jesus the Lord." Whether we believe, or not, He has made reconciliation for sin. He has glorified God as to the whole question of sin. He has finished the work of eternal redemption. His precious blood has been shed; full, infinite propitiation has been made once, never to be repeated. Would you find your register? Look entirely away from self, and law, and works; gaze on Him alone. Can you say, He has been delivered for my offences—He bowed His head in death for me? We think we hear you say, I have not a doubt as to that. Yes, once He bore my sins in His body on the tree, in the midst of that awful darkness; no radiancy shone on Him there—He was forsaken of God. Oh, fearful hour, when my sins were laid on Him! The Father alone knows the suffering of that hour of darkness, when His soul was made an offering for sin. Reader, do you believe all this? And further, when that holy head had bowed in death, and those blessed words fell from His dying lips, "It is finished," did not man even then pierce His side with cruel spear, from which flowed blood and water? After this the nails were drawn from His hands and feet, and that precious body was laid in a new sepulchre. But is that all? If that be all, there is nothing that answers to Urim and Thummim—no light, no radiancy, in the dark sepulchre.

Do you believe God that raised Him from the dead for our justification? Where is He now—

in the darkness of the grave, or in the radiancy of the glory of God? Now, as surely as it was for us He suffered thus, so surely it was for us God raised Him thus. Both are equally true. Behold Him, once on the cross, our Substitute; with unveiled face, behold Him now in the radiancy of the glory of God—our Representative, our great High Priest. Now we are assured, believing God, for God raised Him from the dead, that we are justified by faith, and have peace with God. Yes, we share the peace of His complete victory. And that completeness is now unfolded in the glad tidings of the glory of Christ. And we with unveiled face behold the glory of the Lord. How blessed the radiancy of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ! He who bare our sins in the midst of darkness is now in the radiancy of the glory of God—that radiancy, that Urim, has shone also into our hearts. Aaron was not a perfect figure of our High Priest; he had to stand, bearing the names of the children of Israel on his heart continually. But our High Priest has sat down. But more of this when we consider the Thummim.

Has God by the Holy Spirit removed the veil from your heart? Do you behold the Priest who has been raised up from the dead with Urim and Thummim? Can light be more perfect than the radiancy of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ? Then let us remember the rings of

gold, and lace of blue. Yes, all is of God. He who laid our sins on Him has bound us to His heart continually, that we may not be loosed. All the powers of earth and hell can never untie the heavenly knot. Rings of divine righteousness and everlasting love. The radiancy that shines on the risen Christ, in the glory of God, must shine on the feeblest believer written on His heart. And oh, sweet word, *continually*. He ever there, we ever accepted in Him, the Beloved. Yes, He says, "And the glory that thou hast given me, I have given them." It is not at the foot of the cross we find our register, but above all heavens, on the heart of our great High Priest, in the midst of the radiance of the Urim of God. Tied on His heart with a lace of blue, and kept by the power of God, as the onyx stones were placed on the shoulders of Aaron.

Yes, beloved reader, if you are a believer, such is your place in the radiancy of the glory of God. What a contrast to man's blue ribbon, badge of man's effort to save himself! No, the lace of blue sets before us the precious lesson of divine grace. All, all of God. He who gave His Son to die for us has set our names on His heart, never to be effaced; like the engraving of a signet, where the radiancy of the glory of God for ever shines. In our next we shall hope to dwell on the Thummim in the breastplate of Aaron.

C. S.

THE HOLY GHOST.

No. II.

WHAT an infinitely blessed work must Jesus have accomplished so that the Holy Ghost could come down from heaven, and act and dwell here, in a way He had never done before, as the other Comforter!

We are told that in order to His thus coming, Jesus must be first "glorified." Then those who believed on Him would receive the Holy Spirit; "for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." The coming of the Holy Ghost then is the witness of two things: first, of the eternal efficacy of the blood of His cross, and secondly, of the Son of man being glorified. As to the former, the Holy Ghost is a witness to us by the word of God saying "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more;" and, concerning the latter, His presence here proves that He who is at the right hand of God received the promise of the Father, and shed it forth at the time appointed—Pentecost. It was then the Holy Ghost came. He was sent down from heaven. Christ having suffered for our sins, risen out of death and gone into heaven as Man, the Holy Ghost could come down and indwell those who had been washed from their sins in the Saviour's blood. (John vii. 39; Acts ii. 33.)

Prior to this there were true believers who had been born again, had their sins forgiven, were children of God, to whom Jesus could say, " My Father and your Father, My God and your God," and they also had risen life breathed into them by the risen Saviour ; but they were not sealed, not anointed, not in liberty, and not members of the body of Christ. The contrast is strikingly seen between the state of these saints in the first of Acts, and their state a few days after in the second of Acts. What an amazing change the gift of the Holy Ghost produced ! And when you consider who the Holy Ghost is, is it surprising that it should be so ?

It is not only that the Son of God has come, but that the Holy Ghost has come. But when the Son came, He took flesh, and was found here in fashion as a man. Not so, however, the Holy Ghost. He did not take flesh ; He is not seen and known as Jesus was, and this is why the unconverted know nothing of Him—" Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him : but ye know him ; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." (John xiv. 17.) But the importance of the Holy Spirit being here, and given of God to all them that obey Him, can scarcely be over-estimated. This is why, after the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, you do not find in scripture such an idea as the Lord's people praying *for* the Spirit. Such a thought as " Come

Holy Spirit, Heavenly dove," has no place there ; because He has come. *Before* He came it was right enough to pray for the Spirit, for our Lord had said, " how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him " (Luke xi. 13) ; and He commanded His disciples to tarry in Jerusalem until they were " endued with power from on high ; " they were to wait for the promise of the Father. That the Spirit when He came taught them to cry " Come, Lord Jesus," in the consciousness of having redemption in Christ and through His blood, and the earnest of the Spirit, is quite true ; but for such to be praying *for* the Spirit, after He had come, would surely be subversive of the foundation principles of Christianity. Hence the uncertainty and confusion of mind of many believers in our days.

But what was the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost? Was it the coming of a divine Person, or of an emanation from God, or of a measure of the Spirit, or of an influence, or what? Scripture, as we have seen, speaks of Him as a Person, having personal qualities and personal actings. Some of His sovereign actings we have already noticed. But though the Holy Ghost be a divine Person, yet He is not the Son, for the Son took flesh and died for us, and the Holy Ghost did neither. Nor is He the Father, for He was "the promise of the Father," and was sent by the Father, as Jesus said, "whom the Father

will send in my name." And yet He is a Person.

The personal qualities and actings of the Holy Ghost are largely set forth in scripture. He is described as speaking, leading, guiding, teaching, bearing witness, shewing, searching, interceding, appointing to office, abiding with us for ever, and yet, as we have seen, this holy Person is divine. Hence, too, there is that on earth, which is God's habitation through the Spirit—"the house of God."

The gift of the Holy Ghost, then, is not merely an influence, though He does influence, not an emanation from God, though He was sent by the Father and the Son; for Jesus said, "whom the Father will send," and "whom I will send;" but He is a Person who carries out His will, "dividing to every man severally as he will," and though not the Father, nor the Son, yet One in the mysteriously divine essence of One God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It was He who spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began. It was He who "moved upon the face of the waters" before it was said; "Let there be light, and there was light." It was the same Spirit which strove with men before the flood. It was the same Spirit of God who filled and qualified Bezaleel with wisdom and understanding to make those things for the tabernacle which were types and shadows of Jesus. It

was the same Spirit by which the holy scriptures were given by inspiration of God, so that the writers could say, "Thus saith the Lord," "The word of the Lord came," "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue;" for holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. It was the same Holy Ghost who came upon Mary when it pleased God to send His Son into the world born of a woman. It was the same Spirit who spake of Christ by Mary, Elizabeth, Zechariah, Simeon, and Anna. It was the same Spirit which John saw descending like a dove and remaining on the sacred, spotless Person of Jesus when He was baptised. It is of Him, too, it is said, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost: who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." It was by the same eternal Spirit that He offered Himself without spot to God; and when He was raised from among the dead, we are told that He was "quickened by the Spirit." Again, we are told, that after His resurrection and going in and out among His disciples, it was through the Holy Ghost He gave commandments unto the apostles whom He had chosen: and bade them wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, for they should be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. And when He, as Man, was glorified at the right hand of God, He received the Holy Ghost and gave to

His waiting saints on earth. "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." (Acts ii. 33.) Then the Holy Ghost came, He was "sent down from heaven;" and, blessed be God, here He is still, and will abide with us forever.

It was not a measure of the Spirit, but the Person of the Holy Spirit. We read that "He giveth not the Spirit by measure." (John iii. 34.) The idea is entirely subversive of the great truth of God the Holy Ghost being in us and with us. A moment's consideration of the thoughtful Christian is sufficient to make this clear. Then was the baptism of the Holy Ghost, for we read "By one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles." (1 Cor. xii. 13.) It was the formation of "one body" on earth, of which Christ is the Head in heaven. Wondrous work! Who but a divine Person could be sufficient to unite all believers on earth to Christ the Head in heaven, and to one another in "one body"? It was done by the coming of the Holy Ghost. Precious mystery of divine grace, and power, and wisdom! If, then, it be so, that the Holy Ghost Himself is here, and in us, and we have seen that He giveth not the Spirit by measure, how could we ask for a further measure of the Spirit? Impossible that

an intelligent God-fearing soul could do so ! And if the scripture teaching of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the formation on earth of all believers into one body, how could we ask for a fresh baptism of the Spirit ? Could the "one body" be formed by "one Spirit" over and over again ? Far be the thought ! Could we, then, we ask with all solemnity, be approaching God with reverence and godly fear to express such a desire ? This was the Pentecostal blessing, and when the body was formed by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, we know what wonderful power accompanied the gospel testimony, so that thousands were converted in one day.

Yes, the Holy Ghost is here on earth, and, blessed be God, those who have believed on the Son of God and received remission of sins, are indwelt by Him. We are sealed, anointed, have an unction of the Holy One, and the earnest of our inheritance, and all this until when ? Let us not fail to mark "until the redemption of the purchased possession"—"until the day of redemption," when we shall bodily enter into heavenly glory. Yes, to abide with us for ever, as Jesus said, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever: the Spirit of truth ; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you." (John xiv. 16, 17.)

We must be careful not to confound the work of the Spirit in us when we were brought as sinners to a Saviour—born anew—and received eternal life, with the gift of the Holy Ghost, the other Comforter to take up His abode in us. They are two distinct lines of scripture teaching. That a man must be born again to “see” or “enter into the kingdom of God,” was clearly laid down by our Lord Himself. But when such have been born again, and have remission of sins, then the Holy Ghost is sent into our hearts. In Ephesians it is, “After that ye believed ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise ;” and in Galatians it is said, “Because ye are sons [sons first] God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba Father.” Thus we see the Spirit is given to believers, to children of God, not to sinners in their sins, but to those who have remission of sins—“to them that obey him.”

The promise of the gift of the Spirit formed a prominent point in the preaching of the apostles. On the day of Pentecost, Peter’s reply to those Jews who were awakened with a deep sense of their guilt was, “Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” (Acts ii. 38.) Again, at Cæsarea, when Peter addressed quickened Gentiles who were told by an angel that they would hear words of Peter whereby they would be saved, we can

understand that the moment God's way of peace was proclaimed they would receive it. And so it was. Looking with intense interest at the apostle for the very words which would give them salvation, the moment he spoke of remission of sins the Holy Ghost was given to them, and they all spake with tongues, so that Peter's preaching was stopped. But it is important to see that in both these instances the gift of the Holy Ghost was connected with remission of sins ; and Christ at the right hand of God, who had been crucified, was presented to the hearers as the Object of faith.

As has often been remarked, the twofold testimony of the Baptist was that Jesus was "the Lamb of God" and the One which "baptiseth with the Holy Ghost." This John knew Him to be by "the Spirit descending and remaining on him." The Son was thus declared to be so spotless and pure that the Father could seal Him as man ; the Holy Spirit could remain on Him and anoint Him in virtue of His own intrinsic excellencies. Not so us. Before the Spirit could seal and anoint us, we needed to be washed from our sins in the blood of Christ. Now dwelling in us, He makes us know that we are children of God, that we are in Christ and Christ in us, and the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.

H. H. S.

CORRESPONDENCE.

34. "E. G. K." Sheffield. The true force of Paul's desire, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of [or from among] the dead," is lost, unless you look at it in its connections. Paul had seen the Lord Jesus in glory, and thus to him everything else was poor and unsatisfying. The excellencies of the Saviour had so charmed his heart that he counted all things but loss; and the best things of himself, as a religious and blameless man, as dung. Thus his whole soul was filled with the Saviour's worth and glory. Happy servant of the Lord! Was he doubting his salvation? On the contrary, his heart was on fire with the love of Christ, and desire to "know Him"—to know more and more of His eternal and transcendent beauty. He longed to realise what the resurrection of Christ in all its power was, and to have it so working in him that he might have the place on earth of rejection with Christ, to participate in all His sufferings that as a man he could, even to be made conformable unto His death. Being with the Lord in the glory was the goal set before him, to which his ardent soul was running, and desiring to reach in resurrection blessing at all cost—"If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead." The subject here is not the believer's security, but the longings of a deeply attached heart going out to the Saviour in thorough devotedness to Him.

The difficulties which many have as to this and similar scriptures, we have long been persuaded, arise more from the absence of moral fitness, from a low state as to the affections and conscience, than

from lack of intelligence. Scripture says he which is spiritual judgeth [discerneth] all things ; where this is lacking, or the fine edge of the conscience blunted with worldliness, the Spirit is grieved, so that we cannot know the deep things of God.

" Giving heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip," is a wholesome exhortation, and generally very acceptable to the children of God. The Godhead of the eternal Son, and His having purged our sins, the foundations of the faith, had just been brought out. The Son now in heaven had been contemplated in His creating, upholding, redeeming, reigning glories, as above angels, the highest form of known created intelligences. The salvation, therefore, was great; and how could any escape who neglected it? The absolute authority of God's word is also insisted on.

If you refer to such scriptures as " he that shall endure until the end, the same shall be saved," the questions are what is the end? what the salvation? and who are the people that are saved? (See Matt. xxiv. 9-35.) The context shews that it is prophetic, and refers to the great tribulation coming on the earth, at the end of which an " elect " people of the Jews will be saved, that is, not put to death as multitudes of their brethren will be; and the salvation they look for, and will have, will be to have the promises to Abraham and David fulfilled to them in the millennial earth. We are not contemplated in the passage, nor the Gospel of the grace of God which we preach, but " the gospel of the kingdom " which will go forth again unto all the nations as a witness after the Lord has come and taken us to glory.

35. "J. W. Dayton," Ohio. No doubt the

Lord had a distinct reason for surnaming John and James Boanerges, or sons of thunder, in Mark iii. 17, but what the especial bearing of the appellation was we are not told. It is remarkable though that these were the two who asked the Lord if they should command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did.

36. "H.," Stoke Newington. It is quite true that the church on earth (looked at in the place of corporate responsibility to the Lord) has totally failed to maintain the character in which He set it by the coming down of the Holy Ghost. It is, in this aspect, in ruin. Besides, we have no apostles nor their delegates, so that we have no official elders, or deacons, which required such persons to appoint. But there are those who do the work of elders, and shew plainly that the Holy Ghost has made them such. Eldership is not gift, but a local office. A spiritual mind can discern such. The sick one's faith is manifested in calling such to pray for him, and those called shew their faith in praying over such. We lately heard of two servants of the Lord praying over a sick saint; one of them asked the Lord to heal her and raise her up; the other that the Lord would deal with her soul and set her right with Himself spiritually. She says, as she became exercised before the Lord and increasingly at liberty in His presence, her whole health improved. We can quite understand there may be instances when an elder could not go in faith. Many years ago a friend of ours declined, saying that he could not go in faith.

37. "R.," Teignmouth. "Sin in the flesh" (that evil principle in us) God, in richest grace to

us, condemned in His own spotless Son, when He was offered a sacrifice for sin upon the cross.

38. "H.," Clevedon. Our articles on the Holy Ghost in the last month's and present issue fully meet your question as to the personality of the Holy Ghost.

39. "S.," Sligo. We must never forget that the psalms are (generally speaking) about Israel. David was the sweet psalmist of Israel, not of the church; though all was written for *our learning*. Those who "hope in his mercy" are also spoken of in the verse you quote as *fearing* Him; and refer to a remnant of pious Jews who will be deeply exercised, by-and-by, before they are brought into their promised blessings in the land under their true Messiah.

40. "S. E.," Sydenham. Thanks for your kind and interesting letter. We praise the Lord that your difficulties have been removed by the sword of the Spirit, which is the infallible word of God. The divine statement that "The man *is become* as one of us, to know good and evil," plainly shews that he had it not before he fell.

41. Ashford. We must never forget that the Lord is in the midst of those who are gathered together in His name. The question, therefore, is always as to what suits Him, the holy and the true. No one is competent to serve in the assembly who has not the Lord before him, and who does not practically honour the Holy Ghost. Scripture always points us to the Lord. Besides, in a time of ruin like this, scripture both warns and instructs, and the Holy Spirit exposes and resents evil. 2 Timothy ii., Revelation ii., iii., Jude, and other scriptures contemplate the present time.

THE VICTORY OF CHRIST,
AND
ITS EFFECTS ON THOSE WHO BELIEVE.

"He loved him as his own soul. And *Jonathan stripped himself* of the robe that was upon him, and gave to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle."—1 SAM. xviii. 3, 4.

DAVID, as many know, was a remarkable type of Jesus, especially as the rejected One; and Solomon typified Jesus as the reigning One.

David was spoken of as *a man after God's own heart*; and, if an erring mortal man was thus described, how much more truly could it be said of Jesus! of whom, after thirty years of strangership, temptation, and tears, in this death-stricken world, the voice from the excellent glory declared, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." So exactly was He after God's own heart, that He could say, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father;" and the Holy Ghost, when speaking of Him, says, He was God "manifest in the flesh."

David also had been *anointed* according to the will of God. Having been divinely chosen from among the people, Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren. (1 Sam. xvi. 12, 13.) He was *God's king*, and destined to sit in royal majesty upon the holy hill of Zion. And

was not Jesus Jehovah's elect Servant? Was He not anointed with the Holy Ghost? Did not the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, in bodily shape, as a dove, and abide upon Him, because He was the true Messiah? And was it not the angel Gabriel, in connection with His coming into the world, who said, "the Lord shall give unto him the throne of his father, David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end?" (Luke i. 31-33.)

David was also a *shepherd*. (1 Sam. xvii. 15.) We are told that God "chose David his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: from following the ewes great with young, he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance. So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them according to the skilfulness of his hands." (Ps. lxxviii. 70-72.) And cannot we perceive a greater than David here? Does it not strikingly remind us of Him who said, "I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. . . . My sheep hear my voice," &c.? Surely none but He who is the great and chief Shepherd of the sheep could say, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one flock, and one shepherd." And again, "Feed my lambs. . . . Feed my sheep." (John x., xxi.) What a Shepherd and Bishop of souls He is!

But though David was at this time the king of Jehovah's choice, and destined to rule His people, Israel, yet we find him *despised and rejected of men*. His quieting the troubled spirit of Saul by the melodious tone of the harp-strings which he touched, recalls to our minds the state of many in Christendom, who think of Jesus merely as an object of interest, and admire the sweet sound of gospel truth, instead of receiving the Lord Jesus as their Saviour from coming wrath, and His blood as that which can alone purge their consciences, and make them fit for God's holy presence. To see the Saviour's miracles, to behold His inimitable ways, and listen to His marvellous utterances, were to many who thronged Him only like a pleasant song to interest and quiet the natural mind.

If Jesus came unto His own, and His own received Him not; if, too, it is recorded that "neither did his brethren believe on him;" and if others ascribed His mighty power to Satanic influence, we read that David was so despised by his brethren, that they ascribed his devotedness to the God of Israel to pride and naughtiness of heart. (Ver. 28.)

But David was *an obedient son*, who did his father's will, and that, too, in ministering to his brethren, and seeking their welfare. "Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp of thy brethren: and carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thou-

sand, and look how *thy brethren* fare, and take their pledge." (Vers. 17, 18.) And does not this recall Him to our minds whose "meat was to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work"? Truly He could say, "I do always those things that please him;" and at the close He bowed His head in death, with, "It is finished;" "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." And if David's heart was set on the welfare of his brethren, how incomparably more was it true of Jesus, who "came forth from the Father," and "came unto his own," who "came to seek and to save that which was lost"!

And yet further, for if David in his mission to his brethren found them "dismayed, and greatly afraid," because of the mighty power of their great adversary, did not Jesus find His own people not only under the Roman yoke, but under the blinding and terrible power of Satan, who had the power of death? In no period of Bible history do we find more recorded of the activity of demons, than when our Lord came to His people Israel. And if David longed for their deliverance, how much more did He who was afflicted in all their afflictions, and died for that nation, yearn over them!

The life of faith, too, was strikingly beheld in the ways of David. Though despised by his brethren, whose blessing he was seeking, tempted,

too, to rely on the competency of human weapons, which he so sternly refused, and in privacy and retirement his trusting in Jehovah his God, again give us precious shadows of Him who was the Leader and Completer of faith; who, from Bethlehem to Calvary, trod every step in unfeigned dependence, unwavering faith, and perfect obedience to the Father. Though "being in the form of God and found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him," &c. It is most blessed to trace the Son of man, always perfect in the ways of faith, and thus overcoming the tempter, and the malice of those who threatened to destroy Him; even as David, in his tiny measure, could speak of the divine power by which, in the quietude of caring for the sheep, he had been able to slay both the lion and the bear. (Vers. 34, 35.)

It was when visiting his brethren, and caring for them, according to his father's will, that he witnessed the threatening attitude of their mighty adversary, and beheld their helplessness and fear; but they knew not that the hour for the accomplishment of their deliverance was at hand. To all appearance, they were about to be completely swallowed up, and there was none to help. The armies of Israel had been defied, and the name of the Lord of hosts had been blasphemed. It would be, therefore, for the glory of Jehovah, as well as for

the salvation of His helpless people, that deliverance should be wrought, and that they should be rescued from oppression and death. David was their saviour. He could trust God ; he could face death, go, as it were, into its very jaws, and triumph over this invincible Goliath ; thus did he dimly foreshadow Him, who, in an after age, could say, in the immediate prospect of the death of the cross, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [hades], neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life : in thy presence is fulness of joy ; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." (Ps. xvi.) The stripling, David, went forth, facing death and him (typically speaking) who had the power of death, in the fullest confidence in Jehovah of victory. (Vers. 46, 47.) There stood David, having not even a sword in his hand, with the five smooth stones out of the brook in a shepherd's bag ; and there he faced the giant Goliath, with his drawn sword, armed with his coat of mail, and covered with greaves of brass, and a target of brass, with a man bearing a shield before him. It was a moment of breathless silence for spectators. The ruddy and anointed David was, to man's eye, rushing into death itself ; but his faith is in Jehovah, who can do everything. Jehovah can deliver me, said the anointed and beloved of God. The time was at hand : the awful moment arrives, and the giant is felled to the earth by one of David's

little stones ; yes, the stone, guided by divine power, sinks into his forehead, and he lies dead upon his face to the earth. "Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, [putting the giant under his feet] and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith." And what can more strikingly illustrate the victory which Jesus has obtained for us through death itself, over death and him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage ? (Heb. ii. 14, 15.) How truly the believer can now say, "O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law, but thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Yes, Jesus overcame Satan by his own weapons, for it was *through death* that He abolished death, and overcame him that had the power of death. It was by His own power He trampled upon the mighty foe, as Man, in resurrection, and was righteously glorified at God's right hand, as having glorified God on the earth, and that even as to our sins, and wrought this marvellous victory over death and Satan. Happy are they who can therefore say,

" We triumph in Thy triumphs, Lord,"
who, pondering the cost to Him of our deliverance,
not only from the guilt of sins, by His precious

blood, but also from death and Satan, in Him who rose from among the dead, find never-failing springs of joy and rejoicing in our almighty Conqueror. So truly has the Lord Jesus "abolished death" for those who believe in His name, that it is not necessary that we should die; on the contrary, we are told that "we shall not all sleep," that when Jesus comes some will be "alive and remain," and will then be changed, and caught up (without dying) to meet the Lord in the air, and so be for ever with the Lord. Thus Jesus gives us victory, all the blessedness of the victory which He hath obtained for us—not merely victory through the blood of the Lamb, but victory in Him who in resurrection has triumphed over death and Satan for us. What a victory!

"O death and hell, I cannot dread your power,
The debt is paid.

On Jesus, in that dark and dreadful hour,
My sins were laid.

Yes, Jesus bore them! bore, in love unbounded,
What none can know.

He died, but rose again, and so confounded
The awful foe.

He's now up there! Proclaim the joyful story—
The Lord's on high!

And I in Him am raised to endless glory,
And ne'er can die."

Now let us look at the effects on souls who know something of the value of this victory which hath

been obtained for us. No doubt this typical instruction really applies to Israel, and not to the church; but we use it now as illustrating its effects on us who believe the gospel of the grace of God.

First, let us notice that the good news of the work which the Lord's anointed had accomplished for them filled those who believed it with thankfulness and courage. Their former fears and dismay had now entirely fled. When they saw what a victory had been obtained for them, they "arose and shouted;" they were strengthened also to fight the battle of the Lord—they "pursued the Philistines," and found themselves more than conquerors through Him that loved them; for "they spoiled their tents." And so now, when the soul first believes what Christ has accomplished for him by His death and rising again from among the dead, he is ready to shout for joy, as many do; he can scarcely express the happiness he feels at this marvellous salvation. He takes sides with the Saviour, and not with the world; and he also finds, not only that he is delivered from coming wrath *by* Christ, but that he is blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places *in* Christ. He counts over his spoil—his many blessings. But this is the effect of knowing something of the value of the Saviour's *work*. This is very blessed; but we have not only salvation, but a Saviour; not only redemption, but a Redeemer.

Hence others are taken up not only with the *work*, but with the *person* who did it. The eyes of some were fixed on David. They saw him with the head of Goliath in his hand, and they heard his own words concerning it. Like the disciples, they not only saw the risen Saviour, and heard His own testimony to the value of that work, saying, "Peace be unto you," when He shewed them His hands and His side, but their eyes were fixed on *Himself*. It was not only the work done for them, giving them perfect and everlasting victory—most blessed as it was—but they went further, they were occupied with the *Person* who had done it. It was this which had such power on their hearts, for "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord."

Now Jonathan was one of those who had gazed on David, the mighty conqueror, with the head of Goliath in his hand, and he had listened to his own words concerning it. Now mark the effect of being occupied with the *person* who did the work. We are told that Jonathan "loved him as his own soul;" yes, he "delighted much in David;" and we read again, "because he loved him as his own soul." It was a joyous moment. But that is not all. His heart being taken up with David, he felt that nothing less became him than to strip himself of his robe, and garment, and sword, as well as his bow and girdle, and give to David. Observe, this is not giving up bad things, but giving the best things to David; not being stripped

of God, but stripping ourselves for our true David, that we have here.

And now, dear christian reader, we would affectionately ask, whether the Person of Christ, or His work, most engages your attention? Do His personal excellences and worth so fill our souls, that we have been constrained to live unto Him? We believe that no part of divine truth needs more pressing on the consciences of believers at this time, than personal intercourse and occupation with Christ Himself; for then we shall surely be constrained to yield ourselves and all we have to Him. There is such a disposition in the present day to hold the highest doctrines of divine grace with a low and worldly walk, that stripping ourselves for the honour and glory of our precious Saviour has, we fear, but little place, even to what it had some years ago. Was it not the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord which enabled the apostle Paul to strip himself of all he had ever prized and gloried in? It is this surely that our Lord demands. Did He not knock at the Laodicean church, and shew Himself ready to sup with any who would open the door to Him? Happy are they who are thus taken up with Christ Himself. Such become knit to Him, drawn out in love to Him, strip themselves for Him, and, looking up, say, Come, Lord Jesus!

H. H. S.



THE LACE OF BLUE;
OR,
THE PRIEST WITH URIM AND
THUMMIM.

No. II.

WE have seen in our last the priest with Urim. We will now dwell on the further “glory of the Lord” as the Priest raised up with Thummim—perfections. And let us remember, it is only as we thus know Him that we can eat of the most holy things. Nehemiah vii. 65: “And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things till there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim”—light and perfection.

As with Urim, so with Thummim; it is all-important to notice the similarity, and the contrast, between the materials of the veil and of the dress of the high priest. “And thou shalt make a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen.” (Ex. xxvi. 31.) The same materials compose the dress of the high priest, with the addition of, and first, gold. As we have said, we take gold to be the figure of accomplished divine righteousness. Jesus says, “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich.” (Rev. iii. 18.) The glory of the incarnate Christ, His spotless purity, only shewed how far man was

from God—shut out of His holy, holy presence. That veil—that is to say His flesh—must be rent ; He must die, or man be for ever shut out. No way to God but through the rent veil. The grain of wheat must die, or remain alone.

Jesus could not be the raised-up priest with Thummim until He had accomplished eternal redemption by His death. Thus we see the wisdom of God in placing the gold first in the dress of the high priest. Oh, how precious to our souls to know that the basis of the Priesthood of Christ is the accomplished righteousness of God ! He alone, the fine gold, could pass through the fire of the whole judgment of God on our sins, and sin. Let us, then, now behold the great High Priest passed into the heavens, having first borne our whole judgment in the death of the cross

We shall find Thummim—perfection—to be the great subject of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in contrast with the ministration and priesthood of the law, which made nothing perfect. This is a great subject ; we can only in a short paper call attention, first, to the perfection of the High Priest of our profession ; secondly, to that which He makes perfect. First, then, we see Jesus, “ who being the brightness of [his] glory, and express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, WHEN HE HAD by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” (Heb. i. 3.) What perfect

glory there is in this!—the glory of His own eternal, divine Person. Then see that once bleeding sacrifice, having so glorified God, that He can sit down in His glory on high. Thus “we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour ; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” (Heb. ii. 9, 10.)

“And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.” (Heb. v. 9.) Let us, then, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. See Him thus seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high, crowned with glory, made perfect, become the Author of eternal salvation. In all these perfections, could He be more perfect? If salvation was not eternal, He would not be perfect —He would be only the Author of an incomplete thing, that might fail to-morrow. Hence the great effort at all times to make the believer doubt that his salvation is eternal. Yes, the first figure in the high priest’s dress is fulfilled—“gold.” God is righteous, through the death of Jesus, in raising Him from the dead as our High Priest with Urim and Thummim. We behold Him in the radiance of the glory of God, having accomplished eternal redemption, and that not merely in an abstract

sense, but having accomplished our eternal redemption. Can you say, "My eternal redemption"? And being evermore made unto us righteousness, He sits, crowned with glory, the proof that our eternal redemption is, and has been, perfectly accomplished. Could He, or His work, be more complete?

We will now go on to that which He makes perfect. Let us go on unto perfection; not seeking perfection in ceremonies of the law, "For the law made nothing perfect." We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. (Chap. viii. 1.) Now, since He is perfect, His work must be also perfect, in all its effects on and for us. The Holy Ghost thus signified, "that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest." The sacrifices of the law could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience. Now, to us the witness of the Holy Ghost is the exact opposite of this. "For by one offering HE HATH perfected for ever them that are sanctified." (Compare Heb. ix. 8, 9 with x. 14, 15.) "Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness unto us."

Is it not important to understand these things—these contrasts? The blood of bullocks or of goats could only be used to point forward to that one infinite sacrifice, and therefore perfect sacrifice. The blood of these had flowed from Abel downwards, and for centuries since the veil shut out

man from God; but never could that veil be rent until Jesus bowed His head in death. Every barrier was then removed; the way was opened to the mercy-seat—to the holiest.

Not only so, but as to the conscience also, those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually could not make the comers thereunto perfect. “For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.” (Chap. x. 1, 2.) But it was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. There was the constant burden and remembrance of sins. All the sacrifices of the law could not perfect the conscience; therefore God could not find His satisfaction in those sacrifices which could not give perfect peace to the conscience. “Then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.” “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once.”

This is a matter now of great importance to the whole church of God. It was so then especially to the Hebrews, who were in peculiar danger of giving up the eternal efficiency of this one sacrifice, and going back to those repeated sacrifices now set aside, which could never take away sins. But now, has not almost the whole of Christendom, not merely the Hebrews, lost this great truth of the conscience perfected, purged for ever, by that one sacrifice? Mark, it is not this one sacrifice

continued, or repeated; or He must have died often, or continued dead. But it is the effects of that one sacrifice which continue.

What, then, is this, the conscience perfected? Certainly it is not that the worshipper is not conscious of failure and sins—to say this would be merely self-deception. But, since Jesus is the Author of eternal salvation, eternal redemption, raised up from the dead, and, thus raised, our great High Priest passed through the heavens; our names *engraved* (so to speak figuratively) on His heart; we thus see our names accepted in all the radiancy and perfections of the glory of God. Since He has first purged our sins, we know that God will no more impute them to us, than He will impute them to Him who bore them in His own body. If the sacrifices offered by the priests, which God ordained under the law, could never give this perfection, how can the unscriptural sacrifice of the altar, without shedding of blood, by the pretended priests of Christendom, make the conscience perfect? How sad and vain all such efforts of the dark mind of man! “Without shedding of blood there is no remission.”

In the last place, that word “continually” gives great comfort. Look at the figure: “And Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart continually.” “But 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."

The words, "for ever," mean here "continually," and are so translated in chapter x. 1. Whilst He sits there we are continually without any charge, perfected as to the conscience here. What a truth! "And their sins and iniquities will I remember NO MORE." What need, then, of men's pretended sacrifices? "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." Beloved reader, do you believe men, or God? Are you shut out still in the darkness of human ritual, or have you "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus"?

May God, by the Holy Ghost, open our eyes to see the Priest raised up with Urim and Thummim. Precious Great High Priest! on Thee shines all the radiance of the glory of God; in Thee is found all perfection; in Thee we have eternal redemption. Soon our eyes shall see Thee, shall be like Thee, and with Thee for ever. How soon?— "for ever with the Lord."

C. S.



THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS.

THE midnight cry is heard!—
Oh! slumbering saints arise,
Awake from sleep, your vigil keep,
And prove yourselves "the wise;"
Arise! arise! go forth,
The Bridegroom is at hand;—

The morning Star, He comes from far,
To claim His waiting band.

The midnight cry is heard !
Go forth, your Lord to meet,—
His voice we hear—His step is near,
Your blessing to complete ;
Your lamps are all but out,
Oh ! put them now in trim,
Let every light for Him shine bright,
Let nought their lustre dim.

The midnight cry is heard !—
Oh ! foolish virgins, haste,
While yet there's room, escape your doom,
Of boundless mercy taste ;
The Bridegroom tarries yet,
Your empty vessels fill ;
To God on high, go there and buy,
Without a price—who will.

The midnight cry is heard !
He comes ! He comes at last !—
Ye virgins wise, to meet Him rise,
Your midnight watch is past ;
The new eternal song
Now flows from hearts at rest,—
With Him in light, where all is bright,—
With Him for ever blest.

The midnight cry *has ceased* !—
No foolish enter in—
Too late ! too late ! 'tis sealed your fate,
And now your woes begin ;—
Too late ! too late ! too late !—
The door, for ever shut,
You knock in vain—no entrance gain—
“Depart, I know you not.”

THE HOLY GHOST.

No. III.

WE have already briefly glanced at the Godhead, personality, indwelling, and some of the operations of the Holy Ghost. We shall now, as the Lord may enable us, look further into the scripture teaching of the dwelling of this divine Person in the believer, and also in the church on earth.

1. THE HOLY GHOST IN THE BELIEVER, as we have seen, follows remission of sins; for though He may, and does, work in sinners to bring them to Jesus, for cleansing by His precious blood, yet, when one is born again, has received remission of sins, he is “clean every whit;” so that, because the vessel is cleansed in God’s sight, the Holy Ghost can come, and be in us for ever. Thus the believer is “sealed,” marked by God as His; and has the “earnest” of the inheritance, the pledge of certainly having that eternal glory to which he is called. The Holy Ghost is therefore given to him until he is actually and bodily brought to God—“the day of redemption of the purchased possession.” All of His grace, and therefore all will “be to the praise of his glory.” (Eph. i. 13, 14.) By the same Spirit, too, he is “anointed,” set apart and qualified for the service of God; and, as in the type of the consecration of the priests, the anointing with oil followed the sprinkling of the

blood, so (as we have noticed before), in Acts x., the gift of the Holy Ghost immediately followed remission of sins, and we know that “without shedding of blood there is no remission.” It is then a point of all importance, that we should clearly understand that one aspect of the gift of the Holy Ghost is, that He is God’s *witness* to the sin-cleansing virtues of the blood of Jesus. He is also God’s *gift* to them that obey Him, God’s *seal* to the eternal efficacy of the one offering which was once offered by His own Son, God’s *anointing* for His service.

So clearly is His indwelling in the believer taught in scripture, that on one occasion the saints were asked, “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?” Had they realised this, they would not have used their bodies for unholy purposes. It is our persons that Christ redeemed; so that, though, as to our souls, “we have redemption” in Christ, and through His blood, we look for the Saviour, who shall change our vile bodies; and we are told that our mortal bodies will yet be quickened by His Spirit which dwelleth in us. Not only is this truth eminently sanctifying, but also full of comfort, when thinking of our bodies of humiliation. The Holy Ghost, then, who, as to our souls, has already brought to us eternal life in Christ—“the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus”—has also taken up His abode in our *bodies*. Again, we find our HEARTS.

are spoken of as to where the Spirit has come to dwell in God's children. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your *hearts*, crying, *Abba, Father.*" (Gal. iv. 6.) We might have thought, unless the word had been so very explicit, that the Spirit would have dwelt in the new nature. Not so ; He forms the new nature, so that we are born again by the incorruptible seed, the word of God, and thus brought to the Son of God, who was crucified for sinners, that we might have eternal life in believing on Him, and thus be newly created in Christ Jesus ; but, this being so, He comes and dwells in our "*hearts*," our "*bodies*," and strengthens the new nature, for the Holy Spirit is the power for all communion, service, and testimony. The apostle therefore prays that we may "be strengthened with might by his Spirit in "*the inner man*," and that we might be filled "with all joy and peace in believing," and "abound in hope through the *power* of the Holy Ghost." (Eph. iii. 16; Rom. xv. 13.) How wonderful, then, is God's own testimony to the eternal efficacy of the one offering of the body of Christ, and how blessed the thought that this other Comforter is to abide with us for ever !

Among His many blessed operations in us, we may notice that He is "*the Spirit of adoption*," so that we may have the feelings and activities within us of those who have been brought into the endearing relationship of children of God, by faith

in Christ Jesus. He thus bears witness with our spirit (or, new nature, if we may so speak) that we are the children of God ; and He also cries within us, “Abba, Father.” “Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear ; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” It is by the gift of the Spirit we know our relationship, and the blessed liberty of it, with the Father. “Beloved, now are we the children of God.” We have not, then, received a servile spirit, giving us dread and a slavish fear, which hath torment ; but the spirit of adoption which produces filial reverence and fear, lest we grieve and dishonour Him ; and a childlike confidence in Him who has, in such grace, brought us so near, so very near, to Himself in Christ, and through His precious blood. Neither have we received the spirit of the world, that we should be more successful worldlings, or be able to fight with their weapons, and excel in their doings. Far from it ; it is God’s Spirit, that we might have intelligence and power to act according to God—to be imitators of God as dear children. “Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God ; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.”

Nor have we received the spirit of fear, to crush us under a sense of our own weakness and many infirmities, to cast us inward on our own barrenness and poverty, and thus fill us with fearful ap-

prehensions and gloom. No, these things are not the fruit of the Spirit in us. Though He reproves sin, and at times may deal with us so as to bring us before God in humiliation and self-judgment, yet He points us to a triumphant Christ, a glorified Man, a coming Saviour, Lord of all, as the One in whom all our resources are. Thus He draws out our hearts after Christ and His interests. He bids us to consider Him, lest we grow weary and faint, and to look off unto Him, lest we fail to run with patience the race that is set before us. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (2 Tim. i. 7.) Is it not, then, clearly set forth that those who are taught and guided by the Holy Ghost will not have a servile state of heart, a spirit of bondage and dread? Neither will they be worldly-minded, nor will they be timid and fearful; but, while serving the Lord with all humility of mind, they will be of good courage, loving in their ways, obedient to the Father's will, intelligent as to His mind, sound in doctrine, and will manifest a divine power with their service and testimony.

It is by the Holy Ghost having come, consequent upon the accomplished work of Jesus, that the deep things of God are now "revealed." Prophets had not the knowledge of these things, and they knew they had not; for we find one saying, "Eye hath not seen, neither ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things

which God hath prepared for them that love him ;” but an apostle could add the precious truth, “ but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. . . . The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.” So utterly dark is man naturally as to divine things, that nothing less than the revelation and power of the Spirit of God can enable him to receive them. “ The natural man (educated, uneducated, moral or profane) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ; for they are foolishness unto him : neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” Nor are we competent to make the things of God known to others but by the Holy Ghost. “ Which things also we SPEAK, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but *which the Holy Ghost teacheth*, comparing spiritual things with spiritual,” or communicating spiritual things by spiritual means. If, then, we can neither know, receive, nor communicate spiritual things but by the Holy Ghost, it is also equally clear that the Holy Spirit is given to us to fill us with such intelligence that “ we might know the things which are freely given to us of God,” be able to receive them, and give them out to others. (1 Cor. ii.) Were these statements of scripture received into our hearts in simple faith, how entirely and habitually we should be cast upon the power and operations of the Holy Ghost !

CORRESPONDENCE.

42. "J. M." Devonport. You know you are "a great sinner by nature and by practice," but are you a lost sinner, and anxious to be saved? These are days in which many assent to the truth, and still live in sin, or are linked with the world, and loving the things that are in the world. We trust we shall be kept from writing a line that would encourage such soul-destroying delusion.

We understand, then, your question to be this: Is it scriptural to say the sinner has nothing to do in order to be saved except to believe God?

The illustration you give is, that the Israelites had to kill the lamb, and sprinkle its blood, and trust in that blood, and if they had not done this, their firstborn must have perished. As the scripture says, these shadows were not the very image of the things. We have not to kill the Lamb—He has been slain, His blood has been shed—the whole work has been done that gives the sinner, the moment he believes God, eternal salvation. "IT IS FINISHED." Now it is because all has been done, and that God has raised up Jesus from the dead, that all men are commanded to repent. He is not to repent as doing a work in order to be saved, but because the great work has been done. The two things to be noticed are—first, man's condition in God's sight; and then, God's remedy. Whilst a prisoner is on his trial he may do his utmost—employ counsel, call witnesses, &c.; but when under sentence of death, legally he is a dead man. This is the true condition of man. Locked up in that condemned cell, all must be done *for* him, not *by* him. Now let the officer enter, and announce the free pardon of that condemned man.

—her Majesty's free, sovereign act. What has he to do *for* it? Even his believing the glad tidings is not *for* it. No doubt, the moment he hears, and believes, the effect will be tremendous.

Is it not exactly so with the sinner under judgment? (Rom. iii. 19–26; iv. 24, 25.) We cannot find one single thing here that the sinner does *for* pardon and salvation. The righteousness of God is not unto any *for*, or *because*, they believe, but through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; it is “*upon them that believe.*”

Thus God's free pardon is proclaimed to man in the condemned cell before he believes or repents. The effect, when applied by the Spirit, is, he both believes and repents—but not that God may be gracious, but because He is so. The great mistake we often make is, that we put these things as a procuring cause, or a work to be done *for* salvation. Man must know God first, before he can turn to Him from idols. The grace of God is truly marvellous.

43. “H.” Norwich. The judgment of the living nations in Matthew xxv. is a *sessional* judgment, that is, the Lord as King will sit on the throne of His glory, and the living nations [Gentiles] be gathered before Him. It will take place after the Lord comes out from heaven *with us* in manifested glory. The judgment is final, therefore “everlasting” in its results. The *warrior* judgment in Revelation xix. takes place before this. We cannot find an idea in scripture of what is called a general judgment. Ezekiel xxxvii. will not be fulfilled until Israel and Judah, the ten tribes and two tribes, shall be “one” in the hand of Jehovah.

44. “E. G. K.” Sheffield. We never read in

scripture about *meeting* in the name of *Christ*. Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name." His name now is "the Lord Jesus Christ," for He has been made Lord and Christ in ascension. It is, then, in His name, who is now in heaven, to which He gathers by His Spirit. We believe it to be a divinely-wrought work in the soul to be really gathered unto His name, to be thus joined to the Lord. Such know that HE is "in the midst." You say, though another name is associated with the meeting, you do not worship it. But let us ask, if you were jealous for the name of "our Lord Jesus Christ," how could you countenance another name being associated with His? If that other name added to His does not attract some, why use it? Again, can anything so weaken the clear testimony to the holiness and power of His name as joining with it the name even of the most distinguished of His servants? Is not "the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" enough to attract and keep saints together as the true and only centre? Is it not, then, incumbent on us all to stand for the honour and all-sufficiency of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ?

The "differences of administrations" do not mean sects, as you suppose, but the various kinds of ministries which the Lord is pleased to use for the profit of the members of the body of Christ.

When it is said in John's first Epistle, that "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit [or, practise] sin," and "sinneth not," the believer is looked at as to the new nature which is born of God, which does not sin—an abstract truth of all importance.



GOD RECEIVING.

LUKE xv.

JESUS said, “ He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.” In this chapter, then, we see God, even the Father, revealed in the Son—revealed to a sin-burdened soul beyond all human thought. Nay, it was even offensive to the religious Jew to see the Holy One receiving sinners, and eating with them. No question but that it is truly marvellous, that He, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, can find His deepest joy in receiving, and in forgiving the vilest of sinners.

Let us take a case ; and how many are there ! Think of a person groaning in secret, or openly sunk in the shame and loathsomeness of sin ; he has wilfully departed farther and farther from God. Sunk in misery, he feels himself too vile to live. He tries to drive away the thought of his wretchedness, but only increases it. He tries to serve God, and give up his sins ; but he finds he has no strength or power to do so. The devil, fashion, and companions hold him fast in the entangled grasp. He remembers the happy days of his childhood, and wishes he had never been born. He cannot forget his sins ; and the burden becomes too heavy to be endured. Drink, or the faded pleasures of this world, afford no relief. He tries the law, and hopes to be better ; it can only curse

him, for he is guilty. He tries the sing-song religion of the day, but he finds it empty mockery, and gets no relief. He is still the wretched slave of sin. One word expresses his condition, and that word is, "lost." He is a lost, helpless sinner, drifting fast down the stream of life to endless and deserved perdition. Now, let such a lost soul turn with us to Luke xv.

In this touching parable there are three persons in one parable, just as there are three Persons in the one Godhead.

THE SHEPHERD

goes after the sheep which is lost, until he finds it. Is not this the Good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep—the Son of man, who came to seek that which was lost? All this is of God. He "so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Poor, lost slave of sin, is not this wonderful, that God, the eternal Son, should become a man to seek thee? All the creation-glory of the universe He had made could not satisfy His heart—God must be glorified in thy salvation—He must come and seek thee, and find thee, and save thee; and in all this have His joy. "And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, REJOICING." Yes, He says, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost." It is not the sheep that says so,

it is Himself. However vile, however far off, no one can question the Shepherd's joy in thy repentance. Oh, turn, and look up in that face of joy as thou tellest out all thy sins in repentance before Him. And what a giving up of self, to be carried on His shoulder, kept by His strength, right home, not half-way ! "And when he cometh home"—oh, joyful day, so near, when all the lost ones, saved, shall arrive at home ! Yes, such was the love of the Shepherd, that He died for the sheep, that the Father might be righteous, yea, glorified, in seeking, saving, justifying, and bringing safe home the lost, vile, loathsome sinner. All this is wonderful, and it is entirely of God.

THE HOLY GHOST.

But lost man could never have understood all this, and therefore never would have believed this wondrous grace of God, had not the Holy Ghost been sent down from heaven. Thus, in the parable there is now another person, after the work of the Shepherd who died for the sheep.

A woman, having lost a piece of silver, "If she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house and seek diligently till she find it?" Yes, she seeks it until she finds it ; and when she has found it, she says, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost."

Was not that amazing grace, that when men had, by wicked hands, crucified the Son of man,

the Lord Jesus, who came to seek the lost, even then the Holy Ghost was sent to seek diligently, with the light of the gospel, that which was lost? Oh, sinner, you have given God up; but He could not give you up. The Holy Spirit has sought you, until—it may be by this little paper—He with joy shall find you. A letter lies before us, telling how He sought a poor sin-convicted prisoner; how He used a little tract in giving peace and joy to that sin-crushed heart. Jesus, the Shepherd, the Saviour, has returned to heaven, and sent down the Holy Ghost to seek diligently until every lost one given to Him shall be found. As we write these words, we feel deeply impressed with the fact that none are found but by Him. He may use what He will as a candle, but He seeks, He finds, He rejoices, and says, “Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost.” What a fact this is, that God the Holy Ghost now on earth finds His joy in seeking diligently for lost souls! As Abraham’s servant said to Rebecca, Give me of thy pitcher to drink; and as Jesus said to the woman at Sychar’s well, “Give me to drink,” so God now finds His joy in seeking and receiving the lost sinner.

And now, if God the Son has had His joy in *seeking* the lost, and God the Holy Ghost has His joy in *finding* every lost one, what is the joy of the Father in *receiving* the once degraded son?

It is important to notice the simple, yet correct,

order of this parable. The work of the Son must take place first. He must needs suffer, and rise again. He must glorify the Father about the whole question of sin. He must descend to the depths into which the lost soul is found—"made sin for us." He must be delivered for our iniquities; He must be raised from among the dead for our justification. All this must be accomplished before the Holy Ghost could come down from heaven to bear witness that eternal redemption was finished. All this has been done to the glory of God. Now the Holy Ghost has come down, and reveals the glory of this grace to the vilest sinners on earth. Every barrier has been removed. The Holy Ghost is thus free to act in awaking the conscience, and bringing the sinner, however far off, to God the Father.

We will now see how He acts in doing this. The light is applied to the conscience. Man has departed from God. Oh, how far has he gone astray! And, lest any should despair, an extreme case is given, and yet a sample case, for all have sinned—all are guilty before God. If He should mark, or impute sins, who could stand before Him? All may not have done the deeds to the full length of the prodigal, but all have the same nature in its deepest depths. The first effect, then, of the Spirit acting on the conscience is this, "He came to himself." He finds sin has made him morally insane. What a fool Saul saw himself to be, when

he found he was a hater and persecutor of the Lord of glory! What a fool the prodigal found himself to be in the far country, feeding swine! All the father had given him, every natural advantage, lost and gone through sin. Is not this man's a wretched condition? He gave up all the pleasures of Eden, he joined himself to Satan. And what is the result? What empty husks, what an unsatisfied, restless, weary, guilty heart and conscience! The riotous living ended in a mighty famine in that land. See a man sinking in the depths of despair! Would he fain seek satisfaction in the loathsome husks of sin? His heart sinks within him in disgust. "And no man gave unto him." No man in Satan's country can give such an one a drop of comfort.

Mark the effect of the first ray of light from the candle. He looks right away yonder to the father. Very dimly at first. Why, he says, my father's servants are far better off than I am here—they have plenty to eat, and I perish with hunger. The awakened sinner says, Why, yonder servants of God are far better off than I am, poor miserable slave of the devil; the more I have served him, the worse I find it for me. They do get what they earn, whilst I perish. Very confused the first awaking thoughts, but they are, though far short, yet in the right direction. It is like the first touch of the magnet, but the power of the magnet will soon shew itself. "I will arise, and

go to my father." How like the magnet, we say. Blessed light of the candle, or lamp. Such is every one that is born of the Spirit. He repents. The way is open to the Father. He comes direct to Him. "I will say UNTO HIM, FATHER, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee." This is wrought in the conscience by the Holy Ghost. This is the revelation of the way a sinner is brought to God, from the very lips of Jesus. Jesus places no priest between the sinner and God. He says, I will go to my Father Himself—direct to Him. How deeply he felt his folly and guilt before God. He says, I will tell it all out to Him. There is the attraction of the magnet, as we said, but not yet the full sense of grace: "And am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants."

Before we look at the father's greeting and welcome, we would ask the reader, Has that light ever reached your conscience and heart? Have you learnt the folly and degradation of the slavery of Satan? Is your eye lifted off to the Father's house? Do you feel the drawings of the Spirit to lead you in full confession of all your folly, sins, and iniquity to the Father? If this work be of God the Holy Ghost in your souls, you will find eternal profit in looking further, with us, at the Father's reception of the lost son.

THE FATHER.

The question, then, now is this: How will the

most holy God meet a loathsome sinner, fully conscious, and owning the vileness, of his conduct? Bearing in mind always that redemption has been accomplished by the Son for the lost sheep, and the Holy Ghost has been sent down from heaven to make this known; to a really awakened soul this is a tremendous question. Feeling in his inmost soul he deserves eternal wrath—the wrath of God against sin—can he come direct to God, or does he need the intervention of priests and sacraments? Does he need the intervention of departed saints, or apostles, or angels? Or, does he need days, weeks, or years of penitence and self-improvement, before he can be at all fit to come into the presence of the Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty? We name these things, because such are the thoughts of millions who call themselves Christians. And, further, because of the unspeakable horror that sin gives to a soul truly awakened by the Spirit of God. Then Satan whispers, You have gone beyond all hope. Then the deep shame of guilt, the utter madness of spending all in sin, and for such a master. Sin so great, and against such a God of love, yet a God of infinite holiness. The trembling, anxious soul says, How shall I meet God?

Let Jesus lift the veil, and shew how God can now meet the lost sinner who has come to himself. None but He could thus reveal the Father. “But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw

him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." What a comfort, however far off, the Father sees you ; yes, He knows all—your whole character is known to Him, so that you could not tell it to any person living on earth. Does He impute the sins of the poor guilty one? Does He manifest the wrath due to them? No, He "had compassion." This is that blessed God "who commendeth his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Perhaps you might be afraid to look in the face of any one that knew you as the Father knows you ; but see in His face the tender compassion you could not find in man. Christ has died—he needs no other intercessor. Does He spurn the lost, vile sinner? Oh, drink in those two sweet words, "and ran." Yes, the Father ran, it was not the poor prodigal. He ran. If you have been brought up in dark superstition, and have been shewn hosts of intercessors to help you to approach God, oh, see Him run past them all straight to you ! Yes, God thus meets you—thus meets us. "And fell on his neck, and kissed him." No wonder this half choked the poor sinner, and that he could only get out half of what he had to say.

He said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." Full self-judgment and full confession direct to the Father on his neck ; this was right, it must be. But, as we said, he was either so

ehoked with the sense of the amazing grace, or right down ashamed to talk of being a hired servant. We are assured that those who do take the place of the servant, and think they shall only enjoy the Father's favour so long as they deserve it by works of law, they never have known the embrace of infinite grace. Such unmerited favour as this is enough to choke a returning sinner.

It is God that is revealed by the Son—the same unchanging God and Father. Yes, it is Himself. How did He treat this poor sin-stricken soul? Did He say, You must be exposed in all your rags and filth before all my household? Did He say, Long must you do penance amongst my more righteous servants? God, who is righteous in justifying the guilty by the propitiatory death of His Son, immediately said to His servants, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet." Ah, none knew the Father but the Son, and none but He could thus reveal Him. Here we see the riches of His grace. The self-righteous brother was shocked at this grace, and if he did not understand it, well he might.

Not so the Father. Would He bring him into His house covered with rags? Would He expose his sins to the servants? No; upon that repentant sinner, who has confessed to Him, on that delivered sinner, He would have placed to view, not his sins, but the Father would have him in his

sight, and put upon him the best robe, the righteousness of God, that righteousness which is unto all, and upon them that believe. Not a mere doctrine, but upon him, accounted righteous before God, fit for His holy presence; no longer in the position he had hoped for—a servant—but on his hand the ring of everlasting relationship. And as the work of the shepherd was to bring the sheep home, so we immediately find the once lost prodigal in all the joy and feast of the father's house. Oh, wondrous grace! it is the Father that says, “and let us eat and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.”

How little do we enter into this joy of the Father! It is so entirely of God, and worthy of the finished work of His beloved Son. We thus see the work of the Son, and His joy in coming to seek and to save the lost. Then the diligent work of the Holy Ghost in seeking and finding the lost. And, lastly, the Father's unbounded joy in receiving, clothing, feasting the lost one found. And all this from the lips and heart of Him who is the way, the TRUTH, and the life. Yes, this parable is the exact representation of God's way of receiving sinners. It is the revelation of the Father. Are you groaning in secret over the heavy burden of sin? It may be sins of early life, prodigal sins—sins that fill your soul with increasing horror. Satan may be trying hard to

drive you to remorse and despair. Why not arise, and come straight to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? You have the authority of Jesus in this parable to do so. Come just as you are. Oh, come and tell Him all. "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Hearken, He speaks to you : "COME NOW, and let us reason together, saith the Lord : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Yes, white as snow. Covered with the best robe. Meet for the Father's house, and welcome there, in the everlasting relationship of a child! Ah, the poor Jews could not believe this wondrous grace ; they went about to establish their own righteousness, they would not submit to the "best robe."

Oh, sin-harassed soul, drink at this fountain of infinite, divine love. Oh, look at that once lost, guilty, ragged prodigal. See him clothed in the righteousness of God, and seated in perfect peace at the Father's feast. Is not this the happy place of all who have been brought to Him in real self-judgment and confession of sins ? Had the Lord intended that sins should be confessed to a priest, He would not thus have revealed the readiness, yea, the joy, to receive and pardon the sinner Himself. Here is the great and important truth, that sins confessed to God are sins forgiven by God,

even the Father. And, oh, precious words! He says, "and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Oh, come then, weary one, to the embrace, the kiss, the welcome of the Father. You will find that God is still love. Let not Satan hinder. Let not the remembrance of sins, however sad, hinder. To whom can you come but to God, thus revealed in Christ?

One word, however, of warning. The prodigal did not excuse his sins, or seek to continue in them. We know of nothing so terrible as to use the very grace of God as a cover to continue in the practice of unrighteousness. This is distinctly of the devil. (1 John iii. 8.) To say, "Yes, I know, but everybody does so; this conduct in business is quite common." Thus to excuse evil in oneself, or in others, is the very opposite of the conduct of the welcome prodigal. Oh, infinite and needed grace to the repentant soul! All, all is worthy of the God of all grace. "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love." (1 John iv. 16.) C. S.



THE HOLY GHOST.

No. IV.

THE Holy Ghost having taken up His abode in the believer, he is thus united to Christ, who is at the right hand of God. And what a wonderful thing for every child of God on earth now to know, that

he is actually united to Christ in heaven, as a divinely-wrought fact! Present union with Christ! One spirit with the Lord, for we are told that "he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." How amazing the grace of God, who beheld us in our vile and loathsome state as sinners of the Gentiles, and cleansed us, quickened us, and united us by His Holy Spirit to the Lord Jesus Christ! We have this marvellous union, not by faith, as is sometimes stated, though we are believers; nor even in life, though Christ is our life; but by the coming of the Holy Ghost into our hearts, in consequence of our being washed from our sins in the blood of Jesus. We surely do well to ponder carefully in God's presence this amazing truth; so true is it, that Jesus in the glory speaks of us as part of Himself—"Me"—and the Holy Ghost says that "we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." It is the consciousness of the reality of this union that necessarily attracts us to the Lord, keeps us clinging to Him, to find our all in Him, and therefore detaches us from a thousand things which many esteem to be good, because they are unsuited to Him with whom we are for ever joined by "one Spirit."

Has the christian reader received this divine truth, that "by one Spirit we are all baptised into one body"?—that you yourself are now so one with Christ, that if you are persecuted, *He* could say to your persecutor, "Why persecutest thou

ME?" Have you, beloved reader, the consciousness in your own soul that because you have been washed from your sins in the blood of Jesus, the Holy Spirit has taken up His abode in your heart for ever, and united you to Christ in heaven? It may be possible that you have never heard of this great truth before, or, even if you have known it, you may have little consciousness of its reality, because of your fleshly and worldly walk so grieving the Spirit; still, it is even then blessed to come before God in self-examination, self-judgment, and, it may be, self-loathing, and thus have soul-restoration; and, believing God's testimony, and walking in His presence, have the precious comfort, not only that "as Christ is, so are we in this world" (a most blessed truth), but that you are now on earth for ever united to the Lord in heaven by His Spirit which He hath given us. That every christian reader of these pages may have the certainty and unspeakable enjoyment of being one with the Lord Jesus, is our heart's desire and earnest prayer to the Father of mercies and God of all comfort! (1 Cor. xii. 13 ; Acts ix. 4.)

It is because we have the Spirit that we "know the things that are freely given to us of God," that we have to do with an ascended, glorified Saviour, consciously stand in the liberty where-with Christ hath made us free, and intelligently worship and give thanks. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." In this way the

believer knows that he is not now in his sins, not in the flesh, not of the world, not under law, but justified from all things, has eternal life, is a child of God, has received the Holy Ghost, and is a member of the body of Christ, thus able to serve acceptably, and worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Thus the gift of the Holy Ghost to the believer is connected with knowledge, liberty, communion, enjoyment, worship, and power. The difference is strikingly seen in comparing the state of believers in the first chapter of the Acts with their state in the second and fourth chapters.

Among other operations of the Holy Ghost, we may notice that He bears witness to the Son of God—"He shall testify of me." (John xv. 26.) Thus the Holy Spirit brings before our souls the personal glory and perfections of the Son, His moral excellencies, His finished work on the cross, the various offices which He now sustains, and the ranges of glory yet to be revealed to His eternal praise and honour. He may direct our thoughts back to consider His eternal Sonship, and lead us to contemplate Him by whom the worlds were made. He may recall to our memories His God-glorifying work of redemption in the *past*, or direct the eye of our heart to Jesus at the right hand of God, crowned with glory and honour, where we see Him for the *present*. Or, He may lead us to contemplate Him in the *future*, when He will come forth as the rightful Heir of all things to

establish His kingdom in righteousness, wearing His many crowns. The Holy Spirit may testify of Him as the One in heaven, to whom angels, authorities, and powers are made subject ; He may at one time lead our thoughts back to His perfections in this world as the rejected One, and then to Him as the reigning One, to whom every knee must bow. He may minister to us the marvellous relationship He holds as the Head of His body the church, the offices He sustains as our great High Priest, the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, and our Advocate with the Father, and give us also to contemplate the time of blessing yet to come, when He shall be welcomed and honoured on earth as King of Israel and Governor among the nations. At one time the Holy Ghost may give us to delight in Him as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption ; and at another to look forward to our reigning with Him, and to His executing the most solemn judgments on the living and on the dead. So that, whether the Holy Ghost occupy us with the past, present, or future, things heavenly or earthly, He is the Testifier of the Son, who is the central object of all God's counsels, grace, and glory ! We may be certain, therefore, that no ministry can be characterised as of the Holy Ghost, if the Lord Jesus Christ be not the pre-eminent subject and object of its testimony. How blessed, then, it is to know this, and to ex-

perience in our souls this grand effect of the Spirit dwelling in us, that He testifies to us of the Son ! In no other way can we account for that untold blessedness which we enjoy when our minds and hearts are taken up with Him, and when His perfectness, accomplished work, His offices and His fulness, are brought home to our hearts !

The Holy Ghost is also the Glorifier of the Son, as He said, "He shall glorify me." (John xvi. 14.) He presents Him as worthy of all praise. His excellencies make everything else seem poor. His worthiness will by-and-by call forth the praises of every creature in heaven, in earth, and under the earth. But even now, in this sin-blighted world, the Holy Ghost so reveals Him, that hearts are attuned to sing His praise. To many now on earth His name is above every name, and to their hearts He has the pre-eminence in all things, because the Holy Spirit has revealed to them something of His surpassing excellencies and worth. Yes, He is the Glorifier of the Son of God, the Spirit of truth, who guides into all the truth. He tells us of Him as God's only-begotten Son, as the Creator of the world, that Eternal Life which was with the Father, the Object of the worship of all the angels, the Light of men, the Saviour of all that believe in His name, the One to whom all judgment is committed, at whose name every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess. Thus is He ever to be adored and praised, for He is worthy.

The Holy Ghost does not speak from Himself, but "whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak . . . He shall glorify me ; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine ; therefore said I, that he shall take of mine and shall shew unto you." It is because all that the Father hath the Son hath also, that the Holy Ghost reveals the most precious things of the Father and of the Son to us.

The Holy Ghost also reveals the truth to us as to coming events—"He will shew you things to come." To shut out, therefore, from our minds the testimony of scripture as to prophetic events, would be to resist this blessed ministry of the Holy Spirit. And observe, that it is the Spirit who shews us the future. No power of the natural intellect, apart from divine teaching, is sufficient for this. One thing is certain—that the same Spirit which is given to us, and cries, Abba, Father, also says, Come, Lord Jesus. "*The Spirit* and the bride say, Come." It is, then, a most serious matter when souls, even if they do not oppose the doctrine of the Lord's coming as the believer's hope, yet, if they do not accept it as the divinely-given hope, they are clearly shewn to be not in the mind of the Holy Ghost. (Rev. xxii. 17.)

We read, too, of "joy in the Holy Ghost ;" for if He be here to testify of the Son, to glorify Him, and to shew us things to come, He must surely be thus keeping our hearts near the never-failing

springs of divine grace. We know that the Father Himself loves us—yea, that He loves us as He has loved His Son. Thus, being objects of divine favour, brought to Him in Christ, and through His precious blood, accepted in the Beloved, and His co-heirs, and all kept fresh in our hearts by the power of the Holy Ghost, we know such a deep, calm joy, as makes us look for the coming of our Lord to introduce us into that fulness of joy which His presence only can give.

When we are enjoined to “be filled with the Spirit,” it is clear that it is not having more of the Spirit given to us ; for, as we have seen, God does not give the Spirit by measure, but He gives us the Holy Ghost Himself. We read, therefore, that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. As long as a Christian is encouraging fleshly and worldly lusts, he cannot be filled with the Spirit, for the Spirit is grieved ; but when the believer is self-judged, and holds himself dead with Christ, instead of being occupied with self and worldly lusts, he becomes wholly occupied with Christ. Every faculty of his heart and mind is taken up with the Lord Jesus Christ ; he is filled with the Spirit. The admonition of scripture, therefore, is, “Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess”—fleshly lusts—“but be filled with the Spirit.”

H. H. S.



WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH THAT JESUS
IS THE CHRIST, IS BORN OF GOD.

PROFESSING Christian, have you believed that Jesus is the Christ? Do not tell me you have been baptised, and confirmed, and have gone to the sacrament, and have been doing your best, and no one can accuse you of an immoral life! I dare say all that is true; but all this is not believing that Jesus is the Christ! You may be a good Churchman, a high ritualist, and yet be as ignorant of the reality of Jesus being the Christ as an infidel; and I hope, if you will bear with me, and have patience to read this, that I shall be able to prove it to you.

Messiah is the Hebrew word for the Christ, which is the Greek word for the Anointed. It is not always marked in our English Bibles, but whenever, or generally when the definite article is prefixed to the word Christ, it does not merely mean a name, but is the official title of the Lord, just as we say the official title of the eldest son of Her Majesty is the Prince of Wales. It means, then, in simple words, *the Anointed*. A Jew would have told you at once, who lived in those days, that the Christ signified the Anointed Prophet, Priest, and King who was coming, of whom the Jewish prophets, priests, and kings were types. Elisha was anointed as prophet. Aaron was anointed as priest. David was anointed as king. Oil was

poured on their heads, and they were set apart for their office in that way. So Jesus, after His baptism by John, was anointed and sealed by the Holy Ghost, set apart in that way for His three-fold office as Prophet, Priest, and King. The Jew also ought to have known, from Isaiah vi. 1, 5, and Psalm ii., that the Messiah was Jehovah, and Son of God, as also from Jeremiah xxiii. 6. Now, reader, perhaps you will be interested to read a little longer, and to see whether you really do believe in Him—for remember, if you do not, it is fatal!

First, He is the Anointed Prophet, who came down to give a new testimony from God, which had never been given before—that is, of grace—God no longer requiring men to fulfil certain commandments or laws, but God giving His Son! He said to the Samaritan woman—who presently confessed Him a Prophet—“If thou knewst the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water!” (John iv. 10.) Reader, God hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, the Anointed Prophet. He has been down to the earth to tell us God’s mind, that we, who are already proved guilty sinners, under sentence of death by the law, may now, by hearing His voice, receive grace and pardon for all our sins—yea, eternal life—through simply believing in His name. Therefore it is as

clear as noon-day, that if you are trusting in the law, or in your good works, for salvation, you are not believing the Anointed Prophet's voice, and God says, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. i. 2; ii. 3.)

But, secondly, He is the Anointed Priest! Every priest, we are told, is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices. Therefore a priest and a sacrifice go together. Aaron and his sons offered the daily sacrifices on the brazen altar before the tabernacle; Christ, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God. (See Heb. v. 1; ix. 14.) He is therefore both Priest, Altar, and Sacrifice. Why did He offer Himself? Because the law sacrifices were insufficient to take away the sins, and God wanted sin to be put away, and for sanctified worshippers, saved out of the world, to be in His presence. (See Heb. x. 1-10.) We read that in the tabernacle service the priests always stood, and offered continual sacrifices that could never take away sins; but that this Man, when He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God! (Vers. 11, 12.) If a man stands, it is generally to do some kind of work; the priests under law always stood, because the work was never done, the sacrifices were being continually offered, and they never put away sins; but if a man sits down after having done his work, it is a clear case that the work he was about is done—he has sat down. So

it was with the Anointed Priest. When He had done the work of putting away our sins, He for ever sat down at the right hand of God, for by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified ! What is the use, then, of ritualist priests offering fresh sacrifices on new altars put up ? Why, it is as clear as noon-day that they do not believe in the Anointed Priest, and in the eternal efficacy of His one sacrifice. My reader, beware of following such priests. There is one Priest at the right hand of God, who has sat down after having completely put away every believer's sins, and that is the Christ. Do you believe in Him ? The only other priesthood now is that of all believers. (1 Pet. ii. 5; Rev. i. 6.)

Thirdly, He is the Anointed King. He was the Heir to Jerusalem's throne, the true Son of David ; but the Jewish nation rejected and crucified Him. He now, therefore, sits as the rejected King on the Father's throne in heaven, and is coming presently to sit on His own throne, when He comes again to restore Israel, and to judge this world in righteousness. (See Acts ii. 30-36 ; Rev. iii. 21.) My reader, we are living in the interval between His rejection and His return to reign. He claims now the subjection of our hearts to His sceptre. Have you submitted to the authority of the King during the time of His rejection ? Woe betide you if you have not ! Substitute law for grace, for salvation ; it shews you

do not believe in Him as God's own Anointed Prophet. Substitute eucharistic altars and sacrifices, and man-appointed priests, for God's one Priest, one altar, and one sacrifice, and it shews you do not believe in Him as God's Anointed Priest ; and if you have any other authority to rule your life, be it church authority or human authority of any kind, except the word of God, it shews that you have not believed in Him as God's Anointed King ; and "*he that believeth not shall be damned!*" (Mark xvi. 16.)

One word more. "*Whosoever abideth not in the doctrine of the Christ, hath not God,*" we are told in 2 John 9. Christian, test those who teach by this doctrine. If they bring it not, receive not such in your house, nor bid them God speed. (Vers. 10, 11.) The Anointed Prophet now speaks from heaven the word of grace, in contrast to the one who spoke on earth, from Mount Sinai, the law ! Hear Him, I beseech you ! (Heb. xii. 25, 26.) The Anointed Priest has sat down as the great Centre of christian worship, having opened the way of access to God by His one sacrifice ! Get absolution, I beseech you, from no other priest, nor have any other centre of worship. The Anointed King is about to come to reign ! Are you ready for Him ? Have you bowed to His word ?

A. P. C.

CORRESPONDENCE.

45. "D.," Llandudno. We deeply sympathise with you. You have no Saviour to trust in but the Lord Jesus Christ, and you have no ground given you for assurance of salvation but the word of God. We are *not* justified by feeling, *nor* by experience, but "*by faith*." The sole ground of peace and justification is the blood of the cross ; and His word declares that "whosoever believeth in him [the Son of God] shall not perish, but have everlasting life." Taking God simply at His word, you will have the certainty of your eternal salvation.

46. "H. J.," Denmark. We must not confound the miraculous gifts of healing by the Spirit with the use of ordinary remedial measures resulting from experience and natural ability. Both have their place in scripture. As to "gifts of healing," there is reason to conclude that they, with other sign-gifts, passed away at an early stage of the church's history. But remedial measures were recognised in the apostles' days, while the "gifts of healing," and prayers, and anointing by elders, were in existence. Hence Paul enjoins Timothy to drink no longer water, but to use a little wine for his stomach's sake and often infirmities. (1 Tim. v. 24.) In a former dispensation also the prophet Isaiah prescribed the application of a lump of figs to king Hezekiah as a curative measure. (Is. xxxviii. 21.) Prayer does not clash with these other ways of dealing with the sick. We find Paul, who wrought miracles in healing some, also prescribed means of restoration, and tells us that he left Trophimus at Miletum sick.

The mistake with Christians, has, for a long

time, seemed to us to be not at *first* seeking the Lord about their sickness, but rather, like unbelievers, running at once to physicians, though afterwards, perhaps, asking the Lord to bless the means used. We are told that good king Asa erred in this way, for "in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians." (2 Chron. xvi. 12.) It is, no doubt, a common error in the present day with such as have man, and not the Lord, before them. We are persuaded that if saints habitually walked before the Lord, were exercised before Him in their sickness, and *then* used such reasonable curative means as came within their reach, calling for elders to pray over them, the Lord would be honoured, and there would be more healing and soul-restoration than is commonly seen.

If the Lord be not honoured by us in sickness, let us not be surprised if the ordinary remedial means, which prove successful with others, fail in benefiting us; because, being children of God, we are objects of the Father's discipline, and He has wise and special reasons for sickness, and till the needed exercises are passed through the healing may be retarded.

47. "S. W.," Tunbridge Wells. There can be no doubt that Antichrist is a person, and not a system, though many systems may be anti-christian. He is the wilful king. (Dan. xi. 36-38.) He is the man of sin, or lawless one. The terrible heading up of all that is now working amongst men. (2 Thess. ii. 3, 4.) The wicked one. (Ver. 8.) The very climax of lying and deceitfulness. (Vers. 9, 10.) And withal he assumes a religious character, as connected with the dragon and the beast, or restored head of the Roman earth; has great power, and doeth great wonders.

What is called Boycotting by men is one distinct mark of Antichrist. (Rev. xiii. 11, 17.) Thus the principles of Antichrist are already working. He will be cast into the lake of fire, and will remain alive there. (Rev. xix. 20; xx. 10.)

No doubt the Old Testament saints will be raised from among the dead at the coming of the Lord—"they that are Christ's at His coming." A multitude of the servants of God are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb ; and they are blessed, but still distinct from the bride. They rejoice because she hath made herself ready. (Rev. xix. 5-9.) The promises to the one are connected with the land, the earth. (Gen. xii. 3; xiii. 14-17, &c.) The predestined glory of the church is heavenly in Christ. (Eph. i.; Col. i.)

When the Lord has taken away His church, those who have refused the truth will be given up to strong delusion, and there is no hope held out of their conversion. (2 Thess. ii. 10-12.) The Holy Spirit is not then DWELLING in the church on earth, as it is no longer here. But the Holy Spirit will act on earth, as He did before He came to glorify Christ, and to form the church. An elect number of Israel will be sealed and a vast multitude of the Gentiles saved. (Rev. vii.) The Holy Ghost will no longer act in thus hindering lawlessness. It is terrible to think what will be the state of this world when all restraint on man's lawless nature is removed for a short time, and Satan, the dragon, takes the place of God, and leads his dupe, the man of sin, to do the same visibly. Strange to say, the word by which Satan is leading men on towards this awful slavery is called liberty. But we wait for the Son of God from heaven.

COMING JUDGMENT AND DIVINE GOODNESS.

NAHUM I. 6-8.

WHEN we contemplate the prophetic scriptures, we have to consider the people, and their state, of whom the prophet speaks, and also how far the principles of divine truth there set forth can be used for the profit of souls in the present day.

Nahum's ministry, though peculiarly solemn, was simple. He pointed to the divine judgments impending on the great and arrogant city of Nineveh. It had long been exalting itself, and it must be laid low.

Nineveh was a most ancient city, the capital of Assyria. From Genesis x. 11 (margin) we gather that Assyria was founded by Nimrod, and the city was built by Asshur. Historians tell us that it was about sixty miles in circumference, surrounded by a wall one hundred feet high, wide enough for three chariots to drive abreast, and having fifteen hundred towers, two hundred feet high. It contained "much cattle," so that it evidently enclosed a great space of fertile and cultivated land, besides dwelling-houses. In Jonah we read that it contained, in his day, "sixscore thousand persons, that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand;" and, if this refers to children, the probability is that the population of Nineveh might not have been less than half a million.

It is true that Assyria had been allowed by Jehovah to come against His people in His governmental dealings with them. But the Assyrians were lifted up; they ascribed their success in oppressing God's people to their own power and prudence, and their desire was to destroy them. We read, "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy, and cut off nations not a few. . . . Therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts, O my people that dwelleth in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt. For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction." Again, we read, "For through the voice of the Lord shall the Assyrian be beaten down which smote with the rod." The Assyrian oppressed them without cause. (Is. x. 5-25; xxx. 31; lii. 4.) Thus the rod which Jehovah used strove against Him who used it, and came under divine judgment.

After announcing the truth that God is jealous, and revengeth, the prophet Nahum declares that Jehovah is "slow to anger." This had been re-

markably exemplified in God's previous dealings with men, and now also with Nineveh, as we know it was afterwards with the Jews, and still is with professing Christendom and the world. But, though "slow to anger," judgment must come, for "he will not at all acquit the wicked." It is because God is long-suffering, and that, after eighteen hundred years of warning, the Lord has not yet come to carry it out, that the scoffer says, "Where is the promise of his coming?" and the infidel folds his arms with self-complacency, and despises the truth, because there is no outward appearance of coming judgment. Thus the scripture is being fulfilled, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set upon them to do evil." (Eccles. viii. 11.) It was so with Nineveh.

Upwards of a century before Nahum's prophecy, Jonah was sent to this great city. The word of Jehovah came to him, saying, "Go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it, for their cry is come up before me." We know that he did not go at first, for he needed to pass through death and resurrection in his own soul before he was competent for the mission. "And the word of Jehovah came unto Jonah the second time, saying. Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the

word of the Lord and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed." The effect was that the Ninevites heard, believed, repented, fasted, and put on sackcloth, so that God spared the city, and did not bring the judgment He had said He would upon it.

It was long after this that the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel (the ten tribes) away into Assyria. For the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hands of spoilers, until he had cast them out of His sight. So were Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day. They are generally called the "lost tribes," because no one knows where they are. (2 Kings xvii. 6-23.)

Only a few years after this, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them, and afterwards came against Jerusalem with a great host, and, with great haughtiness, sought to overcome the city. But God answered the cries of His faithful servants, and sent an angel to destroy a hundred and four-score and five thousand of the king of Assyria's army in one night, and the king himself was murdered by his own sons.

It was about this time that Nahum predicted the fall of self-exalted Nineveh, which would be so effectually done, that it would "not rise up a second time," and the city be so entombed in its own

ruins, that the scripture should be literally fulfilled, "I will make thy grave, for thou art vile," and of it should be said, "Behold I am against thee, saith the Lord of hosts; and all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste; who shall bemoan her?" "Woe to the bloody city, it is all full of lies and robbery: the prey departeth not." The prophet tells us concerning the siege and ruin of the city (chap. iii. 14), that "the gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved; and the fire devour thee;" and historians tell us that the river Tigris overflowed its banks, and poured into the doomed city, and that the haughty king, after sustaining a siege of two years, set his own palace on fire, and in this way perished. Thus Nineveh was utterly destroyed, never more to raise its head, while "Assyria" and "the king of the north" will occupy an important part by-and-by, and Assyria will have special blessing in millennial days. (Dan. xi.; Is. xix. 25.)

Such is a brief glance at Nahum's prophecy, which we know had a literal fulfilment; so that even now Nineveh's ruins are a desolation. Anti-quarians are exploring it, and exhuming from this huge "grave" vast varieties of testimony to the accomplishment of the word of the prophets; its site is a place for flocks to "lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations; both the cormorant, and the bittern," &c. (Zeph. ii. 13-15.)

But does not this illustrate another coming judgment of a far more serious character? Has not the clear and loud prophetic warning concerning this long ago gone forth? Let us turn to the apostolic writings. In 2 Thessalonians i. we read, "The Lord himself shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction." What can be plainer, and yet how very solemn! Again, we are told, that "the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." (1 Thess. v. 2, 3.) Peter also speaks of the day of the Lord coming as a thief in the night, and John assures us that when the Lord does thus come out of heaven to judge the living, "every eye shall see him . . . and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." (2 Pet. iii. 10; Rev. i. 7.) Because God is "slow to anger," He has been giving this warning for upwards of eighteen hundred years; yet, as certainly as Nineveh did fall, and wicked Jerusalem, after much long-suffering, was destroyed by murderers, and burned with fire, so surely must the threatened judgments, which are still hanging over this doomed world, have their awful accomplishment, for God "will not at

all acquit the wicked." Truly men will know then that "His way is in the whirlwind and in the storm, and that the clouds are the dust of his feet. . . . The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his indignation? or, who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him." (Nahum i. 3-6.) What saith the reader to these awful predictions of prophets and apostles? Has it ever occurred to you, that every step the unconverted take is one step nearer to this appalling reality? Are you, dear reader, at peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ? and therefore able to contemplate this dreadful scene of men being punished with everlasting destruction, in the surest confidence that, ere this, Jesus will have come, and received you and other loved ones unto Himself, and taken you to the Father's house. If, dear reader, you are not converted, may you now turn to God, and receive remission of sins, through the cleansing value of the precious blood of Jesus.

But amidst these sounds of divine judgment from Him who "will take vengeance on his adversaries, and reserveth wrath for his enemies," a still, small voice is heard to comfort any who have ears to hear. To such the voice is profoundly precious and consoling. "The Lord is good, a

stronghold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that trust in him." (Ver. 7.)

1. "THE LORD IS GOOD." Though the righteous God loveth righteousness, and will not at all acquit the wicked, yet Jehovah is good; God is love. The cross of Christ blessedly manifested this. The love of God to sinners was there told out; for "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." Yes, it was for sinners Jesus died—He came into the world to save sinners. This is divine goodness to us when we were in our sins, enemies, and far from God. "For God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "Not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins." Wondrous love! And this is not all, for the free, unmerited love of God has brought us who believe into the same life, position, nearness, acceptance, and relationship as Christ Himself, at His own right hand, and given us the hope of being yet conformed to His image, and of reigning with Him in glory. "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them." Dear reader, dost thou believe God? Do these testimonies of holy scripture concerning the goodness of God so touch thine heart, as to cause thee to cry out with others, "We love him, because he *first* loved us"? Does the highest thought of goodness thou hast

ever conceived in the least degree compare with this goodness of God? Has it broken thine heart? for truly the goodness of God leadeth to repentance. Surely those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious long for ten thousand tongues to praise Him, and if they had a hundred lives, would like to give them all to Him and His precious service.

2. But He is also "A STRONGHOLD IN THE DAY OF TROUBLE." Yes, if the faithful then living had seen Nineveh falling into a heap of ruins, or the king's palace consumed by the flaming fire; if, at another time, believers had seen the justly-doomed city of Jerusalem under its predicted judgment, they would in either case find the presence of Jehovah their hiding-place and stronghold. And by-and-by, when men are crying out to the rocks to fall on them, and the hills to cover them, and hide them from the presence of Him who is coming to execute the vengeance due to this Christ-rejecting world, the church of God will be safe in glory, and truly rejoicing in the goodness of God, and the stronghold they know Him to be. Even now, to faith, "the name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." And so, on every occasion of sorrow, where is the child of God who does not know that the Lord is good and a stronghold in the day of trouble! What a stronghold we find when we are abiding in the consciousness that we are in Christ, and loved by the Father as He loves Jesus!

3. He knows who believe—"HE KNOWETH THEM THAT TRUST IN HIM." Yes, He knows, and that is all we wish. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." My faith may be the feeblest, but He knows that I look to Jesus, the object of faith, that I "come unto God by him." How consoling is this sweet truth! There is not a thought in our hearts, not a word on our tongue, but He knows it altogether. As Peter, when it was a question of love, could say, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee;" so the believer can say, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I look to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to Him alone, as my Saviour, my way to Thee, my life, righteousness, and all." Oh yes, "*He knoweth them that trust in him.*" These very words might have been an unspeakable comfort to the Annas and Simeons of a former time, and another remnant may by-and-by lift up their heads in times of infidelity and apostasy, and say, "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knoweth them that trust in Him."

H. H. S.



DAVID'S STANDARD—WHITER THAN SNOW.

PSALM LI.

No DOUBT this psalm is the cry of the awakened and repentant remnant of Israel. And the answer

to that cry may be read in Ezekiel xxxvi., almost word for word. But our object at present, in this paper, is to look at the grace of God to David. Here is a man, then—an adulterer, a cruel murderer, and deeply sensible of his terrible sins—a man to whom God gave this testimony, and said, “I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.” (Acts xiii. 22.)

The sceptic scoffs at this. The cross of Christ surely forbids the thought that sin is after God's own heart. His wrath against it has been fully revealed. When the wicked hands of men committed a still more fearful murder, there was one man to whom the heart of Jesus immediately responded ; that man was the dying but repentant thief ! The broken, contrite heart is ever welcome to God.

Yes, it was terrible, having sinned so sadly against Uriah, to see that man laid out on the steps of David's house, and delivered unto death. What a weight of guilt pressed upon the conscience of David—a murderer and an adulterer before the most holy God !—everything else forgotten at the moment. “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight ; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.” Thus crushed, we learn the righteousness of God—His just judgment of our sins—in providing an infinite Sacrifice. And mark,

there is not only the confession to God of these terrible sins, but also the full sense and owning of the deep corrupt nature which has done the sins. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

The reader may say, "But I have not been guilty of such terrible crimes as these." That may be; you may not have sinned against Uriah, and then, after he has laid his head on your steps to sleep, cruelly murdered him. But has there not been ONE on this earth, full of grace and truth, and though the Maker of all things, visible and invisible, yet He had not where to lay His head? What has the world, to which we all by nature belong, done to Him? Was there ever such cruel, deliberate wickedness as the crucifixion of the Son of God? The whole world was there represented. And how have *you* treated the Son of God? Has He been left out on the steps, or received to your heart? And have we not all had the same evil desires, the same lust, that led to these dreadful results? Is not our very nature in which we were conceived as utterly vile and corrupt as David's? See man brought before God, and in His sight all are guilty and under judgment. (Rom. iii.) Now David took this place before God, in the full confession of his sin and guilt. Yet what a contrast to Judas! There was not one thought in Judas after God's own heart. His was the repentance of dark, hopeless remorse—a forecast of endless woe.

And yet one of these—the repentance of David or of Judas—must be yours.

Two things meet in David, considering who he was—enormous guilt, and amazing faith. Sin, in its true nature, before God, and yet surpassing faith in God. Each verse would afford matter for a paper, but we desire to call especial attention to verse 7 : “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be”—what, almost as white as snow? No. As white as snow? No; faith rises higher still—“WHITER THAN SNOW.” Compare this with the faith of multitudes now, and their faith would be 100 below zero. One may be heard to say, Yes, I repent, and confess my sins; and I pray to be washed, but I am left so black, that I shall have to be purified in purgatory! Another will say, I am not certain whether I am washed from my sins, or not; and I must wait until the day of judgment to know. Can this be faith? Surely not.

Let us now turn to the words of David : “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.”

It may be very difficult to determine what plant or shrub hyssop may be. The efficacy of cleansing, or purging, does not seem to be so much in it, as in that with which it is connected; or, as we shall find, that which it was used to convey. We will turn to a few scriptures which will shew this. First, at the passover: “And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in *the blood*, that is, in the

basin, and strike the lintel and the two side-posts with *the blood* that is in the basin," &c. (Ex. xii. 22.) It is not, then, the hyssop, but "the blood shall be unto you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you," &c. The hyssop, then, was simply used in connection with the blood. They were to take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood of the lamb. They believed the word of the Lord about that blood. Is it not as though David had said, I am a born slave of sin—nothing can deliver me, nothing can shelter me but that bunch of hyssop dipped in blood? The blood of the paschal lamb must be shed. Israel must take shelter beneath that hyssop-sprinkled blood, before they can be brought out of the iron furnace of slavery. On the principle of law they must have been condemned with the Egyptians. They were sheltered from judgment by faith in the blood. Can the reader take that place? Can you say, I am a miserable slave of Satan and sin; nothing could shield me from divine wrath but the blood of the Lamb? Yes, the precious blood of Him to whom they gave vinegar, putting it on hyssop. "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." But we will now look at the second scripture—the cleansing of the leper. (Lev. xiv.)

In these words, then, "Purge me with hyssop," David seems to say, I am a moral leper, full of the vile, incurable leprosy of sin—not fit for the

society of men, only fit to lay my hand on my mouth, and cry, Unclean. What a picture is that loathsome disease of the wretchedness that David felt. Yes, David there stood before the Lord as a vile leper. But mark, the active course of sin was stopped. It was not that he felt deep remorse that his sin was found out. He may have felt that. But now he earnestly desires complete deliverance and cleansing.

Thus was the leper brought to the priest in the day of his cleansing. “Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds, alive and clean, and cedar-wood, and scarlet, and hyssop: and the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel, over running water. As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar-wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird *in the blood* of the bird that was killed over the running water.”

Now, here the hyssop is connected with two things for the cleansing of the poor wretched leper—death or blood, and life; a most striking type of the two things necessary for the cleansing of the heavy-burdened sinner—the death of the Lord Jesus, who was delivered for our offences, and His resurrection, who was raised again for our justification. Mark, it is again the blood that is applied. “And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times.” The

hyssop and the living bird are dipped into the blood of the dead bird. The very foundation of his cleansing, then, is the blood. Is it not so with the sinner? We shall see that by-and-by.

The repentant, burdened soul may say, All that is plain enough; but how am I to know that I am cleansed from my leprosy of sin in the sight of God, as He knows me? How was the leper to know that he was cleansed? What was the priest to do to give this assurance? He shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed, "and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field." There was no uncertainty; the live bird let loose gave assurance of the efficacy of the blood.

What, then, does God pronounce by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead? Read carefully the proclamation: "Be it known unto you, therefore . . . that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things." (Acts xiii. 38.) Is there not as great certainty in one case as in the other? That live bird has been dipped in the blood of the dead bird. The hyssop has been dipped in the blood. The blood has been sprinkled seven times (the perfect number) on the leper: the priest declares him clean, and lets fly the live bird. What greater certainty can he need?

Jesus has died, the propitiation for sins. You

believe this? Yes. God has raised Him from the dead. God proclaims forgiveness of sins to you through Jesus. God declares all who believe are forgiven, ARE justified from all things. The assurance is the testimony of God in raising Jesus from the dead. The living Christ is not now in death, but raised from the dead for our justification. Can we want a greater or more complete answer than this? Do you say, I believe God “who raised up Jesus our Lord from among the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification”? Then what follows with infallible certainty? “THEREFORE, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” How much, then, is there in that cry, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean”! Have I been the wretched slave of sin? Oh, the bunch of hyssop was dipped in the blood. Let me take shelter beneath that blood. Do I know and own myself a vile, loathsome, leprous sinner? Then let that hyssop be dipped in the blood, and sprinkled on me. Purge me with hyssop!

Do not these two scriptures, then, set before us in type the cleansing efficacy of the blood of Jesus? We will notice one more scripture in the Old Testament, and then go on to the testimony of the New Testament, to the blessed certainty that “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

C. S.

THE HOLY GHOST.

No. V.

WE are familiar with the truth, that every believer on the Son of God has eternal life. It is a totally new life. By the actings of the word and Spirit on his heart and conscience, he has looked to the Son of man who was lifted up—the only-begotten Son whom God gave—and he has eternal life. He has life in the Spirit. It is not an improvement of the old nature, but a new nature; for “that which is born of the flesh, is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit;” but, because the believer is born of God, and therefore God’s child, the Holy Spirit is sent into his heart to abide with him for ever. Thus the believer is born of the Spirit first, and then indwelt by the Spirit; and it is important to distinguish between these two actings of the Holy Spirit.

It is because the child of God has the Spirit that he is enjoined to “walk in the Spirit,” for then he will “not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.” (John iii. 5–16; Gal. iv. 6, v. 16.) We have, then, another power in us and for us, which is entirely opposed to the flesh, and, walking in this power, fleshly lusts will not come out; but this scripture clearly shews that, though the believer is born again, he still has the flesh in him, and in its very nature it is opposed as much as ever to God.

Hence we read, “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye should not do the things which ye desire.” We have, then, as we have said, a new nature and a new power—the Holy Spirit—to walk in that path which is pleasing to God; when this is the case the Lord will occupy our hearts, we shall be seeking to act for His glory, we shall think of His interests, and the written word will instruct us. It is a path which is entirely beyond the wisdom of the natural man, because prompted and marked out by the Spirit of God. If one speaks of being “in the Spirit on the Lord’s day,” we understand that his thoughts and affections were flowing on in the current of the Spirit; and when we are enjoined to “walk in the Spirit,” it calls upon us to hearken to the word of God, and obey it in all things, and at all costs. In this holy atmosphere fleshly lusts cannot intrude.

The child of God, then, is to give himself up to the leading of Another. It is characteristic of him that he does so; for “as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” (Rom. viii. 14.) A blind man is glad of some one who can see to take him by the hand, and lead him; for he is afraid to take a step, unless he is conscious that a competent person is guiding him. Another person, sensible of his thorough ignorance, looks out for some one to teach him, like the

eunuch, to whom Philip said, “Understandest thou what thou readest?” He replied, “How can I, unless some one should guide me”? And so a Christian, who is sensible of his own helplessness and ignorance, looks for some One to lead and teach him, and for these things, among many others, the Holy Ghost has been given unto him. And one thing we may be sure of is, that He ministers Christ to our souls, and never leads us into a path of legality or fleshly confidence; for “if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under law.” (Gal. v. 18.) It is both interesting and profitable to notice that it was to the Galatian believers, who had slipped away from the doctrines of grace, that an apostle was inspired to write so much about the actings of the Holy Ghost.

Here it may be well for the christian reader to pause, and ask the question, What do I know in my own soul about these things? Being conscious of the gift of the Holy Ghost, by whom the love of God has been shed abroad in my heart, do I know what it is to yield myself up to His leading and teaching, and to walk in that path which is according to His mind? We do well to see how much we have accepted of these marvellous teachings of scripture about the operations of the Spirit of God, and how far we have learned, by personal exercise in God’s presence, their reality and power.

Few things can be more opposed to each other

than “the fruit of the Spirit” and “the works of the flesh.” The former are like the excellencies of Christ—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance. A precious cluster of fruit. All were found perfect, and each in its season, in the Lord Jesus. Some of the works of the flesh are loathsome, others quiet in their activities, and even esteemed by some, such as emulations, and revellings, and such like. Others have a religious, or superstitious character, such as idolatry and witchcraft. Still, they are all so evil in God’s sight, that “they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Gal. v. 19–23.)

“The comfort of the Holy Ghost” is most precious. The troubled and cast-down child of God has often known it in a very especial manner. The consciousness we have in passing through a scene where Jesus had “not where to lay his head,” and was hated without a cause—a scene which yields nothing for our souls, and where everything is against us—of One pointing us to the glorified Son of man, bringing His sweet words, finished work, triumphant resurrection, and session at the right hand of God, to our souls, is very precious. To find, too, the same Spirit bringing home to our hearts, as we need, the various offices in which He is constantly occupied for us in heaven, as Shepherd, Overseer, Priest, Advocate, and Washer of our feet, is comforting in-

deed. And more than these things, He takes of the things of the Father and the Son, their intercourse about us, the Father giving us to the Son, and the Son so owning us as His as to lay down His life for us, and so keeping us, that we can never perish, and such like truths, are precious indeed.

“The communion of the Holy Ghost” is also most blessed, for not only does He give us to know our relationship with the Father and the Son, (wonderful to think of!) but He enables us to enjoy this precious fellowship.

We are more familiar with “the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,” and with “the love of God,” than with the precious reality of “the communion of the Holy Ghost.” Why is this? Because we try to satisfy ourselves with as low a standard of Christianity as we can, provided evil do not break out in some open dishonour to the Lord. “The communion of the Holy Ghost” is a secret known only to the heart that enjoys it. Its effects, no doubt, are seen by others, but the sweet privilege itself is better tasted than described. “Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ,” saints of old were wont to say. They knew no other standard of Christianity than having thoughts, delights, and rest in common with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. Marvellous blessedness! But how could the Holy Ghost who dwelleth in us give us a lower standard,

or minister anything less in quality to those who are children of God? Impossible. In this way, we can, by the truth and Spirit, enter into the Father's counsels, ways, delight, and rest in His well-beloved Son, and in the Father's love and care of all His saints. We can also enter into the Son's love to the Father, and His love and care for every member of His body, and into the various offices which He sustains on our behalf. Surely we could not have anything higher, and the heart may well ask, Will there ever be anything beyond this? Here, compassed with infirmity, our measure may be very small, but it is the same communion of the Holy Ghost which we shall throughout eternity enjoy. In our next we hope to consider what scripture teaches concerning the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the church.

H. H. S.

THE CORN OF WHEAT.

THE "living corn of wheat" must die :—
God's Christ in sinner's grave must lie—
Ere from the dust can spring again
The glorious head of living grain :
The church in union with the Head,
The risen First-fruits from the dead.

Stands full in view that ghastly hour
Of Satan's rage and darkness' power —
Hour of the scourge, the cross, the scorn ;
Hour of God's wrath, for sinners borne ;
Hour such as never yet was known,
Save by the Son of God alone.

Its darkling gloom His eye surveys
 With sweeping, penetrating gaze ;
 Takes in, with comprehensive power,
 The awful import of that hour,
 When sin's atonement must be made,
 And sinner's ransom fully paid.

Troubled His soul—as well it may,
 At prospect of so dread a day ;
 He counts the cost—Ah ! none but He
 Could reckon what the cost must be :—
 His blood pour'd out, His life laid down,
 God's curse endured, God's wrath, God's frown.

“ What shall I say ? ” His soul demands,
 “ Shall I lift up to heav'n my hands ?
 Shall I before the tempest cower ?
 Say, ‘ Father, save me from this hour ’ ?
 Far be the thought,—for this I came,
 Nay, ‘ Father, glorify Thy name.’ ”

“ Thine outraged honour’s righteous due,
 Sin’s insult, and its foulness, too ;
 And man’s rebellion ’gainst Thy throne,
 Demand a victim to atone ;
 Else must the guilty rebels die—
 That willing Victim, here am I.”

“ The willing Victim, lo ! I come
 To do Thy will, to bear sin’s doom ;
 And, worst of agonies, to be
 Forsaken, oh ! my God, by Thee,
 But welcome anguish, cross, and shame,
 So ‘ Father glorify Thy name ! ’ ”

CORRESPONDENCE.

48. "C." Birmingham. To ask in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is certainly to present His name to the Father as the only ground of being answered, and of being answered, too, according to His estimate of that infinite and all-prevailing name. It surely is the ground of true confidence in prayer and supplication; and when we consider it, it is no marvel that the Son should have said, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (John xiv. 13.) It is, however, to be observed, that it was after Jesus had taken His farewell of Jerusalem, and thus Jewish things were virtually over, that the Lord, (who had before taught them a prayer) on His now going to the Father as the Accomplisher of redemption, and to send down the Holy Ghost, should have given an entirely new order of things as to prayer. He said, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing *in my name.*" There was not a sound of it in the so-called Lord's prayer. The Lord, therefore, went on to say, "ask," that is, in my name, "and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." (John xvi. 34.) No doubt those who plead His precious name will know the Lord Himself as dear to their hearts, and will have it on their consciences not to deny His name. Hence they will avoid such things as they cannot truly associate with the name of the Lord Jesus, and delight in those things which will be for His glory. We are therefore told, "Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." (Col. iii. 17.)

The name of the Lord Jesus Christ is that to

which the Holy Ghost now gathers together believers. But those so gathered know Him in the place of authority as Lord, the glorified Man. Such, therefore, have a heavenly Christ before their souls, and know Him "in the midst." They know Him as the One in whom we have redemption through His blood, the Head of His body [one body] the church, the Giver of the Holy Ghost, the source of all blessing, who also judges the assemblies, and is soon coming to take us to Himself. He therefore looks for that which is suitable to Himself, who is "the holy and the true." The highest privilege on earth, no doubt, is to be really gathered together in His name; but He looks for holiness, righteousness, and truth, as well as love.

49. "S.," Launceston. When the Lord is spoken of as being "three days and three nights in the heart of the earth," it was so according to the Jewish mode of calculation, which was to reckon a part of the twenty-four hours as a day and a night. They also looked at the day as composed of the evening and morning, as in Genesis i. It is remarkable that the only place the statement occurs is in Matthew's Gospel, which all Bible students know to be eminently Jewish in its character.

50. "N.," Haverstock Park. Your little paper is very sweet, but, we judge, not written with sufficient care for publication. We rejoice to hear that you are longing and waiting for the coming of our Lord; our earnest prayer is that this "blessed hope" may spread deeper and wider in all directions. As you say, it will be indeed "in a little while."

51. "H.," Jersey. The case you speak of

seems to us to call for personal exercise before God over His word. The heart and conscience must know what it is to be in His presence, and to act out His will. Scripture does not always lay down hard and fast rules, like acts of parliament, but teaches us our new standing and relationships, and enjoins us to walk accordingly.

52. "P.," Cinderford. It would far exceed the limits of this magazine, if we were to give, as you say, a "full explanation" of the texts you refer to. We can scarcely grasp the particular points you wish taken up, but if you will kindly let us know what the attack on the truth of holy scripture is, we will do our best to reply.

We take this opportunity of saying, that, like others, you wrote to us at the end of June, and wished for a reply in our July issue. Permit us to say, that, before your letter was ever written by you, not only was the July number printed, but the August number was in the printer's hands. We regret that there is any delay in replying to our correspondents, but we generally reply as early as convenient time and space in our little serial will permit.

53. "J. C.," Bromley. The Holy Ghost is ever dwelling now in the believer, but scripture does not speak of Him as "Thine own Holy Ghost," but the Holy Ghost. It is always safe to keep close to scripture.

54. Jedburgh. The question of dress has an important place in scripture. We are told that outward adorning, costly array, and ornaments of gold or pearls, are unbecoming christian woman; but the ornament of "a meek and quiet spirit" is said to be "in the sight of God of great price." In these matters, as well as every other step of our

path, all need to be exercised before the Lord, and to have our hearts set on doing His will.

55. "L.," Shepton Mallet. We see no difficulty in accepting the truth of the assembly at Corinth, like the assembly generally on earth, being the temple of the Holy Ghost because there was evil there. Not only are we plainly told so in so many words, but instead of the Holy Spirit's tolerating the evil, He resented it in the most solemn and uncompromising way! No doubt there was much ignorance among the Corinthian saints, and this He graciously met by instructing them, as, for example, concerning the resurrection of the body. He rebuked them too, as for instance, "Awake to righteousness and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame." (1 Cor. xv. 34.) He asserted His claims for practical holiness in many ways, and threatened that "if any defile the temple of God, [the assembly] him will God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (1 Cor. iii. 17.) The presence then of the Holy Ghost exposed the many forms of evil which were there; and afterwards when they hearkened unto what the Spirit said, and cleared themselves, they were commended for it and were comforted.

As a matter of fact, the Holy Spirit dwells in every child of God; and who does not know what it is to have the evil working within laid bare to his view? and what it is to be rebuked, so as to produce in the soul's experience self-judgment, confession, and restoration to peaceful intercourse and communion with the Father?



THE GLAD TIDINGS AT ANTIOCH.

ACTS XIII.

THIS is a most instructive chapter in many ways. How distinctly the Holy Ghost is seen acting in the assembly! “The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.” Here, then, we have the two first missionaries sent out by God the Holy Ghost, and commended to their work by the prayers of their brethren.

In their travels they came to Antioch, in Pisidia. It is deeply interesting thus to be able to go back to the beginning of Christianity; but how difficult to disabuse our minds of the accumulated errors of eighteen centuries! As far as possible, let us so go into the synagogue with them, and hear, as the Jews, and then afterwards the Gentiles, the glad tidings, as they preached it in the synagogue at Antioch. After the usual reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue invite them to address the people. (Ver. 15.) Now one of these missionaries—Paul—stands up. He speaks first on that with which they were familiar—God’s dealings with their fathers, their redemption from Egypt, and history unto David. He then announces the startling fact, that, according to the promise to David, God had raised up to Israel a SAVIOUR—JESUS. He reminds them that

John had been witness to this Saviour; but the rulers in Jerusalem had slain, and fulfilled all that was written of Him. Yes, every type of the sacrifices for sins, every prophecy, how He should be wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. Yes, deeper still; forsaken of God, as foretold in the Psalms. Every jot and tittle written of Him had been fulfilled; and they had taken Him down from the tree, and laid Him in the sepulchre. But was He still there? Was there no assured proof that God was glorified by His death on the cross? Was He still a sacrifice; that is, forsaken of God? Far from this, the preacher—Paul—declared that “God had raised him from the dead.” Nothing could be more certain, for He had been seen many days by those who are His witnesses unto the people. The preacher then announces glad tidings to all present. The promise made to the fathers God hath fulfilled; David, having served his generation by the will of God, had fallen asleep, and seen corruption. But God had shewn His acceptance of Christ by raising Him from the dead, and He saw no corruption. A living SAVIOUR—JESUS—is at the right hand of God, raised again from the dead. What a proof that His work is finished!

Now listen to the message of God proclaimed through the risen Christ: “Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, 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.” What an astounding message was this to men under the bondage of the law which was the ministration of death ! It was all of God. God had sent His Son, God had raised Him from the dead ; God proclaimed forgiveness of sins ; God declared that all who believed were justified from all things. It was the very opposite of the law, and yet the fulfilment of it. It was opposite in this way : the law demanded what they had no power in the flesh to do or give. This wondrous message made known what God had done for them. Such grace—free favour to men—had never been preached in Antioch before. What a message to a sin-burdened soul ! Through JESUS, the SAVIOUR, forgiveness of sins.

Generations of legalism since then have sadly clouded this wondrous glad tidings of grace. It was preached to all alike ; and God declares to all, that all who believe ARE justified from all things. No doubt such in the synagogue as were seeking to work out a righteousness of their own by works of law, would be greatly shocked at these strange preachers. We read of them afterwards contradicting and blaspheming. What should we have thought, if we had heard them say, “It will be great presumption to believe God, and thus know that your sins are forgiven. We doubt, indeed we do not believe what God says ; and it will be great

humility if you doubt with us what God says : no one in this world can know that his sins are forgiven, he must serve God diligently first, and then hope at last, either on his dying bed, or at the day of judgment, to be forgiven" ?

Certainly it was a marvellous thing for two strangers, sent by the Holy Ghost, to come into the city, and announce the forgiveness of sins, and justification of all who believed the message. But now, what could be so worthy of Christ, who had brought in eternal redemption for all who believe? What so glorious for God, in perfect righteousness, to be just, through that redemption, in proclaiming a free forgiveness to guilty men? And what so suited to guilty sinners? They were all guilty. Nothing but pure grace could meet them. Law still left them guilty. In their sins they never could be fit for the presence of the most holy, holy God. The sacrifices of the law could never take away their sins. Here was the very SAVIOUR—JESUS—received back from the dead, and through Him was preached the glad tidings they most needed—the forgiveness of sins; and that most blessed assurance from God, that all who believed were justified from all things. Well might the poor Gentile idolaters earnestly desire these wondrous words to be preached to them. The more we study this discourse, the more gloriously free grace shines out. All is absolutely of God. All that man had done was to crucify the Lord, not

knowing who He was. No sacraments proposed, or works of any kind. No conditions whatever, but the guilty conscience is met, first with a free pardon, and the certainty of justification, and therefore perfect peace with God, through Jesus Christ, as is more fully shewn in Romans v. 1.

And "when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to **CONTINUE IN THE GRACE OF GOD.**" Thus the true gospel brings the believer into a new position and relationship with God. They had passed from law to grace, from darkness to light. God was for them, in infinite grace; He had forgiven their sins. They were accounted righteous before Him. They were introduced into the full, free, everlasting favour of God. They knew God had now no charge to make against them, and, on the authority of His own word, they were justified. And they are exhorted to continue in this free grace. Men cannot see this, will not believe it. No, they must serve God first, and to the end, and then hope to be saved. Now the first thing, according to God, is a purged conscience, and this, as cause and effect, leads to acceptable service. "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." (Heb. ix. 14.) Do not forget this, that all works are dead in God's

sight that do not flow from a purged conscience by the blood of Jesus.

After such an announcement of free forgiveness through the Saviour, Jesus, would not Jewish works of law be simply rejecting this free grace of God? Yea, they were solemnly warned on this very point. "Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken in the prophets: Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no-wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." These religious Jews and proselytes were in great danger; yea, many of them did so despise and reject the grace of God. They stumbled at this stumbling-stone, the free grace of God—forgiveness of sins through the SAVIOUR—JESUS.

But what about the poor Gentiles, the degraded worshippers of demons? The same glorious message was preached to them. "For so hath the Lord commanded them, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." This filled the Gentiles with gladness, "and they glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." "And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost."

Here, then, we have the gospel preached; free, immediate forgiveness of sins, through the Saviour, Jesus—all that believe declared justified from all

things, and preached to a whole city, certainly to those who had no claim on God by works. Jews and Gentiles, all alike guilty before God, justified now freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. And what was the effect of this true gospel of God? A gloomy uncertainty? No, they were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost. Is the same gospel preached now? Are the same effects produced? We shall all do well to ponder this question. The reader may say, Yes, that is all well, but do not you read, "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed"? How am I to know that I am ordained to eternal life? Why, just as they did, just as Paul knew. Believing God was the proof of it. Forgiveness of sins is preached to you just as you are, guilty, and under judgment. You may have learnt in the Old Testament that no sins were forgiven, except through or by the death of a substitute. Through Jesus, crucified and risen, is preached forgiveness to you. It is the most welcome news possible to you—gladly you believe God. He declares you ARE justified, accounted righteous from all things; your sins and iniquities He will remember no more. You have perfect peace with God—not a sin, not a charge, remains. This fills you with calm and heavenly joy. You are in a new creation—nay, you are a new creation, born wholly anew, a child of God, filled with the Holy Ghost. You have the witness in yourself that you were ordained

unto eternal life, and therefore you believed, just as the disciples did at Antioch.

Have you no joy? Is all still gloom and doubt? Are you still harassed with the thought that your dreadful sins will all be brought up against you at the day of judgment? Then it is most certain you have not believed the free forgiveness preached to you through the Saviour, Jesus. And if you die thus, rejecting God's free forgiveness, no doubt every sin you have committed will be brought against you from the books before the white throne, and then there is no escape from the lake of fire. Oh, beware lest any man deceive you! We have seen and heard the gospel as preached by the men sent by God the Holy Ghost, and you may depend on this, that if any man preach any other, he is not sent of God, but may be a minister of Satan to deceive you (2 Cor. xi. 13-15): your eternal salvation is at stake. God has been glorified by the death of Christ. God hath raised Him from the dead. God proclaims to you forgiveness of sins. All that believe Him are justified from all things. God says it, why should you doubt?

C. S.

The only thing which produces truthfulness of heart—truth in the inward parts—is knowing the love that gives us confidence in God.

DAVID'S STANDARD—WHITER THAN SNOW.

No. II.

PSALM LI.

WE have seen how very full of meaning was this cry of the sin-oppressed heart, "Purge me with hyssop." When Israel was delivered from slavery and bitter bondage, the bunch of hyssop was dipped in the blood of the lamb: and the blood was sprinkled on the lintel and door posts. That blood alone sheltered them from judgment. When the poor loathsome leper had to be cleansed from leprosy, it was again by the hyssop and the living bird being dipped in the blood of the killed bird, and that blood sprinkled on the leper. All this speaks, in no uncertain sound, that if the sinner is to be purged from sins it must be by the blood of Jesus.

Again we read, "And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification of sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel; and a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that toucheth a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave," &c. (Num. xix. 17.) Here again hyssop is in connection with death—the ashes of the heifer slain and burnt for purification for sin. David, therefore,

in the deep sense of the loathsome defilement of sin says, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." Surely faith must have looked beyond the shadows which could not take away sins, to the blessed truth so distinctly revealed to us—Christ by His own blood having entered in once into the holy place, HAVING OBTAINED ETERNAL REDEMPTION for us. "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 consciences from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. ix. 13.)

Now when we look at David, at the fearful enormity of his sin, and that the lessons of his faith were the types and shadows, his words and the faith they expressed were marvellous. He not only says "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean," but he goes still further: "wash me and I shall be *whiter* than snow." Yes he says, as it were, I shall (black, and vile, as I am) be purer, whiter than the whitest created thing. Now what but the eternal efficacy of the blood of Jesus can accomplish this? "How much more shall the blood of Christ?" May we not say how little have we understood these great thoughts of faith? The law set forth this one great truth. "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission." It is

evident his faith was connected with this one truth, as we have seen the hyssop was used in connection with death, and the blood. Now looking forward, as Isaiah in another day, had he said (terrible as were his sins) I am too vile to be washed, or I am too great a sinner to be washed quite clean, would these thoughts have been after God's own heart? Far from it. No, faith must rise to the exact thought of God.

There is one important difference between us and David. He looked forward—"purge me," the work of purgation was not yet done. Have you been brought as he was to God in the real confession of your sins, and sin? Do you believe what God has said about the one sacrifice of Christ for sins? Let us really bottom this all important question. Just see if you can follow us in a few scriptures. These will test your state better than any questions we can put. Take this: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." (Rev. i. 5.) We do not for a moment doubt, if you have despised that blood, that you are yet in your sins and guilt before God. No person is a Christian that does not take shelter and rest in the blood of Jesus. And these words test every man whether he is a Christian or not. It is not our love to Him, but "unto him that loveth us." And it is not as with David, wash us, or "wash me." It is done: "washed us from our sins in his own blood." If David looked

forward, we look back: but now apply the standard —the height of his faith. Are we washed really as white as snow in his blood? Would that be after God's own heart, or after His word? Far from it. Can you say, I am washed as white as snow? Well, that is wonderful. But higher still: "whiter than snow," this is David's standard. Look at him as black as hell. Now look, white as heaven's light. And, now eternal redemption is accomplished, shall we have a lower standard? If you are washed in the blood of the Lamb you are not almost as white, or as white, but whiter than snow.

This standard is what marks a person in the light. "But 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." Are we in the light as He is in the light? that is the question. Mark, this is not a matter of attainment of some, but the common fellowship of all Christians in the light. And what is the standard? "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." The next verse shews it is not that sin is eradicated or that we have no sin; but the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin in the sight of God—He sees us whiter than snow, and imputeth no sin.

Now if in the dark all will be uncertainty as to sins. "Then if that be the case," we hear some reader say, "I must be in the dark—utterly overwhelmed with the constant remembrance of my

sins. Heavier and heavier do they become. So dreadful to have sinned so sadly, and so often, against the God of all love. Sometimes I feel a little hopeful, but it is only like a dim mist, scarce twilight—oh! how am I to know that God has forgiven me? How am I to know that I am whiter than snow? I look at myself and I am no better, do what I will. Happy would it be for me if I could get to know that I was whiter than snow." Such is the condition, in substance, of many souls we meet with who are still in the dark.

Now to such we would say, what would you think of a child who was constantly saying, How am I to know that what my parents tell me is true? Surely they would be most untruthful parents to merit such constant doubt. Is God untruthful? Does He merit our doubt? or can you say, His word is so little to be depended on, how am I to know He speaks truth to me? Surely it is a solemn thing to doubt God. Here in a few words are the facts of the case. You are guilty and heavy laden with sin, and as such under the just judgment of God. You could only be reconciled to God by the death of another bearing the just judgment of God against sin. Jesus, the Son of God, has thus died. God has declared His eternal satisfaction and glory by that sacrifice by raising Jesus from the dead for our justification. God proclaims to you through that death the free forgiveness of sins, made certain by that resurrection, to all who

believe. God declares that all who believe are justified from all things. (Read Acts xiii. 38, 39.) Now do you say, how am I to know that God speaks the truth to me here? Oh, can you say such a thing after He spared not His beloved Son? But you say, if I do believe God, what then? What then? Why, what God says, "you are justified from all things." What then? Do you believe God? Why then you can say, "unto him that loveth us, and hath washed us from our sins in his own blood." Let us weigh that "washed." We are personally forgiven when we believe, repent, and confess our sins: but, let us remember, the work was done before Jesus sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. "WHEN he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. i. 3.) On this ground all that believe ARE justified from all things. They are accounted righteous before God. Not some unknown persons, but all who believe. Is not this true then of you who read these lines and believe God? Yes, to you Jesus speaks. He says, "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.) One thing is clear, Jesus speaks to you. Now what He does say is true of you, if you hear His word, and believe God that sent Him. Does He not say that you have eternal life; that you shall not

come into condemnation [or judgment], but that YOU are passed from death unto life? Do you say, how am I to know that Jesus speaks truth to me? How simple this is! But you say, "I don't see that I am any better. If I did, I think I could then be happy." Don't you see, that is all "I"? Did Israel say, if we could only see ourselves better than those Egyptians, we could then trust God would pass over our houses? No, they believed God's word about that blood on the lintels.

Did the poor leper look at himself, or look at the live bird let loose, after he was sprinkled with blood? He looked at the blood, and believed the assurance given to him in the live bird let loose. When David was overwhelmed with his terrible sins, did he say, if I were only a better man then I might perhaps be washed nearly as white as snow? He had not one ray of hope in himself. There was not only what he had done, but what he was, "shapen in iniquity." He looked at the hyssop dipped in the blood, and he said, "wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

"It is finished." Oh wondrous eternal salvation! Not almost as white; not as white; whiter than snow. Whiter than snow! Yes, thus hath He loved us, and washed us from our sins. Whiter than snow. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

C. S.

THE HOLY GHOST.
No. VI.

THE DWELLING OF THE HOLY GHOST IN THE CHURCH.

WHATEVER intercourse God was pleased to hold with Abraham and others, we never read of God *dwelling among* people till they had been under the shelter and blessing of the blood of the lamb. When the people of Israel had been *redeemed* out of Egypt, and the tabernacle was set up, with its altar and priesthood, then Jehovah said, “I will *dwell among* the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may *dwell among them*.” (Ex. xxix. 44–46.) Thus God took His place *among* His redeemed people.

Again we read, that when Solomon had built the temple, “the cloud filled the house of Jehovah; so that the priests could not stand to minister, because of the cloud, for the glory of Jehovah had filled the house of Jehovah. Then spake Solomon . . . I have surely built thee a house *to dwell in*, a settled place for thee to abide for ever.” (1 Kings viii. 10–13.)

In the days of our Lord, He Himself was the *temple*. He said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up . . . He spake of the temple of his body.” (John ii. 19, 21.) The Holy

Ghost had come down in bodily shape as a dove, and abode upon Him, so that Jesus was then *the temple of God*.

But when Jesus was raised from the dead, He taught His disciples to wait for the coming of the Holy Ghost, by whom they would be baptised and receive power. Therefore, on the day of Pentecost the Holy Ghost came down, as a rushing mighty wind, and filled the house where they were sitting, and filled all the waiting believers. Then the believers were, and still are, God's dwelling place—His *habitation*. The appearance of cloven tongues like as of fire sitting upon each of them, plainly shewed that the ministry of the word, with power, would be the special character of their testimony.

Two things, we find, then took place. The body was formed by all the believers being united to Christ and to one another, and thus became “members of his body,” and “members one of another;” there was also then a vessel on earth set in responsibility to the Lord. Both the church, or assembly, looked at as *the body of Christ*, and the assembly looked at as in the place of corporate responsibility to the Lord—*the house*, were identical at first; but it soon became otherwise.

“The body” then is formed by the Holy Ghost, and composed only of true believers: “By one Spirit are we all baptised into one body.” It is the assembly in its true sense, that which Christ builds. We do not read in scripture of the Holy

Ghost dwelling in the body, but dwelling in each individual child of God that forms the body, and energising every activity of it, as well as dwelling in the church on earth.

But when sin came into the assembly, did the Holy Ghost leave it? Certainly not; instead of leaving it, He gave power to judge the evil and put it away. (Acts v.) And when men brought in, as at Corinth, the greatest disorder, false people, and flagrant sins, both moral and doctrinal, did the Holy Ghost leave the assembly on earth? Certainly not. For in 1 Corinthians iii. the Apostle says to these very people, when looking at the assembly on earth in the place of responsibility, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" And then he solemnly adds, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." (Vers. 16, 17.) It is obvious that this responsible assembly on earth is a widely different aspect from "the assembly which is his body, the fulness of him which filleth all in all." (Eph. i. 23.)

We find then in scripture two aspects of the church: one as God's workmanship *living members of Christ's body*, always perfect before God, which no power of evil can sever or destroy; the other, the assembly in man's hands, into which he has brought wood, hay, and stubble, and much that defiles. This is evidently *the house*, which is already being judged, for "judgment must first begin at

the house of God ;” it is Christ’s witness on earth, which has proved so unfaithful that He will spue it out of His mouth. There is an important and wide difference between “the body” and “the house”—“the habitation of God through the Spirit.”

It is interesting to notice that while Peter speaks of “the house of God ” as where judgment begins, he also speaks of the house in a good sense, as composed of living stones and built up “a spiritual house,” a holy priesthood and a royal priesthood. Paul also, who is the only inspired writer on “the body,” not only speaks of the temple in a bad sense, and capable of being defiled as we have seen, but he also uses the figure of a temple for the assembly in a good sense, as growing into an holy temple in the Lord. (1 Pet. iv. 17; ii. 5; 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; Eph. ii. 21.) In this paper, however, we shall confine our remarks on the house as profession, or the assembly on earth in the aspect of what it is in man’s hands ; and “the body” as God’s workmanship.

The house, as we have seen, good at first and identical with *the body*, is the habitation of God through the Spirit. It is not correct then to say that the Spirit is only with us when gathered together in the Lord’s name, for He is always dwelling in the whole church ; but it is quite true that the Lord, who loved us and gave Himself for us, is specially present when so gathered in His name. Neither is it scriptural to say that when thus ga-

thered we wait on the Spirit ; but it would be truer to say that we wait on the Lord who acts among us and in us by the Spirit. Of this we have examples in scripture. In the epistles to the seven churches in the Revelation, the Lord is the speaker, and the One who gave John authority to write to the different assemblies, and yet they were all enjoined to hearken to what the Spirit was saying to every one of the assemblies. Seven times it is said, " He that hath an ear, let him hear what *the Spirit saith* unto the churches," or assemblies. Again, in the thirteenth chapter of the Acts, we find saints who were before the Lord, looking to Him, for we are told that they " ministered to the Lord and fasted," and then and there "*the Holy Ghost said,* Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." May we not then, if waiting on the Lord, expect the guidance of the Holy Ghost ?

Scripture speaks of each believer in the Lord Jesus Christ having the Holy Ghost, and a member of the body of Christ ; but when we consider the indwelling of the Holy Ghost collectively, we have a sphere wider now than the "one body," for a state is contemplated where there are bad materials as well as good, such as wood, hay, and stubble, as well as gold, silver, and precious stones. It is that too which man is capable of defiling, and which is going to be judged—the house. We find these two aspects of the church constantly

recognised in the epistles. 1. What it is in the Lord's hands, what He has formed for His glory, called "the church," or assembly, "which is His body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. i. 22.) Here there is no failure, and can be no separation, it is always intact before God, and by faith to us also. 2. What the church is in man's hands as God's labourers and workmen who have brought in bad materials, and much that is for the Lord's dishonour. This is what we understand by the house. Those who have been baptised by the Holy Ghost and thus united to Christ are in the "one body;" but those who are merely professors belong to the house. We are all in "the house," and are called, at the discovery of being associated with vessels to dishonour, not to leave the house (how can we till Christ comes?) but to purge ourselves from such vessels by separating from them.

It has been sometimes said, Can it be possible that the Holy Spirit dwells where there is evil? It is not an unreasonable question, and one which is easily answered. Going back to the time of God's dwelling among the people of Israel, did He leave them when evil came in? He might rebuke it, as He surely did, and execute discipline; but notwithstanding all this unbelief, their lustings, murmurings, and rebellions, the pillar of fire by night and the cloud by day remained "with them throughout all the journey." We read, "*Thou in thy manifold mercies forsook'st*

them not in the wilderness : the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way ; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go. Thou gavest also Thy good Spirit to instruct them, and withholdest not Thy name from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst. Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness.” (Ex. xl. 38; Neh. ix. 19–21.) Even after ten tribes had been given into their enemies’ hands, and a handful of the two tribes who had been in captivity returned in Ezra’s time, the word of the prophet Haggai to them was, “I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts. According to the word that I covenanted with you, when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you ; fear ye not.”

Again. Look at an individual believer ; does the Spirit leave him who has, like the Galatians, got away from the ground of divine grace, and who is practically manifesting the works of the flesh ? On the contrary, did not Paul appeal to their consciences by this very truth, saying, “Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith ?” That the Spirit may be so grieved and quenched, that there may be little consciousness of His indwelling and power, no one doubts ; but the clear teaching of scripture is that each believer is sealed with the holy Spirit of promise until he is brought home to glory. (See Eph. i. 14 ; iv. 30.) Even when a believer sins, does the Holy Ghost

leave him? Though we are enjoined not to sin, yet where is there an idea in scripture that the Holy Ghost leaves the believer because he sins? Are we not told that "If any man [child of God] sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"? And in connection with His gracious Advocacy, does not the Holy Spirit in the believer lead him to self-judgment, and confession of his sins? No doubt the Spirit of God is "holy," and cannot look on evil with any allowance, yet, as born of the Spirit, and cleansed and perfected for ever by the one offering of the body of Christ, the child of God must ever be an object of His gracious ministry and care.

And if so with the individual believer, why should we expect Him to leave God's church on earth because of its evil associations and dishonour to the Lord? On the contrary, does He not rebuke the evil, enable the faithful soul to discern it, and to purge himself from vessels to dishonour by separating from them? All through the dark ages, His power was seen every now and then put forth. His habitation on earth is His habitation still. That the Holy Ghost remains among us is a most cheering and encouraging truth. Having been given consequent upon the accomplished work and glorification of Jesus, He abides, and will do so until the members of the body are taken to glory at the coming of the Lord. Then that which remains behind will be judicially dealt with. H. H. S.

“GOD'S SATISFIED, SO AM I.”

“A GUILTY rebel lone and sad,
 I trod destruction's road :
 Earth's follies fail'd to make me glad ;
 I groan'd beneath sin's load.
 Salvation I'd neglected,
 And mercy's call rejected,
 But now I stood detected,
 Before a holy God.

“I long'd for comfort, pray'd for peace,
 But long'd and pray'd in vain ;
 My struggles brought me no release,
 No rest could I obtain.
 My sin was all detected,
 Salvation still neglected,
 And mercy's call rejected ;
 How deep the crimson stain.

“At last I turn'd to Calvary's tree,
 And saw the Crucified ;
 Was it for guilty ones like me
 That blessed Saviour died ?
 My sin seem'd more detected,
 Christ's love I had suspected,
 His finish'd work rejected,
 His precious name denied.

“My title's undenial,
 'Tis Jesus and His blood :
His word must be reliable,
 For He's the Son of God.
 And though my sin's detected,
 My Substitute's accepted,
 And now my soul's protected
 From judgment's righteous rod.

“And now upon the throne on high
 He sits, my risen Lord ;
 God's satisfied, and so am I,
 Who rest upon His word.
 Redemption's toil's completed,
 The pow'rs of hell defeated,
 My life's in glory seated,
 Jesus, the Christ, our Lord.”

CORRESPONDENCE.

56. "S. J. G.," South Shields. It is a sure sign of spiritual decline when believers fail or cease to have interest in gospel preaching. Oh, how sad to remain away, or murmur and complain, instead of coming, and helping with earnest prayer and expecting faith ! It is a poor excuse to say they ought to be building themselves up, &c. Are Christians to be so selfish that they cannot spare two hours out of the week to seek the eternal salvation of others ? If they really wish to build themselves up, we would recommend them to try from five to seven in the morning—we have found it a good time for fresh manna. What a contrast such present to Philippians i. 4, 5; 1 Thessalonians i. 8 ! We would earnestly entreat all such to awake, and look to God for strength to shake off such gloomy thoughts. Come together for earnest prayer before the preaching of the gospel, then go out for half-an-hour, and seek to bring souls to hear the gospel ; and, "laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies and envies, and all evil-speaking," look to the Lord to bless the word, whoever may be the speaker, whether that word may be to the unconverted, or the whole counsel of God to the whole flock. We have noticed of late that there is much hunger in believers for food, and where this is the case the Spirit will give it.

57. "J. M.," Devonport. When the jailer inquired, "What must I do to be saved?" the apostle at once gave him a Person to believe on—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt

be saved." The soul thus, by faith, has to do with an ever-living Person, a Man in the glory of God, who is the Saviour of sinners. It is not knowing doctrines merely, but, by the truth of God and the Spirit of God, brought to the Lord Jesus Christ; and thus approaching God through His blood, the soul *knows*, on the authority of the word of God, that he has remission of sins, everlasting life, and is a child of God; so that the heart cries out in thanksgiving and praise to God. "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life." "Whoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." (John iii. 36; Acts x. 43; Gal. iii. 26.)

58. "N.," Portsea. We cannot say whether the striking anecdote you refer to has appeared in any of the early volumes of our little serial. A line to the publisher may, perhaps, bring the answer you require.

59. "C.," Redhill. It would have been incredible, had we not the fullest proof of the fact, that many professing Christians have formed themselves into a society, and are zealously seeking to add to their numbers, "to pray daily for the gift of the Holy Spirit." Their own account is that "6,000 have joined (including about 150 clergymen), and 1,600 in the United States." Many of our readers know, thank God, that it cannot be His mind now that any who are "in Christ" should so pray. It is directly opposed to scripture; for no one is "in Christ" who has not received the Holy Ghost. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father." (Rom. viii. 15.) Does it not, therefore, become

such rather to give thanks for having received the Holy Ghost?

If a sinner has received remission of sins, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, then he has also received the gift of the Holy Ghost; if he has not the forgiveness of his sins, what he needs is, not the gift of the Holy Ghost in order to have forgiveness, but to have to do with the only Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, "for without the shedding of blood there is no remission." This is such a settled certainty in scripture, that the apostle John said, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." (Compare Acts x. 43, 44; Heb. ix. 22; 1 John ii. 12.) We fear this movement is based on the false doctrine, that man wants the Holy Spirit to help him to make himself fit for God, instead of needing the death and blood-shedding of the Son of God to save him from coming wrath.

The scripture they quote for this association is, "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." (Luke xi. 13.) But it is easily seen by the christian reader, that, *at the time* these words were uttered by our Lord, "the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." (John vii. 39.) It was after this, on the day of Pentecost, that the Holy Ghost came, not to tarry with us for a little while, like Jesus, but to abide with us for ever. Therefore Peter immediately preached that all who had remission of sins would "RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST." We know how truly this took place, and how true it is to the present moment. It really

characterises Christianity; hence we read, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Acts ii. 38; Rom. viii. 9.)

One of the reasons these "Associates" have for praying for the Holy Spirit, they say, is, "Because we need Him to shed abroad the love of God in our hearts." What! people calling themselves Christians, professing to remember the Lord, and shew His death in eating bread and drinking wine, and yet have not the love of God in their hearts! We would make allowance for bad teaching, and for even true souls who are born of God, being bewildered by such false ways and misplaced truth; but when scripture speaks of those who "have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," it plainly adds, concerning such, that "*the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by THE HOLY GHOST WHICH IS GIVEN UNTO US.*" (Rom. v. 5.) For more on the Godhead, personality, indwelling, and operations of the Holy Ghost, we refer our readers to the papers on the Holy Ghost which have occupied our pages for several months past.

It is really appalling how many are being deceived through relying on official guides, who are evidently in great darkness as to the truth, instead of searching the scriptures for sure guidance, and implicitly receiving and acting on them as the revealed mind of God. Our earnest prayer to God for these six thousand souls is, that, if any are guilty and lost sinners, they may believe on the Son of God, and have remission of sins; but if any have believed to the salvation of their souls, may they know that they are born of the Spirit, and have also received the gift of the Spirit to be in them for ever.



GETHSEMANE AND CALVARY.

THE darkness of night had set in, and the hour was at hand. The Supper (never to be forgotten) was ended, and a psalm had been sung. It was a profoundly awful moment, and all nature seemed breathless and silent. The betrayer in whom Satan had entered was near. The trampling of the feet of the multitude armed with swords and staves, headed by the traitor, to take the Lord, might almost be heard in the distance, while the light of their lanterns and torches might well nigh be discerned ; for that which had long been written concerning sacrifice and offering must soon be fulfilled.

The passover which Jesus had so lovingly desired to eat with His disciples had been kept, so that "the suffering of death" for which He had come into the world had been most pointedly before His tender heart. His deeply-felt utterance had been, "*With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:*" It must have been a most affecting time, for He knew that He Himself was the paschal Lamb, the Redeemer of His people Israel. And yet, after fulfilling the scripture in eating the passover, His death, "*even the death of the cross,*" was still more strikingly set forth in the institution of His own supper. How touching is the divine record ! "*The Lord Jesus, the same*

night in which he was betrayed, took bread : and when he had given thanks, he brake it and said, Take, eat : this is my body which is for you : this do in remembrance of me." Yes, those very hands which were so soon to be cruelly nailed to the tree by wicked men, took the loaf and brake it, to set forth the symbol of His own body which in a few hours would be actually offered to God as a sacrifice for sin. "After the same manner also, he took the cup when he had supped [after supper], saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood : this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." For this, Jesus, the Lamb of God, was about to offer Himself, and His blood would be shed for many for the remission of sins. How vividly and affectingly must this have brought before the Holy Sufferer the unutterable sorrow and pain so immediately before Him, when He would once suffer for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God ! But what lessons of infinite love all this reads to our hearts !

Soon after this, Jesus and His disciples crossed the brook Cedron, and entered into the quiet garden of Gethsemane. This place was well known to Judas, for Jesus had oftentimes resorted thither with His disciples. There, after saying to them, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder," He took Peter, and James, and John aside, and in sore amazement and trouble, saith unto them, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death ;

tarry ye here, and watch with me." Then withdrawing from them about a stone's cast, "He fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Again, He said, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." Again, He prayed "the third time, saying the same words."

What human language could possibly portray the exceeding solemnity of this scene! When we think that this blessed One could have prayed to His Father, and He would have presently given Him twelve legions of angels, how it bows our hearts in worship, when, instead of asking deliverance for Himself, we hear Him saying, "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name!" And yet, with this most blessed and complete surrender of Himself to the Father's will, what unutterable sorrow and agony pressed upon His heart! As man, which is the view Luke specially takes of our Lord, so terrible was the distress, that we are told "there appeared unto him an angel from heaven strengthening him. And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Can we conceive trouble and anguish more terrible, for the heart to

be so sorrowful as to be connected with such effects? And yet, though the cup was before the Holy Sufferer, it was not to be drunk there. We find from the eighteenth chapter of John's gospel that it was after the terrible conflict in the garden was over, after His betrayers and murderers had come upon Him, after Peter had cut off the ear of the high priest's servant, that He had not then drunk the cup, for He said, "The cup which my Father hath given me, *shall I not drink it?*" If Luke's line is to look at Jesus as man, John certainly speaks of Him especially as a divine Person, and therefore does not bring before us the Saviour's prayer and conflict in the garden.

But let us contemplate a little further this astounding scene in Gethsemane, in that dark and memorable night. Why is the Holy One prostrate on the ground? Why such agony? Why that sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground? Why those earnest prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears? Why the thrice repeated cry to the Father? Why such bitter grief? for neither the hand of God nor of man was upon Him. Was not Satan there? Was not THE CUP there presented to Him? What a cup! Who can describe its unmixed bitterness! And why did Jesus so dread the drinking of that cup? How could it be otherwise? Did not the Saviour say to the cruel multitude, "*This is your hour, and the power of darkness*"? Yes, it was their hour;

for those who had hated Jesus without a cause, and had sought to destroy Him, should no longer be restrained, but, according to the divine counsel, He would be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and the prince of this world, who had the power of death, would put forth his power against Him. In this way, Jesus, by wicked hands, would be crucified and slain. Again, it may be asked, Was not Satan there? Did not this wicked one seek to devour the man-child, soon after His birth in Bethlehem, through Herod's sword? Afterwards, did he not endeavour by repeated temptation to overcome, if possible, the blessed Lord on His entrance on His public ministry? And did not our Saviour say almost immediately before He entered Gethsemane, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me"? No doubt he came, and pressed the weight and terror of death upon Him, but found in Him calm submission and perfect obedience to the Father's will. As another has said, "For Him obedience, however terrible the sufferings, was the joy and breathing of His soul." How the contemplation of Him bows our hearts in adoration! Did not the cup clearly set forth that the righteous Sufferer must be given into the hands of His betrayers; that He must bear our sins in His own body on the tree, and be made sin for us; that death, as Satan's power, and God's just judgment of sin, must be suffered by Him, and, more than all, as suffering for our sins, He must

be forsaken of God? Thus to be betrayed by one apostle, thrice denied by another, forsaken of all; to be the Sin-bearer, and made sin for us, to be forsaken of God, and given up to the death of the cross, were immediately before Him. Could it be otherwise then that He who was perfect in love, in holiness, and in every sensibility of purity and truth, should have earnestly cried, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt"? According to the divine counsels and ways of grace to us, and the glory of God, it was not possible; we therefore, after the thrice repeated prayer, see Him rising up in perfect submission to the Father's will, and looking away from secondary causes He goes forth in obedience to take the cup out of His Father's hand, and at Calvary finish the work which the Father gave Him to do. He said, "Rise, let us be going, behold he is at hand that doth betray me. And while he yet spake, lo Judas, one of the twelve came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people." Soon the traitor's kiss with Satanic foulness was imprinted on the Saviour's cheek (how hateful and distressing to Jesus!), for the betrayer's sign was, "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; hold him fast!" How thoroughly Satanic is this work!

Thus we see the sufferings of the loving Saviour in Gethsemane were great beyond the largest

powers of our comprehension'; but the sufferings there were not atoning. Jesus was not there bearing sins, consequently there was not suffering divine judgment for sin ; He was not then forsaken of God, there was no death in the garden, the cup was not drunk then ; how could there be therefore atonement ? No doubt Gethsemane's sufferings, though unutterably great, were from the anticipation of what He must so soon pass through. In the garden, instead of being forsaken of God, He was in uninterrupted communion with the Father ; instead of having to say, "Lover and friend hast thou put far from me," He had disciples with Him, and He said unto them, "Watch with me." True, instead of watching, they slept ; but they were companions with Him in the suffering. When on the cross making atonement for sins, He was alone, He did "by himself" purge our sins ; but in the garden, in testimony of His perfect purity before God, an angel was sent to strengthen Him. The contrast, then, between the Saviour's sufferings in the garden and on the cross is very striking.

Among other precious lessons which we may learn from the contemplation of our Saviour in Gethsemane, we may observe—

1st. If the *anticipation* of the sufferings of Jesus in the garden produced such unutterable distress, what must have been the magnitude and the reality of His suffering on the cross, when He was

bruised and put to grief, and His soul was made an offering for sin ?

2nd. When we consider for a moment what drinking the cup involved, it becomes evident that only a person with divine capacities could have drunk it, and have risen triumphantly out of it all to the eternal praise and glory of God.

3rd. In the garden, as well as elsewhere, He has "left us an example that we should follow his steps." And although He only could drink that cup, yet we may learn that earnest cryings and prayers, and supplications, and repeated, too, in time of trouble, are perfectly consistent with entire submission to our Father's will, and desire for His glory. "Being in an agony he prayed more earnestly." "Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." (Heb. v. 8.)

4th. That in time of distress and sorrow, whether, instrumentally, it come to us from Satan or man, or both, it becomes us to be so satisfied that it is His will, as to take the distress, whatever it may be, from His hands. Though Satan's and man's hatred, sin, the grave, death under judgment of sin, and forsaking, were involved in our Saviour's drinking the cup, yet He so discerned His Father's will, as to rise above all secondary causes, and say, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" To see God in everything is surely the activity of a divinely-wrought faith ; but can

this be till the soul has taken the ground before Him of “nevertheless, not what I will, but as thou wilt”?

5th. It is scarcely possible for us to meditate on the cup of unmixed sorrow which He drank for us, without a lively sense in our souls of divine grace, and the amazing contrast of it with the cup of perfect love and peace which He bids us drink in remembrance of Him.

6th. The more our spirits are in company with our adorable Lord in Gethsemane, the more the work of the cross will stand pre-eminently before our souls in its perfectness ; the more, too, will the magnitude and value of the finished work take hold on us, and we shall enter increasingly into the solid and immovable basis in divine righteousness on which all our hopes and blessings are eternally founded.

H. H. S.

“THIS SAME JESUS.”

“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. II.

THESE words have been used by the Holy Ghost in a remarkable manner in Upper Egypt. The Coptic Church have, through all these centuries, held fast the true divinity of Christ ; but, as is well known, they lost the true humanity of Christ since His resurrection. To them there were not now the two natures in Christ : only the divine.

So that about five years ago, when the Lord's servants began to preach the coming of the Lord, it was said the Copts would never listen to such a thought. On the contrary, God was pleased to use this scripture, to produce an entire change, and great numbers now believe the true humanity, as well as the Godhead of the Lord Jesus. They are now preaching the gospel, and waiting for "this same Jesus" from heaven.

When we remember the meaning of the word Jesus, the assurance is very sweet. "This same Jesus [Saviour] which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

When the angel of the Lord announced the birth of Jesus, he said of Mary, "She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS : [that is, Saviour] for he shall save his people from their sins." "And they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." (Matt. i. 21.) What a birth ! What a name ! The incarnate Son, the Saviour-God with us. Trace His wondrous path from the manger to the cross. At every step, in every act, we see the Saviour-God with us. By His almighty power, He calms the raging sea ; restores the dead to life ; gives sight to the blind ; and healeth all diseases. But oh, the display of tender, infinite love ! See this same Jesus when the sinner weeps at His feet. Hearken to those first but tender words, "Thy sins are for-

given. Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace.” Oh, the deep untold joy of His heart in seeking the lost! When another sinning daughter of Samaria came to the well to draw water, oh hear the words of Emmanuel! “ Give me to drink.” And in answer to her great surprise He said, “ If thou knewstest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink ; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.” This is that same JESUS that loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. Fully did he enter into their death sorrow. “ Jesus wept.” This same JESUS is coming again. The same Saviour that bare our sins in His own body on the cross. The same Jesus that was raised again from the dead for our justification ; and shewed Himself to His disciples alive from the dead. “ Jesus [the Saviour] himself stood in the midst of them and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.”

Not only as God, truly God, Emmanuel, God with us, not a spirit, but the true humanity risen from the dead. He said, “ 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 unto them his hands and his feet.” (Luke xxiv. 36–43.) This is a matter of eternal moment. “ And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain ; ye are yet in your sins.” (1 Cor. xv. 17.)

The resurrection of the same (Saviour) Jesus is the crowning-point in the preaching at Pentecost and onwards. “This JESUS [Saviour] hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.” “God hath made that same JESUS, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” (Acts ii.) “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through THIS MAN is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. And by him all that believe are justified,” &c. (Acts xiii. 38.)

He will come as Judge; but He will first come as Saviour. He comes as Saviour to take His own to be with Himself. When He shall come as Judge they will come with Him. He will come and reign in righteousness. And righteousness shall cover the earth. All things put under Him. “But now we see not yet all things put under him, but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory,” &c. (Heb. ii. 9.) This same Jesus, as Saviour, shall come again. This was the hope of the church in the beginning. The Thessalonian converts were “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. 10.)

It is blessed to own Him both Lord and Christ. “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our

Lord Jesus Christ at his coming ? ” (1 Thess. ii. 19.) “ For our conversation is in heaven ; from whence also we look for THE SAVIOUR, the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Phil. iii. 20.) So also Paul writes to Titus, his own son in the faith, “ Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST : who gave himself for us,” &c. (Titus ii. 13.)

It is thus most important to keep before our souls the true humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. He comes, the same Jesus, in all the tenderness of infinite love. The same Jesus who said, “ Now is my soul troubled ; and what shall I say ? Father, save me from this hour : but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name.” Yes, “ having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.” To them He said, “ 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.” (John xiv. 1, 2.) Thus He speaks to us. And then this same Jesus speaks to the Father, “ Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am ; that they may behold my glory.” (John xvii. 24.)

Surely, then, He comes, as the same Jesus ; in like manner as He ascended up into heaven.

Behold Him. “ And 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 they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy : and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.” (Luke xxiv. 50-53.)

If such was the joy at parting, with the testimony, that this same Jesus shall so come again in like manner, what will be His joy in meeting in the air, those whom the Father has given unto Him ! And what our joy and worship, as we enter the glory ; and in that glory the place prepared for us ! Oh, think of this same Jesus coming Himself to take us to Himself—to welcome us home. Once He bore our sins, now He comes without sin unto salvation. Our hearts shall adore Him as the Lamb once slain. The same Jesus, for ever Emmanuel, God with us. What a Saviour ! What a victory ! How deep is God’s mercy to us ! How great is His love ! “ That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

Yes, we are waiting for the display of all this wondrous grace at the return of this same Jesus, who is gone up into heaven.

For centuries this wondrous scripture had been entirely overlooked, and Christians had been taught to look for Christ as Judge, and not first as the

same Saviour. He hath loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood. He will not come to judge His own perfect work, or lay to our charge the sins He bore. Yes, soon we shall see this same Jesus; He who died for our sins according to the scriptures; He who was raised from the dead, our ever subsisting righteousness; He who has never failed to intercede for us above, or restore our souls whilst we are here below. If He has by the Holy Ghost made us to know our own vileness (that in us, that is in our flesh, there dwelleth no good thing), it is to make known to us that He is “made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” (1 Cor. i. 30.) If we have been disappointed, in vainly seeking perfectness, or sinlessness in our poor, wretched selves, it is to have found it all in Him. Infinite love possessed in Him. Oh, boundless treasures of perfect love in Him, and shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost! We shall see Him as He is, and be like Him then, no more to desire, but for ever to enjoy. Yea, even now, He is ours, and we are His. May we not, then, even now, no more merely desire, but repose in the fulness of infinite love! When He fills the vision of the soul, self, good or bad, must disappear. If we are occupied with ourselves (and, alas! how often this is the case), then the eye is not filled with this same Jesus, nor the heart waiting for Him from heaven.

Oh, blessed link, nothing can part us from the

love of Christ, this same Saviour. He who shall come to judge the nations is the coming Saviour to us. How different to the world. "Behold, he cometh with clouds ; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him : and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." (Rev. i. 7.)

Ah, reader, will your eyes behold Him as *your* Saviour, or will you wail with the world, when He comes to judge ? Is He your Saviour now ? Or do you belong to the world which still rejects His love and mercy ? He may come to take His own to-day, and then would you be left behind ?

He says, "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii. 16, 17.)

Precious words of Jesus, Jehovah Saviour ! Bright and Morning Star. Surely the bride that knows Him must say, Come. Looking for this same Jesus cannot you say, Come ? And it is the glory of the grace, to the last moment of this day of mercy. "And let him that is athirst come : and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Blessed closing words of this same Jesus.

C. S.

THE HOLY GHOST.

No. VII.

WHEN believers are really gathered together to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, nothing is clearer to such than the presence and operations of the Holy Ghost. As we have seen, those who are conscious of the Lord's being in the midst and are occupied with Him, will prove the guidance and ministry of the Holy Ghost in various ways. It is truly a place of wonderful favour and blessing. And yet, if we quietly think the matter over, there can be but two kinds of activities on such occasions—man, and the Holy Ghost ; so that all that is done at such meetings will be either in fleshly or spiritual energy. If the former, however attractive to the hearers, it will not profit, as our Saviour said, “The flesh profiteth nothing.” For all then that is God-glorifying and for real blessing to souls, we are cast entirely upon the Lord. Many, no doubt, will acknowledge the correctness of these principles ; but we need grace, that grace which is always connected with thorough self-distrust, and looks to the Lord for every good thing, in order to know the power of the Holy Ghost.

To those who habitually in private life take the place of dependence on the Holy Ghost, it becomes simple enough to do so when gathered together in the Lord's name. If we cultivate the habit of

reading the word when alone, in the consciousness of entire dependence on the Holy Ghost, to reveal and minister to us the deep things of God, if we are found, too, in our closets "praying in the Holy Ghost," we become so sensible of the blessedness of His help and guidance, that, when gathered together, His working and power are at once looked for. And it is a solemn question whether the chief reason why the forward actings of the flesh, or the more quiet movements of intellectualism, so shew themselves at assembly meetings, instead of the holy activities of the Spirit, is not because He is not better known to souls, and more honoured in private walk and ways.

However charitable we may be, it is impossible to accept everything that transpires at such meetings as being of the Holy Ghost. It ought to be so. It may be that sometimes in the same meeting there may be much that is of the Spirit, yet some things out of place, and so out of keeping with the line to which He is then directing (not to speak of what may be manifestly unscriptural), as cannot commend itself to those who are spiritual. On the other hand, when we think that every child of God present is composed of that which is born of the flesh, as well as that which is born of the Spirit, and that Satan, when we are unguarded, can act on the former, it is wonderful that God's care and goodness are so manifestly over us on such occasions. We believe that few things have dis-

honoured the Lord, and brought the truth into disrepute, more than fleshly ways and utterances when gathered together in our Lord's name. We commend the subject for earnest prayer, and deep exercise of soul and self-judgment before the Lord to our beloved brethren in Christ. It may be that some who begun well have sunk down from the place of dependence and faith in the Lord to fleshly energy and unbelief ; like the Galatian saints who begun in the Spirit, and sought to be made perfect in the flesh. While others who have received gifts from the ascended Lord have, through unwatchfulness, become drowsy and inactive, and thus left room for those who have not gift and but little power, to grieve and weary their hearers, if not to offend and scatter the saints. We trust that God's children everywhere will lay this matter to heart; that, as every one of us has received grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ, we may each so feel our responsibility to the Lord as to occupy the place in the body, and the measure which He has given for His glory, and godly edification. Surely the gifts have been given for building up the members of the body, and all that is done should be for profit to the hearers ; and these points are never to be lost sight of. Even if a person could speak in the Spirit, he is not to do so, unless it would profit others ; and the number who should speak at a meeting is limited to two or three. (1 Cor. xiv.)

We doubt not that a great deal of fleshly activity in the assembly, and of unbelief as to the operations of the Holy Ghost, is because His Godhead and personality have not been more distinctly held. When He is clearly known as indwelling the believer, and also having His abode in the church—the house—then His gracious working and power are constantly looked for. Such know that we cannot have a true heartfelt thought of Christ, not a glance of the eye of the heart to Him in the glory, not a grateful remembrance of His sufferings, death, and triumphs, but by the Holy Ghost. We have not a feeling of love to Him, not a lifting of our souls in worship to the Father, not a happy sense of being in His presence in virtue of the blood of Him who is now seated on His throne, not a desire for His coming—but by the Holy Ghost.

Moreover, it is not mere instruction, or reproof, that He ministers; it is not merely informing light, which the Holy Ghost gives, but “the light of life,” thus drawing out our affections in adoring gratitude and praise. His ministry, too, will be always “meat in due season;” and “a word spoken in season how good is it!” So that we may expect when ministry is really in the energy of the Holy Ghost it will not only minister Christ to souls, and open up and enforce the divine authority of scripture, but it will commend itself to consciences as meeting the present need. We judge,

therefore, that those who minister the word as guided by the Holy Ghost, will not merely give out what they know to be the truth, but what, after exercise before the Lord, they believe to be food for "the flock of God." It is one of the marks which our Lord has given of a "wise and faithful servant." The word abounds, too, with instruction as to the mind of the Spirit in the servants, such as "in honour preferring one another," "let each esteem other better than themselves," "submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." Those, therefore, who have received gifts from the ascended Christ need a state of soul suited to His mind; then we are sure that lowliness, courteousness, and reverence will be manifested by them. We have sometimes thought that blessing has been hindered by a lack of these gracious ways. On the other hand, saints who hear need a moral fitness, a state of soul capable of receiving a divinely-given ministry; and when this is wanting, how can profit be expected? From all these considerations it is clear that though the Lord is in the midst of those gathered together to His name, and the Holy Ghost always in each believer, and in the house, we are set in the place of absolute dependence on the Lord, and as those who have died with Him and are alive in Him, are to honour the Holy Ghost, and have no confidence in the flesh. It is surely a matter of all importance.

And further, it is well to perceive that the Holy Ghost by the scripture teaches that He has definiteness of purpose as to the object in gathering us together. Without referring to gospel preaching, and meetings for teaching, which obviously are not assembly meetings, we may observe that in chapter xi. of the first epistle to the Corinthians, the saints are looked at as gathered together for the definite purpose of eating the Lord's Supper. Full directions are found in scripture as to the Lord's mind about it. The one great object is to remember Him. "This do in remembrance of me." In eating of the bread together and drinking of the cup, we shew forth the Lord's death; and it is clearly His mind that we should be so occupied from time to time till He come again. "As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." If remembering the Lord and shewing His death, then, do not characterise such a meeting of the saints, how can it be according to the guidance of the Holy Ghost? Can He possibly act contrary to His own written directions?

Again. In the fifteenth chapter of Acts, the saints were gathered together before the Lord to judge a question of doctrine. They were manifestly led to it by the Holy Ghost thus to come together, with the apostles and elders, and consider the matter before the Lord; and we find this characterised the whole meeting. The simple

object of that meeting was before them throughout. The subject was looked at in various ways, and different brethren expressed what they judged was *the Lord's mind*, but at the close they could say, "It seemeth good to the Holy Ghost and to us."

The same definiteness is observed in a meeting of an assembly for discipline. (1 Cor. v. 4, 5.)

If we look at meetings for prayer as recorded by the Holy Ghost in the Acts of the Apostles, we see what point and definiteness marked these meetings. In the fourth chapter the supplications were earnest, and presented to God with one accord. In the twelfth chapter they were gathered together praying. Prayer was the simple object of the meeting. We may be sure, therefore, there were not rambling and disconnected utterances about the truth, but that simple and definite prayer was presented to God. Few things are more unprofitable and painful to those who are simple in prayer than a string of pointless words, however orthodox, or a kind of lecture prayer, an aim at instructing those who kneel beside them, or an attempt at giving information to God, not to speak of the great irreverence of praying at others; but such proceedings never fail to carry with them the stamp of unreality. In these meetings for prayer recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, those who prayed were simply a mouth-piece for those assembled, and so expressed themselves that the

others could heartily go with them ; for, without this, how could there be “one accord”? The Holy Ghost tells us that they “lifted up their voice to God with one accord,” and “prayed ;” and again, that “many were gathered together praying,” and that “prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God” for Peter ; so that we may be sure, though there might be thanksgiving too, that prayer—earnest, united, prayer and supplication in the Spirit—characterised these meetings for prayer. We believe these points are of all-importance at this time, for in some places the meetings for prayer have been humiliating, rather than a solemn pouring out of heart to God in earnest request with reverence and godly fear. This may often account for the few that attend ; for when souls are really gathered to wait on God in prayer, we can scarcely think of saints who would not make every effort to be present. The truth is, that if the Lord’s presence and the power of the Holy Ghost are looked for, all will go on well ; without this, nothing can.

When the Lord is given His rightful place in our midst, and the power of the Holy Ghost is therefore really known, we doubt not that souls will be filled with joy and peace in believing, and abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost. There will be, too, a sense of what for the present suits Him who is the Holy and the True. Being ourselves free and happy in His presence there

will surely be prayer for all saints; for how can we be really holding the Head without embracing every member of His body? How can we be diligently keeping the Spirit's unity unless our interests, affections, and prayers go out towards all saints?

And further. If we are in the enjoyment of the various relationships into which God, in the exceeding riches of His grace, has brought us, shall we not be in earnest prayer that others may be saved, that the word of the Lord may run, have free course, and be glorified? If we are rejoicing in the hope of our Lord's coming, can we fail to preach and pray that multitudes may take of the water of life freely to His eternal praise and glory? If we really honour the Holy Ghost, how can we be indifferent to the glad-tidings which He declares? Yea, rather, how can we fail to take the deepest interest in the gospel of the grace of God, which is now preached by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven? H. H. S.

FRAGMENTS.

“*GOD is light*” to convict and shew us what we are ; He is “*love*” to attach us to Himself through His Son Jesus Christ.

We cannot have the *heart* free, if the *conscience* be not clear ; this the blood of Christ gives.

CORRESPONDENCE.

60. "Kilmarnock." It is clear that the Lord gave thanks before He broke the bread, and gave it to His disciples at His supper, and also before He gave them the cup. (See 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25; Matt. xxvi. 27.) Now as the Lord's supper is characterised by remembering Him and shewing His death with thanksgiving, we cannot see any reason why those who take the Lord's supper should not give thanks, both before eating the bread and drinking of the cup; on the contrary, is not giving thanks the delight of our hearts on such an occasion? We need scarcely add that the brother who gives thanks is only a mouth-piece for all who partake. There is no idea in scripture of the one who blesses the Lord or gives thanks doing anything to the bread and wine. A heartfelt enjoyment of the Lord Himself, and the consciousness of the eternal blessing into which we are brought in Him and through His death, sets the soul clear, when nothing else will.

61. "Colsterworth." Many difficulties in scripture vanish when we see the present ways of divine activity—grace, and government. Those who see only the grace of God bringing to us salvation, will wonder at such ways of divine interference in the assembly, as with Ananias and Sapphira. We read that at Corinth many were "weak and sickly," and many "sleep," and also the passage to which you refer, "a sin unto death," as in 1 John v. 16. The truth is, not to speak of the Father's discipline of His own children, that God governs men because they are His creatures. The Lord chastens, rebukes, and judges them in His assembly, because it is His assembly, and

there are sins of such a grievous character in His sight as to call for removal by death. It may be a lie of a most foul type, or the wicked practice at the Lord's supper of not discerning the Lord's body, or something else, which may be "a sin unto death ;" when a case is clear, we cannot pray for such, but must leave them in the Lord's hands. We do not, therefore, read that Peter or the other saints prayed for Ananias and Sapphira.

62. "Cinderford." Elijah was "taken away," into heaven by a whirlwind ; whereas the Son of man ascended up into heaven by His own power. "I ascend unto my Father and to your Father, and to my God and your God."

63. "Brixton." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" is something more than the mind assenting to the fact that Christ is a Saviour for sinners. It is not only believing about Him, but believing *on* Him. We are told that it is "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Such have fled to the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour from everlasting punishment ; they look to Him as the Object of faith ; they approach God by Him ; they rely only on His blood as their ground of peace and justification ; and they trust in Him who was crucified, but now risen and ascended. They know Him as a living Saviour ; they do not only confess, therefore, that He was the Son of God (which is quite true), but "that Jesus *is* the Son of God ;" they do not merely believe the historical fact that Jesus was the Christ, or the Anointed, but "that Jesus *is* the Christ." Thus they have a living Saviour before their souls, who, having accom-

plished eternal redemption for us, is now seated on the Father's throne. Such certainly have authority from God's word, for being assured that they have remission of sins, are justified from all things, have been crucified with Christ, and are risen with Christ. (See Acts x. 43, xiii. 38, 39 ; Gal. ii. 20 ; Col. ii. 11-13, iii. 1-4.)

64. "Twickenham." In the first and second chapters of Ephesians, the believer is looked at as having been by grace quickened, raised up, seated and blessed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus. This is the new character of blessing which is peculiar to Christianity. Our walk flows out of our apprehension and enjoyment of this nearness to God, and the new relationships connected with it. It is in this communion and blessing we are enjoined to stand ; that is, to be consciously in the nearness and acceptance of "the Beloved;" and it is in regard to this that wicked spirits oppose us. They are active in hindering us from maintaining our standing where God has set us, and are to be resisted by the strength of the Lord and armour supplied. Our standing as complete in Christ, in all His nearness and acceptance, must be uncompromisingly maintained—"having done all to stand." It is plain, therefore, that no one can know the conflict with these wicked spirits in the sixth chapter, who has not accepted and made his own by faith the blessings in which divine grace has set us, as brought out in the first and second chapters. It is this which these wicked spirits try to hinder, and all heavenly-minded souls know it.

THE SWALLOWS ARE GONE.

"Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord. How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us? Lo, certainly in vain made he it; the pen of the scribes is in vain. The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?"—JEREMIAH VIII. 7–9.

THE end of the year is near. The swallows are gone; the cold blasts of winter are come: but not one swallow is left behind. We saw them gathered together, and they were seen to fly higher, as the time to depart grew nearer. No one saw them go. But they are gone to sunny lands of the south. The frost and the snow, the sleet and piercing winds of winter never reach them there. Very remarkable is this instinct of the birds. "Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord."

Is there not a lesson for us in this instinct of the birds? It was pleasing to watch the swallows as the winter drew near; how they would gather in companies; how they seemed to wait for the wanderers. Then they would fly high, as wanting to be gone. We thought, is not the Holy Spirit

now gathering Christians together in little companies to Christ? Now here, now there, a wanderer coming in. Should we not fly higher? we, like the swallows, are about to leave this scene below. Already signs of this world's judgment begin to flit across its autumn sky. And now every swallow soared ready to depart, moved by one common instinct. Oh that every Christian was seen manifestly ready to depart, moved by the Spirit of God.

But will it be with the whole church of God as with the swallows? Yes, the Holy Ghost is already gathering them in little companies to Christ. He has revealed to them afresh, after many centuries, the heavenly Bridegroom, and the heavenly calling of the church. He is leading their thoughts and hearts, higher and higher yet. And soon, very soon, though the world will not see them go, yet every one shall be gone, not one left behind. "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 him in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Are not these the sober words of inspired reality? Yes, brethren, we shall all be gone, not one be left behind: for ever with the Lord. If the swallows are gone to more sunny shores, oh, what will it

be to be caught up away from the scenes of this world's wintry woes, and judgments, and in peaceful rest enter the glory of our Lord?

And if God never fails to take by instinct at the appointed time, the stork, the crane, and the swallow, can He possibly fail at the appointed time to take the saints to meet their Lord? Is it not sad and humbling that the Lord should have to complain, that though the swallow should know her appointed time, "my people know not the judgment of the Lord"? Is not this as true now of Christendom, as it was of Israel then? What profound ignorance there is on this important subject. "My people know not." Men go on dreaming of continual summer, yea, of increasing sunshine, peace, temperance, prosperity—just at the very time when the saints are about to be gone like the swallows of autumn, and the storms of this world's wintry blasts are about to take them all by surprise. (1 Thess. v. 1-9.)

It is incredible how utterly unaware the learned of this world are of the wintry judgments about to be poured out on the nations of the earth. "How do ye say we are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us?"

Never was there a day of more boasting: "we are wise." It is quite true the word of God is in men's hands; but who believes it? The rapture of the church before the day of the Lord is clearly revealed. God has said it. He has made it per-

fectly clear, both the departure of His saints to meet the Lord in the air, and the terrible judgments that shall follow. Has He made it clear? Yes, but, "Lo, certainly in vain made he it; the pen of the scribes is in vain." Yes, in vain hath God spoken in His word: men will not believe Him. "Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition." (Mark vii.)

Let us now pass on to the December of this world, before the new era of the millennial kingdom begins. (Ver. 9.) "The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?"

Let us listen to these learned men, these rejecters of the word of God. "How strange this is: those Christians we despised are all gone like the swallows of autumn. Not one of them can be found on earth. How we laughed, and hated their gathering together. What fools we thought them because they would fly higher; as they said, their Lord was coming to take them. They spoke of their heavenly calling: and would have nothing to say to our earthly societies and politics. We scorned them because they would not join our various schemes for the improvement of man. We hated the thought that we were not to glory save in the cross of Christ. They gathered together—poor little despised companies—and told of the coming Saviour to the wanderers all around. No one saw them go, but they are gone. And now the world's wild, fierce,

wintry blasts are blowing. Where is all our boasted wisdom? Peace is taken from the earth. All that we hear on every side is, that men are killing one another. Famine and pestilence, sword, hunger and death, all around. Woe, woe to us, the winter of this world is come."

"And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains . . . hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." (Rev. vi.) Ah, we rejected the word of the Lord, but now the Christians are gone, and the great day of His wrath is come. Storm after storm has come: we seek death and do not find it. (Rev. ix. 6.) Where is now our boasted wisdom? We are worshipping devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass and stone, and of wood. (Rev. ix. 20.) And what is the end of all our politics? What strange events since the winter set in, and the church is gone. It is not forty-two months yet, since the new last head of the Roman Empire appeared. But oh, what months! The dragon has given him his power. Ten kingdoms have sprung up and given their power to this Satanic head. When he opens his mouth it is in blasphemy. And all that dwell on earth worship him. And all that refuse are boycotted and put to death. It is true all this was distinctly foretold in scripture, but we

were far too wise then to believe what God said to his servants in Revelation vi., ix., xiii., xvii. Certainly there never was such a winter as this since the beginning of the world, no, nor ever shall be. Jesus said it would be so : but we did not believe Him. (Matt. xxiv. 21.)

Yes, "The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord ; and what wisdom is in them?"

And now, beloved reader, as the last days of another year are fast coming to a close, where are you, and what is the condition of your soul ? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb, and ready to be gone like the swallows in autumn ? Are you following the wise men of this world, who will so soon be ashamed and confounded ? Is Christ the centre of attraction ? Are you separated to Him, and waiting for Him from heaven ? Great is the last effort to draw Christians from Christ to join the confederacies of men. Oh, let us seek to get higher and higher. The word of God is utterly disregarded. On no account will men allow it to be Christ alone. Christ and circumcision, Christ and the world's various confederacies, or even Christ and profanity. All these things hide the coming of the Lord to take His saints. Every doctrine of human improvement denies the utter ruin of man through sin, and the fast approaching winter of divine judgment on the rejecters and despisers of the word of God. It is solemnly true

of the great men and the wise of this world, "THEY HAVE REJECTED THE WORD OF THE LORD." The mark of a Christian is, "THOU HAST KEPT MY WORD, and HAST NOT DENIED MY NAME." Which is true of you, beloved reader? Whatever name you may bear, if you have not kept His word you are not a Christian, and will surely be left behind when the Christians depart like the swallows that are gone.

Can you for a moment admit that the instinct of a bird is more sure than the words of the Saviour? As this world's winter approaches, let us then dwell on the words of Jesus. He cannot fail to fulfil His promise. We may not know where the swallows go: but Jesus says to us, "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." (John xiv. 2, 3.) Do we hear you saying, "Yes; Jesus says so, but our learned, wise teachers do not say so?" Remember the word, "They have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?"

It is a solemn fact that God by His Spirit has sent forth the midnight cry, "Behold the bridegroom—go ye out to meet him;" and they have rejected the word of the Lord. God grant we may cease from man: for what wisdom is in him?

May the saints of God be now gathered together like the swallows in autumn. May we love to dwell on His sweet words of promise. Has He not gone to prepare the place? Oh, those scenes of radiant glory, far away from earth's cold wintry blasts. And will He not come to take us to Himself? With Himself! How soon, like Moses and Elias, shall we be talking with Him! Glorious reality. Soon we shall be gone: not one be left behind. And poor deceived apostate Christendom left to "become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." (Rev. xviii. 2.) Blessed comfort: the Lord knoweth them that are His, and none shall be left behind.

"Wherefore he saith. AWAKE thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

C. S.

GOD.

SINNER, do you know God? This ought to be the question of questions to you, for this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. (John xvii. 3.) The gospel is the gospel of God. (Rom. i. 1.) It is the glad tidings of the revelation of what God is! God was never revealed in what He is, His nature and character, till Jesus came. The only-

begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father,
He hath declared Him !

He was revealed as the good, beneficent Creator, with all power in creation. (See Gen. i. 31 ; Rom. i. 14.) Even since the fall man was not left without witness as to His goodness, in giving him food and fruitful seasons, &c. (Acts xvii.) But all was dark as to the future.

He revealed Himself as the Governor of Israel, and His will (as far as to shew what man ought to be for Him), in the law. That so far shewed Him to be a righteous God, requiring man to love Him with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself. But it did not tell what *God was* in love, and it also left man greatly in the dark as to the future existence, though there was enough to shew it, as the Lord told the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God ! But in Christ He is revealed in His fulness. His full nature is shewn, and that in grace. God is light ! God is love !

Who is God then ? He is Spirit (John iv. 24); light (1 John i. 5) ; love (1 John iv. 8).

First, God is Spirit, the very source of thine immortal nature, sinner ! Man is said to be God's offspring (Acts xvii. 29), and to have been created in the image of God ! (Gen. i. 27.) Sinner, you have a spirit within you, then, with as endless a life as God has ! God, who is Spirit, not only created the heavens and the earth, but formed the

spirit of man which is in him. (Zech. xiv. 1 ; Is. xlvi. 5.) God is the God of the spirits of all flesh. (Num. xvi. 22.) He is the source of their immortality, having breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. (Gen. ii. 7.) Who are you, then, responsible to but to God, who formed you, and who will be your Judge, either to place you in eternal bliss for ever, or in everlasting woe, in the lake of fire ? Oh, sinner, think of this ! Your spirit must soon return to God who gave it ! Are you ready for this change ? God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. (John iv. 24.)

But, secondly, God is light. (1 John i. 5.) Light searches, light manifests. Bring a light into a dark room ; it manifests all that is in the room, its state of order or disorder. Sinner, have you ever been made sensible that God is light ? What does the light reveal ? A heart deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. (Jer. xvii. 9.) Oh, can you bear to think about it ?

It reveals that all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. (Rom. iii. 23.) It reveals that in you, that is in your flesh, dwells no good thing. It reveals that man is the enemy of God—yea, worse, that he is dead in trespasses and sins. (Rom. v. 10, vii. 18 ; Eph. ii. 1-3.)

But, blessed be God, it also reveals Christ on the cross, meeting all those conditions. Christ

died for our sins according to the scriptures. (1 Cor. xv. 3.) When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son. (Rom. v. 10.) By one righteousness the free gift went out to all men unto justification of life. (Rom. v. 18.)

Sinner, hear the glad tidings of the glory of Christ. Christ has been raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father. He sits on the throne of God in glory. Gaze by faith at the Man there. A Man in whom the whole glory of God shines is there. God is light, and that Light shines in the face of the Man Christ Jesus. He is the Man *justified*. He is the Man at *peace*. He is the Man in whom *eternal life* is. He is the second Man, substituted for the first. Oh, sinner, do not you see Him with the eye of faith? Alas, if you do not, it is because you are lost! The god of this world hath blinded the minds of those that believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.)

Thirdly, God is love. It is His nature to love sinners. When a test of four thousand years had brought out the fact as to what man was, as a lawless being and a law-breaker, and that he could give to God no righteousness; then God became a Man in the Person of His Son, took the name of Jesus (meaning Jehovah-Saviour), and became a man, to die to save His people from their sins.

(Matt. i. 21.) God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. (2 Cor. v. 19.) The light had revealed man as a guilty criminal, under sentence of death, an enemy of God by wicked works, and a slave of sin. The love gave His dear Son to die, to meet that threefold condition. And Jesus did meet it to the full ; He died for the sins of the guilty criminal, and rose for his justification. (Rom. iv. 25.) He made peace for His enemy, and has brought him nigh to God in Himself. (Eph. ii. 13 ; Col. i. 20.) He has so entirely condemned the sin in the flesh that held the poor slave under its dominion, and paid its wages (Rom. vi. 23, viii. 3), that the believer is completely delivered by His death and resurrection being applied to him. The believer has died to sin, and is alive to God in Christ Jesus. Oh, blessed good news about God ! for God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life ! (John iii. 16.)

And still this is not all. God in love gives us Christ, *where He is* in glory. He is our new standing in righteousness, peace, and eternal life. We are quickened together with Him, raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ. (Eph. ii. 5, 6.) When He comes again He will descend into the air ; the dead in Christ will be raised, the living be changed, and all

believers caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be for ever with the Lord. (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.)

And is this *God*? somebody says. Yes, my friend. He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who hath given us in the meantime the earnest of the Spirit. (2 Cor. v. 5.)

"Then, surely, if this be so, I may know I am saved," says the now believing man. Yes, assuredly, my friend; and that is just the effect of knowing God, as Eliphaz said to Job, Acquaint now thyself with God, and be at peace. (Job xxii. 21.)

A. P. C.



THE LAST KNOCK AT THE DOOR.

"Behold I stand at the door, and knock."—REV. III.

HERE is the very last state of Christendom before it becomes the Babylon described in chapter xviii. : "The habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit," &c.

To those who understand these seven addresses to the churches, as describing the whole course of Christendom, there can be no question but that we are now at the very close of that course. Jesus speaks to us just now: "Behold I come quickly," and, "Behold I stand at the door, and knock."

We will, then, suppose the reader to understand that the address to Ephesus described the state of

the church in its first decline. The address to Smyrna, its period of persecution; Pergamos, the period when it so sadly mixed with the world; Thyatira, the dark ages of popery, and which is seen to continue to the end; Sardis, the period of the Reformation, or its results in the condition of Protestantism; the last two, Philadelphia and Laodicea, describe the condition of souls at the end of Protestantism. We have the close of Christianity on earth. The judgment of the Lord Jesus, His promises and warnings, what He approves, and what He disapproves. In fact, He speaks to us, and He knocks at the door of Christendom at the moment we read this paper.

In Philadelphia we see what the Lord finds as true. In Laodicea we see that which is false. The more we study these two addresses, the more we shall see it is not here a question of false assemblies and true ones, but that which marks a true christian condition of soul, and false profession, wherever found now at the end. Do these words, then, apply to the reader? "Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." Surely these are the marks of a true Christian in these days of human boasting, rationalism, and the denial of Christ. Verse 9 intimates that ritualism also will abound, and is declared to be the synagogue of Satan; it does not rest in the word of Christ, but seeks to set up the Jewish principle of a ritual, that can never

purge away sins. It is unmistakably of Satan. To all who have kept the word of His patience is the promise given, that they shall be kept from the hour of temptation. (Ver. 10.) This must include ALL that are Christ's. To all true Christians, then, at this time the Lord Jesus says, "Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Oh, let us meditate on these words, morning, noon, and night. Is it not as if we heard His voice from the glory, "Behold I come quickly"? Let us now hearken to the last knock at the door of a false Christendom.

There is something deeply solemn in the thought, that there is not one thing in the last condition of Christendom that the Lord can approve; and He is "the faithful and true witness." Let us read, and may we, by the Spirit, understand that He is the faithful and true Witness of what the state of Christendom is in this its closing state.

Jesus says, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." Assuredly this witness is true. Indifference, and utter want of love to Christ, is the first mark of all the false profession of this day, of that which bears the name of Christ, of that which calls itself the church. We read, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that

is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1 John ii. 15, 16.) Instead of separation from the world, does not hollow, heartless profession take the very lead in all its pleasures and follies? What are the shameful bazaars of Christendom in the eyes of the Lord Jesus? Is it not going mad after sport and worldliness? Yes, the Faithful Witness says, Thou art neither cold nor hot. Oh, deceived multitudes, sporting on to perdition, hear these solemn warnings of the Lord Jesus. He says, "because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." This is the certain doom of Christendom—to be utterly rejected, and cast out as loathsome.

It may be said, How can this be? Was there ever a time of such religious activity, such wealth in buildings, in able men, in knowledge, in temperance societies, and efforts and works of every kind. Look at our armies and blue ribbon societies; think of the crowds that sign the pledge. Certainly there is very little of Christ in all this; but no one can deny the church never was so rich in all these things.

Hear the last knock, and hearken to the voice of Jesus: "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Is

not this the condition of thousands of souls? Men must have excitement of some kind, to drown their thoughts—one day the pleasures of the world, another the busy activities of religious or temperance excitements. All this may be, nay, is, whilst those thus occupied are "*wretched*." If such calmly think of death, they are wretched. If they think of their sins, of a future judgment, they are wretched. Religious activities without Christ leave the soul *miserable*. These are the words of the faithful and true Witness. He knows the true spiritual condition of the professing masses to be wretched, and miserable, "and poor." Ah, whatever may be the possession of wealth or religious fame, in the light of the solemn fact that Jesus says, "Behold I come quickly," how poor is the soul without Christ! "And blind." What, this highly cultivated, educated, christian world, *blind*! Yes, He, the faithful Witness, says it. Yes, Christendom, in thy last, boasting state, thou art blind. Like Israel, thou also seest no beauty in Jesus. Do not forget this—that highly-favoured, polished nation saw no beauty in Him to desire Him. It is so with unconverted Christendom, with all its polished teachers and privileges. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." What a scene in His sight is the hollow profession of these last days! Blind leaders of the blind. This applies to every unconverted professor, be he teacher, preacher, or hearer. The

Lord Jesus testifies of this, the last state of Christendom, Thou art "blind."

"And naked." Yes, with all the effort to make a religious apron. Oh, poor deceived ritualist, or moralist, or half-hearted professor, thou must stand before the face of Him in judgment who says, Thou art "naked." Why dost thou make a profession, since thou art naked? "How camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?" How terrible will be those words, "Take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." God, who clothed Adam and Eve with skins, also gave His Son, not only to bear the sinner's sins, but also to be raised from the dead, to be his righteousness; and yet, Christendom, even now, at the end, thou art declared to be *naked*. When we remember it is the Lord who thus speaks, nothing can be more solemn.

We shall see all this more than confirmed by the last counsel of Jesus: "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich"—the righteousness of God accomplished by Christ passing through the fire of divine judgment. This is neither known nor possessed by professing Christendom. All pretensions to righteousness by law must be given up; and this is just what the natural man will not do. On which foundation are we resting? Are we vainly seeking righteousness in ourselves, or by works of

law ; or are we resting in the righteousness of God, apart from law, even Jesus, the fine gold that passed through the fire? (Read Rom. iii. 19-26.) Yes, eighteen hundred years ago, Jesus thus described Christendom at the end, without this righteousness. Let any one read the Epistle to the Galatians, and say, Are not all unconverted preachers and people seeking righteousness by works of law? God grant that the last knock of Jesus may be heard.

And what does He further counsel thee to buy? "White raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." What has a believer to give for the white raiment? We learn in Philippians iii. It is very simple when the eye is open to see. Paul had to give up his own righteousness. Before God he had found all to be filthy rags. He counted all but dung, that he might win Christ. "THAT I MAY BE FOUND IN HIM, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

Yes, filthy rags defiled with sin, or in Christ whiter than snow. If not in Christ, all our efforts leave us naked. If not accepted in Christ, we cannot be accepted in any other way. If He is not made unto us righteousness, we are not Christians. And if we are mere professors, it is to be on the way to apostasy. All this is exceedingly

solemn. What a state of soul is here described by the Faithful Witness! We beg the reader not to take refuge in any mere position, but inquire whether this address to Laodicea describes the condition of your unclothed, christless soul.

Jesus further says, "and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." This witness also is true. If we have not received Christ as our righteousness, if we are not resting in His finished, atoning work, we certainly are not anointed with the Holy Ghost. He bears witness to the value of the blood of Jesus. Thus this boasting Christendom is found wanting in everything that marks a true Christian. It is that state of soul which ends in final apostasy, and eternal perdition. Still, the heart of Jesus lingers, and all He loves He rebukes and chastens. Are any found in Laodicea? He rebukes them, and bids them be zealous, and repent. To repent would be to judge and give up all that the natural man boasts of in these last days—it would be to cease to be a Laodicean. Jesus lingers still, He knocks at the door of Christendom. Soon it will be for ever too late. To all who are in that state described in the address to Philadelphia, He will surely quickly come, and take them to Himself: they shall be kept from the storm of judgment about to fall on apostate Christendom.

It may be asked, Is it not written, that the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the

waters cover the sea? Most assuredly this will be the case, but if we examine the scriptures, we shall find this, and all such promises, are not in connection with, or to Christendom; but in connection with Israel, and the kingdom, or reign of Christ, which cannot be set up until after the false apostate Christendom: and the lawless, infidel nations of Europe have been destroyed. (Rev. xvii., xviii.) Then shall He come whose right it is to reign (chap. xix.), and shall reign a thousand years. (Chap. xx.)

Hark, hark, then, to the last knock of Christ. There can be no question that the true children of God are about to take their flight, like the swallows of autumn, to be "for ever with the Lord." Then, for the poor, frivolous, lukewarm, yet boasting apostate Christendom, with thee it shall be for ever too late, God shall send thee strong delusion. (2 Thess. ii.) Child of God in the midst of this scene, the night is far spent, the day is at hand: "Wherefore, he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Let us boast no more of Philadelphian position, but ask ourselves, Are we in the Philadelphian state of soul?

C. S.



The Holy Ghost dwells not in any particular assembly, but in the whole church.

"I'D RATHER SUFFER LOSS."

"IT was in that very spot, sir," said a working shoemaker, pointing to a place in his little workshop, "Yes, in that very place, sir, six years ago, that the Lord spoke peace to my troubled soul; and how good and gracious He is." Such was almost the beginning of our happy and profitable intercourse on paying a visit to this dear servant of the Lord Jesus.

After talking generally together, and having had sweet fellowship in the things of our precious Saviour and Lord, and we were about to leave, he said, "I should like to let you know something about the exercises of soul I have been lately passing through." To this we readily assented.

He then said something like this: "When I was converted to God, and knew the Lord Jesus Christ His Son as my Saviour, I thought I shall now surely prosper in my little business; but in this I was sadly mistaken, for my earnings very soon fell off. The first year I earned three shillings a week less, the second year three shillings a week less, the third year four shillings a week less, and of late my earnings have been so little that I thought I must give it up, and seek some other employment, though I have so enjoyed the Lord's presence with me in this little place. Accordingly, knowing Mr. M. to be a kind christian man, and that he held a good situation in a large factory

near this, I asked him if he thought he could procure me employment of any kind in his place of business, and he promised to let me know when there was a vacancy.

“But after this I became deeply exercised before the Lord as to what I was about. Is this that I am seeking according to my own will or the Lord's will? Is He bidding me to give up my present calling and seek another? for I have had much of the Lord's presence, and enjoyed His sweet company when working alone in this corner. And just then the Lord seemed to say to me, Which will you have? Will you go into the factory, and mix with the ungodly multitude with large wages, or remain in this corner and enjoy my presence with small earnings; which will you have? I assure you, sir, it was a serious moment. I turned it well over in my mind. I considered how weak I am, how easily turned aside, and began to think that if I went into that factory to work, I might soon be drawn away, and lose my blessed Lord's sweet company. So I said, ‘Lord, let me have Thy company even if it must be with small earnings; I'd rather suffer loss, than not enjoy Thy presence with me.’ From that time I became perfectly settled, and told Mr. M. not to think anything more about procuring a situation for me. Now, sir, it is remarkable that from that time work began to come in more than for a long time before.”

We could not help thinking that the result was just what we should have expected. We believe that one of the greatest hindrances to souls is their being so taken up with desire for worldly prosperity. The consequence is that the Lord has not got His rightful place in their hearts ; and, however many excuses they may make, the question really is, “Am I seeking earthly gain, or the enjoyment of the Lord’s presence ? Is communion with Him the uppermost desire of my heart ?” Perhaps no point is of more importance for us really to settle in the presence of God. If worldly advantage, to say nothing of the accumulation of wealth, has the *first* consideration, let it not surprise us, if such go further and further away from the Lord ; but if we are willing to suffer loss, and to lay aside everything that hinders our enjoyment of His sweet company, then we may be sure that He will not forsake us as to food and raiment. We believe the scripture is as true as ever, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you.” We do well to remember that to the believer it is said, “Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.” (Matt. vi. 33 ; Phil. i. 29.)

H. H. S.