

THE REMEMBRANCER

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

FOR

THE LORD'S PEOPLE.

“Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them. Yea, . . . I think it meet, . . . to stir you up by putting you in remembrance.”

2nd Peter i. 12, 13.

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The Remembrancer.

THE NAME OF JESUS.

I own the name of Jesus,
Let others it despise ;
The blessed name of Jesus
Above all else I prize.

I bear the name of Jesus—
Confess Him as my Lord ;
Acknowledge Him my Saviour—
Alone beloved, adored.

I love the name of Jesus,
Whate'er the cross I bear ;
I find my joy and solace,
And all I wish for there.

I prize the name of Jesus,
The treasure of my soul ;
The sum of all my riches,
My joy unspeakable.

Yes, blessed, precious Jesus,
My heart e'er turns to Thee ;
Come whatso'er Thou willest,
Thy name my all shall be !

And, O ! the name of Jesus
Shall be my deathless song,
When in the realms of glory
I joined the ransomed throng.

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF GOD.

(EXTRACT FROM A LETTER)

. On Lord's day evening we had Prov. viii. and were with Wisdom everywhere: "The Lord possessed me" from before all His works, before He had laid the foundations of the earth and the worlds. The archangel announced His approach in Luke i. to Mary, by "the mystery of the Incarnation." At His birth, one universal song, by the multitude of angels and the heavenly host, spread the glad tidings that unto men "is born a Saviour in the City of David which is Christ the Lord." Simeon, the power of the Holy Ghost resting upon him on earth, possesses this Wisdom (*in time*) Whom the Lord possessed from before time was. A man below has got this Treasure from above in his arms, and celebrates Him as God's Salvation to the very ends of the earth: "A Light to lighten the Gentiles and the Glory of Thy people Israel.

Wisdom utters her voice and begins to preach in the city, at the entering in of the gates—and in Luke iv., at Nazareth (where He had been brought up according to human reckoning) Jesus enters into the synagogue, and this Wisdom "stood up for to read." He takes the Book of God's everlasting counsels, and finds the place where it is written "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me" (read vs. 18-23).

Wisdom's delights were in the habitable parts

of the earth too, and with the children of men—so that in chap. v. He was in a certain *city* and a man full of leprosy meets Him, and Wisdom in *grace* drives away the leprosy and the man is clean. Wisdom is found in another *city*, and at the *gates* there was a dead man being carried forth, the only son of his mother and she was a widow (chap. vii). Wisdom finds its *new* delights by meeting death; and, taking His place in the midst of this scene in compassion, said “weep not, and He came and touched the bier, and delivered the young man to his mother etc.” The time is now come for this Wisdom, in its turn, to be justified by one of its children, and who could do this but the woman of another *city* who was a *sinner*. She justifies Him by owning Him, as only a sinner can, and stood behind Him weeping, etc. (vs. 36–50). Simeon had Wisdom in his arms, but the sinner is at His feet, and He finds His best and sweetest delights with this woman. Wisdom is justified by this child in the house of the Pharisee, and she is justified by infinite Wisdom and Love: “He said to her, Thy sins are forgiven Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace.”

In Luke xxiii. “This Wisdom” takes another place on the cross in order that God might righteously assume the attitude of beseeching sinners to be reconciled to Himself and find His delight in so doing. He there did the work in blood and death, by which He became yet further the Wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation to every

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one that believeth. Wisdom (as the fruit of this finished redemption) carries one of its children away back into the heavens, as the trophy and witness that His delights were with the sons of men. This child justified Wisdom in his expiring breath, saying, "This man hath done nothing amiss," adding, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom;" and Wisdom in the boundlessness of its own delights justified the thief by saying, "To-day shalt thou be *with Me* in Paradise!" The thief has gone up with Wisdom, as a sample to the heavens of what had been gathered from below—and God Himself can come down to make the cross of Christ a mercy seat (see Rom. iii. 25) and proclaim Himself in righteousness a just God and the Justifier of him that believeth in *Jesus*.

By the side of *this* Wisdom (as in 1 Cor. i.) all the wisdom of man is foolishness with God, and rejected by Wisdom's children too. "Let no man deceive himself. If any man seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise" (1 Cor. iii. 18). "Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice! Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of man; O ye simple, understand wisdom; and ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart." (Prov. viii. 1, 4, 5). *This* Wisdom that God possessed from the beginning for Himself, He now makes, in sovereign grace and divine holiness, to be *unto us* (who are Wisdom's children) our wisdom, and

makes this Christ as suited to us at the end, as He was to God at the beginning, of His ways. For 1 Cor. i. 30 it is the hand of God who closes up the circle of our blessedness, by standing in the midst of Wisdom and all her children and saying, "Of Him are ye *in* Christ Jesus, who of *God* is made *unto us* wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord." May we not be *unready* to justify this Word made flesh—our Saviour, Christ and Lord—in all the ways of His own delights with His children in the habitable part of the earth. May we glory in the Lord *below* and get *outside* every person and place and thing, that usurps His name and title, till He comes for "His own" and be justified by us, in the presence of principalities and powers in the high places of the heavens. The woman of the city who was a sinner brought the precious ointment and anointed Wisdom for herself in the house of the Pharisee, till the day comes when He will be anointed with the oil of gladness above all His fellows in the courts above!



GOD'S GREAT ORDINANCE.

We may have observed in John's Gospel the zealous and decided way in which the Lord Jesus sets aside all honour which man might bring to Him, in order that He may establish the grace of

God, or the love of the Father, to poor sinners. In that Gospel, He shines in the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father, as full of grace ; and He will not shine in any other glory. Men may propose to honour Him as a Teacher of heavenly secrets, as a Doer of wonders, as One suited to be great in the world, as a Judge or as a King ; but He sets all aside with marked and indignant earnestness, and will be received only as the witness of the Father, the minister of grace to sinners.

This gives character to the Lord's way in the Gospel by John.

In a corresponding way, we may see how zealously, so to speak, all through Scripture, God sets aside all that would stand alone as in company with Christ to share His place with Him (and, still more, all that would dare or affect to *displace* Him,) that He may fix and establish Him as His one great Ordinance.

There is, let me say, a very blessed correspondency between these two things. In John's Gospel, or during His ministry here among us, Christ the the Son is zealous in hiding Himself, that the grace of God, the secret of the bosom of the Father, may appear : and God, at all times, during the different dispensations, is zealous that CHRIST, and CHRIST ONLY, should be accepted and honoured as His own one great Ordinance.

Of this latter truth, I would notice some striking pledges and witnesses, as we pass down the current of Scripture.

Nadab and Abihn, with bold and infidel daring, set aside the fire which had come down from heaven. That fire, symbolically, expressed the acceptance of the services of Aaron ; and was, in this way, the seal which God was putting upon Christ and His work : for He is the true Aaron and the true Victim, the Priest and the Sacrifice of God.

The hand of God awfully and peremptorily judges this sin, by slaying them on the spot. Penal fire avenged the strange fire which had displaced the fire which had borne witness to Christ. This is full of meaning. (See Lev. x.)

Moses and Aaron exposed themselves in like manner, though not indeed in like measure. They trespassed against the Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. It was not in the spirit of infidel daring like Nadab and Abihn. No, indeed ; far otherwise. It was, through sudden temptation, under the provoking of the people. But still they did dishonour God's great Ordinance at the water of Meribah. They did not sanctify God in using the rod with the Rock, according to the divine word. Moses spake unadvisedly with his lips. He trespassed against the Rock which followed Israel, and that Rock was Christ ; and that is enough. He and Aaron are judged for this sin. They are told that they shall not bring the people into the land—a judgment which is never repented of. God is not to be moved from avenging the wrongs of Christ upon His choicest servants, be they who

they may, even a Moses and an Aaron. The judgment was pronounced on the spot, and maintained till it was executed to the very letter. There was a great moral distance, I know, and, as I have already said, between the offence of Nadab and his brother, and that of Moses and his brother. The haste and unadvisedness of the latter are surely not to be condemned, as the bold, infidel insult of the former. But still, God avenged the controversy of Christ upon each and all of them. (See Num. xx.)

When we come to New Testament times, we find the same jealousy touching the honours of the Christ in the mind of God. In ignorance, as not knowing what he said, or not knowing any better, Peter, on the holy hill, proposed to give equal place to Moses, Elias, and Jesus. But "the excellent glory" could not be silent then. The honour of Christ is not to suffer at the hand of any one. It may be but ignorance, and not unadvisedness, as with Moses; or infidel presumption, as with Nadab—it may be neither scorn nor temper, but only from want of knowing better. Still, God's hand or God's voice will be ready to avenge the dishonour of His Christ. The voice from the excellent glory lets Peter know that "the beloved Son" alone is to be heard. (See Luke ix.)

Then, what God thus, by hand or voice, began to do in this matter, the Spirit in His vessels continues to do. God in the excellent glory, the Holy Ghost in His vessels, and, I may add, every saint

(walking with God), are one in this zeal and jealousy.

The disciples of John Baptist were somewhat moved by the multitude seeming to pass by their master for the younger Jesus. They resent this—as Joshua, ages before, had done in the cause of his master Moses, when Eldad and Medad began their prophesying. But John, in all gentleness, and yet in all decisiveness, answers this. As in the name of all the prophets, as standing at the end of the line of them, and uttering their mind, he hides himself, that Christ alone may be seen and heard: “A man can receive nothing except it be given him from above”—“He must increase, I decrease,” he says, replying to the words of his disciples. Though but a vessel of the Spirit, though but an Elias, he speaks the language of the excellent glory on the holy hill. The voice of God there called away Moses and the prophets from the eye and from the ear of Peter; so here, John’s word withdraws himself and all his fellow-servants, the Bridegroom’s friends, from the eye and ear of his disciples (and indeed from all beside), that the same “Beloved Son” may alone be known or thought of. “John” and “the excellent glory” have, in this way, the same mind about Jesus the Christ, God’s great Ordinance. (See John iii.) This is all consistent, and all blessed. The glory as on high, and the Spirit in His vessels here, are agreeing together to give all honour to the Son.

After John, we listen to the epistles; each of

them, in its way, does this same service. It is jealous over Christ, careful to maintain His place and honours for Him alone. But in that to the Hebrews, we see this purpose prevailing in the mind of the Spirit throughout : I may say it gives its character to that epistle.

That epistle is a setting aside one thing after another, in order to leave the Lord Jesus, the Christ, God's great Ordinance, only before us ; and having brought Him in, to keep Him there ; and each thing, as it comes up, is set aside with a *strong, decided hand*, as in ancient days, the days of Nadab and Abihn, or of Moses and Aaron.

Angels are first withdrawn from our sight, and He, who has obtained a more excellent name than they, is brought in ; and this, too, upon the authority of Scripture after Scripture. (Chaps. i., ii.)

Moses is then set aside, as but a servant in the house of another, and He, Jesus the Christ, the Son, is brought in as lord over His own house. (Chap. iii.)

Joshua is to give place, as one who gave Israel no rest, while Jesus, the true Joshua, is revealed as giving God's own rest to us. (Chap. iv.)

Aaron, the priest, is then shown as yielding to Christ, the true Melchisedec, the Priest in the power of an endless life. (Chaps. v.-vii.)

The old covenant vanishes before that covenant of which Christ is the Mediator, and which will abide for ever. (Chap. viii.)

The sanctuary under the law is taken down, and the better and more perfect one, where Christ serves, is raised in the stead of it. (Chap. ix.)

The victim provided for the altar by the law is slain no more, and the one sacrifice of Christ is established in its efficacy for ever. (Chap. x.)

Thus, God's great Ordinance is set in its place. Christ is brought in, and all, one after another, have to go out. Angels, Moses, Joshua, Aaron, the old covenant, the first tabernacle, the legal sacrifices, are made to leave the scene, that He and He alone may fill it, and being brought in, after this manner, by the Spirit, Christ is set before us for ever—as we read just at the end of the Epistle, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.”

All is thus in earnest and consistent jealousy around Jesus, from first to last. The hand of God avenging, the voice of the Father rebuking, the Spirit in His living vessels or in His written oracles renouncing, all slight upon Him, the Christ of God, God's one great Ordinance.

And what has thus been done by the divine hand and voice, and by the Holy Ghost in His authorized, authoritative ministers, is still done, and that every day and all the earth over, by all blood-bought, ransomed sinners. The faith of the saint is one, with all beside, in this jealousy.

Paul, as a saint, will say, as Paul, as an inspired teacher, will teach, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

And again, "Christ is all." John will say, with intense jealousy watching over the name of Jesus, "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed (lit. 'salute him')." This jealousy touching Him, this glorying only in Him, is the common instinctive property of every renewed mind, the inwrought, and thus, indeed, the natural sense and judgment of every saved soul. When I say "natural" I mean as being "born again."

What harmonies are these! Harmonies of heaven and of earth, of all times and dispensations, of the excellent glory and of poor earthen vessels! And the harmonies that utter the song or form the music, take for their subject a theme of loftiest conception, and of most precious and joyous meaning—the glory and worth of the Lord Jesus, the Christ of God, who is to know no one to emulate Him throughout the eternal ages.



HEBREWS.

There is a divine wisdom stamped upon every part of the word of God, which needs only the key to its understanding and a heart subject to God, in order to the perception and the precious enjoyment of it.

In this epistle that wisdom shines with peculiar brightness; while the importance of the subjects

upon which its rays are concentrated gives it a special claim upon the mind.

Sacrifice, priesthood and religious ordinances—the subjects of this Epistle—are elements, one might almost say, for which there is a natural affinity in the human mind, almost independently of the adventitious circumstances of rudeness or intellectual culture, the possession of a divine revelation, or what men call natural religion. They are elements which make their appeal to the conscious necessity of man, whether that necessity is measured by the scattered notices of traditional truth or by the perfect revelation of the word of God.

Thus the immense practical importance of this Epistle will at once be seen, since its object is to define the character of these elements, and to give them their just place and force according to the light of the gospel of the grace of God. Everything of the character of *divinely*-appointed ordinances that ever had a claim upon the conscience, is here taken up and treated of with a wisdom essentially divine.

The circumstances of the persons to whom this Epistle was addressed gave the natural occasion (so to speak) for the application of this divine wisdom given to the apostle. These circumstances are forcibly expressed in Rom. ix. 4, 5. "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.”

The *manner* in which this wisdom is applied can however be only understood by a consideration of the Epistle itself.

Generally, it may be said, that its design is to prove an entire abrogation of the whole range of religious ordinances—ordinances that had been *divinely*-appointed, be it remembered. But the *way* in which it is shown they are abrogated is that in which this wisdom is conspicuous, and reflects the most wonderful light on the person and work and offices of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is striking to notice by what terms the Spirit of God characterizes everything connected with a divinely-appointed ritual, after the work of Christ, by which it was abrogated, is accomplished.

In its first constitution there was no latitude permitted, as it was said to Moses, “Look that thou make them after their pattern which was showed thee in the mount:” and this on the very ground that “the law was a shadow of good things to come.” But now, since the work of Christ is accomplished, they are characterized as “meats and drinks and divers washings, carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.”

Now these are superseded, as the Epistle shows, not by an array of more spiritual ordinances, but by showing that their whole meaning, and harmony, and force are concentrated in the person and work,

the position and offices of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And when it is considered that all which is called religion (in these days), apart from the blood of Christ and a conscience purged by His sacrifice, is composed of these ordinances, it will readily be conceived how important is the bearing of our Epistle; for its express object is to take up the whole means (of God's appointment) by which man could have to do with God, and to show that in their abrogation the believer now, *through the means of their putting away*, is brought into the nearest possible connection with God, and into an entire dissociation from the world in which these ordinances had their place. So entirely is this so, that the position of the Christian is only to be expressed, according to the typical language of the Epistle, so that of "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us, *through the veil*:" that is to say, the most unquestioned right of immediate access to God, on the one side, and on the other, as to the world, whether religious or profane, it is but the "going forth therefore *unto HIM*, without the camp, bearing *His* reproach."

In the first two chapters of the Epistle we have everything on which this hinges. As plainly the glory of the person of Christ is essentially connected with His sacrifice, which is the foundation of all. But then it is *Christ* which is presented to us, and not merely a doctrine. But it is *Christ* as filling out these types, bringing the heart to see their

meaning in Him, and in His work, which draws as naturally to Him, *where He is*, and thus sustains us, instead of those ordinances which are but the shadows of that which in its reality is seen in Christ.

The principle thus indicated, the study of the Epistle will supply the rest.



A CHOSEN VESSEL.

CHAPTER I.

THE VESSEL IN THE POTTER: THE POTTER IN THE VESSEL.

“Then I went down to the potter’s house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.” (Jer. xviii. 3, 4.)

“Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?” (Rom. ix. 21.)

It is of immense interest and profoundly instructive to us, to trace the history of souls in the word of God. Not only does this interest grow upon us in apprehending His dealings with “men of like passions as ourselves;” but in such a study we learn what God Himself is, in His unspeakable goodness and mercy: One who never withdraws His gifts, nor repents of His calling; and who never falters in His purpose until it is accomplished fully; in vessels “which he afore hath prepared

unto glory, even us whom he hath called ; not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.”

In all this work His sovereignty shines conspicuously. Nay, He would have us accord to Him His own place in this ; who “worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” He has a right to do as He pleases, which man has not. Man would seek to bind God to certain laws of his own, and so fetter His sovereign will, as to refuse that He should act outside them, but once we know that all our blessing hinges upon His absoluteness—and that this absoluteness is pleased to display itself in mercy, in which He delights—all is changed. In fact, beloved reader, we are shut up to this in God. We have no more right to *claim* our soul’s salvation from Him, than we have power to change places with Him on His throne of glory ! We may have grace given to *surrender* this supposed claim ; to put ourselves before Him, conscious that He has a right to do just as it pleases Him. We may find, too—nay, we shall find, that our very title to mercy is the absence of any ! and that rest of soul is found in His *nature* itself—which, had He not been pleased to reveal to us, in Christ, we never even would have known.

He was pleased to create a world, to set it revolving in space amongst the countless orbs which shine in the heavens around us. He was pleased to allow sin and death to enter that fair scene. Who can reply ? He was pleased to choose and to call a people out of it, and to permit them to destroy

themselves, while He, with long suffering, bore with them "till there was no remedy." He was pleased to send His Son to endure the cross and bear His wrath. Who was before Him in all this? Not one! In all things He wrought: He permitted; He ordered; and it is He who challenges the stubborn heart which would say, "Why doth he yet find fault, for who hath resisted his will?" It is He who deigns to stoop to the reply, "Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?" (Rom. ix. 20.)

Have we ever stood in the potter's house, and beheld him, as he wrought on the wheels? The workman takes the lump of clay; he presses it to the wheel; the wheel revolves before his eye. Where now (let me ask) is the vessel? It is in the mind of the potter, before it is formed: the design is there. His fingers shape the mass before him: gradually it grows up before his eye: gradually the thought in his mind is transferred to the clay, and it rises up before him, and the thoughts hitherto unexpressed, grow into the vessel which his fingers mould.

He sees a flaw, an imperfection in the clay. Others, beholding, have not detected it, as with the artist's eye. He crushes the clay under his hand into a shapeless mass again. And again his fingers mould and fashion it into his design. Again and again defects appear. Again and again the clay is reduced to a shapeless mass, until at

last it rises, in perfection of design before him ; his eye surveys it with satisfaction and pride : and he removes it from the wheel to take its place with the choice things of the earth around.

Where now is the potter ? Where was the vessel before he began ? It was in the potter ! Where now is the potter ? He is in the vessel ! All that his mind designed and wrought is there seen. The vessel is fit for that which he had intended.

And this is the history of the soul. The clay is in the Potter's hand. His fingers fashion it, and it is marred ; the clay needs more of His patient manipulation and skill. It is not yet smooth and even, nor pliable to His hand. He crushes it time after time. The perfect vessel stood before His mind and purpose ere His hand had taken the clay, and placed it on the wheel. But when all is done, He has transferred His thought with unerring skill to the clay ; the Potter is now seen in His handiwork ; and it is a vessel of mercy, which He afore has prepared for glory.

How important, as these crushings take place, is the need of the interpretation of the skilful workings of the hand of the Potter ! How often are the lessons misunderstood ; or not apprehended at all ! In the history of souls in the Word these actions are seen ; the results are reached. In them we read the history of His dealings with our own souls, and the handiwork of God. We look then for the lines of beauty, resulting from His

hand ; we yield ourselves to the things which happen ; we see the end of the Lord : we know how it is that all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to His purpose.

As a Potter (*Yatsar*) the Lord God took of the dust of the ground, in the first creation ; and fashioned it into a man ; and then “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life ; and man became a living soul.” But the vessel was marred. Again the divine Potter takes of the same lump, and puts forth afresh His skill, and forms a vessel of mercy, for eternal glory : a new creation in “Christ.”

(*To be continued, D. V.*)



EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

“... Truth is eternal and love endures for ever ; both are in our precious Saviour : let us hold them fast through grace. In these last days everything comes out more plainly as the dawn of the day draws on ; I can say that the truth of eternal things has a reality that it has never had. Christ becomes more and more everything ; the things which perish have only an appearance. We have always to fight, but that which is not seen is eternal and is ours by grace. May Christ dwell in our hearts by faith...”

BECAUSE OF HIS IMPORTUNITY.

(*Luke xi. 8; xviii. 1.*)

Wilder, Father, grows the tempest !
Darker still, the night comes on ;
Every earthly hope has vanished !
Every earthly joy has gone,

I was growing faint and weary,
Watching, waiting for the day
To rise, within a loved one,
'Neath Thy Spirit's quick'ning ray.

But the clouds were growing darker,
Hope had well nigh left my soul ;
For my prayers were still unanswer'd,
And my loved one not "made whole."

Then a voice came through the darkness,
Through the gathering shades of night ;
"Because of his importunity,"
The Father *rose at night.*

Faith may be but weak and wav'ring,
Hope may have well nigh fled ;
Still, "Ask and it shall be giv'n you,"
Were the words that Jesus said.

Still watch, still wait, still hope, still pray,
And never slack thy grasp,
Until the Father pours thee down
The blessing thou hast ask'd.

Oh ! blessed Lord, it was Thy voice
Came through the thick'ning gloom
And strewed those words of comfort o'er
The pathway to the tomb !

'Twas Thou did'st bid me watch and wait,
 To catch Thy smile of love—
 And bid me “pray and not to faint,”
 But fix my eyes above.

And now my heart is cheered—refreshed—
 And prayers again I raise ;
 In full assurance, in *Thy time*,
 Thou'lt turn my prayer to praise.



EARLY TRAINING.

“*A time to plant.*” “*In the morning sow thy seed,*” &c.

A few years ago a company of Indians were captured on the western frontier. Among them were stolen children. They had been with the savages for years. Word was sent throughout the region, inviting all who had lost children to come and see if, among the captives, they could recognize their own. A long way off was a woman who had been robbed of a boy and a girl. With mingled feelings of hope and fear she came ; with throbbing heart she approached the group. They were strange to her. With the dull feeling of despair at her heart she was turning away, when she paused, choked back her tears, and, in soft, clear notes, began a simple song she used to sing to her little ones of Jesus and heaven. Not a line was completed before a boy and a girl sprang from the group, exclaiming, “Mamma ! mamma !” So lives a mother's early influence in the hearts of her children.

THE RELATIONSHIPS OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN IN THE LIGHT OF CHRISTIANITY.

(*Ephes. vi. 1-4.*)

How interesting it is to see the children of believers introduced as objects of the Holy Spirit's care, and viewed as subjects of the exhortations in the Lord, which belong to those who are within, who are no longer in this world, of which Satan is the prince. Sweet and precious comfort to the parent, that he may look upon them as having a right to this position, and a part in those tender cares which the Holy Ghost lavishes on all who are in the house of God! The apostle marks the importance which God attached, under the law, to this duty. It is the first command with which He linked a promise. Verse 3 is only the quotation of that which he alludes to in verse 2.

The exhortation to fathers is also remarkable—that they should not provoke their children; that their *hearts* should be turned towards them; that they should not repel them, nor destroy that influence which is the strongest guard against the evil of the world. God forms the heart of children around this happy centre: the father should watch over this. But there is more. The christian father (for it is always those within to whom he speaks) ought to recognize the position in which, as we have seen, the children are placed, and to bring them up under the yoke of Christ in the discipline

and admonition of the Lord. Christian position is to be the measure and the form of the influences which the father exercises, and of the education which he gives his children. He treats them as brought up for the Lord, and as the Lord would bring them up.

It will be remarked, that in the relationships we are considering (as well as that of wives with their husbands and of servants with their masters) it is on the side from which submission is due that the exhortations begin. This is the genius of Christianity in our evil world, in which man's will is the source of all the evil, expressing his departure from God to whom all submission is due. The principle of submission and of obedience is the healing principle of humanity: only God must be brought into it, in order that the will of man be not the guide after all. But the principle that governs the heart of man in good, is always and everywhere obedience. I may have to say that God must be obeyed rather than man; but to depart from obedience is to enter into sin. A man may have, as a father, to command and direct; but he does it ill if he do it not in obedience to God and to His word. This was the essence of the life of Christ: "I come to do thy will, O my God." Accordingly the apostle begins his exhortations with regard to relationships by giving the general precept: "Submit yourselves one to another," adding "in the fear of Christ" (corrected reading), that, in the obedience rendered, the Lord may be before the

heart. This renders order easy, even when the order of institutions and of authority may fail. Submission, moral obedience, can never in principle be wanting to the true Christian. It is the starting-point of his whole life. He is sanctified unto the obedience of Christ (i Pet. i. 2).

It is beautiful to see the way in which divine doctrine enters into the details of life, and throws the fragrance of its perfection into every duty and every relationship ; how it acknowledges existing things, as far as they can be owned and directed by its principles, but exalts and enhances the value of everything according to the perfection of those principles ; by touching not the relationships but the man's heart who walks in them ; taking the moral side, and that of submission, in love and in the exercise of authority which the divine doctrine can regulate, bringing in the grace which governs the use of the authority of God.



THE POWER OF FAITH.

(*1 Sam. i. 24 ; ii. 10.*)

It is only as we enter into the future that we have power to walk firmly in the right path in the present. It is what is beyond the present scene that must take possession of the heart, and must form the basis of our spiritual power, here in the midst of this scene ; but it is wonderful what power that gives if the heart is in it.

There are almost similar words used here as in Mary's song in Luke i. There is the greatest possible human weakness in both these cases, but we have also what gives mighty power, and that is *faith*. We have need to go on into what is before us, if we are to go on rightly in the present (*cf.* 2 Cor. iv. 18 ; v. 7 ; Heb. xi. 1). Those who shone in this way were generally those who had a large grasp of God's purposes with His people. This is a remarkable utterance for a woman, such a burst of praise and intelligence. It brings out the full force of that word, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant." The glory was about to depart from Israel ; but in the midst of it all we have a woman of faith, and it was her *own* faith, for neither Elkanah or Eli entered into it. Hannah's faith went far beyond all the ruin. It was not merely the birth of a little child, but it was that God was about to bring in a deliverance for Israel and the whole creation of God. "My heart rejoiceth in *the Lord*:" she is outside the immediate circumstances. The last notes of her psalm go on to the extremity of time, and God's purpose as regards His creation. It is important for us not to border our thoughts by the little circumstances with which we are surrounded ; God has counsels concerning the church, the world, the creation, and we can take up these things in spirit. There is not a single promise that God has made in His word that is not now fulfilled to us in Jesus Christ.

Every promise of God is mine in Christ Jesus. What enables us to keep the word of His patience but the certainty that all these things are mine already? We are not here merely as those who are hoping for an uncertain thing, we have the confirmation of the promise in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Six or seven times over Samuel is spoken of as the one who is in the house of the Lord, ministering there, and *growing* there. How few in Israel thought anything about Samuel then, or connected him with the overthrow of the Philistines, or with the establishment of God's counsel. And when Simeon took the Lord up in his arms, who connected the coming day of glory with that little child? *Faith only*. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and a wonderful secret it is—a wonderful thing to be in His secret counsels and to cherish them. We might be disheartened if we looked at things around us; but look at Hannah's faith and Mary's faith—hearts bursting forth in praise, and looking on to the end of time. Only hold all the simple principles, and let the circumstances be what they may, we have Christ at the right hand of God—the anchor of the soul and we have the secret of the Lord, His thoughts and counsels. And do not let us get narrowed into our little circumstances, but remember that we are bound up with all the interests of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A CHOSEN VESSEL.

(Continued from page 20.)

CHAPTER II.

THE END OF MAN'S HISTORY.

“Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?”

There was but one man on earth (once a child of Adam) who could say, “Be ye followers together of me” (Phil. iii. 17); and this without any qualifying word. This man was the apostle of the Gentiles—Saul of Tarsus; afterwards called Paul. In this he does not speak to us as an apostle, armed with the power and authority of Christ; but as a Christian—the leader or representative man, of the whole profession of Christianity; than whom none knew better when to assert and to prove his apostolic office, nor better how and when to lay it aside. He lays it aside here in this remarkable expression, as well as in the epistle generally, in which it is found.

There are other passages where he uses language apparently of like significance, but to which he adds some qualifying words: “Be ye followers of me, as I am also of Christ”* (1 Cor. xi. 1, etc.). But the difference is very great, even without entering on the meaning of the words in the original tongue. In *this*, he is inculcating the *surrender* of

* This verse belongs more correctly to the close of chapter x. and of the line of truth there spoken.

all things for another's wealth : this Christ ever did, and in this he followed Him. But in *this* (Phil. iii. 7-14) he runs the Christian race for the goal, casting all behind his back, and looking to "win Christ, and be found in him," to be like Him in full conformity ! He runs to *attain* all, at the end. This Christ never did. He surrendered all indeed ; but never ran to attain, for He was always *Himself*—whether here or on high.

I need not dwell on the fact, which is of course clear ; that whether asserting his apostolate, or laying it aside, his writings have each and all the same authority as the word of God. These fine and touching distinctions will only be the more valued, when apprehended by the spiritual mind.

Let us look then upon him as a Christian ; a heavenly man ; a vessel of mercy ; a " chosen vessel unto me ;" as the representative, or typical man, of the whole scheme of Christianity ; a vessel filled with the Spirit, who can say, " Be ye followers together of me, and mark them which walk, so as ye have us for a type" (*typos*).

First of all, let us see the moment, in the history of the world, when the " chosen vessel" was called. This imparts great significance to the manner and method of his call ; as well as to the state of mankind at that moment, out of which he is separated to Christ.

We will refer first to the parable of the fig-tree planted in the vineyard—used by the Lord Jesus in Luke xiii. The hour of Israel's judgment wa

fast approaching ; yet their eyes were such as "see not." They had made their Lord their "adversary" (Matt. v. 55 ; Luke xii, 58) in rejecting Him, and He counsels them, if even so, to agree with their adversary "quickly, as thou art in the way," lest when the end came, the adversary would deliver them to the judge, and the judge to the officer—the officer to the prison ; from which there was no escape till the last mite was paid. Talking of judgment thus, some mentioned a *partial* one which had fallen on those Galileans who had been slain by Pilate. They spake of it as of the ordinary news of the day, and with the not uncommon thought, that a special visitation of such a kind from God's hand, only marked those upon whom it fell, as deserving it beyond their fellows. They deemed that such was the sign of God's outwardly and manifestly governing the world, so that they could approve or understand. The Lord at once applies this to the conscience of all around ; as also the case of the eighteen persons on whom the tower of Siloam fell ; saying that judgment would now be *universal*, and not *partial*, and that unless they repented, they would *all* likewise perish, not merely those of their brethren whom they were bringing up for His judgment.

He then speaks the parable of the fig-tree, planted in the vineyard (chap. xiii. 6-9). This was a picture of what was passing around at the moment, and of its end. For three years the Lord had come, in His ministry, seeking fruit from His

fig-tree—and finding none, He saith to the dresser of the vineyard, “ Behold these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none ; cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground ?” Here was the sentence in righteousness. The fig-tree was not only fruitless, but mischievous, “ a cumberer of the ground.” But grace said, “ Let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it ; and if it bear fruit, well ; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.” This extra period of trial was the fresh ministry of the Holy Ghost sent down at Pentecost, and ended with the martyrdom of Stephen, when they finally refused Christ in glory. This closed the history of Israel, as of man, under the dealings of God.

This extra year of grace was marked by every sign and pleading of the Lord with His people, until refused. When we open the Acts of the Apostles (chap. i.), we find the Lord Jesus in resurrection amongst His disciples. Their hearts still lingered over the hopes of Israel—uncertain as to the end. “ Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel ?” He replied, “ It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you ; and ye shall be my witnesses, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the uttermost part of the earth.”

In the enactment of the laws of a country, when a statute becomes obsolete—the circumstances

having changed under which it was given—the legislature repeals the old law, and then enacts a new one adapted to the fresh condition of things.

When the Lord had sent out the twelve to preach the kingdom of heaven to Israel (Matt. x.), the mission was confined and narrow. He was “a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers” (Rom. xv. 8). All the promises to Israel were fulfilled in Himself. Their mission was, “Go not into the way of the *Gentiles*,”—there was yet no word for them. “And into any city of the *Samaritans* enter ye not.” This mongrel race, half heathen, half Jew, had no promises from God any more than the Gentiles. “But,” said the Lord, “Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of *Israel*.” They were the objects of this narrow, but necessary and preliminary mission. And yet it did not even embrace all Israel, “For they are not all Israel, who are of Israel” (Rom. ix. 6). Nay, “Into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire *who in it is worthy*” ! Narrowed up thus, was this mission, to the worthy ones—the godly remnant of the people. But the nation having refused Jesus, and his atoning work having been accomplished on that cross, where His own people had placed Him by Gentile hands, all was now over on the ground of promises to Israel.

But Christ had risen ; triumphant over all His foes. The boundless grace of God was set free to bless all men in righteousness through His work

on the cross. The old enactment of Matthew x. must now be changed. The sphere was too narrow for this grace to flow out ; and as His footfall grew lighter, as it were, as He neared the top of Olivet, He turns round to a lost and ruined world of sinners—giving His disciples in the breadth of His heart, their new and fresh enactment. They were to begin at Jerusalem, where faith was dead : they were to carry the mission onwards to Samaria, where faith was corrupted for centuries ; and to the uttermost parts of the earth, where there was no faith at all ! And the grand answer to every state of man would be found in a *risen Christ*, of whom they were witnesses.

May we not say that these three concentric circles give us the key to the Acts of the Apostles, in the twenty-seven chapters which follow ? The mission began at Jerusalem (chaps. ii.-vii.) ; it went out to Samaria (chap. viii.), and to the uttermost parts of the earth, in principle, as to the whole creation, with Paul, in the chapters which follow, to the end (Cf. Col. i. 23).

These were His last words on earth : His farewell words. "When he had spoken these things while they beheld he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly (*atenizo*) toward heaven, as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel ; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven ? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so

come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts i. 9-11).

The special year of grace was to be ministered to the fig-tree : the Lord would not therefore yet take them definitely out of their Jewish hopes. These "men of Galilee" have their eyes diverted *from* the heavens towards which they were gazing. They were to keep their eyes downwards on the earth : Jesus would "so" come again to them ; outside the cloud He would be seen ; and His feet would stand upon the mount of Olives (Zech. xiv. 4), from which He had just ascended in their sight. This would be His coming to Israel, with the ensigns of the kingdom, and earthly glory.

They could not yet see (by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven) the inside of the cloud, which Stephen saw, when, filled with the Spirit, he saw the heavens opened, as he stedfastly gazed (*atenizo*) into it. All then was over finally, and instead of angels diverting his eyes *from* the heavens, as in Acts i., the Holy Ghost directs his eyes *to* heaven, as the sphere to which he now belongs, and Jesus, first sustaining him in the hands of his murderers, receives his spirit, and all closes with man on that ground for ever.

In Paul we will see further still, how he takes his origin from the glory of God, now seen in the face of Jesus Christ.

The Holy Ghost was sent down from heaven in chapter ii. The witnesses—in chapter iii.—Peter and John, go upto the temple at the "hour of prayer,

being the ninth hour." A certain man was daily carried, and laid at the "Beautiful" gate : a cripple from his birth ; who begged his bread. This was the picture of Israel. "Beautiful" as was the spot where they were, they were like this lame beggar, and had never really walked ; and were bereft too, of Israel's blessings of "basket and store," of "silver and gold." Their history now, as under probation had closed, for the man was "above forty years old" (Chap. iv. 22). Forty years spoke of their moral end as a people under the old state of things.

But that "ninth hour" had witnessed another prayer, from the heart of Jesus on the cross, and darkness had covered the whole land, from the sixth to the ninth hour (Luke xxiii. 44)—the "hour of prayer" and of the "evening sacrifice" too (Dan. ix). At that hour Jesus had committed His spirit to His Father, and the veil was rent from the top to the bottom. Judaism was over ; God was fully revealed ; man's sin had come to its fullest height, as he there stood face to face with God. But the sins of His people were borne at that moment, and the throne of righteousness eternally satisfied.

"Silver and gold have I none," said Peter, "But such as I have give I thee ; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." And immediately the "lame man leaped as an hart," and he entered the temple "walking and leaping and praising God." God was ready, through

Jesus, to do this for the whole nation of Israel, had they then received His Son, and bowed in faith to His name.

Peter now addresses Israel (vs. 12-26), offering them, on their repentance thus, that the Christ they had refused would return from the heavens, and that the times of restitution of all things of which the prophets had spoken, would come, and the nation would be fully blest. The answer to this is in the following chapters. In chapter iv., they put the two witnesses in prison—and in chapter v., the whole twelve are also put there. Then in chapters vi., vii., Stephen, the last great witness, summed up their history as the rejecters of every deliverer God had ever sent. Joseph, they had sold into Egypt: Moses, they had asked, “Who made thee a ruler and a judge?” They had slain the Just One, as their prophets had foretold; and now they resisted the Spirit of God! A broken law; stoned prophets; a slain Christ; and a resisted Spirit closed the tale. As they “stopped their ears and ran upon him” they were like the “deaf adder, that stoppeth her ear” at the voice of “charmings, charming never so wisely” (Ps. lviii). Stephen’s spirit passes away to Christ; and Christ, standing and ready to return, now sits down at God’s right hand, waiting till His enemies are made His footstool (Heb. x.).

Saul of Tarsus, then a young man, was present at Stephen’s death, and “kept the raiment of them that slew him.”

The Sanhedrim was becoming effete and old. Its energy, hitherto fiercely waged in vain against the cross, was growing feeble, when this young man came upon the scene. One of great learning and unspotted life—and probably of the highest caste among the Jews, excelling all amongst his people in the religion of the Pharisee; with perhaps the finest energy given to man—he had been welcomed by the great Sanhedrim of Israel, and entrusted with authority to extirpate the religion of the Nazarene! With a zeal for the God of his fathers beyond all others at that day, he stood by when the final stroke was put to the rejection of Jesus, in the stoning of the proto-martyr Stephen. And lest the murderers should be impeded, by their long Eastern garments, he “kept the raiment of them that slew him,” and “consented unto his death.”

The whole christian assembly was then broken up in Jerusalem, and scattered everywhere, “except the apostles.” Saul must now carry out his commission elsewhere, and Damascus was to have been the next scene of his zeal.

But before I refer to this, I would note the touching grace which shines out in the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

During the past history of Israel God had sought to find a response in their heart under the culture of His hand; whether, as under the law, or the prophets, the Baptist, or Christ. All had failed: there was no answer in their heart either

to the thunderings of the law, or to the pleadings of the prophetic ministry ; nor had the grace of Christ drawn forth other than the cry at the end, " Away with him ; crucify him." The final witness was seen in the church, formed at Pentecost, and the voice of the Holy Ghost proclaimed the " wonderful works of God." This followed, as we have seen, till the seventh chapter of the Acts closed the trial that sought for good out of Israel's heart, or for an answer there to perfect goodness in the heart of God. Now the turning-point had come ; and it would be no more sought to *produce* good from man's heart ; but to *put* good into it by a new ministry inaugurated in the conversion of Saul. But there was still something to be met which God would not pass over, and this we find in chapter eight of the Acts of the Apostles.

A child of Ham had travelled a toilsome journey across the deserts of Africa, from the abodes of Cush, and with a burdened heart, to " Judah, where God was known" (Ps. lxxvi. 1, 2). He had heard of the God of Israel, and of the Holy city where He might be found. Up to this the stream of mercy from God's throne had been poured forth upon Jerusalem. But Jerusalem, refusing the " sure mercies of David," had diverted the stream. Still, it had not ceased to flow, though its course was changed. It turns its course now to unclean Samaria, and onward still, till it reached the deserts beyond. There, this Ethiopian

was seen, returning to his own land, with his soul unsatisfied, for Jerusalem's day had passed ; she "knew not the day of her visitation." But God is "a rewarder of those that diligently seek him," and this seeking heart shall not have sought in vain. Philip draws near at the Spirit's bidding, and hears this man read the prophet Esaias. Neither wealth nor learning, nor worldly place, had given him the riches he was about to find—treasured in the book which he had brought away from Jerusalem. Philip began at the same scripture which he read, and "evangelized to him Jesus." The Person who alone could satisfy his soul was found, and he goes "on his way rejoicing." Ethiopia had not stretched out her hand in vain to God ! (Psalm lxxviii.). God did not change His governmental ways in placing the race of Ham under degradation (Gen. ix.), in the blackened skin of the negro race : but while leaving all questions of government as they were, He makes—not the face—but the heart and conscience of the negro as white as snow, by the blood of the Lamb !

I read this chapter, in this light, as a parenthesis : thrown in between the first notice of Saul at Stephen's death, and his journey to Damascus (chap. ix.). It is, beloved, as if God would say, even when this solemn scene of martyrdom had closed for ever the ground on which He would have dealt with Israel ; and when he was about to "cast them out of his lap," and to inaugurate a

new order of things—as if He would say, if there be a seeking soul in the wide earth, even the child of a cursed race, that soul shall not seek Me in vain. I am a rewarder of all that diligently seek Me.

But when I come to Saul I find the other side, illustrative of this new departure from the old ways ; and in him is exemplified the word—afterwards written by his own pen—“ I am found of them that sought me not ” (Rom. x.).

(To be continued, D. V.)



A MARVELLOUS BOOK.—No other book in existence of such varied styles, composed by so many hands, and occupying so long a period in its compilation, is marked by so marvellous a unity. A single great scheme underlies, traverses and interpenetrates the Bible, a great and connected system of truth, as bone and cartilage the human frame ; a single, high, gracious and inflexible aim pervades this majestic volume from end to end. In principle and essence the faith of David and Paul, Daniel and John, Abraham and Peter, is but one. Genesis and Revelation greet each other across the gulf of ages. God’s word is a unit—a boastful science, a proud, self-satisfied and imperious criticism, to the contrary notwithstanding.—*(Selected.)*

JEHOVAH-JESUS !

Jehovah-Jesus : Man divine,
In whom all Godhead glories shine
 In fullest brightest ray.

Jehovah's fellow, Him Thou art,
Yet of our nature took Thy part,
 To change our night to day.

Jehovah-Jesus : Name of pow'r,
That brought Thee e'en to death's dark hour
 Man's wretched fate to share.
But glorious Victor Thou didst rise,
To bear us with Thee to the skies,
 To dwell in glory fair.

Jehovah-Jesus : Name above
All other names of pow'r and love,
 Omnipotent to save.

Here once for man Thou suffer'd'st loss,
Wore crown of thorn, bore cruel cross,
 That we might glory have.

Jehovah-Jesus : God and Man,
Thy love did'st execute the plan,
 Thy love for us prepared.

Soon shall we see Thee on Thy throne,
Thy righteous sceptre there shall own,
 And all with Thee be shared.

Jehovah-Jesus : Saviour God,
Thy saints shall sing Thy praise aloud,
 Through all eternity.
Each crown before Thy feet be cast,
Each lip proclaim, Thine own blood hast
 Redeemed us unto Thee.

Jehovah-Jesus : Thy blest Name,
Thy saints with reverence proclaim,
 While waiting still for Thee.

Soon, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord,
We'll rise to meet Thee at Thy word ;
 With Thee for ever be !

GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH.

Throughout John's Gospel we may perceive that a sense of the glory of His person is ever present to the mind of Christ. Whether we follow Him from scene to scene of His public ministry (chap. i.-xii.), through His parting words with "His own" (chap. xiii.-xvii.), in the path of His closing sorrows (chap. xviii., xix.), or in resurrection (chap. xx., xxi.), this is so.

This full personal glory that belongs to Him is declared at the very beginning of this Gospel (chap. i. 1), and there recognized by the church, conscious, as she is, that she had discerned it (chap. i. 14). But, as I have just said, it is always present to His own mind. He is in the place where covenant arrangements put Him, and He is doing those services which care for the manifestation of the Father's glory laid on Him; but still He takes knowledge of Himself in the fulness of the Godhead glory that belonged to Him, essentially and intrinsically His. (See ii. 21; iii. 13; iv. 14; v. 23; vi. 46, 62; vii. 37; viii. 58; ix. 38; x. 30, 38; xi. 11, 25; xii. 45; xiv. 15; xvi. 15; xviii. 6; xix. 30; xx. 22)

The Spirit in the saint, after this manner, glorifies Him still. The saint may recognize Him in the place of covenant subjection, or think of Him in His sorrows and sufferings, but (like Himself in the days of His flesh) never loses the sense of that personal glory which is essentially and intrin-

sically His. Christ's own way when He was here, and the saint's present experience, are thus in perfect concord. And when we look a little at the epistles, we shall find something still in harmony—I mean in this particular. The Spirit in the apostles does not meet an injurious treatment of the person of Christ in the same style that He does a wrong dealing with the truth of the gospel. And this difference in style is very significant. For instance, in the Epistle to the Galatians, where the simplicity of the gospel is vindicated, there is a pleading and a yearning in the midst of earnest and urgent reasonings. So there are measures and methods recommended (such as charging, rebuking, stopping the mouth, 1 Tim. i., and Titus i.), and not a summary process and outlawry at once, when Judaizing corruptions are dealt with. But when the person of the Son of God is the thing in hand, when His glory is to be asserted, there is nothing of all this. The style is different. All is peremptory. "They went out from us, because they were not of us." "Receive him not into your house." "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God."* The Spirit, as I may say, holds the decree most sacred, and guards it with instinc-

* The eating of herbs only, and the observing of days, if fully interpreted, are customs which depreciate the gospel, or affect the full beauty of the truth. But such things are to be borne with (Rom. xiv.). But our souls have the full sense of this, that depreciation of the person of the Son would not receive a decree in its favour after this manner.

tive jealousy, "that all should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (John v. 23).

All this about His full divine glory is precious in the thoughts of His people. We are, however, led to look at man in Him also, and through a succession of conditions we see in Him man presented to God with infinite though varied delight and satisfaction. I have, long since, traced Him in the following way, as man in all perfectness :

1. *Born*.—The material, so to speak, moral and physical, is presented in Jesus as the born one. He was a taintless sheaf of the human harvest. Man in Him was perfect as a creature (Luke i. 35).

2. *Circumcised*.—Jesus, in this respect, was under the law, and He kept it, as of course, to all perfection. Man in Him was thus perfect as under law (Luke ii. 27).

3. *Baptized*.—In this character Jesus is seen bowing to the authority of God, owning Him in His dispensations, and man in Him is perfect in all righteousness, as well as under law (Luke iii. 21 ; cf. Matt. iii. 15).

4. *Anointed*.—As anointed, Jesus was sent forth to service and testimony. In this respect man is seen in Him perfect as a servant (Luke iii. 22).

5. *Devoted*.—Jesus surrendered Himself to God, left Himself in His hand to do to His utmost will and pleasure. In Him man was therefore perfect as a sacrifice (Luke xxii. 19, 20. 42).

6. *Risen*.—This begins a series of new conditions in which man is found. This is the first

stage of the new estate. John xii. 31, 32, intimates a new course in man, as here said. The corn of wheat, having fallen into the ground and died, is now capacitated to be fruitful. Man in the risen Jesus is in indefeasible life.

7. *Glorified*.—The risen Man, or man in indefeasible life, wears a heavenly image. The new man has a new or glorious body.

8. *Reigning*.—The risen and glorified Man receives, in due season, authority to execute judgment. Dominion is His. The lost sovereignty of man is regained.

Scripture leads us through this series of contemplations on the Son of man. And though I speak here of the Man, as before I did of the divine glory, yet I divide not the person. Throughout all, it is "God manifest in the flesh" we have before us.

We need to walk softly over such ground, and not to multiply words. On so high a theme, precious to the loving worshiping heart, we may remember what is written, "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin."



JOYING IN GOD AND WAITING FOR CHRIST.

2 THESS. iii. 5.

There are two things, which constitute the joy of a Christian, to be his on the road, and the object constantly before his heart. The first is, the hope of the coming of the Lord; and the second is,

present communion and fellowship with God the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these two cannot be separated without loss to our souls; for we cannot have all the profit without both of them. If we are not looking for the coming of the Lord, there is nothing whatever that can separate us in the same way from this present evil world; neither will Christ Himself be so much the object before the soul; nor yet shall we be able, in the same measure, to apprehend the mind and counsels of God about the world.

Again, if this hope be looked at apart from present communion and fellowship with God, we shall not have present power, the heart being enfeebled from the mind being too much occupied and overborne by the evil around; for we cannot be really looking for God's Son from heaven without, at the same time, seeing the world's utter rejection of Him, and that the world is going wrong; its wise men having no wisdom, and all going on to judgment; the principles of evil loosening all bonds, etc.; and the soul becomes oppressed, and the heart sad; but if through grace, the Christian is in present communion and fellowship with God, his soul stands steady, and is calm and happy before God, because there is a fund of blessing in Him which no circumstances can ever touch or change. The evil tidings are heard, the sorrow is seen, but his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord, which carries him far above every circumstance. Brethren, we all want this. To walk steadily

with God we need both this fellowship and this hope.

I do not believe that a Christian can have his heart scripturally right unless he is looking for God's Son from heaven. There could be no such thing as attempting to set the world right if its sin in rejecting Christ were fully seen, and moreover there never will be a correct judgment formed of the character of the world until that crowning sin be apprehended by the soul. To a Christian who is looking and waiting for Christ to come from heaven, Christ Himself is unspeakably more the object before the soul. It is not only that I shall get to heaven and be happy, but that the Lord Himself is coming from heaven for me, and all that are His with me. It is this that gives its character to the joy of the saint. As Christ Himself says, "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also"—when I find my delight, then shall you find yours also, I with you, and you with me,—“For ever with the Lord.” You may think to find good, or to produce good in man, but you will never find waiting for Christ in man. In the world, the first Adam may be cultivated, but it is the first Adam still; the second Adam will never be found there, being rejected by the world. And it is the looking for this rejected Lord which stamps the whole character and walk of the saints.

Then again, there is another thing connected with my waiting for God's Son from heaven. I have

not yet got with one I love, and while waiting for Him I am going through the world tired and worn with the spirit and character of everything around me ; and the more I am in communion with God, the more keenly shall I feel the spirit of the world to be a weariness to me, although God still upholds my soul in fellowship and communion with Himself. Therefore Paul says in 2 Thess. i., "To you who are troubled, rest with us." So then I get rest to my spirit now in waiting for Christ, knowing that when He comes He will have everything His own way. For the coming of the Lord, which will be trouble to the world, will be to the saints full and everlasting rest. Still, it is not that we are to be "weary and faint in our minds." It is not a right thing to be weary of the service and conflict. Oh, no ! rather let us be victorious every day. Still, it is not rest to be fighting.

However, when walking with God, it is not so much thinking of combat, as joying in God Himself.

This I shall know all the better when I am in the glory ; my soul will be enlarged, and more capable of enjoying what God really is, but it is the same kind of joy I have now as I shall have when He comes to be glorified in His saints ; only greater in degree. And if this joy in God is now in my soul in power, it hides the world from me altogether, and becomes a spring of love to those in the world. For though I may be tired of the combat, still, I feel there are people in the world that need the love

I enjoy, and I desire that they should possess it, as it is the joy of what God is for me that sustains me, and carries me through all the conflict. So that our souls should be exercised on both the fellowship and the hope ; for if I look for Christ's coming apart from this fellowship and communion with God, I shall be oppressed, and shall not go on. When the love of God fills my heart, it flows out towards all those that have need of it, towards saints and sinners according to their need ; for if I feel the exercise of the power of this love in my heart, I shall be going out to serve others, as it is the power of this love that enables me to go through the toil and labour of service, from that attachment to Christ which leads to service, though through suffering for His sake. If my soul is wrapped up in the second Adam, attachment to Christ puts its right stamp upon all that is of the first Adam.

When this love has led out into active service, then the conflict, doubtless, will be found as in 2 Cor. i., where it is present blessing in the midst of trial. But in 2 Thess. i., it is tribulations, and not rest out of it, until the Lord comes ; " that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer." In 2 Cor. i. 3, 4, there is present blessing in the midst of the trial— " who comforteth us in all our tribulation ; " so that if the sufferings for Christ's sake be ours, there are at the same time, the comfortings of God in the soul. How rich a spring of blessing is this in re-

turn for this poor little trouble of mind ! I get God pouring into my soul the revelation of Himself ; I get God communicating Himself to my soul ; for it is really that. I find it to be a present thing ; it comes home to me, to my heart, the very joy of God, God delighting in me, and I in God. He identifies Himself with those who suffer for Him. There is no time for God's coming into a soul like the time of trial, for in no way does He so fully reveal Himself to the soul as when He is exercising it in trial. There is astonishing power in this ; for the amazing power with which Christ is to us present power and consolation is by His coming in, in present living power, even whilst these poor mortal bodies are unchanged. Ours are not yet redeemed with power, though they are bought with a price ; but we have in Christ the life and the power ; and, in spite of all, God is pouring in these consolations when we are in tribulations, shewing the kind of power in Christ by which I am lifted up above every circumstance of trial ; "The Lord direct our hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ."



All praise and glory, Jesus,
 Be Thine for evermore !
 Thou didst from guilt release us,
 Our souls Thou dost restore ;
 And, oh ! Thy grace transcending,
 Its fulness will declare,
 When, from on high descending,
 We meet Thee in the air.

A CHOSEN VESSEL.

(Continued from page 40.)

CHAPTER III.

THE VESSEL CALLED : THE NEW MAN.

“*He is a chosen vessel unto me.*”—Acts. ix. 15.

We thus see the moment in the history of the people and of the world at which we have now arrived. All had closed up for ever in the way of grace presented to be received by Israel, and of Israel's testing to prove what man is.

We must now see more than this in Saul, who comes in, not as a member of the chosen race, the seed of Abraham, but on the common ground of man, “dead in trespasses and sins.” Therefore in him we find embodied the sin of man as a race, in all its varied answers to the dealings of God.

We may possibly know that after God had tested man in paradise, and man had fallen, He tested him out of paradise as a sinner (whose back had been turned against God) for four thousand years. These trials, in broad lines, were: first, by his *conscience* which he received when he fell, and he became lawless and unclean; then under the *law*—and he became a lawbreaker; then by the ministry of Jesus in *grace*, Whom he had crucified and slain; and lastly, by the *Spirit of God* sent down from heaven—Whom he resisted. This was, with many details, the history of the probation of man.

If we now turn to 1 Timothy i. 15, 16, we read, "This is a faithful [or trustworthy] saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth the whole long-suffering [*ten pasan makrothumian*] for a pattern [or delineation] of them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." Here he plainly occupies the first place, as "chief of sinners;" as the man, too, in whom the whole long-suffering of God was displayed; and as the pattern for all who should follow in the faith of Christ. This is worthy of our marked attention. Mark well the expression—"the whole long-suffering!" This embraces that great period between the fall of man—his departure from God at the first, when driven out of paradise—until that long-suffering absolutely closed in the rejected ministry of the Holy Ghost (Acts vii.).

God's long-suffering since then is on other grounds (2 Pet. iii. 9, 15). He has not counselled [*me boulomenos*] that any should perish; but that all should come (or be afforded a place) for repentance. And again, "The long-suffering of the Lord is salvation."

But, in Saul, outwardly spotless in life, we behold the man who could say: 1st, "I have lived in all good conscience unto this day" (Acts xxiii. 1). 2nd, "Touching the righteousness in the law [I am] blameless" (Phil. iii. 6). 3rd, "I verily

thought I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts xxvi. 9). And, 4th, when the martyr Stephen charged the Jews, saying, "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts vii. 51), Saul was there, and Stephen's murderers placed their clothes at his feet, while he, consenting unto Stephen's death, kept the garments of them that slew him! Here, then, we see the embodiment of the whole long-suffering of God in a man, immaculate, outwardly, as he was. Yet, while, with conscience inviolate, and the law's righteousness fulfilled, as far as he himself knew—he persecuted Christ, and with murderous zeal, resisted the Spirit of God: yea, more, a man who could claim, by the Spirit of God, to be, in a superlative manner, the chief of sinners. Because, in his mighty energy, he had undertaken a task, never surpassed in purpose by another, to wipe out the name of the Nazarene from the earth, as a man wipes a dish and turns it upside down!

Armed with the powers of the Sanhedrim, such as they were, and "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," this "*cumberer of the ground*," this fruitless Pharisee, doing evil on every hand, proceeds on his way to Damascus, and God's hand laid hold of the axe, and with one stroke cut down the tree! It had cumbered the ground too long—doing mischief to all around.

But now, let us, with retracing steps, examine the grounds of the attitude of Christ to him as presented in this scene.

His cross was "the judgment of the world" (John xii. 31): man had placed Jesus there with wicked hands. It was the reply of his heart to the *perfection of goodness in God*. It was that in which "the thoughts of many hearts were revealed." The heart of man was there; and the heart of God. The heart of Christ was there; and that of the poor convicted sinner; as well, too, as were the hearts of those who truly loved their Master; but who, when Satan's power—the power of darkness—was over the minds of men, forsook Him and fled away.

But the moment Christ expired, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, as if God was waiting until that moment arrived, to show that the judgment was so fully borne—that the distance between Him and a world of sinners was gone—that He could now come forth and kiss the prodigal in righteousness; and impart new life to the tree which He had cut down, while yet it cumbered the ground. Three days afterwards the tomb where Jesus had lain was rent, to show that He who had removed this distance was also gone. But now (Acts ix.), He rends the heavens and comes forth, proclaiming afresh His true and God-given name of "Jesus"—Jehovah the Saviour: "I am Jesus," the Nazarene, the Saviour of My people from their sins.

Saul, and those that were with him, were journeying onwards to Damascus, with letters to the synagogues, that if he found any of "the way" [*tes hodou*] he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. At this time Christianity had no name. It had come into the world, but was not of it, nor of its ways. It was not Judaism with its ceremonies, instituted of God, though now corrupted by man. It was not heathenism, with its orgies of uncleanness and abomination. It was a strange and heavenly thing, governed by no principle that governed the world. And it had no name; but was termed "the way." Several times in the Acts do we find it so named.*

Of one heart and one soul, and with great grace upon all, there was, in the hearts of those who had been cast out of all on earth, a heavenly purpose, a courage and joy which was not of man. The martyr Stephen, when being crushed to death by the stones of the multitude, could kneel down, and with yearning of soul for his slayers, and without one thought but for their blessing, pray for them, and looking up steadfastly to heaven, commit his spirit to Christ and pass away. Let its disciples be scourged by the rods, and with their feet fast in the stocks, and their bleeding backs on the cold ground of the innermost prison—they would sing praises to the Lord at midnight, instead of murmuring at their lot. Others could count it all joy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus. What name

* Chapters ix. 2; xix. 9, 23; xxii. 4; xxiv. 22.

then could be found for such a creed? There was none. And therefore it was called "the way." And indeed, we may add that it never got its name, till the mocking and witty Antiochians named the disciples "Christians" first, in their city. Called such in sarcasm by man, it was accepted by the Spirit of God from that day. Still, as yet it had no name; and Saul, with his company, bent upon its extermination, turned towards Damascus to find out any there that were of "the way."

In a moment all was changed. "At midday, O King," said the apostle, long afterwards, "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. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest" (Acts xxvi. 13-15).

Here was the solemn end for his conscience. the terrible reply. Christ and Saul were face to face! Saul, in the full flush of energy, in enmity and violence against the Lord; and He, with the calm and touching reply of One whose very answer speaks of mercy. "I," and "Thou!" Personally, individually, alone, and face to face, were Christ and this persecuting and injurious man: this "cumberer of the ground;" the devastator and

waster of the church of God. "I am Jesus:" His mission fulfilled on earth; and in the brightness of the glory above, only seeking such objects as Saul, to display the virtues of salvation! Speak, Saul; let thy voice be heard; the day has not come, when those who refuse to answer now will be "speechless!"

"And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" It is not now the answer of another who knew not his own heart yet—"Lord, *I will* go with thee," etc. Nay, that was the will of man. It is rather, "Lord, what *wilt thou* have me to do?" This soul was converted to Christ. Here was the will of man broken; the will of God alone allowed. This was the instinct and out-speaking of obedience—the first characteristic of the new man. The old tree was cut down to its roots; new life was implanted, through the quickening voice of the Son of God—and at once it struggles for action, even before his conscience was at rest: nay, even while his soul was in an agony.

Blind for days, with the glory of that light; blind to all around, that he may see only what was within his own heart, no food nor drink passed his lips for three days: his soul in anguish might say, "Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord." All this was produced in one little moment, and now to be made good in his soul by a gospel, dating from the throne of God; a gospel by which is declared the Father's estimate of what His Son

has done, when He had died, and risen, and ascended on high: the gospel of the glory of Christ. This son of Benjamin—ravaging “like a wolf,” at midday—soon shall “divide the spoil.”

“They led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.” There, in the isolation of repentance, in the house of Judas, in the street called “Straight,” upon his knees in prayer—so real, that the Lord calls attention to it in that touching interview with Ananias, in the words, “Behold, he prayeth”—this was the second characteristic of the new man. Here was prayer—the expression of dependence, at once heard: this, too, as well as the desire of obedience, before his soul had found rest, or peace with God.

But Ananias—is he prepared for this full expression of mercy to such as Saul? Could he understand the “new wine” of this gospel of the glory, which could come forth and lay hold of such as he? Nay; he remonstrates, “Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints in Jerusalem, and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name.” He cannot but suppose that all was a mistake. Impossible that one like this could be thus laid hold of, as a suited vessel to display the fulness of mercy.

The Lord’s reply to Ananias was this: “Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me for I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake.” And Ananias went his way,

and entered into the house, and putting his hands upon him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord has sent me (Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way that that thou camest), that thou mightest look up, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

Here we have the gospel, carried by Ananias, from the Lord to Saul, removing the fear which had filled his soul ; speaking peace to his troubled conscience ; withdrawing with a tender hand the barbed arrow of conviction ; and the Spirit of God is now received by Saul as a seal of this message of mercy. His eyes, which had hitherto been blinded to all but the darkness within, are now enabled to "look up" [*anablepses*] to the source from which all had come—to the very face of Jesus Christ in glory. Ananias then receives him by baptism : "And straightway he preached Jesus in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." This was a true conversion : the turning round of the whole man : the breaking of his will. The features, too, of the new life, the new man, are at once expressed : peace with God learned, and the Holy Ghost, sealing all home to his soul ; and he could say, as more fully afterwards, "I believed, and therefore have I spoken," as his voice is heard preaching Christ in the synagogues of Damascus.

This was the call of this "chosen vessel unto me." Separated from the people of Israel, as well as from the Gentiles (Acts xxvi. 17), by his conversion from the glory of God on high, where

Christ was ; he is sent forth to be “a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee”—to make known on earth, as sent from Christ in glory, all that he knew of Him who was there. Heavenly in his birth, and heavenly in his testimony, he is the pattern of all who should believe on Jesus afterwards, even from that moment, to life everlasting. Every believer since that day, has taken his birthplace from that glory. The condition of Christ at any moment, determines that of all who belong to Him ; whether as incarnate ; or risen ; or ascended to the glory of God. Such have to bear witness that they belong to that scene, and to Him who is there ; they have to witness that they have been taken out from the people or from the Gentiles, as neither of one, nor of the other, but as heavenly men, who have, like him, to be shewn what they must suffer for His name’s sake, while living in, and passing through a world which rejected Him.

What a wondrous thought, that it is no good that God is seeking from man ! He seeks rather those, who may be the more fitted to display that mercy in which He delights. To “make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us whom he hath called, not out of the Jews only, but also out of the Gentiles.”

(To be continued, D.V.)

“PEACE—MY PEACE.”

JOHN XIV. 27.

Two things are brought before us here. The first is the fact of peace, though there may not be earthly blessing and prosperity, like the Jews, but trouble outwardly ; the second is that which characterizes the peace. “My peace” is what He has Himself, and the extent of it. Being thus characterized, it implies that they had not it while He was with them. He could speak peace in the forgiveness of sins ; but this peace, *His* peace, was not before given to the disciples.

Peace shuts out trouble, as to the realization of it. It is not peace of conscience with God here, but that which could not be disturbed by the knowledge of God. It is not peace without God, and it is independent of all circumstances. So much trouble as there is in circumstances, the peace could not be secure, if it could be altered by them.

This peace is the possession of such quiet as to be undisturbed about other things. It is peace with God in the sight of His righteousness and His holiness ; and it is an absorbing thing. Suppose I am at peace with some one I do not care much about, I may be troubled enough about other things. The peace does not absorb my affections. When we have the peace itself, we may acquaint ourselves with God. The soul, so satisfied with the peace which it has, desires nothing else. It

knows God, and finds nothing to disturb it in God or out of God.

This peace will keep God between the trouble and us, instead of the trouble coming between us and God. Such is our danger, and such the remedy.

Mark the extent of the peace—" *My* peace ;" and how thoroughly well He knew what He had, that He could give it them ! He had been tried, rejected, had suffered ; " He had not where to lay His head," " hunted like a partridge on the mountains," the " man of sorrows and acquainted with grief ;" and yet He knew so well the blessedness He had that He could speak of it to leave it to them. There was an unclouded rest in God, and God an unclouded source of blessing to Him, in all His path of sorrow and trouble, so unlike that which any one else ever had. But " Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee," etc., was known experimentally by Him ; and was there ever uncertainty as to whether His Father heard Him ? No ; there was unclouded certainty. Nothing could bring it into question. He need not put it to the test by throwing Himself down from the temple : this were tempting God.

The two expressions in the verse explain each other ; " peace," " *My* peace," etc. " Let not your heart be troubled." I am giving you My own " peace." What we have, we know to be His : not the knowledge of what we are with God,

but what He is to God. We cannot have peace if we have the thought, When I come to know God, what will He think of me? I must know God in order to have peace.

If the Lord came this moment, would you have peace and be able to say, "This is our God, we have waited for Him?" If you have the consciousness of liking anything that God does not like, you cannot be at peace. Even if you have found peace of conscience about your sins, through the blood of the cross, it will destroy your communion and peace of heart, if you like anything that God does not like. If there is anything not given up in the will, there cannot be peace; if you have peace, then if God came in, your peace would stay.

Peace is never imperfect: there can be no flaw in it. If anything comes in and produces an uncertainty, it cannot be peace. Water in a dirty pool may look clear at the surface; but, if it is stirred up, the dirt comes to the surface; and so with the heart.

Christ gives us His peace; and can wrath disturb it? Did He not know the wrath due to our sin? He bore the wrath. Did he not know the sin? "He was made sin," etc. Did He not know God? He came forth from Him.

How can we have peace? Because He has made it "by the blood of His cross." He has expiated sin. The question that agitates your heart, He settled between Himself and God, not on His

own account, but for us. He was the Son of God. In the presence of wrath He settled it; in the presence of holiness, too, He made His soul an offering for sin. God spent His Son for us; and can He fail to claim us as the objects of His love? He has bought us at an unspeakable price.

He has seen the sin, judged the sin, put the sin away in Christ. Peace is made, peace is given, peace is known by the "blood of the cross." Is it a thought of mine about my getting the peace? No. He says, "My peace I leave with you." He knows what God's wrath is; what God's righteousness is; what God's holiness is; what all His requirements are; and we have the assurance of His peace from His own mouth. Have I earned it? No; He has earned it. Can He deceive me? What is my warrant for expecting the favour of God? If you have believed what wrath is, you will value the favour of Christ. Christ would rather give up His life than God's favour for us.

If Christ is your peace, He is as sinless for you as He was in Himself. He is "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."



THE LORD'S LOVE FOR HIS PEOPLE.

The Lord takes notice of every circumstance, every shade of difference in assemblies, as also in individuals in them, thus showing that He is not

indifferent as to the state of His people by the way—their daily steps—because He has secured blessing for them at the end. His love is not a careless love. We have all, more or less, lost sight of the judgment exercised by the Lord in “His own house;” and it is too frequently supposed that because the salvation of the saint is a sure thing God is indifferent about character here. But to love—this is impossible. A child might be sure eventually to inherit his father’s property; but then what parent would be satisfied, if he loved his child, with knowing that? Would he not anxiously train him up, watching every development of his mind and faculties, and ordering all things in his education so as best to fit him for his future destination? How much more is this the way of God’s love with His children!

We have to remember that the church, and indeed every individual saint, is set in the place of direct conflict with Satan, the more so because of the high standing and privilege given us in Christ. Now it may be in triumphant victory, as it is said, “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.” To effect the purposes of God’s glory, coming in as it will by-and-by, when He shall establish His kingdom, we know that Satan must be fully dethroned; but in order, even now, ere that time comes, that we realize our blessings in heavenly places, it is needful he should be practically dethroned from the heart through the power of the Holy Ghost.

“JUSTIFICATION OF LIFE.”

(Extract from a letter.)

“ . . . As to ‘justification of life,’ it is that justification we have as being alive in Christ ; that is, it goes beyond mere forgiveness of sins, as in the old man, which are put away. It is the clearance of all imputation which we have, as alive in Christ ; but the passage gives us something more specific, it refers to verses 16 and 17 (Rom. v.).

“ Verse 16 is of many offences to justification, which of itself goes further than clearing the conscience of sins. Verse 17 further adds, that they who have received abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, will reign in life. This, while based on the clearing, brings us into the new place in life, and reigning in it. Hence we have ‘justification of life.’ ‘By one offence towards all to condemnation.’ ‘By one complete righteousness towards all men to justification’ (v. 18); but then ‘in life,’ a new life in Christ, not merely, that is, the old sins cleared away negatively, but in the new place by the work of Christ, which God had fully owned. He had finished the work which His Father had given Him to do, and was, in virtue of it, in a new place, as Man in life—life (in us) and justification went together. It does not go quite so far as the ‘in Christ,’ but it does identify *our* justification and a new *life* in Him.”

A CHOSEN VESSEL.

(Continued from page 60.)

CHAPTER IV.

THE VESSEL SET FREE.

“The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” (Rom. viii. 2.)

The guilt of a lifetime is often learned by the convicted soul, in an incredibly short space of time. Drowning men, who have been recovered, have said, that like a flash of light, their lives stood out before them; and the forgotten sins, which years before have been committed, seemed in one moment to rise before them, in their terrible category. As the language of “Moses, the man of God,” it would be: “Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.” (Ps. xc.) The dead conscience awakes, quickened under the convicting rays of God’s light, and in a moment we stand before One who told us all things that ever we did.

When this is so, excuses are of no avail: no palliation is offered now. A man finds his soul laid bare, in the presence of infinite holiness. Hitherto, the conscience may have been asleep, with no thought of guilt, unless the vague sense that all is not well. Or the conscience may hitherto have been uneasy, yet no defined sense of guilt be there. Doubtless, Saul of Tarsus, quailed be-

fore the words, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." The natural conscience of man feels this pricking and goading at times : its zeal and ardour is forced and unreal. There are compunctions in that principle which sits in judgment upon men's actions (which conscience does), and though it be sought to silence its voice with freshened zeal, it never rests.

Were there no prickings of the natural conscience in Saul of Tarsus, when with upturned face, shining like an angel, the martyr Stephen gazed into the heavens, his body shattered by the stones of the multitude, and commended his spirit to Jesus? Were there none, when those pale faces of some who loved their Lord and Master—to save themselves, and those they loved, from prison and from death—blasphemed His name, compelled to it by this violent man? (Acts xxvi. 11.) Ah, "the way of transgressors is hard," and it was so with Saul. Yet, while natural conscience takes knowledge of these things, it does not follow that the soul is converted to God. Nay, rather, natural conscience drives a man away from Him. It drove Saul to greater excesses than before. It drove Adam away from God to hide under the trees of the garden ; until his conscience felt the power of the word—"Adam, where art thou?" Then it was awakened, and he stood before God a convicted sinner. It drove Saul to seek to hide his real state under the religious zeal which hitherto filled his soul.

But when the voice of Jesus reached him in his

mad career, his guilt stood forth in its terrible intensity, as he was brought to bay. And when he was allowed to read his own soul's guilt in the presence of God, where no excuse could avail, then his conscience was purged and set at rest. But with him at this time, there may have been no question of his *nature* raised. This is not the question which comes foremost in the history of souls. The efforts to avoid the evil, and perform the good, to be well pleasing to the Lord, which follow true conversion, bring out this in its true and terrible depths. Saul has now to pass through this stage of the soul's history, for his own deliverance, as a saint; I do not dwell here on the fact of its necessity afterwards for helping others—but as a vessel of mercy, which, from such a state, must be set free.

As to when this took place, I do not dogmatize: but it was a needful process, whenever it occurred; and the result of it we find in the experimental learning of his nature, through the bitter anguish and exercises detailed in Rom. vii., much of which doubtless he had to learn experimentally for himself, as also the many lessons which he learned for the sake of other souls.

The natural man may have lived—"touching the righteous that is in the law, blameless," yet with his soul still unawakened. In overt acts its prohibitions had never been broken. But they never touched the tree—the root of "sin" within! There was one of its commands which reached his

inmost soul at last : the command which said, "Thou shalt not lust," and when that commandment came, expressing the holiness of the law, "sin revived, and I died." "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of lust, for without law, sin was dead:" it lay dormant, or unprovoked within his soul ; until its unholiness was thus revealed.

Human nature fallen, too plainly speaks on every hand, not to have discovered to us the fact, that the moment a prohibition comes home to us—from the earliest childhood to our latest breath—at once is kindled within us the desire for the very thing which it forbade. A thousand instances and examples might be presented to prove this.

But there was "Law" in paradise—before man fell, and man was a responsible creature before he broke away from God : he was responsible to obey the law—prohibiting his eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—before he became a "transgressor." God had revealed His ways to him, as a Giver, in the largest and widest munificence. Nothing was withheld from man. The ten thousand tributary streams which contributed to his happiness in Eden, spoke of a God who would withhold no good thing. "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat," proclaimed the freeness and fulness of no niggard Hand. The man was to enjoy it all freely. One small interdict prohibited the eating of the fruit of one tree : a tree which marked a responsibility

which, when accepted, would only entail evil : “In the day that thou eatest thereof, dying, thou shalt die.” It was that, in observing which, he expressed that his will was subject to God who had placed him there, and surrounded him with every creature blessing.

This is the principle of law. An interdict will always prove a will in the person addressed, either subject or insubject to another. The smallest interdict is sufficient for this. It is the way to discover whether another is subject to you or not. If insubject, the authority of that other is refused, and as a consequence two wills are opposed, the one to the other : while the man that is tested, owns in conscience, that God has a right to be obeyed.

Now Satan did not begin by calling attention to the blessedness with which the man had been surrounded : nor to the character of God as “giving richly all things to enjoy.” Rather does he seize upon the prohibition—calling attention to the interdict alone—“Yea, hath God said, *Ye shall not* eat of every tree of the garden?” whereas God had said, “Of every tree thou mayst freely eat.” The grand master-stroke of the serpent was, to instil lust into the soul, and distrust of God ; to cast a suspicion on the fulness and freeness of His nature to bestow. This was the poison of the serpent, which has permeated humanity ever since that day. It was done before ever there was a sin committed. The devil had stepped in, and sown distrust in man’s

heart; creating a suspicion in the soul; and separating man and his Creator by the loss of confidence in Him.

This is what men do between each other now-a-days, to reach some end they have in view. I dare say they may not perhaps think so: but the largest portion of the sorrows between men, or or even between brethren, are caused by some hint, behind backs; or some whispered story, to which the heart of others is ready to lend an ear; which causes distrust to spring up between souls. Distrust engendered, dislike follows, but more especially in the one who has wronged the other. *It is exceedingly hard to trust a heart you have wronged.* "A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it;" and "He that repeateth a matter, separateth very friends;" and "He that did his neighbour wrong, thrust him away," etc. These passages (kindred in their character) are but the workings of this principle of evil. Hence the true saying, "The injured may forget; the injurer, never!"

To restore man to perfect confidence in God: and to meet the outrage on His nature, was the work of Christ at the "end of the world."

Man, then, was a responsible creature before he fell. Distrust of God and lust were instilled into the soul of the woman. Will was put forth against God—and in the case of Adam, high-handed will (for "*he was not deceived*;" 1 Tim. ii. 14), and man fell. A breach, wider than the poles, came in at once between God and man; an abyss,

impossible for man to repair, or to recross. Man became as "one of us," said the Lord, "to know good and evil." (Gen. iii. 22.) This he never can unlearn. He never returns to innocence again.

What, then, is "to know good and evil"? It is something which is said of Godhead too; "as one of us," we read "to know good and evil"! It is to sit in judgment, and pass sentence, on good or evil which we find in our own souls. Of David the king, it was said, by the wise woman of Tekoah, "as an angel of God, so is my lord the king, to discern good and bad." (2 Sam. xiv. 17.) This in reference to the decisions of judgment. So of Solomon in 1 Kings iii. 9; so of Israel, Deut. i. 39; see also Hebrews v. 14.

This is the work of conscience: to take knowledge of the evil practised by a will opposed to God; to sit in judgment upon it, and to condemn: and, alas! to apprehend the good, while opposed to it; to approve of it, without the power to perform. This was fallen man with a conscience. Responsible before he fell; distrusting God; and transgressing in will His command. An ability, even when fallen, to pass sentence upon his own actions, by the knowledge of good and evil: good that he had not the power nor desire to practise, and evil that he was not able to avoid! Then, at last, he is driven out of the presence of God; for he had lost his place on such a ground for ever. These three things marked his state. Distrust of God; sin committed in that distrust; and his

place irrecoverably lost. These three things are reversed by the gospel. His confidence is restored by faith in Him as a Saviour; his sins removed, which had been committed in distrust; and he is brought into a new place in Christ before Him.

The soul when thus awakened, finds these great primal enmities which separated between God and man, wrought upon, in deep and solemn exercises. The sense of responsibility as a sinner who had eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, at enmity in his mind by wicked works; the knowledge of good unfulfilled, and of the evil of his nature exposed; powerless, too, for all but evil; the sense, in some measure, differing according to circumstances, of good in God Himself; and a responsibility to set itself, as it supposes, right with Him. These things are forced on the soul in terribly bitter lessons.

Nothing in man's words can equal those of the soul's anguish in Romans vii. "I am carnal,* sold

* There are two words in the original tongue for "carnal" (*sarkinos* and *sarkikos*), the only difference being one letter. They are found in 1 Corinthians iii. 3 and Romans vii. 14, and elsewhere. One word is applied to the *standing* of an awakened man, still "in the flesh," that is, having the sense of his responsibility, as a child of Adam, and no deliverance before God. This is Romans vii. The other is applied to saints, whose practical *state* was not spiritual: they "walked as men." (1 Cor. iii.) This latter is opposed to the normal state of a saint as a "spiritual" man. We find in the context (1 Cor. ii., iii.) the "natural," the "spiritual," and "the carnal man." The first a man merely with a natural soul unquickened; the second, the normal state of the saint; and the third, the saint walking after the flesh.

under sin ; for that which I do, I allow not : for what I would, that do I not ; but what I hate that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law, that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 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, for the good which I would, I do not ; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do, that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. 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, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members."

Mark, reader, this struggle between "good" and "evil," by a soul under the sense of responsibility, or, "in the flesh." Yet it is not his guilt which troubles, but his state. The deep anguish not only takes in all this, but goes back to the first spring of departure of man from God. All the roots of its being are laid naked, and open, before Him with whom it has to do. How varied are the ways of God to lead the soul into this struggle ; that it may learn to struggle no more ; that it may learn that every effort, every trial, every struggle, as long as they continue, are only the more distinct proofs that it is not yet arrived

at that point where, when ceasing to struggle, it surrenders ; and then only finds that this surrender is liberty. It is then set free.

I forbear here, to deduce examples of these exercises and their end, as found in the word. Many are to be found there ; many, too, may be interpreted every day by Scripture, as they are seen in the people of God.

The discovery of an evil nature, by a saint, suggests at once, that it should be subdued. The desires and longings of his renewed soul, when felt by him, suggest at once, that they should be gratified ; and that God had implanted it there to that end. The sense, too, of responsibility, that both these suggestions should find their answer somehow, lays the ground of this painful struggle. It is not conflict, properly so called, at all. It is the effort which only ends in defeat, more painful still. It leads into captivity, but does not set free. But when *deliverance* comes—not *victory* (victory would be my own meritorious act, deliverance that of Another), it comes as a double deliverance—answering to the “good” which it found itself incapable of producing, and to the evil which it was impossible to avoid. The soul must be able to look up, rejoicing in liberty with God, and it must be able to look down into its own heart, and be able to produce the good which it longed to perform, and have power over the working of a sinful nature, “the flesh,” within.

Here it is that we find a defect in our souls.

Many *have* got that liberty which enables them to look up to God ; they can say, " All there is well." But are we all free from the power of the evil within, when we examine our own hearts ? Nay ; the very joy and thankfulness which the soul experiences in being free in looking up, makes too often careless, alas ! about the other. This may be through ignorance ; indeed, it may frequently be so. We need to be taught that there is a freedom of the soul, which is filled with the Spirit, in which it may walk each day absolutely apart from all the workings of the flesh, or the desires of the mind ; such a liberty, indeed, as if there was no evil to combat there at all—a freedom which brings forth fruit to God.

It is not that there will not be conflict to the end of our pathway here ; it is not that " the flesh " will cease to be an occasion of constant watchfulness. Nor is it that " sin in the flesh " can ever cease to exist, while we are here on earth, though " condemned " when Christ died. But let us remember Paul's path as a saint, a vessel chosen to God ; one who walked in such a way (and in this he would join others also), saying, " It is God that worketh in you, both *to will* and *to do* according to his good pleasure ! " It is no more *then*, " the good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do." Nay, the " willing " and the " doing " are accomplished by souls set free ; vessels in whom God can work, and wield according to His good pleasure.

For what, beloved reader, is a vessel? Suppose you placed one on the table at your side, have you not two thoughts in your mind as to its use? You place it there to *hold* what you put in it; this is one thought. Then the other is, that it may be held by the hand of another. Had it a will or a motion, these uses would be hindered. And so with God's vessels of mercy; they must be will-less, and motionless too; they are to be filled with that which He puts in them, and to be held and used by His hand. It is only in the measure that our wills, our motions, our thoughts, are set aside, that we are really vessels; and, as such, fitted and meet for the Master's use.

But this is not our present subject. Here we are discussing the deliverance of the vessel, so that it may be free in soul with God, and free, too, from the workings of the will of the flesh, and have power to bring forth fruit to God; that on the one hand it may realise its place "in Christ," and on the other, that "Christ liveth in me."

I remember, years since, visiting at the bedside of an aged saint. We spoke for some time on general things as Christians. I asked her if she had ever thought of Christ who was in glory, "living" in her weak body, on its bed of suffering? I have not forgotten the strange look she gave, as the thought flashed upon her mind, for the first time, as it appeared to me. "Ah," she said, "Christ living in me!" It seemed a wonderful revelation to her soul: the body, as the vessel—so much in

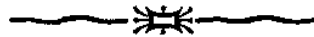
the power of this, that Christ, not self, lived. "Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Is not this even a greater thought, though the converse of that word of Paul, "To me to live is Christ"? The latter was the motive of his life—the spring in his soul; the former, the result of this, "Christ liveth in me."

This is freedom indeed. "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free." We speak of the law of gravitation, the law of nature. We mean the natural tendency of each which governs its actions; as the apple falls to the ground: it does not rise when disengaged from the tree. This thought in its own character, is here. That "law,"—the tendency in which it must move—"of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free." It lifts the soul out of that other law of sin, that which governs the nature of the flesh; and also, that law of death. *It* has become the law—the natural issue, of *life* which He breathed on His own when He arose—a quickening Spirit—the second Man—the risen Lord.

Thus, may we not say, the soul finding its responsibility—"under law," as having eaten of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil,"—passes through these deep lessons, that it may discover experimentally, the depths of a ruined nature—"the flesh"—which sprang up in man's heart when he broke away from God. But now set free, it finds too, that it has reached in Christ, the "Tree of life": the "law of the spirit of life" in Him,

setting it wholly "free from the law of sin and death." Free, too, in that two-fold way which we have in measure discussed. Namely, free in soul in looking upward at God; free to enjoy in the present, and in hope, all that He is. And free from the workings of "the flesh" within. Self is ignored, and the life lived in the flesh is lived by the faith of the Son of God: that is, faith in Him as object, and power, and all. The springs and motives of such a life do not spring from self, but from "Christ;" and thus only bring forth fruit to God: being filled with the fruit of righteousness, which is by Jesus Christ, to His praise and glory.

(To be continued, D. V.)



FRAGMENT.—God has a way in the world where Satan cannot touch us. This is the path where Jesus walked. Satan is the prince of this world; but there is a divine path through it, but only one, and there God's power is. The word is the revelation of it. So the Lord bound the strong man. He acted by the power of the Spirit, and used the word. The Spirit and the word cannot be separated without falling into fanaticism on the one hand, or into rationalism on the other—without putting oneself outside the place of dependence upon God and of His guidance. Mere reason would become the master of some, imagination of others.

A CHOSEN VESSEL.

(Continued from page 80.)

CHAPTER V.

WHY DID GOD PERMIT THE ENTRANCE OF EVIL?

“By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.” (Rom. v. 12.)

Before examining God's ways further with “a chosen vessel,” it will be profitable to examine the testimonies of the word as to the “new man,” God's “new creation,” in Christ Jesus, which is thus being developed in the vessel of mercy.

The terms “old man” and “new man” are very definitely used in Scripture. I judge that neither term can be used of an individual *as such*. That is, an individual could not say, “I am the old man;” nor, “I am the new.” The terms are generic and comprehensive, embracing—the first—all that we were “in Adam;” and the second—all that believers are “in Christ.” Nor do I find that Scripture will allow us to say that we have the “old man” in us—while it teaches most fully that we have “the flesh” in us to the end; if it works, we read “with the flesh (we serve) the law of sin.” (Rom. vii. 25.) These terms will come out more fully, as we proceed with the examination of the truths now before us.

One great and important question here arises, re-

verting to the condition of man as first created of God. That is, the solemn question of the entrance of moral evil into this world. How frequently is such mooted by the sceptic ; and as frequently found without reply, in the mind even of the believer in Christ ! The question is, Why did God permit the entrance of sin ? Why leave it a possibility ? And in this is embraced the entrance of death by sin.

How immensely important to possess clearly an answer to this stupendous question ; one that will leave the infidel without excuse, and, at the same time, settle firmly in divine truth the minds of those who believe. I do not here go further than its entrance into *this present world* on which we live. For we know from Scripture that sin had already entered the universe, possibly through Satan's rebellious fall, once an "anointed cherub." (Ezek. xxviii.) Nor do I comprehend the fall of the angels that had sinned, and who are reserved in Tartarus (2 Pet. ii. 4), until the judgment of the great day. I confine the question to the entrance of sin into *this world* ; and that of death—its consequence—having passed upon *man*—the race of Adam alone. Death may have been, and was possibly, there—even in *this world*, in its previous periods of change, during the ages and cycles which had passed prior to its having been shaped by God's hand, in the six day's work, into an abode for man.

I accept what is now pretty well known by the student of the word, that in the term which opens

the book of Genesis—"In the beginning," as well as in the next clause of the verse, God has left it open for the possibility of millions of years to have elapsed since that "beginning" was, when God created the heavens and the earth; and thus time sufficient was allowed, to form the strata of the earth, as it is now found, before the work of the six days was accomplished, in the varied ages which had passed, and through the many catastrophes which had possibly taken place. For we read in the next clause of the verse, that the earth (not the heavens), was without form and *waste* (*tohu*), having probably fallen into chaos. God had not created it in this state, as Isaiah testifies. (Isa. xlv. 18.) "He created it *not waste*"—the same Hebrew word as used in Genesis i.

We are aware that there are traces of death to be found in the fossils and petrifications of extinct animals, of species now unknown, in the strata formed by the ages gone by. This is admitted most fully; but it does not interfere with our present question in any wise.

I take, therefore, the statement of Romans v. 13, as the basis of the great question now before us: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered *the world*, and death by sin; and so death passed upon *all men*, for that all have sinned." The first part of this important passage confines the entrance of *sin* to *this world*; and the second limits the passing of *death*, as a consequence of sin on *man*; without noticing, in the former case, the possible entrance

of sin into other spheres ; and, in the latter, the fact of death passing upon other than the human family.

Let us now turn to Genesis i., ii., where we have the account of the creation of man, " And Elohim saith, we will make man (Adam) in our image, after our likeness, and they shall have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every reptile that is creeping on the earth. So Elohim created the man (Adam) in his own image, in the image of Elohim created he him ; male and female, created he them (literal translation).

There are two distinct words used here by God, very different in their signification ; they are " image " and " likeness." The accuracy with which this usage is maintained throughout the word of God, is amongst the wonders of its perfections.

The word " image " is sometimes, in human language, used to signify the likeness in one for another ; as one would say, ' such an one is the very image of his father '—meaning that he is an exact likeness ; but this is not the way it is used in general, in Scripture. There it is used, rather in speaking of that which is set to *represent* another, without having any reference to its being like or unlike, in features, or otherwise, to the person represented. As we read of Christ being " the image of the invisible God " (Col. i. 15) ; and man

being “ the image and glory of God ” (1 Cor. xi. 7), etc. : the word image being here used, as fully representing another, as the image of Jupiter, of Cæsar, etc. Now “ likeness ” is different from this : its meaning is simple and readily understood, as describing a person being like another, that is, having the same traits of character and features, etc.

The man was created then in both these ways. He was set as the great centre of an immense system, fully to represent God, as His *image*. The dominion of the vast system was his. All created things were under him. All intelligences, his wife included, were to look up to him as God’s representative in that sphere. God alone was over him ; all else being subject to man. But he was also in the likeness of God. He was pure as his Creator made him, he was “ very good ; ” he was sinless too, absolutely without evil : he was from God, to be for God, and thus like Him, and fit, therefore, to be His image—to represent Him ; and to be the centre to which all should look up ; and with an intelligent will ; his choice also was free.

But again we ask, Why did God leave moral evil a possibility ? Or, in other words, why permit the entrance of sin ? Could He not have created a being, which could not fall ? one who could only do what was good and right ?

The answer is plain. Because, if He would create a glorious creature—man, after His *own*

image, and in *His* likeness, free to choose either good or evil, and not a creature governed by a mere chain of instinct, as the birds and beasts around him—He must leave the entrance to him of evil, a possibility, though not a necessity. If man, as God created him, could not choose evil, then he had no choice at all : and he would be no more virtuous in doing good, than the mere animal which follows the instincts of its nature. And because, in such a case, he *must* do good, he would be no more virtuous in doing so than they.

Either God *must refrain*—we write the words with reverence—from creating such a being, of this high and glorious order of existence, with a free choice and will ; or He must leave the question of evil a possibility to him. Alas, for the result ! of which a fallen race speaks with such terrible reality. He chose the evil and refused the good ; and the moment he exercised his choice he became a sinner. Fallen Adam begets a son in his *own* likeness after *his* image (Gen. v. 3), while unfallen Adam had been created “ in the likeness of God ” (Gen. v. 1).

Observe, in all this there was no thought of man being *holy* : nor could it have been said as afterwards of the “ new man,” that he of Him, was “ created in righteousness and holiness of truth ” (Eph. iv. 24). God is holy—absolutely so. But holiness is relative, inasmuch as it supposes evil to exist, and implies absolute separation from it. This could not be said of man, as God created Him.

He was pure, and perfectly good, but evil was not for him in existence, until he chose evil, when presented in the form of a temptation, and thus he threw aside the authority and will of God, who had given it to him. So of righteousness, which also presupposes the existence of evil.

How everything in the sinner now depends on his will, in having to do with God ; his salvation and all, depend upon the surrender of his will to Him. “Ye *will* not come unto me, that ye might have life” (John v. 40). And “Whosoever *will*, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev. xxii. 17).

Now Christ is said to be the “image of the invisible God” (Col. i 15) ; the “image of God” Himself (2 Cor. iv. 4). This is because He fully represents God ; but He is never said to be in His “likeness ;” simply because He *is* God Himself, therefore not merely *like* Him. But it is said that He came in the “*likeness* of sinful flesh,” and rightly so ; because He was *not* sinful flesh at all. See Romans viii. 3.

He, too, had His own perfect will ; and while tested to the uttermost in life and in death, it was always subject to God’s. “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (John iv. 34).

This obedience and subjection found its perfection fully in death. He “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Phil. ii. 8.) Mark, He was not subject to death, as the first man, through his sin. With him it was the

penalty of disobedience, and the ending, by God's sentence, in death, of *will* in him to the uttermost. But it was there that the perfection of Christ's surrender of a perfect will in obedience, shone out most fully. Or rather, may we not say? the perfect blending of a perfect will in Him with that of God, in obedience unto death itself.

(*To be continued, D. V.*)



“LET THE DEAD BURY THEIR DEAD.”

(*See Ecclesiastes i. 2 ; viii. 10.*)

I've wandered o'er earth for many a year,
And hunted for pleasure and substance here,
I have tried the forum, and tent, and hall,
And wisdom and folly ; I've proved them all ;
But the mask and mirage alike have fled :
This earth's a tomb, where "*they bury their dead.*"

Where'er I journeyed I heard the sad toll
Knell loud and far the depart of the soul ;
I have seen the coffin, and hearse, and pall,
And widows and children were weeping all ;
Bitter and scalding the tears that they shed :
This earth's a tomb, where "*they bury their dead.*"

I've read the names on the rude, carved stones,
Where moulder to dust the now fleshless bones,—
The babe's, from its mother's fond bosom torn ;
The husband's, that left wife and babes forlorn :
The aged and the young, the weak and the brave,
Alike were the prey of the hungry grave.

I have stood in the ancient Gothic pile,
 With its painted lights and its long-drawn aisle ;
 I've heard the organ peel forth its numbers,
 Where the dust of the rich and noble slumbers ;
 There were crypts below, and marbles o'erhead :
 'Twas a tomb where the great "*dead bury their
 dead.*"

Ye poets, fetch hither your sweetest lyres,
 And waken your dead by their brilliant fires ;
 Ye sages—ye statesmen—your wit essay
 To rob the dark grave of its loathsome prey ;
 Ye mitred priests, in your ghostly pride,
 To exorcise death let your rites be tried !

Ye warriors bold, in your martial skill,
 So quick to destroy, and so strong to kill,
 Your legions muster, your blades unsheathe ;
 Your captains release from the hands of death :
 Your cheeks grow pale, and your daring is fled ;
 Your trumpets must wail forth "*the march of the
 dead.*"

Poor world, thou art powerless ! Before thy great
 foe,
 Thy wisdom, and glory, and might are brought low ;
 Thy beauty is changed to corruption ; his thrust
 Turns all thy proud boastings to ashes and dust :
 Thou hast nought but to follow thy conqueror's
 tread,
 And do his stern mandate,—*dig graves for thy dead.*



“God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent :
 because 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
 men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead.” “For
 since by man came death, by man came also the resurrec-
 tion of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ
 shall all be made alive.” (Acts xviii. 30. 31; 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22.)

HEAVEN'S JOY.

Will it be the glory bright
Of those realms of endless light ?
Streets all paved with crystal gold,
Gates of pearl of price untold,
Harps, and thrones, and diadems,
Palaces, and costly gems ?
No more sorrow, death, or pain,
Meetings ne'er to part again ?
Eyes undimmed by any tear,
Peace unruffled by a fear ?
All, and more than this, is given,
But 'tis not "*the joy of heaven.*"

One there is, and **ONE** alone,
Every ransomed saint will own
As the central Fount of bliss ;
Heaven were empty without this.
JESUS, Lamb of God, Thou art
Now the Centre of my heart ;
While by faith Thy face I see,
While I live, and feed on Thee !
E'en in this sad, weary waste,
Often heavenly joys I taste :
Thou the *Joy of Joys* wilt be,
Of my heaven's eternity !



VICTORY.

I CORINTHIANS XV.

There are two characters of relationship into which believers are brought : One is, union with Christ ; and the other, relationship along with Christ to God as Father, He being the Firstborn

of many brethren. "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." This last is the result in glory, but it is founded on the great truth of "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." It flows from our connection with the Second Man (He, Head of a spiritual race, as the first man, Adam, was head according to the flesh).

This is a different thing from His relationship to the bride, and the headship of the body. It teaches us how the whole of the Old Testament Scripture looks at our history in the first Adam, closing that history entirely, and then brings in a new one. This is not brought out until the Second Man is raised from the dead. He was in person the same before, but He was not head of a spiritual race until He was raised. "Except the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone," &c. (John xii. 24). It was only then that He could take such a position with His disciples as to say, "I ascend to my Father and your Father" (John xx.). All thought of any union as man, with Christ, is wrong. He could not unite Himself with us in sin: He could show compassion, but it was impossible there could be any union between us and God in the flesh, as men in nature. When Christ takes a new position, outside of every position in which flesh could be taken account of,

those who believe are united to Him by the Spirit ; but the whole history of man shows the impossibility of union between man in nature with God. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." "And as I said unto the Jews, whither I go, ye cannot come ; so now I say to you," "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now." Flesh, corrupt and corrupting, cannot enter into glory.

True, flesh works in the believer ; but Scripture goes deep and brings out this truth, "in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." So the apostle says, "When we were in the flesh." I do not know whether you would be able to say that—when I was in the flesh. If we can say so, our responsibility now is to walk in the Spirit. A Christian is not to walk as a man, but as a Christian. There are duties of husbands, wives, children; and the relationships between man and man have to be sustained, of course ; but before God I am not looked at as a man in the flesh at all. The flesh tries to hinder. It comes to be a hostile power to what I have from the last Adam ; but if you walk merely as men, you are lost.

Flesh showed its weakness. The word to Adam did not provide for sin, and supposed no lust in man. In the garden of Eden lust came in, sin came in, and the separation was complete between God and man. Adam then became head of an excluded race.

Law, given afterwards, supposed men needing

life, but invoked responsibility. Man, left to himself, became corrupt before God. The earth was filled with violence. Then a flood came. Then came the law as a trial of man. Promise was not a trial of man, but it manifested grace without a question of man. There was no promise to Adam, the promise was to the Second Adam, the Seed of the woman. God cannot promise to sin. There was no question of responsibility in promise. He gave it to man and left it. Afterwards the question of righteousness is raised.

We too often may little weigh what the terms of the law imply. Were I to say, if you do this you will get a fortune, it implies that you have not a fortune without. You cannot say, do this and live, if you have life. When God said to man, "Do this and live," it implied his being dead. Man did not think so, but it was the ministry of death and condemnation (2 Cor. iii), because it demanded obedience, which man could not render. Law does bring out man's guilt; he cannot be subject to the law of God. (Rom. viii.)

But there was another thing that proved his guilt far more thoroughly. Will they accept God's terms when He came to them in grace? Christ came, and in His life was the perfect manifestation of goodness. He came amongst men to do them good, healing the leper, etc. But could flesh find anything attractive in Him? He was an out-cast among the people to whom He brought home the goodness and love of God.

When law was given, they were not subject to it; and when Christ came, they would not have Him. Therefore the Lord said, "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out." "They have both seen and hated both me and my Father." Man, tried in every way, is proved to be bad.

In other circumstances, namely, that of the Christian, there is the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the same impossibility of its pleasing God. All flesh shows utter rejection of God Himself, and is proud of itself all the time. Before God executes judgment, man has entirely cast God off. The wonder of the cross is that He came—the sinless One came into the very place where flesh is. He who knew no sin was made sin for us. He finds Himself in the fully revealed position of man before God; He puts Himself there in grace and in obedience, too. There was more than that: He "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." He was "made sin," and put it away by giving up the life in which He bore it. God deals with Him about sin, and the very life ceases in which He takes it, and then He rises up. God had dealt with it, putting an end to it entirely on the cross. There was an end of the old man; and now it is said, "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead," etc. "He that is dead is freed from sin." Christ has taken the place of the first Adam in sin. All that I was in, Christ has stepped into and borne. He rises up, and I

have an entirely new position. I am now in Christ. He has closed for ever the history of the flesh (we have it as an enemy—but its history is closed for ever before God) and commenced a place for us in Himself, the last Adam. “Father, glorify thy Son.”

Christ returned to His place before God, having accomplished righteousness. He is Head of a new race, a family of His own. He has new glory as thus Head of a race. We are livingly united to Him, being in Christ. “As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.” We are not in flesh, but before God in virtue of accomplished righteousness. All God’s dealings with man before were grounded on sin having come in: so law, promise, government, until Christ came. Now His dealings with us are founded on righteousness. God has His righteousness before Him in a man. The Son of Man has glorified God on the earth, and God has glorified Him in heaven. It is as a man He is there, though he is much more to be sure.

Life I have in Him and righteousness. Life is in the Son, the Second Man, and I can treat the flesh and all connected with it as an enemy. As to that, I am dead: flesh has no place now. I have life in Christ and died to flesh. I have nothing to say to it, no relationship with God in flesh; I have to pray against it, fight against it, read, and use all the means I can against it; but I am not in it. There may be confusion in the

mind, but not in the relationship. God can have nothing to do with flesh. "Reckon yourselves to be dead," for Christ has died. It is not said, die to the flesh. The flesh will keep itself alive as long as it can. It will try to mend itself—try to be better. There would be no sense in telling the flesh to die. But Scripture says, "Ye *are* dead." (Col. iii. 3.) Flesh has been judged in Christ, and therefore I am entitled to say, I am dead and am a new creature. Then walk in the Spirit, walk as Christ walked, as the Second Man, not as the first. You cannot get back to innocence, the uprightness of creation. True, you are upright, if in the Spirit, but more, righteous and holy. All this is equally true about sins. As surely as the first Adam was turned out of the earthly paradise and became head of a race, so He, the Second Man, is Head of a race for the heavenly paradise.

Faith takes absolutely what God says. Where does it take its place? Half way, or entirely, with Christ? Flesh never can take its place before God. Faith says, I have no place before God, but in Christ Himself. He is righteousness on the throne of God. Any half-saviour or half-place would not do. We grow up into His likeness: but our place before God is the same at first. Christ's life upon earth is a perfect pattern for us, manifesting God in all His ways.

Our position before God is one of full favour. And we have the hope of glory before us. How it elevates the heart—not us! Grace humbles us,

but elevates the heart. I have boldness before Him in the day of judgment. When we reach the heavenly tribunal, we shall be like Him, the heavenly One.

Grace alone does it. It enables us to discern between flesh and spirit, not only between what is right and what is wrong ; but we can say, That is flesh, or This is Spirit. It may look very fair, but if it is flesh, it comes to nothing. If all the world thinks a thing good, that is not Christ, and I would not believe it. If a man walks with the Lord, the flesh is judged. There are the different growths of the babe, the young man, the father ; but if we walk with Him, we discern what a thing is. The flesh is very subtle, but it will not last out when the Lord tries me ; the wood, hay and stubble will not stand. Gold is a rarer thing in the world than wood, hay and stubble, but it lasts longer.

Can you then say, " When I was in the flesh," with the very distinct consciousness that you are not in it now ? Then you are called not to walk as if you were in it. The Spirit has not a fair show. You cannot go on with Christ ; you may walk with Christians, but you cannot walk with Christ without the power of the life in exercise—not going to look for the power, but having it. May the Lord give us to know what it is to be in the Spirit and not in the flesh ! It may try the conscience, but the end will be peace and joy.

“AS THE TRUTH IS IN JESUS.”

“ But *ye* have not thus learnt the Christ, if ye have heard him and been instructed in him according as [the] truth is in Jesus : [namely] your having put off according to the former conversation the old man which corrupts itself according to the deceitful lusts, and being renewed in the spirit of your mind ; and having put on the new man, which according to God is created in truthful righteousness and holiness. Wherefore, having put off falsehood, speak truth every one with his neighbour, because we are members one of another.”
Eph. iv. 20-25 (*New Trans.*)

What a contrast between the ignorance of a heart that is blind, and a stranger to the life of God, and consequently walking in the vanity of its own understanding, that is, according to the desires of a heart given up to the impulses of the flesh without God—what a contrast between this state, and that of having learnt Christ, as the truth is in Jesus (which is the expression of the life of God in man, God Himself manifested in the flesh), the having put off this old man, which corrupts itself according to its deceitful lusts, and put on this new man, Christ ! It is not an amelioration of the old man ; it is a putting it off, and a putting on of Christ.

Even here the apostle does not lose sight of the oneness of the body : we are to speak the truth,

because we are members one of another. "Truth," the expression of simplicity and integrity of heart, is in connection with "as the truth is in Jesus," whose life is transparent as the light, as falsehood is in connection with deceitful lusts.

Moreover, the old man is without God, alienated from the life of God. The new man is created, it is a new creation, and a creation after the model of that which is the character of God, righteousness and holiness of truth. The first Adam was not in that manner created after the image of God. By the fall the knowledge of good and evil entered into man. He can no longer be innocent. When innocent, he was ignorant of evil in itself. Now, fallen, he is, in his ignorance, a stranger to the life of God: but the knowledge of good and evil which he has acquired, the moral distinction between good and evil in itself, is a divine principle. "The man," said God, "is become as one of us, to know good and evil." But in order to possess this knowledge, and subsist in what is good before God, there must be divine energy, divine life.

Every thing has its true nature, its true character, in the eyes of God. That is the truth. It is not that He is the truth. The truth is the right and perfect expression of that which a thing is (and, in an absolute way, of that which all things are), and of the relations in which it stands to other things, or in which all things stand towards each other. Thus God could not be the truth. He is not the expression of some other thing. Every thing relates to Him. He is the centre of all true

relationship, and of all moral obligation. It is God become man, it is Christ, who is the truth, and the measure of all things. But all things have their true character in the eyes of God : and He judges righteously of all, whether morally or in power. He acts according to that judgment. He is just. He also knows evil perfectly, being Himself goodness, that it may be perfectly an abomination to Him, that He may repel it by His own nature. He is holy. Now the new man, created after the divine nature, is so in righteousness and holiness of truth. What a privilege ! What a blessing ! It is, as another apostle has said, to be "partakers of the divine nature." Adam had nothing of this.

Adam was perfect as an innocent man. The breath of life in his nostrils was breathed into him by God, and he was responsible for obedience to God in a thing wherein neither good nor evil was to be known, but simply a commandment. The trial was that of obedience only, not the knowledge of good or evil in itself. At present, in Christ, the portion of the believer is a participation in the divine nature itself, in a being who knows good and evil, and who vitally participates in the sovereign good, morally in the nature of God Himself, although always thereby dependent on Him. It is our evil nature which is not so, or at least which refuses to be dependent on Him.

But besides participation in the divine nature, there is the Spirit Himself who has been given to us consequent on believing (see chap. i. 13), and we are enjoined to "grieve not the holy Spirit" who dwells in us. The redemption of the creature has not yet taken place, but we have been sealed into that day. Let us respect and cherish this mighty and holy Guest who graciously dwells in us.

THE FATHER'S LOVE.

Blest Father ! infinite in grace :
Source of eternal joy !
Thou lead'st our hearts to that best place,
Where rest's without alloy.

There will Thy love find perfect rest,
Where all around is bliss ;
Where, all in Thee supremely blest,
Thy praise their service is !

Eternal love their portion is,
Where love has found its rest ;
And, filled with Thee, the constant mind
Eternally is blest !

There, Christ, the centre of the throng,
Shall in His glory shine ;
But not an eye, those hosts among,
But sees that glory—Thine !

Thy counsels, too, in all Thine own
Fulfilled, by power Divine,
Spread wide the glory of Thy throne,
Where all in glory shine.

Yet deeper, if a calmer joy,
The Father's love shall raise ;
And every heart find sweet employ
In His eternal praise !

Nor is its sweetness now unknown,
Well proved in what it's done :
Our Father's love with joy we own,
Revealed in Christ the Son !

THE FATHER.

(*John xiv.-xvii.*)

“ I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it.” These words were spoken to the Father by Christ respecting the saints. They tell us that the great business of the Lord was to acquaint saints with the Father, that such had already been His business, and that such He purposed should be His business still.

This is full of blessing. To think that our souls are under such instruction as this ! The Son nourishing and enlarging in us the sense and understanding of the Father’s love ; and using His diligence to give our hearts that joy, and to give it to us more abundantly ! We may be slow, and we are slow, to learn it. We naturally suspect all happy thoughts of God. Christ has to use diligence and to put forth energy in teaching us such a lesson : “ I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it.” But so it is. This is the lesson of which He is the Teacher, and our inaptness to learn it magnifies His grace, for He is still at it, still teaching the same lesson.

The earlier chapters (xiv.-xvi.) show us Christ declaring the Father. They begin with His telling us that the Father has opened His own house to us—nay, that He had built it with direct respect to us, having made it a many-mansioned house for our reception (chap. xiv. 2).

He then, with some resentment of their unbelief,

tells them that the Father has been already revealing Himself to them: "Have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Because the things He had said and done, He had said and done as Son of the Father, as the One who was in the Father, and in whom also the Father was (vs. 5-14).*

For this was natural unbelief, the indisposedness to learn the lesson of the Father of which I have spoken; and happy it is to find it here rebuked by the Lord. Indeed, it is only faith which can sit as Christ's pupil—that principle only which listens. The moral sense of man reasons itself out of that school.

Jesus, however, goes on with the lesson in spite of this dulness. He tells them, after this interruption, how He purposed, when away, to glorify the Father in their works and in their experience (vs. 12-14); and then He tells them that the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, the Holy Ghost, who was about to come to them, would come as the Spirit of the Father, letting them know that they were not orphans, but had the life of the Son in them (vs. 16-20); and again He tells them that the keeping of His word would secure to their souls the presence and fellowship of the Father, as

* The Lord's rebuke of Philip has not such direct application to Philip's unbelief touching the Person of the Son, as to his unbelief respecting the revelation of the Father which had been made by the Son: the other is involved.

well as His, because the word was not His but the Father's who had sent Him (vs. 21-24). This word or commandment, which was to be kept in order to this fellowship being secured to the soul, was about love ; because it was the word brought by the Son from the Father, and not a word brought from a king, or from a judge, or from a legislator. (See chap. xiii. 34 ; xv. 12, 17.)

In all these truly blessed ways He declares the Father to us, and uses Himself only as the Witness or Servant of such a revelation. His own personal glory is implied in such a service ; but that is not His object—the declaration of the Father is. And so also, as He proceeds through this wondrous discourse, He declares the Father to be the Husbandman of the vine, thereby letting us know that the fruit sought for is fruit worthy of a Father's hand, fruit which children, not servants or subjects, must yield (chap. xv. 1-14). And again, the friendship He introduces them to with Himself has respect to the Father, because it was the Father's secrets He was communicating to them in the confidence of friendship (ver. 15). And then, at the close of the same chapter, He presents the world simply in the character of having hated the Father, testified in and by the Son (vs. 23, 24).

How does all this make good the word, "I have declared unto them Thy name!" But further : He anticipates the day of the Holy Ghost ; but He does this in constant recollection and mention of the Father. The Spirit was the Spirit of the Father

given by Him, sent by Him (chap. xiv. 16, 26 ; xv. 26) ; and when He came, their divine Teacher now tells them that they should ask the Father and receive from Him, that this their joy as children who know a Father's love and blessing should be full (chap. xvi. 23, 24).* And He further tells them that in that day they should plainly know their adoption, or their place with the Father (ver. 25).

And somewhat beyond all this, and as crowning all He had said, He tells them that His prayers for them in heaven were not to be understood as though they and the Father were somewhat distant from each other, but that rather they must assure themselves that the Father's love rested immediately on them, as in the full power of the relation in which He stood to them (chap. xvi. 26, 27).

Thus, it was the name of the Father He was declaring to them all through these wonderful chapters, bringing the Father into the thoughts and enjoyments of their hearts. And if love and heaven be prized by us, what welcome communications will these be !

So, on the closing chapter (xvii.) we may say, No tidings from us return to God so acceptably as this, that we have, by faith, received these tidings of the Father. The Son brought a message of love to us from the bosom of the Father, and if He now report to the Father that we have received the message, this will be the most prized answer with the Father. And such receiving of this word

* It is not the thing they receive which makes their joy full, but the proof they get through it that they have their Father's heart and ear. The Father, not the gift, does this for them, filling up their joy. (See chap xvi. 24.)

about the Father will also be our truest sanctification or separation from the world, for the world is that which refuses to know the Father.

I might more shortly express it thus : In chapters xiv.-xvi. the Lord purposes to put our souls into communion with the Father. He fills the soul with thoughts of the Father : recollections, present exercises of spirit, and prospects, are all by Him connected with the Father. He tells us, it is the Father's house that is to receive us by and by, it was the Father who had been working and speaking in Him, so that what He had said and done had been the sayings and doings of the Father ; that greater works than He had done they soon should do, for He was going to the Father ; that the Comforter would be sent to them from the Father ; that their fruitfulness should arise from the Father being the Husbandman ; that the world would hate them, because it knew not the Father nor Him ; that the Father Himself loved them, and that they should soon enter into the sense of their relationship to Him.

If the Spirit of truth, the Comforter, realise these things to us, we may set our seals to that word, "It is expedient for you that I go away."*

* So, I may say, the Lord's purpose in chapter xiii. is to put our souls in communion with Himself in heaven.

He shows us Himself in heaven, as the very home of love and glory, because He was to be restored to the Father there, and to have all things put into His hand by God there ; and after this manner He anticipates heaven as the home of love and glory to Him.

But then He lets us know that He would ever continue in His love towards us there, and in His service of our necessities—that, though there, He could never forsake either us or our need. Thus He seeks to put us into communion with Himself as He is now in heaven, just as afterwards (in chaps. xiv.-xvi.) He seeks to put us, as I have been observing, into communion with the Father.

May this blessed sense of relationship fill and satisfy our souls more abundantly !

THE NEW CREATION.

(2 Corinthians v. 13-21.)

It is blessed to see in this chapter how the thought of *God* comes out in the new creation. In this aspect man is gone as to his sins and responsibility—dead in them. The judgment of the first Adam is complete. The old thing is entirely gone. It is a new creation now, and, in this new creation, I find God instead of man. Even Christ Himself, as known after the flesh, is known no more. True, He was, when down here, the hope and expectation of faith as coming into the world. But the apostle only knows Him now as having died for all and glorified ; all under death, whether Jew or Gentile, and Christ no more known after the flesh—that is as come after the hopes of man in it—but Head of a new creation, where all things are of God, and in which we have been made in Him the righteousness of God. God has manifested Himself in the Second Man, and wrought atonement in His death ; and now those who believe are the righteousness of God in Him.

In the first creation we see man and his responsibility. In the new creation all things are of God, and man is reconciled by Jesus Christ unto Himself. We want to have the power of this in our souls, to live as belonging to the new creation, as reconciled by God to Himself, all that belonged to the old creation for ever gone to faith—“ Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.”

We see how the apostle walked in the power of this in verse 13: “ Whether,” he says, “ we be

beside ourselves, it is to God." That is, if he were beyond the influences that belonged to him as a man, it was not an excitement that belongs to these influences ; it was because he was absorbed in God. It is what is called ecstasy. When his spirit was free to rise above present service in what he was in Christ, he was lost in God, carried out beyond himself. If he were sober, if he had to weigh difficulties—come down into the sober estimate of what was before him—it was God in love working in him. His thought was entirely for others in that love. This was his daily life ; as to himself transported with God ; and when he did think about things down here, all his thoughts were for others.

It was the love of Christ that constrained him, and he looked upon all around in connection with the death of Christ. It was no longer a living Messiah in the flesh with promises for Israel. All this was over. Christ had died, and he judged that *Christ would not have gone into death, if men had not been there.* The whole history of Adam's race is closed in death. If they had not all been dead, Christ would not have been found in death ; why have gone down there if others were not lying there ? And, therefore, those who from amongst these lived, were now to live not to themselves, but to Christ, who died for them and rose again.

Thus, if he met an unconverted man, he would not think of him as an old acquaintance, and know him as such. He would look upon him as one that was dead, and needed to be saved by the death of Christ. Or if the person were a Christian, it would be just the same. He would not know him after the flesh, according to an old acquaintance with him ; he would look upon him as one alive with Christ, and his one thought would be

that Christ might be glorified in him. Even Christ Himself was not to be known any more in connection with this creation. He had died to it, and if any man is in Christ, he is of the new creation, where old things are passed away, and all things are become new, and all things are of God. Man is looked upon as dead, and God brings in a new creation.

We have the same aspect of truth, when in verse 19 he speaks of Christ's coming in the flesh. It is not looked upon as fulfilling promises to Israel, but God revealing Himself in grace to the world. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." This was the aspect of Christ's first coming, in which the apostle thought of Him. We know He came to His own, and was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made to the fathers. All this is blessedly true; but here we have God in man *come here, and the apostle sees neither Jew nor Gentile.* If God were in Christ, He acts towards the *world.* To what portion of it can you confine Him, if it be a question of God displaying Himself in grace in the world? For the same reason, when he speaks of the love of Christ, he judges all to be dead, and sees neither Jew nor Gentile, but a new creation, in which God counts every man that is in Christ.

We know that that is God as to the glory of His divine Person, but the apostle is speaking here historically; and, therefore, when he looks upon the Lord Jesus living in the world, he sees God in Him acting in overtures of grace to the world. God *was* in Christ; that is the great fact, that God has been here as the Reconciler, and man would not be reconciled. Does the apostle say

that God is reconciling us? No, but that God “*has* reconciled us by Jesus Christ unto Himself, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” We are made the righteousness of God in Christ ; and now we go out with the word of reconciliation to the world. Specially, no doubt, the apostles, but in their measure true of all. Man would not have God when He came, and therefore He had to make Christ sin, to work atonement for us, and now He is at God’s right hand, in whom we become the righteousness of God.

The apostle does not say to the Corinthians, Be ye reconciled, for they *were* reconciled ; but Christ being in heaven, having gone there through death in working out atonement for us, and His presence there being necessary to complete all in glory, He must have ambassadors to carry out His word of reconciliation here ; so the apostle says, when he preaches—that is the gospel to sinners—“We pray in Christ’s stead, be reconciled to God.” That is what he had to say to men as Christ’s ambassador.

How far are we living thus? Living in the power of God’s new creation, judging the whole thing belonging to the first creation as gone to faith, and entering into the blessedness of our place in Christ in the power of an ungrieved spirit? Exercised for others, that the life of Christ may have power in their walk and ways ; judging evil practically in our own path through the world, but yet having our souls so full of our blessedness in Christ, of what it is to be reconciled to God, that directly opportunity arises our hearts burst forth in praises to God, and ever go forth after others still dead in their sins.

That this may be so practically, we must bring the death of Christ to judge everything in our-

III

selves and in our ways. As the apostle says: "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" (2 Cor. iv. 10). If we do not daily and hourly bring everything under the sentence of Christ's death, and judge everything by it, the Spirit will be grieved in us, and, instead of filling us with the joy of our portion in Christ, He will cause the light of Christ to awaken us to the judgment of ourselves and of our ways.

May the Lord give us to walk in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, bringing everything into subjection to Christ, that we may know what the apostle goes on to say, "Death worketh in us, but life in you." In thus bearing about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus, Paul found death to self, and the result was life to the Corinthians. Paul held the power of Christ's death on the natural man, so that when he ministered among the Corinthians there was no Paul at all, but only Christ. It was life to them because death was working in Paul.

May the Lord give us thus to live. And may He grant us, especially in a day like this, to judge of men as Paul did, so that whatever the boast of human nature may be, we may see that all are dead, because Christ died for all in grace—for the highest act of grace and love is the proof of it—and that the only living ones are they that live to Him who died for them and rose again, while in our own souls we enter into His new creation. We may have to go down to babes and feed them with milk, and not with strong meat; but may we ourselves live in the light of this new creation, where all things are of God.

We must pass through exercise, and be tried

and tested to learn what is in our hearts, and to have our senses exercised to discern good and evil. This is all needful and profitable, but then there is our distinct place in Christ, as part of the new creation, where, instead of having the first man responsible to God, we have God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself in grace, and making Christ sin for us to bring us into this new creation, where all things are of God, and where man is before God in divine righteousness, and, as to his enjoyment, finding himself lost in God.

It is God, and not man. It is what God is to man, and the blessedness of man being with God. God, we know, revealed in Christ; but nevertheless God revealed, and man made the righteousness of God, a part of God's new creation.

A CHOSEN VESSEL.

(Continued from page 88.)

CHAPTER VI.

THE NEW MAN.

“Created in righteousness and holiness of truth.”
(*Eph. iv. 24.*)

We now come to the New Testament, where we find a gradual unfolding of God's ways as to the “new man;” indeed, we may say a new kind of man altogether from the first man. I would just draw attention to some of the salient points which are found there in the epistles to the Romans, Colossians, and Ephesians; which, taken together, would give us the completeness of God's thoughts, and His purposes in the new creation in Christ.

The first of these epistles unfolds in detail, the moral closing up of the history of the first man, as fallen, under every advantage, and after every trial from God : whether without law, as being proved lawless ; or under law, as a law breaker, and this, subsequent to the possession of privileges and advantages, which were before the special dealings of God took place in a separate people. The end of the trial and time of testing was when Christ came and was refused. "All (now) had sinned," in looking back, and "come short of the glory of God"—the measure now, and standard by which all would be judged. Man had been set up in perfection as a creature, and had fallen ; could he now meet the burning rays of God's glory ? On this, as on all other grounds, all was now over, with the old man for ever.

God must now either end that man, whose will was set up against Him, by judgment in righteousness ; or reveal Himself in sovereign grace through righteousness, in virtue of the work of Christ. I do not here, of course, enter upon this work of the cross, and the death, and resurrection of Christ ; only looking at it, as the means, whereby God would close morally for faith the history of man in righteousness, and begin His new creation in His Son—as Head of a new race.

The section of the epistle in which God first shews how the race was all under judgment, and guilty before Him, ends in verse 19 of chapter iii.

We then find, immediately following, in iii. 20, etc., how the righteousness of God is now manifested *for* the sinner, in God's raising up His Son from death and setting Him on high; and not *against* him, as standing in his own responsibility. And this, too, "by faith in Jesus Christ," personally; and "by faith in his blood," as the means by which the righteousness of God was vindicated against sin. The believer thus stands in perfect justification from all his *guilt*.

But his *state* as a sinner in the first Adam is not thus ended. When we pass that section which deals in all details with his guilt, and which ends at verse 11 of chapter v., we are introduced to the manner, in which our whole state is dealt with, and closed in the death of Christ. We read in chapter vi., "Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." There is nothing in the Romans about the "new man" in any wise. But there is the crucifixion of "our old man" fully set forth, in order that the body, or totality, of sin might be set aside. The nearest approach to anything positive on this head is found in the expression of chapter vii., "I delight in the law of God after the *inner man*," but it goes no further. While fully closing up the questions of our guilt and state, it goes no further, but while shewing *Christ* risen, the believer is not said to be risen with Him. For this, we must have the next step, in the Epistle to the Colossians.

There is in Romans a new will shewn as either struggling against the old—the flesh, in Romans vii. ; or else, when the soul is set free, walking in “newness of spirit,” and “newness of life.” Romans gives us, therefore, the crucifixion of “our old man” with Christ.

Now Colossians, stands between Romans and Ephesians in doctrine. In Romans, man is seen as alive in sins ; the heart is going out after all its lusts unhinderedly. What then, must be done ? He must be brought down into death—the death of Christ—to have his history closed : “Knowing this, that our old man is co-crucified [with him].”

In Ephesians, we have man “dead in trespasses and sins,” and consequently another kind of dealing must come in. Unlike the Romans, where he must be brought down into *death*, because alive in sins, life must come in positively to quicken a dead soul in that condition, and to raise him up out of it ; and all must be a new creation in Christ Jesus, who is in heavenly places.

Colossians, therefore, as we might suppose, would take in both sides—dead in sins, and alive in them. This it does, looking back on our Romans condition, and looking forward to our Ephesians condition in Christ Jesus. Therefore we read, “In the which (sins, etc.) ye walked when ye *lived* in them.” (Chap. iii. 7.) And we also read, “And you, being *dead* in your sins,” etc. (Chap. ii. 13.) The saint, therefore, is looked upon as “dead with Christ” from the elements of the world, as well as

dead to sin, and dead to the law ; and also risen with Christ, and though not sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, he is seeking those things "above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." He is, therefore, down here on earth.

This being so, he has not reached his new place with God in Colossians, though he is suited to the place as in life, and as risen with Christ. He has a new status, but not a new place. We would not therefore find, here in the epistle, the "new man" spoken of as in Ephesians. Indeed it is remarkable, that when it is apparently spoken of in chapter iii., it falls far short of the full thoughts of Ephesians iv. 24 ; different words being used in the Greek original ; and the word man (*anthropos*) being omitted altogether. (Chap. iii. 9.)

We have, therefore, a different word for "new," used in Colossians, as compared with Ephesians. In the former it is *neos* ; in the latter *kainos* : the latter signifying what I may term familiarly by the graphic expression "brand new !" a kind of man never seen or heard of before ;* while the former would be entirely new, but does not imply a new kind of genus, as the latter would.

We find, however, that the knitting up of both Scriptures, Ephesians iv. and Colossians iii. is done by the Spirit of God in remarkable wisdom, by the use of these two words, being found in the construction of the verbs, "renewed" in Ephesians iv.

* It is not Adam innocent, nor Adam fallen and righteousness under law, but a positively new creation.

23, and Colossians iii. 10 ; that in Ephesians being compounded with the “ new ” of Colossians ; and that in Colossians with the “ new ” of Ephesians.* Wondrously wise are the Scriptures of our God.

We may also here notice what is still the more striking and instructive : namely, that the word “ putting off ” is quite different in each epistle ; in fact, there is no affinity at all between the words in Greek. In Colossians we have a word which signifies “ passing out from under,” or, “ being divested of ” something ; as a garment. In Ephesians we have not this, but its being absolutely “ laid aside,” or “ laid down.” I might take off my garment in one action ; and I may also, by another action, lay it aside when I have taken it off. We shall presently understand the reason why it should be thus in each epistle, coupled with what we have seen already.

There is an illustration of the use of these two words in the LXX. of Leviticus xvi. 23, where Aaron, having finished the work of the great day of atonement, clothed in the white linen garments, first “ *puts off* ” those garments, and then *leaves* them in the tabernacle of the congregation. I would also refer the English reader to Acts vii. 58, where the verb of Ephesians iv. 24, and translated “ putting off ”—which should be, more correctly,

* It has been noted that the *kainos* of Ephesians iv. 24, and the *neos* of Colossians iii. 10, are characteristic of each epistle. In Ephesians it is a new creation in *contrast* with an old ; in Colossians it is a *practical* new life in which we live ; though the care is taken to shew that *it* is a new thing entirely, formed of God.

“laying aside”—is used by Stephen’s murderers, who “laid down” their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul ; and also to Hebrews xii. 1., where the same word is translated “lay aside,” as to “every weight,” etc.

In fact, while Colossians gives us the *subjective* side of the “new man” (what is practical life in which the saint lives here while walking on earth), Ephesians gives us the *objective* side of the “new man,” as shewing us what he is on high. Colossians being rather Christ in us.

In Romans, therefore, we find “our old man *crucified*”: in Colossians the old man parted with,” and the *subjective* side of the “new man.” While in Ephesians we have the old man wholly “laid aside,” where we are seen as all that we are in Christ—the objective presentation of the full “brand-new” man : an absolutely new creation in Christ.

We may read verses 21-23, thus : “If so be ye have heard him, and in him have been instructed, as is truth in Jesus (namely) your having laid aside, according to the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the lusts of deceit ; but being made new [that is, absolutely new] in the spirit of your mind ; and your having been invested with the new man [that is, the brand-new thing] which is after God, [or according to God] having been created in righteousness [not innocence] and holiness of the truth.”

This “holiness of the truth,” stands in contrast

with the "lusts of deceit" of verse 22. The deceit of the serpent having produced the lusts of the heart at the beginning ; and righteousness being the basis of God's new creation, he is formed—created—in it, and in holiness (absolute separation from evil) of the truth, which has begotten him.

As to the passage in Colossians corresponding and filling up on the practical side, we may read : "And your having been invested with the new" (*neos*),—he does not write "man" (*anthropos*) this word only being used of the full absolute thing in Ephesians iv.—"which is continuously being made new toward perfect knowledge, according to the image of the Creator of him."

Now remark again, that in Colossians we have "*Christ*" as the example of all for the new (man). Your life is hid with Him in God (ver. 3). The *traits of character* of Christ as the elect of God, presented as forming and practised (vs. 12 and 13). The *word* of Christ is to dwell in him richly (ver. 16). In fact, as verse 11 states, "Christ is all, and in all." While in Ephesians it is "*God*," and the nature of God is presented as the standard of all. The "new man" there is created after God (ver. 24). He is to be an imitator of God (chap. v. 1). To walk in *love* (which Christ showed fully) and as a child of *light*—God's two essential characteristics, what He is (chap. v. 2 and 8).

Again, we have more : we have in Colossians the "*image* of Him that created him." In Ephe-

sians we have rather “*likeness*” to God Himself pressed (*kata Theon*).

Here, therefore, we come back to these words as at the first, “likeness” and “image;” the new man of Ephesians being morally like God—seen in his true place as in Christ in heaven; and as objectively presented to us there in Him. Therefore, when we come into the practical life—the subjective side, in Colossians iii. we have “image,” because there he walks on earth at the present, but is morally to represent God, who was fully represented in Christ Himself, and who is “all.”

Then again, as to the exhortation of each epistle connected with the “new man.” We find in Colossians iii. 9, “Lie not one to another.” There it is the practical life. But in Ephesians iv. 25 we have, “Wherefore having laid aside lying, speak truth” to each other. Here, with the old man who has been laid aside, goes the thing itself—lying. Not merely is the exhortation, as in Colossians, to refuse the practice of it; but the thing is looked upon as gone here, and the exhortation takes the positive side, exhorting to speak the truth, etc., as in the other parts of the context in the epistle. There alone, too, have we the conflict of the saint in its true and only measure. Satan is again on the scene in a special way, to oppose this man of a new creation, as at the first he did in the old. On this I do not enter here.

(*To be continued, D. V.*)

THE SCHOOL.

(*Matt. xviii. 3.*)

Where is the school for each and all,
Where men become as children small,
 And little ones are great?
Where love is all the task and rule,
The fee our all, and all at school,
 Small, poor, of low estate?

Where to unlearn all things I learn,
From self and from all others turn,
 One Master hear and see?
I learn and do one thing alone,
And wholly give myself to One
 Who gave Himself for me.

My task, possessing nought, to give ;
No life to have, yet ever live—
 And ever losing, gain ;
To follow, knowing not the way ;
If He shall call, to answer, " Yea—
 All hail all shame and pain !"

Where silent in His Holy Place
I look enraptured on His Face
 In glory undefiled ;
And know the heaven of His kiss,
The doing nought, the simple bliss
 Of being but a child.

Where find the school, to men unknown,
Where time and place are past and gone,
 The hour is ever NOW ?
O soul ! thou needest ask no more ;
God tells thee of His open door :
 Still, hearken thou !

A CHOSEN VESSEL.

(Continued from page 120.)

CHAPTER VII.

THE VESSEL EMPTIED OF HUMAN STRENGTH.

“ Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” (2 Cor. xii.)

In another connection, which we may hope to refer to again, the apostle Paul writes thus : “ We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not from us ” (2 Cor. iv.). I cite this now with reference to the end of the verse. God never gives intrinsic power to His saints. “ God hath spoken once ; twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God ” (Ps. lxii 11). If this is important in the lives of the saints, how much more, if I may draw a distinction, is it for those who are called upon to serve in the word. Yet in every service and in every action in the lives of God’s people, the power of God is needful, that they may walk and serve and work and toil in the energy of the Spirit, and in the expression of the life of Jesus in their mortal flesh.

For this end, another character of discipline takes place after deliverance is known. This may be more or less spread across their lives, but one absolutely needful to produce that condition in which the power of Christ works : which is, as we read, “ made perfect in weakness.”

The object of this discipline is not easily distinguished at first by the majority of saints. It is more often divined and felt by those who serve outwardly in the word, than in the ordinary pathways of the people of God. It frequently happens, too, that it mixes itself up with exercises before deliverance is known, and is not easily separated from these, in the analysis of the soul's history. However, although *we* may confound them experimentally in ourselves, Scripture distinguishes them most clearly. It is only as we grow in the apprehension of the word, and of the mind of the Spirit there, that we are able to give to each its place and its true interpretation. We only know in part, at best, while here ; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part, shall be done away ; and then shall we know even as also we are known.

Saul had served amongst the saints for some years, before he was separated to the work to which he had been called. This took place formally and definitely at Antioch (Acts xiii.), where he was sent forth by the Holy Ghost on his first mission amongst the Gentiles ; but going, as he always did, "to the Jew first." We find this mission described at length in Acts xiii., xiv. The vessel had been prepared in quiet, and now in going forth into that wider harvest field, he needed special dealings of the Lord to strip him finally and fully from every thought of *quasi* strength in man. The very success of the work, and the power of

God manifested towards souls, needed corresponding dealings to countervail the tendencies of the flesh. It ever seeks to intrude, and hinder the work of God. Often, in apparently insignificant ways, its intrusion is felt by one's self or by others : like the "dead flies" which "cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour" (Eccles. x. 1).

It is therefore to be expected that special dealings of God should be discerned distinctly at the opening of this great world-wide service of the apostle, commencing here. After the early part of the work is described, and that at Antioch in Pisidia took place (chap. xiii. 14, etc.) ; he now leads the band of servants, first to Iconium (Acts xiv. 1, etc.), and thence to Lystra and to Derbe. At Lystra he was stoned, and drawn out of the city, as they supposed him to be dead. I refer to this to connect this moment with what he reveals of his life in 2 Corinthians xii.

Having no visible proof of his being called to serve the Lord, like Peter and the rest, who were appointed by Him in life ; he must prove, as all true ministry must from that day, its divine origin by the effect of it upon souls. Consequently his ministry was constantly called in question. The servant must expect this now-a-days also, as a consequence, when he seeks to serve according to God's mind, and as following in the line of those gifted from Christ in glory.

This took place in a very painful manner at Corinth. The jealousies of others so wrought against him there, where the chiefest of his work had been accomplished, that he was forced to speak of himself very prominently (always a painful and trying subject), and to tell of services, of toils, and of sorrows, seldom (perhaps never) equalled by those of any other man. The folly of others gives us here a glimpse of an unparalleled life of devotedness to Christ and the church. "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness," etc. (Chap. xi. 23-27).

This is what he had done for the Lord! But what had the Lord done for Paul? "It is not expedient for me, doubtless, to glory, I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord." (Chap. xii. 1). And here he discloses what had happened to him "above fourteen years ago." The scene at Lystra when he was left for dead, was more than

probably the moment when what is recorded here took place.*

If chapter xi. gives a history which might clothe Paul with honours, and give grounds for him to boast : chapter xii. gives us a dealing of the Lord which reduced him to "nothing." No doubt it was necessary that the leading man in the Christian course should be introduced into things which it was not lawful to utter. It was needful, too, to strengthen him in a special way—giving him to realise, above others, what was the portion of all : the possible state for every saint to enjoy, though, in the state of things, unspeakable also. But to follow this, and consequent upon it, the discipline came which had the effect of emptying Paul of every vestige of human strength, reducing him to the condition of a will-less, powerless vessel, so that he might be fitted thus to be wielded and used by the hand of the Lord who did so.

"It is not," said he, "expedient for me doubtless to glory ; I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell ; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell : God knoweth) ; such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man . . . how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man

* I see no reason to question the chronology of the Authorized Version here. It shews that the stoning occurred first at that time.

to utter. Of such an one will I glory : yet of myself I will not glory, but in my weaknesses.”

Here was the realisation given him of all that he was, both as a man in Christ, and of the sphere of blessing where his portion lay ; and of those things which he heard there, which human language could not express. The measure of this common portion of all His saints, may be realised variously by each ; but the portion is the same for all. Upon this I do not enter. Each, too, may minister in part of that which he consciously possesses. But if so, the special dealings of God ensue to check the evil of the flesh which is prone to rise in proportion to the abundance of the revelation given.

This discipline is suited and adapted to each several soul. This is the reason why, I doubt not, that all speculations as to what was the nature of Paul's thorn in the flesh, end in nothing. God has wisely seen fit to leave it untold. Were it made known, we would have perhaps settled that it was not ours, and then have left it there. To have left it untold, gives us to see that there was a great principle of God's dealings, seen in this man's case, but applicable to all. Each would have his suited “ thorn :” the very thing that would counteract his natural tendency ; and so act as to strip him of every pretension to power, and break any fancied strength of man.

We see this on every hand, we see it better in our own soul's history. For it is not always that another is permitted to know the secret thorn

which rankles in the breast, such as that we would give the world to remove, ere we know the "end of the Lord." He presses home the "stake" (*skolops*) which pins us to the earth, as it were, in very powerlessness. You see this at times, for instance, in incongruous marriages. The soul is worn away, especially in a sensitive, spiritual mind; and there is no earthly power which can change the sorrow, and heavenly deliverance is withheld. Again, there is a child whose conduct breaks the heart of a parent: every measure fails to deal with him, and the "thorn" rankles deeply in the wounded heart. It may be that some disgrace is permitted, as to which the soul feels that death were easier to bear. It may be that slander has stung the soul with deeper pain. There may be, too, some human weakness, which renders the afflicted one an object of pain to those who love him, or of ridicule to others. Such as these, and the many sorrows of the way are used of God as the "thorn" to curb the energy, to break the strength of "man." Circumstances, friends, relations, health, good name, all are touched by Wisdom in this holy discipline of the soul. These things in the hand of God are like the river banks which on either side guide the stream of waters which flow between them; rendering the waters useful and fructifying, which, if flowing onwards without these guides, would devastate all around, instead of bearing a blessing on their bosom. How often have we not thought what good Christians we

might have been if circumstances were different ; in short, if the banks which carry the river were broken down. Nay, these are the wise dealings of our God to *keep us just* in the channel and path where we are, to shine and glorify Him.

Like Paul of old, when the "stake" was driven home, we may cry to God, even thrice, as he : Take away this thorn, this terrible hindrance to the work of Christ, this feebleness of the vessel, this sapping of energy, this hindrance to service, this cruel "stake" from which the soul struggles in vain to be free. But no ; there it remains, until we find, in the acceptance of its bitterness, the occasion of a strength which is not of man, but the emptying us of fancied human power. We learn our powerlessness, we feel that struggling is but in vain. Yet here the secret of strength is found : but not of man, not our own. The Lord comes in. He finds the vessel bereft of strength ; prepared for that power with which He can wield it. He finds that condition which it is His to use. "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee ; for power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather boast in my weaknesses,* that the power of Christ may rest ["tabernacle over"] upon me : " "That the surpassingness of the power may be of God, and not from us."

Those who serve the Lord outwardly in the word,

* It is not "infirmities" but "weaknesses" in which he glories.

know in measure these things. They know well, much as they may be blessed, and valued too, what bitter lessons they have to learn in secret with the Lord. Never could they be explained to another; yet they are but the emptying of fancied strength in man. No true servant but will find this out for himself; he will recall those moments, when death was working in the fragile vessel, that life might work in those to whom he ministered. Yea, he begins to find how good these lessons are, that made room for a power working which he is conscious is not of himself, not of man; and that when, outwardly calm, he felt the abject weakness of his own heart, his Lord might step in and give him victory.

Thus, then, is the vessel brought by the hand of the potter, often through bruising and breaking and crushings on the wheel, to its true and blessed form in which God can work Himself alone: when the vessel would say, "not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;" and again, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not from us" (2 Cor. iii. 5; iv. 7). Forcible and striking this is: he does not allow that the power would be '*from*' God, as something apart from Him, and conferred or imparted to us. Nay, but it is divine, and yet inseparable from Him who works; it is "of God"—and yet not '*of us,*' as not only negating the thought that it might be so; but the

word he uses still more strongly emphasises this : that the power is *of* God and not *from* us.

There is a "threefold cord" which must be found in the saint if he would serve his Lord aright : the *motive*, the *energy*, and the *end*. At times the *motive* may be right and the *end* also, but the *energy* may be but the human vessel working out (as it supposes) the things of the Lord. All three must go together, and this is the object of this disciplinary process that all may be of God, and not of man.

(*To be continued, D. V.*)



THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE ONLY MOTIVE, WISDOM AND POWER.

How long it is before that believers in the Lord can understand that Christ must take the place of everything in and to the saints ; that God's object in those "predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son" (He is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature," Col. i.) is, that they should, now in the liberty and power of the Spirit, "be changed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor. iii.), that as the Lord, the gracious Lord Jesus, represents them above, where He is at the right hand of power, so shall they, in their measures, be representing Him down here. The apostle could say, "to me to live is Christ, to die is gain." Was this the possession of the life ; nay, more, its manifesta-

tion? "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (1 John ii.), always remembering, however, that He walked without sin or corruption; the saint, of himself, sinful and corrupt, has to be a debtor entirely to grace, and get victory over these things (through mortifying them) by the power of the Spirit of the living God. But how long, I would repeat (alas! the heart knows *its own* bitterness), it is ere the true saint gets into any measure of the experience which Paul gives us in Phil. iii.—the Lord Jesus found by him as righteousness divine (and he refuses any other); all was settled for his soul before the eternal God. The Lord then becomes the Object of the affection of his soul; the engrossing and only Object—"that I may win Christ," may know the "fellowship of His sufferings;" go through anything to reach Him,—if by any means, I might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead. Man's guilty, selfish need of soul must, indeed, first be met; his conscience must find peace; he must learn the infinite value of that most precious blood, his full divine title to stand in the glory of God,—he must believe that Christ "has made peace, through the blood of the cross," and go on to understand the wondrous provision of God's broad and deep mercy as unfolded in Rom. v., and here, after that all have been brought in guilty, every mouth stopped, all found sinners before a holy God, we find the three-fold provision of God's grace to meet all the need and

condition of His people. *First*, peace with God for all that is passed; being justified on the principle of faith through our Lord Jesus. *Secondly*, for the present moment and wilderness journey, “access by faith, *into this grace wherein we stand* ;” ample provision indeed! It is here that a stiff-necked people, alas! learn the riches of grace. *Thirdly*, for the eternal day, “rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” Such is our God and such our Father’s everlasting mercy—His, who would not spare an only begotten Son, even Him that was in the bosom! Yet it is true of most of us, as the Lord once said, “O fools and *slow of heart* to believe:” so true, that nearly the lifetime passes in arriving at that which a soul, subject to the Holy Ghost and to the word, might quickly know; and thus, alas! they fail to realize God’s object for them; they fail to make everything of Christ their own,—fail to find Him, not only life and righteousness, but wisdom, strength, motive and all; they fail to find “fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” They do not see that communion must go before walk and works, and all that which most may occupy their souls.

I would now refer to Scripture to open out and illustrate some principles of truth; and I would seek to press on my own soul and conscience, as well as on those of my readers, what it is which hinders our attainment of more power,—more, “ALWAYS bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might

be made manifest in our body" (2 Cor. iv.).

It is not only the *fruits* (plentiful as they might be, alas !) of my evil nature that I am to judge, but the *Root*. It is not my besetments alone, bad as they may be, but the *cause* of them. It is the nature, the flesh (in the evil sense of it) that must be judged, in the light of the presence of the Lord ; where *alone* sin is seen and known in its *true* character ; and that essential truth learnt, that " no flesh should glory in His presence ;" that according as it is written, " he that glorieth, let him glory (boast) in the Lord." Many continue to mourn over and judge the fruits of an evil nature,—and thus carry on what a Puritan writer quaintly calls "*the trade of sinning and repenting*,"—yet more judge the nature itself in God's holy presence. Now, when the Lord was restoring Simon Peter (as in John xxi.), did He charge Him with the fruit, the *consequences* of his unjudged nature ? No, he pointed to the source ; the self-confidence, the over-weening presumption of Peter's nature. He judged the *root*, the *cause* of his fall. And so must we, if we are to know ourselves and to understand the true grace in which we stand. It is the perfectly good for nothing, totally ruined, helpless, wretched old man, which is put off, by the holy judgment of faith ; the flesh seen reduced to the silence and contempt that belongs to it, before the glory of the cross of Christ. Yet the new man, in the creation, is able to make his boast in the Lord and in

Him alone. What illustrations we find in God's word, in each dispensation, of what man, believing man, found when in the presence of God. Whether Abraham (into the chambers of whose heart the God of glory so shined, that he "obeyed and went out, not knowing whither he went") or poor Jacob; whether Job or Isaiah. "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts" (the Lord Jesus, compare John xii. 41). Or whether it be Daniel, whose "comeliness was turned in him into corruption," or Ezekiel; whether Peter, or Paul, or John (who had to fall at the Lord's feet *as dead*), all show to us what the presence of the living God must produce on man when he gets there.

And now, dear reader, I would desire to make some close application to ourselves. Why is it that we know not more of power in our souls? more of that joy which the Holy Ghost gives to them *that obey Him*? It is a deeper joy than that which does with peace, accompany the full reception of the Gospel. We have *theorized* too much. We have been occupied with doctrine, yet detaching it far too much from Him, in whose glorious person all doctrine and all truth concentrate. Him, in whom, though humbled down here, "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Some have been so occupied with their devotedness (excellent in itself), that that devotedness has

been the object before the soul, rather than the person of the Son of God. The same may be said in regard of works and walk, both good in themselves; [and here, alas! the writer may freely say, how this is wrung from his own heart, when he remembers years of failure, *mixed motives*, years of not having the eye and heart on the Lord Jesus Himself.] And what was the cause of His judgment, whose "eyes were as a flame of fire" against Ephesus? Had they failed in works, in labour, in patience, in faithfulness against evil, in not fainting? No, but the sentence comes forth: "Nevertheless, I have against thee, *that thou hast left thy first love.*" The true *spring* of devotedness had failed. It was not the constraining power of the love of Christ. It was not Himself depended upon and obeyed. He had not found the works perfect before His God, as He speaks to Sardis. As for us, supposing there has been, in a measure, the true judgment of nature in God's presence, and consequently the tasting of some liberty of soul, we have for full blessing, to go on in the path of obedience and dependence (the main springs of Christianity); obedience to God and to His word, the power of holiness; dependence, the way of strength. Whatever be the struggle, the blessed work of mortifying through the Spirit must be carried on, and the sense of responsibility be maintained to walk in the Spirit *because we have the Spirit*, the Holy Ghost, and our bodies His temple. There is, too, the fear of the

Lord ("the *secret* of the Lord is with them that fear Him," Ps. xxv.); and we have to walk, dear reader, *alone* with God. Alas! (it must be confessed) often the meeting with saints, instead of imparting strength by communion, flowing from "fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ," brings weakness and disorder to the soul. To walk *alone* with God has been, from the beginning, and with all His people, the secret of true power. It is there and in true dependence the believer may hear that voice full of majesty and grace: "My grace sufficeth thee, for My power is made perfect in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, will I rather boast in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ *may have its dwelling place* upon me.

I would refer to John xiv. as to the Lord's plain, practical teaching on obedience implying dependence. He reveals Himself there to the disciples (not as Messiah, but) in His full divine glory, as Son of God and Son of the Father,—the Object of their faith (ver. 1); of their worship (ver. 9), "he that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father;" and, in the fulness of His love, utters those precious words: "I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also" (what loving hearts, the *Bride's heart*, should He find)! But, He continues: "At that day (the day of the Holy Ghost's presence), ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, *and I in you.*" Amazing responsibility, yet blessed truth for pow-

er. "He that hath My commandments (for He has a right to command), *and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me*, and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him *and will manifest Myself to him.*" And in His answer to Judas (not Iscariot): "If a man love Me, he will keep my *words*" (implying more than commandments, the one who loves will diligently search the words and learn by the Spirit, in His intelligence, the mind of Christ), "and My Father will love him and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." Most of us know that the promise to the poor sinner is unconditional, sovereign grace and mercy. The promise to the saint is *conditional*, and attached to obedience and a moral condition of soul. Consequently, I am not to be waiting for power to obey; but having life and grace flowing from that divine and eternal fullness, *I am to obey, and power comes in doing so.* There is the secret of hindrance to so many. It is not talking of grace, but the heart being "established in grace," we obey the written words and find the blessing *follows.* The Lord's words quoted above can bear no other interpretation, that is clear, and thus there may be the habitual waiting upon God, our expectation being from Him and Him alone, where all power is. To illustrate for every day practice. I meet men, even saints. My first turn is to be to the Lord, i. e., I must realise His presence, where alone I can find wisdom to speak aright. I meet circumstances, trying ones, too; it is in looking

(off) unto Jesus, and seeing the glory there, and tasting the love, that strength is found "to lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset, and to run with *patience* the race that is set before us." It is thus, surely, that in obedience, with dependence, we get great strength.* Satan, another has observed truly, has power against pretensions, mere knowledge and the like; but none against obedience. We are to obey, in spite of difficulty, and not to allow our own will. Clear it is, that for all this I need the sense of the Lord's presence, and that I am there, and to taste His love. His death has rent the veil, and brought the believer into God's presence,—but to realise it with an *ungrieved* Spirit's help,—and there to taste of His love. "The love of Christ," the apostle says, "constraineth us." This is the spring of true devotedness; here we may reckon ourselves dead and as risen. Men may mortify the deeds of the body, learning to live, in some way, a life of death in the mortal body. But, I would not dwell on the difficulty only—impossibility to flesh and blood—but I would dwell on this that we may reckon on the Lord's love. He gave Himself for us, laid down everything He could for the church; surely, then, we may reckon, and reckon

* Oh, to realise more of that blessed word in Ps. xvi. : "I have set the Lord always before me, because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." "Thou wilt show me the path of life; in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

holily, on every spring of power and sympathy in Him. It is well pleasing to Him, and to His Father and our Father, that in the confidence of His love we may expect all our souls' desire. Yea, it is according to that word of His own Son Jehovah Messiah down here : "Thou hast given him His heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of His lips." Wonderful that *we* may apply it in our little measure ! May the reader and writer both find the faith that overcomes,—through the knowledge of the glory of the person of the Son to which the promises attach : "To him that overcometh, will I grant to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it." Wonderful token of His love ! Amen.

FRAGMENTS.

Paul was a model man : a model-man, not of human perfectness, but of what divine grace and goodness could now make of a man who was led by the Spirit and walked with Christ.

Circumstances are the looking-glasses which show us where we are.

Circumstances are the moulds which determine the shape which grace has to take.



THE TREASURE.

(2 Cor. iv. 6, 7.)

God in heaven hath a Treasure,
Riches none may count or tell ;
Hath a deep eternal pleasure,
Christ, the Son He loveth well.
God hath here on earth a treasure,
None but He its price may know—
Deep, unfathomable pleasure,
Christ revealed in saints below.

Christ, the light that fills the heavens,
Shining forth on earth beneath,
Through His Spirit freely given
Light of life 'midst shades of death ;
Down from heaven's unclouded glory
God Himself the Treasure brought,
Closing thus His love's sweet story
With His sweetest, deepest thought.

God, in tongues of fire descending,
Chosen vessels thus to fill
With the Treasure never ending,
Ever spent—unfailing still.
Still unwasted, undiminished,
Though the days of dearth wear on,
Store eternally unfinished—
Fresh, as if but now begun.

Earthen vessels, marred, unsightly,
But the Treasure as of old,
Fresh from glory, gleaming brightly,
Heaven's undimmed unchanging gold.

God's own hand the vessel filling
From the glory far above,
Longing hearts for ever stilling
With those riches of His love.

Thus, through earthen vessels only,
Shining forth in ceaseless grace,
Reaching weary hearts and lonely,
Beams the light in Jesu's face.
Vessels worthless, broken, bearing
Through the hungry ages on,
Riches given with hand unsparing,
God's great gift, His precious Son.

Thus, though worn, and tried, and tempted,
Glorious calling, saint, is thine ;
Can the Lord but find thee emptied,
That is all He seeks to find.
Vessels of the world's despising,
Vessels weak, and poor, and base,
Bearing wealth God's heart is prizing,
Glory from Christ's blessed Face.

Oh to be but emptier, lowlier,
Mean, unnoticed, and unknown,
And to God a vessel holier,
Filled with Christ, and Christ alone !
Nought of earth to cloud the glory,
Nought of self the light to dim,
Telling forth His wondrous story,
Emptied—to be filled with Him !



A CHOSEN VESSEL.

(Continued from page 131.)

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PURPOSE OF GOD IN THE VESSEL.

“For the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Cor. iv. 6.)

“Because [it is] God who spoke light to shine out of darkness who hath shined [or “lit a lamp”] in our hearts for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassingness of the power may be of God, and not from us” (2 Cor. iv. 6, 7). Marvellous purpose in God! To light a lamp within us, and so deal with us, that the vessel may be brought to that state in His hands, that the glory of God shining in Jesus on high, should shine out so that His people may be God’s lanterns in a dark and Christ-rejecting world.

The circumstances through which the vessel was passing at this moment, all working to this end, are worthy of our deep consideration. They enter into all the texture of the teaching which flows from God to us in this epistle. Indeed this is ever so in the ministry of the New Testament times. The vessel is passed through the trial or exercise, whatever that may be, and the heart thus trained; the affections formed by these

things ; the man himself so sustained and supported of God in the sorrows of the way, that " Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." He has drunk the living stream at the fountain head of all, in the eighth day of heavenly power and blessedness in Christ. His thirst has been quenched by Christ. And so his inner man—the mind, the heart, the soul, the whole vessel, becomes the medium of those streams of refreshment to others, which have consoled his own soul in its sorrow. The Father of mercies has filled it with all His consolation in Christ—so full, so blessedly full, that it overflows and the stream passes on in living power, fructifying those in the desert sands of the world where his path lies.

Fourteen years, after what we have already spoken of, had passed : scene after scene of his labours had been traversed ; and during the successful work at Ephesus (Acts xix.), news had come of the sorrows and sins of those in Corinth, who had been the objects of the labours of Paul. He had written to them a letter (1 Cor.), his heart full of anxiety, but teaching, largely, too, what was needful there. The mighty energy of God's Spirit had sustained the vessel for this service, and then it was despatched by the hand of Titus.

At this moment the enemy had come in, in terrible power at Ephesus (Acts xix.), and the infuriated mob, moved by the spirit of idolatry, had

made the insurrection which we learn of there. Paul, after the manner of men, might have said he had "fought with beasts" there. He had like to be torn limb from limb by those whom Satan led at that moment in terrible power. So terrible was the moment that hope was gone, the jaws of death were all but reached, and his spirit passed into the state of one who had "the sentence of death" in himself, and he "despaired even of life" (2 Cor. i. 8).

Here was a moment for the soul! A living man, whose life was so real before God that God, as it were, might have said: Such a real man as Paul must learn all in power himself; his purpose is to bear about in his body the dying of Jesus; well, then, he shall be helped in this. He shall be delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus may be manifest in his mortal flesh. This is ever God's reward to those who seek to live in the power of what they teach and know.

But at that same moment a deeper anguish filled his soul. The energy of the Spirit had waned, in which he had been sustained when he wrote to the Corinthians. A reaction came. Titus was gone. There was no recalling what was past. We love those to whom we have ministered in the church of God more deeply than others. There is a link formed between their souls and ours, which even the glory will not efface. (Cf. 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.) What bitter pangs does the heart feel when, in any way, the enemy's power comes in to sever

this bond. We look upon them as lost to us ; the joys of fellowship with them destroyed. He wrote in the greatness of his service, and with the truth of the Spirit from his pen. But now the reaction came. He feared he had lost the beloved Corinthians. How will they receive his letter? Was it too hard, too severe? In deep exercise he repented having written it. "I did repent," said he, speaking of his tried heart's exercise (2 Cor. vii. 8). A greater death than that of the body, which seemed to have impended, was now felt ; his soul died within him, as it were, in the bitterness of his sorrow. Some have passed through this kind of death : it must be known in measure to be understood. He could not rest in his spirit at a great and prosperous work at Troas, but went in search of Titus, that his soul might be relieved (2 Cor. ii. 13).

Pressure after pressure at the hand of the potter, for he was but the clay upon the wheel ; growing up under the skilful eye and hand of the Master. All these varied trials fell at one moment of crushing soul-death on this vessel, God thus dealing with it, so that the light might shine forth with brighter power ; that the Treasure of his heart might be more clearly seen, that His purpose in the vessel might be unhinderedly manifested.

At last—"God, which comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus" (2 Cor. vii. 6). God "delivered us from as great a death"—as from the fury of man at Ephe-

sus. What a moment of soul-comfort which now followed ! “ We were comforted in your comfort ; yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all ” (2 Cor. vii. 13). Well can he say, “ O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.” He can pour forth his heart’s teaching. He is unhindered in his joy.

What a moment for the true servant ! What a moment for the people of God ! Little do they know how the servant’s heart is hindered in the ministry at times : how the springs of God are dry to them because of their state : then the servant has to learn fresh lessons of death working in himself ; and his brightest words become dull, because the Spirit of God is grieved, and hearts are dull of hearing. He must be a rebuker to both servant and people, instead of rivers of refreshment in a thirsty land.

But what was this Treasure which he possessed ? Strange casket was he for such, also one which he would not *conceal*, but permit its full *display*. The context will explain. It does so, first by recalling a moment in Israel’s history which laid the ground of it in the nature of God there first made known—in sovereignty, displayed in mercy.

Israel’s history had run on under pure and living grace, from the day when God called Moses to be a deliverer of His people, at the backside of the desert in Midian, until, as a delivered people pur-

chased and redeemed, they drank the waters from the smitten rock at Rephidim. Many a time did they abuse this living stream of grace, and murmur against Him who poured it forth.

Then came the giving of the law to Israel, which was only accepted to be broken. Thus all relations, whether of grace or law, were destroyed, grace was abused, and the golden calf was the answer to their word, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." Moses goes up from that scene saying, "Peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin." He returns, and separates himself from the guilty camp of Israel. Then, in the touching interview which followed, and at his cry, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory," the Lord retires into Himself—He stands upon a sovereignty which can do as it pleases. He alone can say, "I will," and none can hinder. "I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy." This is the manner in which His sovereignty will be displayed, "Because he delighteth in mercy."

And Moses comes down from the mount, with the second table of the law in his hand, the skin of his face shining with the brightness of this fresh and suited name: "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, abundant in goodness and truth." Sovereign mercy was the foundation of this relationship of God with Israel. But now we come to Paul in 2 Corinthians, and there we find that *sovereign mercy is the basis of the gospel of the*

glory, which in a special way he names as "Our Gospel" (chap. iv. 3).

What, then, was the gospel? Was it different from that of the other apostles? For by it was communicated "this Treasure" to Paul, who stands here as the representative man—the pattern to all coming after. Mercy, sovereign and free, shines in this man's case more fully than all, as we have already seen. He would tell us so, saying, "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received *mercy*, we faint not."

Christ had died: God had "made him sin for us, who knew no sin." God had abandoned Him who had trusted in His God. He who had taught others to trust in Him was Himself forsaken, and the cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" attested this; and was the mocking taunt of His foes, "He trusted in God, let him deliver him now if he will have him" (Matt. xxvii. 43). We see no righteousness in this. But we see that "The righteous Lord . . . hateth iniquity"—and His Son having taken that place must take all its consequences. It was God's righteous judgment *against sin* which we see there.

He was taken from the cross and placed in the grave. The soldiers sleep as they guard the tomb: they became as dead when the angel of God descended to roll back the stone where the dead had been laid. But Christ had risen. He was not there. The tomb unsealed, the grave-clothes un-

moved, pointed to the mighty fact that no grave could hold the Son of God.

Some days elapse, when we see another sight. On the Mount of Olives, perhaps some five hundred disciples stood, and from their midst a Man ascends to heaven out of their sight. He is saluted there by God in righteousness as the Author of eternal salvation; the Establisher of righteousness against sin, for "the righteous Lord loveth righteousness." The Father gives Him the Holy Ghost afresh for others—and out from the glory comes the message, which afterwards arrested Saul of Tarsus, that this righteousness of God was so vindicated by the Son, that God set Him on His throne, and the news is sent forth from the heavens that God's righteousness could now be displayed *for man, a sinner, in salvation—and not against him in judgment*: that all who submitted to Jesus, the Nazarene, should become God's righteousness in Him.

"Our Gospel" dates from the glory of God. It comes forth as a ministration of righteousness, and of the Spirit (2 Cor. iii. 8, 9): no more the ministration of "condemnation" and "death." It shines out from His face who accomplished the work, and whom God seated on His throne—the witness of His estimate of the work which he had accomplished. The "Treasure" was this. It was all that was thus brought forth from the glory of God, as found in Christ there; and as possessed by the vessel of clay.

Then came the dealings of God with the vessel, that it might be fitted to be the medium through which the "Treasure" should shine. The light was taken in through exercises of conscience ; and shone out through the exercises of his heart. The "*life of Jesus*" must be made manifest in the earthen vessel (chap. iv. 10) ; out of it the *faith* of Jesus (chap. iv. 13 and cf. Ps. cxvi. 10) must be expressed ; and the *hope* of Jesus (ver. 14) must actuate the heart. And the momentary lightness of the affliction, through which it passed, only worked to enlarge the capacity and give in result a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. The eye was fixed on the unseen and the eternal : the seen and temporal was passing away ; and even if the earthly tabernacle—suited to the present passing stage—were dissolved, a building of God, a house not made with hands, was sure ; and if Jesus came—all that was mortal which remained would be swallowed up of life. (Cf. 2 Cor. iv., v.)

This, then, was the purpose of God with the earthen vessel ; this the process to reduce it to all that He desired. The light of the glory in the face of Jesus shone in the holiest on high, and on earth the light of the lamps shone over against the candlestick to cause its beauty to be seen.

(*To be continued, D. V.*)



WHAT GOD IS TO US IN CHRIST.

EPHESIANS I.

There are two ways in which we may look at our relationship to God, and rightly : first, our coming to Him ; and, secondly, our souls looking at the dealings of God towards us.

Of Abel, it is said, by the Holy Spirit, God had respect unto his gifts—he came with his needed offering. We are looked at in the Epistle to the Hebrews as drawing near to God. Who could draw near unless he could bring Christ as an offering? We must have that sacrifice in order to bring us near, consequently in that case our relationship to God is measured by our need. We come near because we find we cannot do without it, and we accept that offering as needed to accomplish it.

In another way, the measure of God's blessing we never know until we look on our relationship as measured by God's thoughts of us—by all that which He loves to display when He satisfies His own heart of grace with His ways of showing it out. We never enjoy our true blessing unless we see how He thus feels and acts. My mind must rise above what I am to what God is ; then it is my mind is formed by the revelation of what God is. To this we are called.

We must come in by our need, as the prodigal did. Man cannot by searching find out God. There cannot be any knowledge of God

in grace by man's competency to know Him. There would be no need of grace if he could know God without it. If I can claim this grace, I do not need grace at all. The way a sinner must come in must be by his need ; in that way he learns grace, learns love. But when I have got to God, it is another thing. Then He would form our minds and hearts by what He is Himself. I come as a sinner, because I need it—just as a hungry man needs food ; but when brought, I have fellowship with the God who has brought me to Himself. The measure is given in this epistle—growing up into Christ, in all things (chap. iv. 15.) It is a wonderful thing that God has called us into fellowship with Himself—to have the same thoughts, the same feelings as God, and to have them together. All flows down from Him and we are brought into it by grace, and we enjoy it just so far as we are emptied of self.

First, He makes us partakers of the divine nature—the same nature as Himself. This gives the capacity, I do not say power. The new nature is capacity ; the Holy Ghost is power. The new nature is entirely dependent and obedient. The Holy Ghost being there gives me power. In the first Epistle of John this capacity is brought out in a remarkable manner (chap. iv.). Every one that loveth is born of God—has this nature ; and he that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. Then being partakers of His nature, we, by virtue of the blood being sprinkled on us, have received

the Holy Ghost which gives power. In order to communion there must be perfect peace as regards the conscience. There is no communion in conscience. I am alone as to my conscience, and so are you. In order to communion, I must have nothing to settle with conscience: a perfectly purged conscience is the basis of communion. We must know that God has settled the whole question of sin. The moment a child of God fails, communion ceases. The Spirit then becomes a reprover to bring him back; but there is no communion. Communion is the full enjoyment of God and of divine things; when there is nothing to think of as regards oneself. God can now let flow into his heart that has a conscience purged all that He delights in. He loves to communicate what He Himself has joy in. All that Christ is is for us to enjoy. You are called into this place of Christ Himself—He, the Head of the body; and that the delight God has in Christ should flow down into your heart. How rich then the saint must be! but he is entirely dependent on the Spirit of God for power. There is no power to enjoy anything without Him. There must be an emptying from self to enjoy what He gives. The Spirit of God has no place to act where self and imagination are in exercise. It is not the glory at the end that is so much the object of the believer's thoughts, as the source of it—God Himself. There is more happiness in the fact of being in communion with Him than in the things He com-

municates : and I say again, because of its importance, a soul cannot have the enjoyment of the things of God without having peace, which is connected with the conscience.

The beginning of this chapter shows how we are presented to God. It is a test, whether the judgment-seat brings any terror to your minds. Does it give you any uneasiness? How does the saint get there? Christ comes to fetch him. He said, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself." Do you ever think of your coming before the judgment-seat being the effect of his having come to fetch you? Not sent for you, but coming Himself for you, because of His desire to have you with Him where He is, to be fashioned into the same image. You are to bear the image of the heavenly, as you have borne the image of the earthy. When you are there before the judgment-seat, you will be with Him, and like Him : every trace of God's unwearied hand, all His patience, here brought out. We shall be like the One who is the Judge. You will never (I speak, of course, to saints now) be before the judgment-seat of Christ without His coming to fetch you into the same glory in which you are to be. It is the knowledge of grace, or redemption, that leaves me at perfect liberty ; and all my life should be a witness to the enjoyment of this blessedness into which we are being brought. The whole of this is through looking at Christ. He is the Firstborn among many brethren in the Father's house. We shall be with Christ and like

Christ before God the Father. There will be the blessedness of being with Christ, in the presence of the Father, loved as He is loved. This is what we have in this chapter—set in the presence of God.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” We are blessed in Christ, and God is the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is “my God and your God,” Christ said. There is no measure of any relationship out of Christ—nothing but condemnation out of Christ.

If I have known what it is to be condemned, if I have known what sin is, and how God hates sin, I know there can be no hope for me out of Christ. But God has put away sin. God does not look at my sin, but on Christ. Just as I know my condition in Adam as ruined and condemned, so I know my place in Christ—accepted. How it throws us out of self-importance, self-dependence, self-glorying ! We enter into the presence of God in Him who has perfectly glorified God. He is the God as well as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is that wrought in Christ which was hidden from ages and from generations, and He has gone back in virtue of what He has done to vindicate the character of God. We enter into the blessing in Him who has done all. We shall know God in virtue of what the Father bestows upon us. The Father brings many sons unto glory, and brings them there perfect through the work of Christ—
“Blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ :” none can be wanting ; not an affection of God’s

delight is wanting. He brings us into His presence without one reserve of the affection that Christ has. We are brought there in Christ. Therefore all that Christ has we have.

How He goes on to unfold it ! “ That we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” He is not content with a mere general account, but brings it out in detail that we may know it. Suppose I saw a person with an excellent character, and I felt I could never be like that person, I should not be happy. The fact of the excellency of the person, without the possibility of being like him, would make me miserable ; and to have him always before me would be all the worse. But in heaven I shall be with Christ, and see Him, without the possibility of being unlike Him. What divine inventiveness of love to make us happy, infinitely happy ! What God does, and is, is infinite ; and it is so much the better that He will be always above us.

We shall have perfect freedom of intercourse with Him. Moses and Elias were speaking with Him of His death (it may not be then so much of His death), but there will be communion with Him of all that He has.

“ Without blame.” Released from all that which would hinder my loving Him ; therefore I am made “ holy and without blame.” There is the proper joy of the heart—“ before Him in love,” but no thought of equality ; “ wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence.”

Then there is another fact—"Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world." Thus we have His heart set upon us in eternity. The soul knows there is a personal love from God towards himself, and the heart delights in that. So with Christ. In Revelation ii. there is the white stone He will give—proof of personal delight. There is the individual rejoicing in the love of Christ.

How the Spirit seeks to draw out our affections by all this! He tells it all, and would have us know and enjoy it. He would have us know that we are going to heaven, and why. He would form our hearts by what He is doing, while bringing us in, "having predestinated us unto the adoption of children"—still in Christ and with Christ—"by Jesus Christ unto Himself." It is through Him, and in Him, and with Him I find it. It is having my heart fixed on God and the Father, that my affections may be drawn out to Him, and all is because "accepted in the beloved." God has not blessed angels like this. We are not servants only (we should be servants, to be sure), but we are brought into the confidence of children. Ought not a child to have confidence? We have the Spirit of adoption (sonship) whereby we cry "Abba Father." Our heart should answer to God's outgoings of heart in grace, and reflect this grace, "to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved." He has done it all.

Remark here, that there is not as yet a word

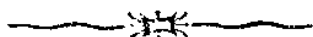
about the inheritance. I dwell on that, as showing how the affections of the saint are formed. If I speak of the inheritance, it is something below me. All prophecy concerns the inheritance. But I am looking at what is above me, and my own blessedness is in what is above me. Subjects connected with the church, blessed as they are, as prophecy, etc., are below. He will exercise us about these things, but let me first get my relationship with my Father known. Do not talk of me, what I have, but of what Christ is, and what He has. My soul must enjoy the love that has given it all. The love that has saved is more than the things given. It is of importance to the saints to feel this in the presence of God. It is not mental power, but the heart right—a single eye—that is the great thing. Unless a soul gets its intelligence and direction from God, it never understands the ways and affections of God. His own affections must be known and valued. If I have not known my place in the affections of my Father, I am not in a position to have the communion of His thoughts and purposes. When we were dead in sins, His heart was exercised for us. The sinner is here looked at as dead, not “living” in sins (as in Colossians), but “dead”, not a movement of life, when God comes and creates the blessing according to His own will. When our souls have known the value of Christ’s sacrifice bringing us to God, we are seen not in ourselves at all, but only in Christ. Then there is perfect rest.

But afterwards he can tell us of the inheritance ; and then the prayer is that we may know the hope of His calling (which calling is not the inheritance). He has called us to be “before Him in love ” (vs.

3-6); then verse 11 begins about the inheritance. Now I will show you what Christ's inheritance is, and you are to have it too. I must know I am a child and have the thoughts and affections of the child before I can have to do with the inheritance. The end of the matter is that we are brought in to share the inheritance.

How far are your hearts confiding in God's rest only for your wants, etc.? Rather, How far is your confidence and delight in Him for Himself? The heart of the child will delight in the affections of the father. Do your thoughts about God flow from what God has revealed to you of Himself? or are you reasoning about God—will He, or will He not, do it? When it is a settled thing with me that I am a sinner, what have I to reason about? We want to be brought to this simple conviction: I am a sinner; and if I am a sinner, what am I to do? Can I look for anything from God on the ground of righteousness? No. When brought to God I am brought to grace. What He is is the spring and source of the whole matter. We are in Christ. It could not be otherwise. We stand there now, by virtue of the atonement, in that position which makes the sin the very occasion for God to bless. Christ died for my sins, and God is "faithful and just to forgive us our sins."

God is going to take us to heaven, to be happy with Christ there; but He makes us happy out of heaven too. It is a difficult thing, but He does; and He would have the saints living up there where God is, and where we are going, and free from this present evil world.



ERRATUM.—Page 134, line 16, *for* "more" *read* "never."

A CHOSEN VESSEL.

(Concluded from page 151.)

CHAPTER IX.

GOD IN THE VESSEL.

“ *The sentence of death.*” (2 Cor. i. 10.)

“ *The power of his resurrection.*” (Phil. iii. 10.)

The passages at the head of this chapter present two principles which the vessel of God's choice must practically learn. They are not confined to the Christian interval alone; but have been the lessons variously taught, and more or less intelligently learned by the elect, at all times, and in all dispensations; though the clear, doctrinal meaning was not known until New Testament times.

They are, as we may speak, in a certain sense, correlative. The vessel is taught experimentally the *first* of these; and in the same way he finds the *second* working in him. What has “the power of his resurrection” to do with aught but a dead man? Surely nothing! Therefore if death works in him, life works also in him in the power of resurrection. This power is of God alone.

These are the great lessons set for every saint while here. The measure in which they are learned is quite another matter; as is also the soul's apprehension of the lesson. But oh, what conscious power is found, as the soul learns to hold the cross, to every motion of human life

which works in his body ! to bear about in himself the sentence of death, morally or physically, that he should not trust in himself, but in God who raises the dead. Then death works in him, and life towards others.

The former principle—"we have the sentence of death in ourselves"—is preparatory to the desire "That I may know him and the power of his resurrection." And this will be seen as we examine other cases in Scripture, "written for our learning."

The history of the "father of the faithful" will help to this end. In Abraham's path we are introduced to one, and the dealings of God with him, in whom we see the gradual unfolding of God's lessons for the soul, before the doctrine of these things is developed to us in the New Testament Scripture.

Like ourselves in our measure, he had to pass through all in an experimental way, to reach the perfect end. With the saint in the New Testament, did he but accept what is there taught, it would be with him that the place where others ended he would begin. But the state of soul, and the power of the flesh, and the deceivableness of our own hearts, are such that we must, alas ! learn, too, all the lessons in an experimental way.

In Paul we see one who learned these things practically, but with much difference from ourselves. How frequently, alas ! we learn them through failure, in which we experience (more like

Peter) the extricating ministry of Christ. Paul's case differed much, for in him we see rather the true heart taught, the singleness of eye met, so that he had more of the preventive or preserving ministry of Christ, rather than the restorative or extricating, while, at the same time, he was passed through circumstances of varied kinds that the lesson might be experienced in his own soul. We see failures in his life, but they were few.

We all experience, in a sense, the threefold way in which God revealed Himself to Abraham. He was called by the "*God of Glory*" (Acts vii. 2). He was sustained by the "*Almighty God,*" and all was provided by "*Jehovah Jireh.*" This was his history as a saint. But all was not revealed to him at first: the flesh had to be broken, fallen nature exposed, law had to be tried and found fruitless for faith, promise had to be rested upon, and then the fruit of accomplished promise had to be surrendered for the power of resurrection on Mount Moriah. Until this came he never was really and fully a worshipper, nor did he ever know God by that new name, "*Jehovah-Jireh.*" I do not dwell much upon his earlier history. He did what true children of God do also, until they learn otherwise. He saw, when called of God at first, that which it was God's will should be done or possessed, and he assayed to realise and accomplish it in the strength of man. All fails, and then at last God *does by him* what he assayed *to do himself*. The end in view was right and the motive was right,

but the energy put forth was of "man." He had not yet taken "the sentence of death" to himself, nor had he learned "the power of his resurrection."

Was not this so with Moses when he assayed to deliver Israel? With David at Ziklag? With Peter in the judgment hall? Each was tried, each sought to do that which was right and of God; but the energy was of man, and God did, at the end, by each one the same things which each had assayed to do themselves. We see this every day around in the history of saints. We know it in our own. Often, too, we have seen, in the first freshness of soul in a young saint apprehending the truth, a deeper and more spiritual recognition of the will of the Lord than at later times in his life. He may have turned aside from the performance of it, or he may have sought to do it in the power of man, thinking that because it was right and of God, *he* should do so. Years after the thing is done (if there was no failure or turning aside) by God Himself in him. Or, if failure supervened and turning aside, it was forced upon him through sorrows and trials and breakings of the flesh, and of the will of man which had come in to hinder.

You see it, too, in those that have assayed to serve in the gospel or in the church. The energy of the heart which pushed forth the young man as a servant, fails, he breaks down, he is coldly received, or the like. If there is gift from Christ,

the thing was right and of God ; but the energy was self—unbroken. Painful lessons followed (than which there are few more so), but if we watch that man's after history, if he walk with God, he will come forth brightly in useful service to the Lord : *God doing by him* what *he* assayed to do *himself* in vain.

In Abraham's case we will examine the moment when he was enabled to take home "the sentence of death" to himself in the "sign of circumcision" (Gen. xvii.), thus learning the fruitlessness of flesh, and to be cut off from himself in the things of God.

Nearly fourteen years had passed since the birth of Ishmael, this son of the bondwoman : this effort of the energy of man to accomplish the thoughts of God. He was born and was brought up in Abraham's house for twice seven years. All seemed outwardly promising for the time ; but Abraham had trodden for those fourteen years a path which was self-devised. These years are passed over as a blank in his history—utterly unrecognized. And oh, how many histories of God's saints will be found a blank by-and-by ! The power of man was seeking to further the things of God. But this he must discover, in one short interview, in which his whole path and his Ishmael are totally ignored ; not by words, indeed, but by the simple revelation of God Himself—the Almighty One who was *all-powerful*, in contrast with *quasi-power* in man.

Let me ask my reader, has he ever known cases analagous to this? Has he not seen with an enlightened eye lives of apparent usefulness—and this, too, in ways supposed to be of God—blown upon in one moment by some truth flashing upon the soul, which judges all? How multitudinous are the paths that would fade into a mist as one flash of divine light is shed upon them! Yea, even those which are based upon the word of God and His known will in the truth, not to speak of the ten thousand paths and ways of supposed service, which have no warrant from it at all: the former done in the strength of man and worthless, the latter I care not to analyse, so worthless are they.

“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God [El-Shaddai] walk before me, and be thou perfect. . . . And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him” (Gen. xvii). What a moment was this! To discover in that interview that he had never yet touched the pathway of the Lord. He had walked by the light of his own eyes. All was worthless, all was ignored, he has but to listen as he lay on his face before God, until the whole unfolding of God’s mind, thus far known, is heard, and the previous fourteen years is treated as a blank in his history. One sentence alone passes his lips in this whole chapter, one cry from his heart is heard. It is the struggle of one who now feels that nothing of God was in those many years of hope, that he must

now step off this self-devised pathway on to the path of God, leaving all behind as a mistake, as the effort of man to accomplish the things of God.

What a moment for the soul! Have there not been such-like soul-awakenings in God's saints at times? Moments when all was fading away which had delighted the eye, and the heart's cry was heard: "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" Must all then go? Is there not some remnant of former days which may be spared? Has *all* been a mistake? Is all to be thus ignored? God may pity the soul in this—though not His purpose. He may say, as it were: "And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee." And the link may be spared and blessed in an earthly way, but it never enters the path which is divine: "But my covenant will I establish with Isaac."

Seven times do we now hear the utterances of God in His unchallengeable "I will" (vs. 2-8). Those purposes are announced, into which man could never enter as co-worker with God. "*I will* make my covenant with thee;" and I "*will* multiply thee exceedingly;" "*I will* make thee exceedingly fruitful;" "I will make nations of thee;" "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and to thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." Compare Gal. iii. 29; Phil. iv. 19.) "I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land whereon thou

art a stranger ;” and “ I will be their God.”

Abram has but to hearken, to receive, to hear, all that God Himself would do by him. Abram’s strength was but that of man, it could but mar the power of God in resurrection. He must accept the seal of this new creation, he must take “the sentence of death” home to his own soul in the “sign of circumcision”—the seal of the righteousness that he had by faith, being yet uncircumcised.

Mark the significance of all this, expressed in the changing of his name at this time. Rather, let us say, in God imparting to that name the breathings of His own. Instead of Abram he would now be Abra-h-am. The breathings of the name of Jehovah, the self-existing God, are imparted to his ; he is made, as it were, a “partaker of the divine nature.” (Cf. 2 Peter i. 4.) He belongs to the new creation of God.*

This was the sign of “the sentence of death” upon man, and the entrance into that where “all things are of God” of which circumcision was the seal. The work of God would be done in the vessel by Himself alone. The human vessel must bow. It must take this sentence home to itself. In spirit it must enter into the new creation with a new and divinely-breathed name. The vessel must be will-less and powerless in His hand.

But more : “The power of his resurrection”

* See also how Oshea is turned to Jehoshua, and many other cases in the word. (Numbers xiii. 16.)

must be known, for it alone can avail in a dead man, to lift him out of the dead and into this new sphere. (“He considered* his own body now dead.” “He hesitated not at the promise of God through unbelief.”) This power now comes in: “As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be.” She, too, must be made partaker, as it were, of the divine nature; she must, like him, have the breathing of God’s name put to hers, that she may in figure be of the new creation also. “And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be the mother of nations, kings of peoples shall be of her.” Again he falls on his face—now as *Abraham*. He “found strength in faith, giving glory to God.” Abram once had fallen on his face and *listened*; but now “*Abraham* fell on his face and *laughed*, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah that is ninety years old bear? And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee *a son indeed*; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: † and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.”

* This was “the power of resurrection,” now the resource of God. Human strength and human

* The omission of the “not” here is very probably right, and in keeping with the subject.

† Which signifies “laughter” or “joy:” he makes melody in his heart to the Lord: realising this heavenly joy; this “eighth day” of creation power.

hopes were dead in Abraham and Sarah, the "sentence of death" taken home to their souls, that they "should not trust in themselves, but in God that raiseth the dead." "Against hope he believed with hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be" (Rom. iv. 18).

But there was more taught here. God had said, at the moment when he first appeared to Abraham as the Almighty, "Walk before *me*, and be thou *perfect*."

Hitherto the Lord had been his shield and his exceeding great reward. His guardian care had marked his path—his shelter from his foes. Now more was asked: God's new name would bring fresh responsibility. El-Shaddai had been revealed Himself, who could do all things, who only needed an empty vessel under "the sentence of death," to use. "Perfection" must now be found. This was the answer of the soul to the revelation of God, the soul responding, as face answers to face in the glass, to all that God is—as thus known.

We have then: 1, Circumcision first brought in, the sign of the sentence of death and the cutting off from ourselves; 2, the power of His resurrection follows, as that of God, who would work in a dead man; 3, we have perfection required in those in whom the other two are seen.

Thus were the roots of these things learned in practical power by the vessel of promise, after-

wards to be known in their spiritual significance in New Testament times.

When therefore we turn to Paul in Philippians we find all there. The vessel is there in its moral beauty and perfection, as far as this can be reached below. The workings of flesh are not there, nor sin, nor the weakness of man, as a vessel of mercy upon the potter's wheel. No flaw is here. The vessel is not now marred in the hands of the potter. True, it is not yet transformed into the potter's image in glory, but through the dealings of God with the vessel it is rendered so that the "Treasure" is shining out in every phase. Christ is motive, Christ is energy, Christ is end. The potter is now seen in the vessel.

We find those great principles which we saw in Genesis xvii., in Philippians iii. Paul has gone through the prefatory work. Four years in prison, chained to a soldier, had wrought its work. The soul had been stripped of all its "desirable things." The labour for Christ which was his life was now arrested, as to outward warfare in the work. Brighter lessons were in store: lessons for the church of God, in all ages of her sojourn here on earth, were to come forth from the Roman capitol, where he wore his chain.

He takes the conscious place—not now merely as learning the fact of *death* to all the energy of man, as Abraham—but of accepting it. "*We are*," said he, "*the circumcision.*" The painful lesson is past. Christ had passed away from the

earth : He had died to the scene, and died out of it, to rise into that new place, now fully taken, as "the beginning of the creation of God." Head of that new order of things, associated with Him, "circumcised with the circumcision not made with hands," we partake of all that into which He as Man had entered. We are circumcised in Him, as Sarah was in Abraham. "We are the circumcision, who worship God by the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh : " the "sentence of death " to all that savoured of the energy of man, even at his best, and the flesh only to be ignored, even in its best phase.

There all that savoured of this, all that of which man could boast, is cast aside. Of all men he had that of which he could boast as to the flesh. Not the "flesh of sin " here, but that which looked fair in man's eyes, and was the best fruit that man could produce, as such, in divine things. By birth, by religious zeal, by righteousness of the law which applied to man in the flesh, all was surrendered in that moral death, of which circumcision was the seal.

But more : "all things " were counted loss, they but stood in the way of that which was "all his desire." "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection." Here was another of those striking points found in Genesis xvii. : the desire in gazing at Christ in glory, to know Him there—gone up to that scene where all His glory shone. And here on earth, as a vessel indeed,

will-less, powerless, empty, finding that power which raised up the Son, out of every sorrow and grief by the way—and by which, at last, He rose from the grave—working in the vessel, wielding it and using it for the purposes which alone were His, to work, while here, for His glory.

How did this power work in Paul? Look at the man who above all on earth was filled with such mighty energy in the service of Christ in the gospel: shut up as a malefactor in prison, suspected by his brethren, shunned by all for a time, cut off from the work which was more than life to him. His great heart had swelled with the hope that, as he had evangelised the eastern world—“From Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum,” he had fully preached “the gospel of Christ”—he would now go forth to the western world, as far as Spain—carrying the word of life.

Caught in the toils of a prison, the great vessel learns, after four years of exercise, to say: “I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.” God was doing greater things when the great vessel to whom the gospel of the glory of Christ was committed was set aside from its active work. Most of the brethren were waxing confident now (as in quietness of heart, his case in God’s hands, he waited on His vindicating love), his bonds were known to be for Christ; others were the more bold to speak the word without fear.

But God was *making* the vessel for His use. It was on the potter's wheel. There were greater things to be done by him than his heart had devised. It was a light thing to evangelise the western world compared with the writing of those epistles which came from his prison in Rome, to instruct and comfort and rejoice the hearts of millions of His saints for well-nigh two thousand years. To this end "the power of his resurrection" alone could work. And if "the fellowship of his sufferings" reached even to "conformity to his death," it was but the path by which he would arrive at "the resurrection out from among the dead," and thus be more like Christ.

There again we have "perfection" seen in the vessel, as far as such can be reached while here on earth. This "perfection" is always dispensational in its character, and answering to the revelation of Himself which God has been pleased to make from time to time: as *Almighty*, or *Jehovah*, or the *Father of the Lord Jesus Christ*.*

It is important for us that we understand the different ways that perfection is looked at in the word.

1. We have *positional* perfection, as we may term it, which every soul that belongs to Christ possesses in Him; the *standing* of the saint as set free under the gospel now set forth. This positional perfection is in contrast with what a Jew

* Compare Genesis xvii. 1; Deuteronomy xviii. 13; Matthew v. 48; Philippians iii. 15.

under the law could possess ; because " the law made nothing perfect." Under the gospel the conscience of the believer is perfected by the precious blood of Christ. When " once purged," no charge of sin can ever press itself on the worshipper. By one offering, Christ has perfected continuously the sanctified ones, that is, those separated to God by His blood.

But more : he has died with Christ out of the old status, which he possessed as a child of Adam. He is risen with Christ into a new sphere, too ; he has been quickened together with Christ, and raised up together (Jew and Gentile) and seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Every soul who is in union with Christ stands in this " perfection " before God. I do not speak here of their realisation of such. Paul laboured that he might present every man perfect in Christ. (Col. i. 28.) In this there is no intrinsic perfection in the saint, it is his dispensational standing. He is complete in Him who is the Head of all principality and power. He is circumcised (positionally) in Him by the passing out, in the circumcision of Christ, into that new order of things, that eighth day, to which circumcision belonged. (It must be performed in the type on that eighth day.)

2. There is a *moral* perfection which is attainable here below on earth, to which Paul exhorts and in which he walked himself. (Phil. iii. 15.) This is what the Spirit of God wrought in the vessel, in the condition found in Philippians, producing in it a

reflex and an answer here to all that Christ on high is : with the hope filling the soul, to be conformed to Him in His path on earth, reaching even to the grave, and out of which the power of His resurrection would raise it if it reach "conformity unto his death." "All things were loss and dung in seeking for such perfection ; but it was attained by the setting aside of all that man could glory in, and it was wrought by the Holy Ghost in an empty, will-less vessel, hastening on to the goal. "Let as many as be perfect, be thus minded : " attainable, indeed, by all, though perhaps few really attain it, for want of a single eye.

3. But "*perfection*" *itself* could never be reached on earth. True, the *positional* perfection, all who are Christ's possess in Him. *Moral* perfection would be attained by the true-hearted saint who yielded himself to the workings of the Spirit of God. But the end would not be reached while here. Nor until the mighty power of Christ would be put forth, and "mortality would be swallowed up of life," and He would change our vile body (or "body of humiliation") that it might be fashioned like unto His glorious body (or "body of glory") according to the power whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself. Of this Paul would say : "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."

Thus the father of all that believe learned his

threefold lesson experimentally in his path of old ; and the leader of the people of God, in New Testament days, learned it in his. He was a man of like passions as ourselves, but a man with a single eye, a single motive, an undivided heart. He waits on high with Christ for the fruit of all that the potter's hand had skilfully wrought, not a flaw remains, no more crushings are now required. He enjoys the "far better" thing meanwhile. By-and-by "This corruptible shall have put on incorruption : and this mortal shall have put on immortality," and the Master's handiwork will shine in him, as a "vessel of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory."

He will have then received the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will give him at that day, and not to him only, but unto all those that love His appearing (2 Tim. iv. 8).



SUFFERING AND TRUSTING.

DANIEL iii.

In the narrative of this chapter, we have a picture of the spirit and character in which the godly remnant of Israel will pass through their trials. It is not to the character of their trials, however, the outward difficulties and deliverances here referred to, so much as to the spirit of the thing that I desire briefly to call attention. In Israel, God was showing forth His mighty power in *temporal* deliv-

erances, as in the case of Pharaoh, etc. But it is different now with us who, through grace, are the Lord's: we have *soul* deliverance (1 Pet. i. 9), and are waiting for God's Son from heaven. At all times those who are faithful to God have been a suffering people. Obedience and reliance on God characterize the seed all through.

We find here, that, besides the love of power, religion is used to unite and band together, to oblige conformity to the king's word. No matter whether king or pope if it is his religion; for religion being the strongest motive in the human heart, men use it to sway and influence others to gain their own selfish ends. We get a perfect example of it here. He who wielded God's power, and in whose hand God put it, did not use it for God's glory. God had tried man under the *law*, and man had failed; He then put absolute *power* into the hands of one man, but instead of using it in serving God, he sets up an image, and commands all men to worship it. What do we find as the result? God's people abstain from it in the character of the remnant. They will not submit, nor do they. Of course this is a great crime, upsetting the whole thing. Then comes persecution, and to that they do submit.

However God might allow His people to suffer, nothing ought to alter their reliance on Himself. Faith was as simple a thing in Babylon as in Jerusalem. God is the God of heaven and earth at all times, and none can hinder His power, or the

exercise of it in grace towards His people. He may suffer them to be in trial—He may not always give outward deliverance ; but *patience* is always the same, and the ground of confidence is the same here in Babylon as in Jerusalem. If the circumstances of trial are different, the Lord's power of interfering is always the same. Circumstances do not hinder that in the least. The outward trial may conceal God's power from our eyes, but He is always the same. I doubt not in this day many a heart is feeling discouraged, and ready to say, "Who will show us any good?" The answer follows: "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us!" And what could you get more? What is better or mightier than the light of God's countenance? However sorrowful we may be about things, that should not weaken our confidence in God. It was when all seemed hopeless in Israel that "Immanuel" was found among them; and however hopeless the condition of God's people may seem when a *false* god is set up, God remains the same.

Mark, now, the perfect power of the king, and the perfect patience of these faithful sufferers. If they had resisted the power, it would have been over with them in a moment, as they would then have taken it out of God's hand. But *now* they change the king's word by their patience. If they had opposed Nebuchadnezzar it would have been all over, for God gave the king his power; but they submitted, therefore God could deliver them.

What is the effect of these faithful ones being in the trial? The identification of their names with God! as He was called the God of Abraham. "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego." What an honour!—what a blessing to be thus associated with God, having His name associated with theirs; and how blessed the identification of the saints with the God who is not ashamed to be called their God! It was by non-resistance that they reached this glory, by bowing to the power and will of God, although evil as regards the exercise of it in the king's hand. If we get into the humble, low place of suffering under the power, we shall find God's power put forth to deliver. We see here what quietness and peace of heart they have, whether it be in refusing to worship, or suffering the furnace, or coming out with honour; and it is sure to bring the blessed reward of ever having God's name identified with ours; and the God whom we have known as our God, and whom we have cleaved to in trial down here, and He to us, is the same whose name attaches itself to us in the glory.



FRAGMENT.—The bitter waters of Marah must be tasted when the salt waters of the Red Sea have delivered us from Egypt for ever and ever. Put the wood of the tree, the cross of Christ, into our cross, and all will be sweet. "Crucified" is terrible work—"crucified *with Christ*," joy and deliverance; reproach is cruel, "the reproach of *Christ* greater riches than the treasures of Egypt."

THE OUTCAST.

MATT. viii. 20.

For Him the wilderness did not sing,
Nor the desolate place rejoice—
Nor as the rose did the desert bloom,
Nor the wastes lift up their voice.

The glory of Lebanon was not there,
Nor the shittah nor myrtle, sweet ;
Nor was the place of His sojourning fair,
Nor glorious the place of His feet.

Through the great and terrible waste He trod,
Where water springs were none—
In the weary desert alone with God,
And His heritage God alone.

No way in the desert prepared for Him,
Nor the mountains and hills made low—
Nor the crooked straight, nor the rough ways plain,
Where His pilgrim feet must go.

O Father, Thy care is not to make
The desert a waste no more,
But to keep our feet lest we lose the track
Where *His* feet have gone before.

Thou carest not that the rose should bloom,
Nor the myrtle where we must tread ;
Nor to make the fir and the cedar tree
A shadow above our head.

But Thou carest that, though this earth we tread
We walk in the light above,
That we sit in His shadow with great delight,
And feed on the fruit of His love.

Thou carest that in the pastures green,
And where the still water flows,
In the midst of the paradise of our God,
We should find our deep repose.

And Thy Spirit doth give us deep, full joy,
As through the wilds we roam,
Atuning our hearts with songs of praise,
On our way to our Father's Home.

Whilst yet we walk through the weary land,
Where we bear the outcast name,
Where the foxes have holes, and the birds have
nests,
And our Lord the cross of shame,

Apart from all, in the joy we dwell
Which the eye hath never seen—
'Tis a dry and a thirsty land below,
But above the fields are green.

Where He is no more the outcast Man,
But the Lamb whom all adore,
Where in fullest measure our joy and song,
Continue for evermore.



THE WATCHER AND THE HOLY ONE.

DANIEL IV.

The present is a moment of great significance in the world's history. We often speak of other days as having been strongly characterized, and as of high importance in the progress of the way of man, and in the unfolding of the purposes of God. Were we but in the due position, so as to look at them aright, the present would be seen by us as

equal to any of them in importance and in meaning.

Man is preparing that great exhibition of himself, whereby the whole world is to be ensnared and deceived to its final utter ruin. Such a condition of things has already had many a miniature resemblance; and nothing has escaped the snare but "the mind of Christ," *i. e.*, the man of God, led by the Spirit through the specious and commanding delusion.

There was, in other days, a tree whose leaves were fair and whose fruit was much, the height of which reached unto heaven, and the sight of it to the end of all the earth, the beasts of the field had shadow under it, the birds of the air dwelt in the boughs of it, and all flesh fed on it. It was, after this manner, the admiration and the boast of all: their desire was towards it; and the heart of the man who planted it, affected it as his glory and joy — "Is not this great Babylon that I have builded," said the king Nebuchadnezzar.

Thus was it, this fair luxuriant tree. All flesh was content, and man's heart feasted on it; the ends of the earth gazed at it; and thus it got its sanction from all that was in man or of man.

In a little space, however, heaven visited it: and it was altogether another thing in the judgment of heaven. The Watcher and the Holy One came down, as the Lord Himself had done in the still earlier days of Babel and of Sodom, and this Visitor from heaven inspected this tree of beauteous

wondrous growth. But with Him it was no object of admiration or worship. He was not moved to desire its beauty. In His thoughts it was not a tree good for food, or pleasant to the eye, or desirable for any end, as it was in the thoughts of all flesh. He looked on it as on a thing ripe for righteous judgment, and He said of it, "Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit."

This was solemn, in a moment of common universal exaltation, when the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and all flesh, were glorying in the thing which heaven was thus dooming to destruction. But Daniel among men in that day was one who had the mind of heaven, the mind of the Watcher and the Holy one respecting this tree—but such as he only. For the saint on the earth has the mind of heaven in him. This is our place. All flesh may feed on that, of which faith, or the mind of Christ in us, sees the end under the sure judgment of God.

This is so: and may we experience it! But moral danger and temptation beset our hearts. "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." And the saint, in these days, is in great danger of having more of the mind of man in him than that of God. Look at even such an one as Samuel. When Eliab stood before him, he said, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before him." But he looked where the Lord did not look. He eyed the countenance of the man,

and the height of his stature ; while the Lord eyed the heart. And we are in danger (in these days of both religious and secular attractions) of mistaking Eliab again for the Lord's anointed. Paul was held in some contempt in Corinth because of his "bodily presence," which was "weak." He was no Eliab. He was wanting in "outward appearance" (see 1 Sam. xvi. 7 ; 2 Cor. x. 7, etc.), and even the disciples at Corinth were beguiled away from him.

All this is warning to us in this solemn and significant day, when man's exaltation of himself is growing apace, and things are judged of by the mind of man, and in their bearing on the advancement of the world.

But, again, when the disciples were held in admiration, religious admiration, of the buildings of the temple, we have a like occasion of the rebuke which the mind of man met from the mind of God. "As He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said unto Him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here ! And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings ? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." (Mark xiii.).

This has the same moral character in it. It is the erring judgment of man, spending its delight and wonder on what the righteous judgment of God has already and solemnly renounced. The Lord (may I say ?) was as the Watcher and the

Holy One of the prophet, delivering the sentence of heaven upon the boast and pride of the heart of man, found too in the place of religion. And again, I ask, has not this a voice in the ear of this present generation ?

The case, however, which above all has fixed my mind at this time, is that in Luke xix., where the multitude are following the Lord on His way from Jericho to Jerusalem. We are there told of them, that “they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.”

This tells us again of the expectation of man’s heart. The people judged that the present scene, the world as in man’s hand, could get its sanction from God. The kingdom, they thought, would be set up at once. But this can never be. Christ cannot adopt man’s world. Through repentance and faith man must take up with Christ’s world, and not think that Christ can take up with his. The kingdom cannot come till judgment shall have cleared the scene of man’s iniquities and pollutions. But this is not what man calculates on at all. He judges that the kingdom may immediately appear—appear, or be set up, without any purifying, any change : all that is wanting is advancement a few steps farther, as from Jericho to Jerusalem, a little more progress in the growing scene, and all will be the kingdom fit for God’s adoption.

This is the mind of the present generation—like those who, in this chapter in Luke, “thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.”

Things are so far advanced, so refined, so cultivated by a multitude of fresh energies, moral, religious, and scientific, that under the success and progress of such energies, the world will do for Christ in a very little while. But no, it is man's world still, and this will never do for Christ. You may sweep and garnish the house, but it is the house of the old owner still; and, for all the pains spent upon it, only the more fit for the old owner's designs, and in no wise one single bit more suited to God's great and glorious purposes.

Jesus goes up to Jerusalem. But He finds there a field of thorns and briars: there were money-changers, and sellers of doves in the temple of God. The house of prayer was a den of thieves. The rulers, chief priests, and scribes, were seeking to destroy the Just One. The religion of the place was chief in the offence. Jesus wept over it: instead of all being ready for the kingdom appearing immediately, all was but ready for judgment, for the stones crying out immediately. And thus, the city, as Jesus said of it, was soon to be entrenched and encompassed, and laid even with the ground, instead of being the habitation of glory, and the witness of the kingdom of God.

I ask myself, has not all this a voice for our ears in this generation? "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." Jesus, as a Holy One and a Watcher again on this occasion, as in Matthew xxiv. 1, 2, inspected the fair tree of man's worship and joy,

and in spirit said, "Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves and scatter his fruit." And so is my soul deeply assured He is doing at this moment, touching all the progress and advancement and boasted toils and successes of this present hour. He that sits in the heavens has another thought of it all than men vainly imagine. He is not about to sanction, but to judge the world in this its day (a day near at hand) of loftiest advancement and exaltation.

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CONQUERORS.

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When we look a little at the different agents of evil and of delusions exhibited in the book of Revelation, we wonder how any soul will escape. And then, when we remember that though these agents have not yet been manifested, yet that the energies which are to animate and use them are already abroad and in action, and all working now in mystery if not in revealed forms, we stand amazed at the sight we thus get of the conflict in which we are engaged.

There will be "the dragon" and his "great wrath"—the "beast" and his "false prophet"—the "frogs"—"Babylon"—"the kings of the earth"—and "the whole world wondering after the beast."

What tremendous agents in the works of delusion, darkness and blood! What strong temptations and what appalling difficulties will then be-

set the path of the wayfaring saints! Who will stand? Who will find conduct through this array of hindrances? Who will discover the path of life and light amid all this thickening and overwhelming darkness?

And yet with each feature of this terrible scene, with each member of this great system of subtlety and strength, in the mystery or spirit of it, we have now to do; though, of course, some part of it may be more in real activity than others. But it is our duty still, and always, to recognize the dragon and his wrath, the beast and the frogs, Babylon, the kings of the earth, and the world deluded into infidel or idolatrous wonder and worship—to recognize each and all of these in the mystery, or in the hidden energy of their working.*

The field of conflict thus spread out is serious indeed. But, as this same book unfolds to us, we have at the same time to recognize the better region—that is, the heavenly—where we get other objects altogether, and all, I may say, for us.

The prophet of God in Patmos passes, in vision, with great ease and rapidity from earth to heaven, and from heaven to earth. The two regions are alternately before him, and he sees the action in each. But the passage is made with ease and with speed.†

* The "lawless one" is to be revealed, but it is "the mystery of lawlessness" that is now working (see 2 Thess. ii., *Greek*).

† He was "in the Spirit" (chap. i. 10). And we know

In chapters iv. v., he is in sight of heaven. So, at the opening of the seals in chapter vi., passing however at once to see the results of those opened seals on earth; so again in chapter viii., we find him in vision of both the regions; and, in like manner, I may say, throughout. He hears the music and the conferences in heaven, the rapture and the hopes there; and then again he is amid the infidel pride, the confusion, and all the workings of apostate principles, which are giving character to the scene on earth. He passes from the exulting marriage feast in heaven to the terrible judgment of the Rider on the white horse on all the confederated iniquity of the earth.

We see something of this in the opening of the book of Job. There we are, in vision, both in heaven and on earth, as in the twinkling of an eye.*

Is it not the business of the soul thus to act still? There are two regions—that of faith and that of sight: and the soul should pass rapidly and frequently into the region of faith. Had Job thus visited heaven, and heard and seen the action there, he would have been ready for the trials and sorrows which awaited him on earth.

that the Spirit was as a chariot to convey the prophets of old, either really or in vision, hither and thither. (See 1 Kings xviii. 12; Ezek. iii. 12; Acts viii. 29.)

* So at the time of Stephen's martyrdom. How near to each other are the two regions (that of sight, and that of faith, or of earth and of heaven) though so different, presented to us! (Acts vii.)

Little one knows of it, indeed, but the soul covets the power to follow John in the Revelation, passing as we see, easily and speedily from earth to heaven and back again, and always prepared, I may say, without amazement, for the shifting scenery.

But beside this, for the encouragement of our hearts, I observe two victories achieved in the progress of this book—one over the accuser (chap. xii. 11), and another over the beast (chap. xv. 2).

The accuser was defeated by a certain army of martyrs, and the weapons of their victorious struggle are hung up before us; for we are told they conquered by “the blood of the Lamb,” by “the word of their testimony,” and by “their not loving their lives to the death.” These had been their armour in conflict with the accuser.

If he went up, as in Job's case, to the presence of God with charges against them, they met him there with “the blood of the Lamb.” They pleaded the sacrifice of God's own Lamb according to God's own testimony respecting it. And to the charge that “skin for skin, all that a man has will he give for his life,” they rendered up their lives to death in answer.*

*They surpassed Job's measure. He pleaded “the blood of the Lamb” (see Job xix. 25), but he failed in the devotedness of a martyr, and was not prepared for the place of death. [It may be questioned if “Redeemer” in Job means what the writer infers; though, no doubt, the power in which He will act in favour of the saints cannot be separated from His atonement.—ED.]

Here was their victory, and such and such the weapons which accomplished it. Heaven could employ itself in celebrating this victory. Was Jesus standing when Stephen was martyred? Easy then for heaven to be engaged in rehearsing with joy these conquests of this martyr-band.

But again, we have another victory celebrated in chapter xv. It had been obtained over the beast, as the other had been gained over the accuser.

The conquerors here are like Israel on the Red Sea in Exodus xv. And just as in that song of Israel, so here in this song of triumph, we learn the character of the previous truth, and how it was the conquerors conquered.

Moses and the congregation rehearse the fact that a victory had been won. They sing of the horse and his rider being thrown into the sea; of Jehovah, as a man of war, casting His enemies into the mighty waters; of the depths covering the foe. And they let it be known that Israel themselves had not fought, but that Jehovah had made the battle all His own.

Thus the style of the victory, its instruments and strength, is published in the song as well as in the fact of victory. And I judge in like manner so does the song in Revelation xv.

All the world had wondered after the beast, and their wonder led to worship—or it was itself worship (chap. xiii.). His power appeared to be so great, his history so marvellous, that all the world

wondered and worshipped, except (as I may say) this conquering band who paid their lives as the price of their faith in God and fidelity to Jesus.*

But the song, as I have said, utters, as I judge, the weapons they had used in that day of battle. And they were these. These martyrs were admiring and worshipping "the Lord God Almighty," while the world around them were admiring and worshipping the beast. The world was wondering at the greatness of the beast and the marvellousness of his history ; but they were standing in the holy adoring admiration of the Lord and the marvellousness of His works. (See Rev. xv. 3.) And while all beside were fearing the beast who could and would kill their bodies, they lived in the fear of God only, giving heed to the angel's voice which had spoken of His coming judgment (see chap. xiv. 7 ; xv. 4).

Thus this fine but short song tells of the manner of the victory, or the weapons which had accomplished it, as that song of Israel at the Red Sea had done before.†

But further. I might extend this thought as to victories in the book of Revelation, and say, gen-

* I doubt not that "the great exhibitions" of the day are designed of Satan to practise the world in this idolatrous admiration of man, so that they may be the more prepared for the beast when he appears in all his fascination. The saint should retire from it to Jesus.

† I might notice a difference in the battles, though the songs are the same. That on the Red Sea was fought alone by Jehovah for Israel, this with the beast was fought by the Lord in His saints.

erally, that from beginning to end it is the book of victories.

It contemplates corruption or apostasy—evil in the church and in the larger scene outside ; or first among the candlesticks, and then in the earth or world.

But corruption or apostasy occasions struggle or conflict on the part of saints ; and accordingly, the saints in this book are addressed or contemplated as conquerors ; such as have been in conflict because of corruption and have come off in victory.

They are formally regarded in this character in this book. Thus it is as conquerors they are addressed by the Spirit in each of the letters to the churches. “ He that overcometh ” is the language in each of them ; because in each church there is contemplated a struggle or conflict, by reason either of corruption within or danger and enmity without (chaps. ii., iii),

And I suggest that the crowns of chapter xv. are more formally the crowns of victors than of kings (see chap iii. 11), as though we saw the “ overcomers ” of the previous chapter enthroned in chapter iv.*

* We may say that, in divine reckoning, there is scarcely a difference ; for the kingdom is taken by those who have been in the conflict before (see Luke xxii. 28, 29 ; Matt. xx. 28 ; 1 Cor. ix. 25 ; 2 Tim. ii. 12). The Lord had gained a succession of victories in the days of His flesh over Satan (Matt. iv.), over the world (John xvi. 33), over sin and its judgment (Matt. xxvii. 51), over death and the grave (John xx. 6, 7). The earth has been the scene of these victories, the gospel publishes them, faith accepts them.

So in the very next scene (chap. v.) the Lord Jesus is recognized as a conqueror. In that character He takes the book. The word "prevailed" is the common word for "overcome," "the Lion hath overcome." Then, in the progress of the book, we see two victories celebrated in heaven, one obtained over the accuser (chap. xii.), and another over the beast (chap. xv.), as I have before noticed. Then, on the earth, we see victory achieved, victory over the closing concentrated enmity and apostate strength and pride of the whole world (chap. xvii. 14, or xix. 11-21).

And further still, for I ask, Is not the first resurrection contemplated as a resurrection of conquerors? Is it not a reign of conquerors which we see in chapter xx. 4?

And so for ever, for the inheritance of all things, after this, is in the hands of conquerors (chap. xxi. 7).

Can I ask my own soul what measure or character of victory marks my course? Can I enquire of myself, Do I know what conflict is because of corruption, and what the victory of separation from it?

The more we are conquerors, the more we are morally fit to be readers of the book of Revelation. John, I may say, was a conqueror in the first chapter, for he was a martyr or confessor in the Isle of Patmos, "a brother and a companion in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ," and in that character he gets the revelation communicated to

him. And I suggest again that it comes to him from a Conqueror, because it comes to him from "Jesus Christ" in the character (among others) of the "faithful witness," the character in which He overcame the world (see 1 Tim. vi. 13; see also John xvi. 33; Rev. iii. 21).

Indeed the four leading ideas in the book seem to be corruption, conflict, victory, and kingdom, the judgment of God being in exercise throughout.

The book assumes, so to speak, that those who have tasted the grace of the Saviour should stand in the rejection of the Saviour. This may give a character to the book which will be somewhat strong for our timid hearts; but it is fitting that the volume of God should close with such a chapter, if I may so call it. Because the blessing of the creature was not the only business in creation, neither is it in redemption. His own glory was proposed as well as the creature's good. And it is His glory to judge a reprobate unrepentant world; and His people glorify Him by taking part with Him in that judgment; and they judge it now in weakness by gainsaying the course of it even at the hazard of goods, liberties, and lives, as they will by and by judge it in power, when seated on their thrones in the regeneration.

The volume then closes as it began, for His own glory, of course in a different way (*i. e.* in the judgment of all the apostate principles of the world in their ripened condition). And the saints are rightly expected to be on His side in that action.

This is their place and character in this book. The present is an age of easy profession, and the martyr strength and devotedness which are found in this book is not the common element. O for faith and love to reach it!—to be on the side of a rejected Jesus against the world!

But more than this: the book contemplates the saints as heirs as well as conquerors. The expectation and the desire of getting the earth into possession and under dominion occupy the mind of Christ and of the saints throughout.*

In the opening of the prophetic part in chapter iv. we see the rainbow, the sign of the earth's security, round the throne in heaven. And the One who sits on the throne is clothed in His glory as Creator, for whose pleasure all things were created. We are, thus, in Spirit, in Genesis i.

In chapter v. the book of the inheritance of the earth passes into the hand of the Lamb, and all rejoice. We are, thus, in Spirit, in Genesis ii., where the Lord God Himself, and all the creatures owned the dominion of Adam, the Lord God by conferring it, the creatures by submitting to it.

Judgments under the seals and under the

*Properly or necessarily so, because the sealed book is the book of the inheritance, and that book rules the action from thence onward to the end; and I ask, Is not the attitude of the saints quite different now from what it is in the Apocalypse? They are now "waiting for the Son from heaven" (1 Thess. i); in the Apocalypse they are waiting to reign on the earth (*i. e.* now they are on earth, but then they are in heaven).

trumpets, the necessary precursors of the kingdom, then take their course ; and in chapter x. the Lord Jesus, as the mighty Angel, triumphs in the now approaching moment of inheritance and dominion over earth and sea ; and, in chapter xi., the saints in heaven do the same.

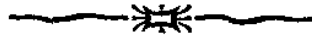
The voice heard in heaven in chapter xii., and the song of the victor-harpers in chapter xv., alike utter joy over the prospect of the kingdom. “ Now is come the kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ,” says the voice in heaven. “ All nations shall come and worship before Thee,” the harpers sing.

Then in chapter xix. the joy in heaven is this, that she that corrupted the earth has been judged ; and the voice there (as of many waters and mighty thunders) utters, “ Alleluia ! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” And the action which makes the earth the Lord’s property takes place.

In chapter xx. the first resurrection is spoken of as being for the very purpose of bringing in or *manifesting the kingdom*. Speaking of the risen ones, the prophet says, “ They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

And how does the book close ? Not with a description of the church in the hidden place of heaven, as the Father’s house, but with a sight of the church in the manifested heavens, the place of power or government, up to the light of which the kings will bring their glory and honour, and forth from which will go the waters of the river and the

leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations. And this is such a view of the heavenly places as suits the earth in the days of the kingdom ; and of the servants of God and of the Lamb, who are there, it is said at the close, "and they shall reign for ever and ever." *



“SANCTIFY THE LORD GOD IN YOUR HEARTS.”

We have to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts (I Pet. iii. 15). Failing this, we take refuge in "a confederacy" (Is. viii. 12-14), some human scheme (whether of our own devising or that of others), for we are unable then to see things on God's side. In Gen. xx., Abraham had left the plains of Mamre, and was sojourning in Gerar. He was on the edge of the place of blessing, and not in the heart of it ; and instead of the Lord being his fear and his dread, he is afraid of the king of Gerar. This leads to a confederacy, an unholy compact between Abraham and Sarah to deny the true and rightful place of the latter ; and the mother of the promised seed, the child of holy laughter and joy, is taken into the house of Abimelech. What degradation ! when the Lord should have been their sanctuary. Yet so it is. But that is only looking at things from their own side, and on that side

* It is the book of the kingdom rather than of the church. The church's heavenly destiny is assured, as in chapter iv., but the kingdom at the close is reached through judgments.

there is failure, sorrow, degradation, rebuke, and the involving others in judgment—but for God's merciful interference. If we look at it from God's side, what, we may ask with reverence, were His thoughts as He saw the depositaries of all His promises, both for the heaven and the earth, making a compact which in result separated the mother of the seed of promise, in whom all nations were to be blessed, from him who was the "covering of her eyes," and placed her in the house of the king of Gerar? It is when we see the church as the vessel in which there is to be glory to God in Christ Jesus through eternal ages, and in which angels are now learning the manifold wisdom of God, that we could consent to nothing, if we sanctify the Lord God in our hearts, which would falsify its position with regard to Him who loved it and gave Himself for it, that He might present it to Himself. On man's side, Paul spake foolishly in commending himself to the Corinthians; but it was the earnestness that was jealous over them with a jealousy of *God*, for he had espoused them to one husband, that he might present them as a chaste virgin to Christ.



BABYLON.—On her forehead her name was written. A drunken world does not see it; but a saint ought not to mistake it. We should judge from the *outside* of it; and if we are in our place, in the Spirit, in the wilderness, we shall not mistake. But if we temper with it, we have lost the sense of it: we have drunk some of the wine, if we do not discern it.

CHRISTIANITY OBJECTIVE, NOT SUBJECTIVE ONLY.

The Lord says, that the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, which should come, should take the things that were His, and shew them to us (who through grace, are His own); and all that the Father has is His. All the infinitude of the unseen heavenly, and, I may say, divine world, was to be revealed, and that in the intimacy of the relationship of the Father and the Son, so that we should have fellowship with them. And no man had gone up there, but He who descended thence. He could speak what He knew, and testified what He had seen—declare the Father as in His bosom. He and He only had seen the Father; but this is truth given by the Spirit (all of it, even what Christ said). For the rationalist all this is lost; instead, we are to have the spirit or conscience assume the throne intended for Him in the soul, and draw from the storehouse of youthful experience, and legislate upon the future without appeal, except to himself; a law which is not imposed upon us by another power, but our own enlightened will. All that God can give of the heavenly blessedness of the Son, now a glorified Man, is lost, for ever lost; and man is only to seek the development of what is within man.

And this rejection of objective religion is as unphilosophical as it is unchristian; for all creatures must be formed by objects. God alone is self-suf-

ficient. He can create objects in the display of His love ; but He needs none outside Himself, a creature does. Man has no *intrinsic* resources within himself, whether fallen or unfallen ; nor even angels. Take away God, what are they ? Nothing or devils. So man : if money is his object, he is avaricious, or covetous at any rate ; if power, ambitious, ; if pleasure, a man of pleasure ; and all other objects are judged of by the ruling one. In every case of a creature, what is objective is the source of the subjective state.

In Christianity this is connected with a new nature, because the old *will* not have the divine object which characterizes, and is the foundation of, faith ; but the principle remains unchanged. “ We all, with open [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.” See what a magnificent picture of this we have in Stephen !—in a remarkable way, no doubt ; but still exhibitory of it morally, as well as by a vision. The whole question between Christianity and rationalism is brought to an issue. The progress of human nature, with the very elements spoken of, and the contrasted result, is stated. “ Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost : as your fathers did, so do ye.” There is the relationship between man and the Spirit. Next, “ Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted ? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been now the be-

trayers and murderers.” These were their ways with those who unfolded the law in a more spiritual manner, and with the great living witness of perfection Himself. Such was man—flesh in contrast with the law. Such was his state : he always resisted the Holy Ghost. Now note the contrast of the objective spiritual man. Stephen, “ full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the *Son of Man* standing at the right hand of God.” And what was the effect, the subjective effect, in one full of the Holy Ghost, of his objective perception of heavenly objects ? In the midst of rage and violence, and while being actually stoned, in all calmness* he not merely bears, but kneels down and says, “ Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” So Jesus : “ Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do.” Then he said, “ Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,” as Jesus had said, “ Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” He beheld, with unveiled face, the glory of the Lord, and was changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. But how full and complete a picture—man always a resister of the Holy Ghost ; under

* The same calmness marks his whole discourse. He recites the Jews' history, their own boast, so that they could have no word to say ; yet it said all. They had rejected Moses the true deliverer, Joseph their sustainer and help ; and the temple they had trusted in, God had rejected by the mouth of their prophets.

law, not keeping it ; with prophets, persecuting ; with the Just One, a murderer ; with the witness of the Holy Ghost, gnashing his teeth and slaying in rage ! Christianity, in contrast—a man full of the Holy Ghost, seeing Jesus the Son of Man in heaven, changed into His image, and killed by man, falls asleep, Jesus receiving his spirit !

The rationalist goes over this ground, rejects Christianity as to an external revelation (that must be a law), takes up exactly the same elements as Stephen, and declares that man is progressively educated by them to do without that which Stephen enjoyed. Which am *I to believe* ? Yet I have but coldly sketched the elements of thought ; I must leave you to meditate over it and appreciate the beauty and *spiritual* importance of it. It is a most enchanting picture, and the deepest moral principles are contained in it. But Scripture is a wonderful book. This was a vision, no doubt ; but what Stephen saw is revealed, and written for my faith to act on.

The rejection of Christ in the world made evidently a turning-point in the world's history, as to the proof of what it really was ; and the history of Stephen shows man resisting the testimony to Christ's heavenly glory, as they had killed Him when He was the witness of perfection and of God on earth.

There is a silent witness to the divinity of Jesus, and, while truly and really a man, a contrast between Him and all other men, which has pro-

foundly interested me. When man is blessed, morally blessed, elevated, he must have an elevated, and, indeed (to be taken out of self) a divine object before him. Jesus was the Object even of heaven, instead of having one. When Stephen is before us, heaven is open to him as it was to Jesus ; but he sees the Son of Man in the heavens, and this fixes his view, and lights up his regard with the glory he saw. Heaven is opened upon Jesus, and the angels are His servants ; He sees it opened, and the Holy Ghost descends—Witness that He is Son of God ; but He is changed into no other image by it ; He has no object to which to look up, but heaven looks down on Him, and the Father's voice declares, " This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

We enjoy these revelations of His person ; but the declaration that the Word was God, and many such like, is a declaration which has authority over my soul. I make God a liar, as John speaks, if I do not believe it ; and so I can use it with others. God has declared it : he that believes not has made God a liar, because he has not believed the record which God has given concerning His Son. He that believes has the witness in himself. And all these traits which clothe, or rather reveal, the beloved person of Him who was humbled for us, are ineffably sweet ; but the positive declaration is of all importance too.

Note, in John i. two other ways in which Jesus is presented, besides the actual declaration that

He was God and the Word made flesh.' (1) He gathers round Himself. If He were not God, this would be frightful, a subversion of all truth, a destructive impossibility : He would turn men away from God. He accepts this place. All that is attracted by what is good flows around Him and finds there its perfect and all-satisfying centre. That is God. No one else could or ever did do this, except in sin or violence. The Church can say, Come and drink, I have the living water ; so she has, but not, Come to *me*. That marks the spirit of apostasy. The stream (blessed be God !) flows there, but she is no fountain to which to go. This must be divine, or it is false. But mark, this is a new gathering by a divine revealed centre, not the educational progress of the race ; it is the opposite, though blessed instruction for the whole race. (2) The other way Jesus is revealed is in the words, " Follow me." We have the same perfection, but now by and in Him as man there is a path revealed through this world of evil. It is one, only one—following Christ. There can be no way but a new divine one, yet necessarily a human one ; there is no way for man, as man, in the world at all. When Adam was in paradise, he did not want a way. He had only, in blessed and unfeigned thankfulness, ignorant of evil, to enjoy good and worship. When man has been cast out, and the world has grown up away from God—away in nature and will, there can be no way in a rebellious world, in a sinful corrupt system, how

to walk aright, as in and of the world, when its whole state is wrong. But if what is divine comes into it as man (what has motives not of it—if it gives a path in which the divine nature is displayed in grace and holiness in these circumstances, yet always itself manifesting what it is in them) now I have a way. I follow Him, truly, in everything, a Man—but a Man displaying divine qualities in the ordinary circumstances of human life. He says, “Follow me,” but when He has said, “Ye are not of the world even as I am not of the world,” He goes into glory, sanctifies Himself even externally, in His ascension, from the human race, that we may be sanctified by the truth.

It is the beauty of Christianity, that being objective, being truth, “the truth shall set you free,” and a person, “the Son shall set you free.” It works effectually in those who receive Christ, and requires no intellectual development to receive its power. Christ is received into the heart, and, dwelling there by faith, produces the effect in us. Yet it takes us out of ourselves, because it is objective, and we, filled with delight in an Object which is perfect, are like Him.

It is divine wisdom. Man would produce virtue by the love of virtue in himself; but then he thinks of himself, and all his virtue is rottenness. God gives us a human but divine Object, and our affections are divine, because we love what is so, and we are morally what we love; but we love it in another, and are delivered from self. I would

just add, that I believe that this adaptation of the character of walk to our entirely new position in Christ is what is meant by "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has *afore prepared* that we should walk in them." Hence, we are the epistle of Christ, engraved in the fleshy tables of the *heart* by the Spirit of the living God.

The very starting-point is opposite. Christianity treats man as a fallen being, not merely as imperfect but as departed from God, and needing a new nature and redemption. Christ meets Nicodemus at once on this ground.

The rationalist or infidel system takes in Christianity by the by, as it does Greece and Rome; but man, as he is, is to be educated.



THE GROUND OF GOD'S DEALINGS NOW.

Sin is the groundwork of *all* God's dealings now. Is not judgment in respect of sin? So much so that there could be none without it; hence *in itself* it can only be condemnation. If God judges His own workmanship as it came out of His hands, He is judging Himself, not the work, or if you please, in the work. But if it has departed wilfully into rebellion, judgment as such must be condemnation. If man had never fallen, there was nothing to judge, speaking of human nature: all was then as God made it. If man has abandoned God and gone into sin, I repeat, judgment must be condemnation; and this is the

ground Christianity goes upon. Christ comes to seek and to save the lost. And so every divinely taught soul : " Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord ; for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." But I pursue my theme a little.

Is not the exercise of mercy in respect of sin ? and law, and grace, and salvation, and judgments, and patience, and vengeance ? All is in respect of sin. Hence the immensely deep moral development in the soul in its relationship with God. No angel would know God, or be in the kind of relationship in which a sinner brought to God is. All the highest attributes and qualities in Godhead are brought out. Mercy, patience, goodness, condescension, love in its perfect exercise in the shape of grace, on one side, and restoring in righteousness on the other, to perfect delight in itself—in a word, redemption. The intimacy with the working of grace, whether in the incarnation or in the soul of one in whom grace is ; the estimate of good and evil, by the proximity of what is divine to evil as it is in us ; yea, the communication of what is divine to one who, on the other side, is weakness and yet wilfulness and self, the dependence of a creature who has both on continual grace, and yet the capacity of the enjoyment of the highest good : all this, which is not Christianity exactly, but its working in us, gives a display of divine wisdom, a purifying and elevating process, a knowledge of God in His highest nature,

most intimate, and yet most adoring, which makes philosophy puny and dry beyond all belief—empty, utterly empty. Christianity is light and love come into darkness and selfishness, and in the human heart reaching all its springs, and destroying self by showing it and replacing it by God ; and this, not by the flimsy spinings of the human brain, but by a divine Person ; who, if divine desires are wrought in me, takes me out of myself by divine affections instead of exalting self, by producing in it qualities to be admired, which being by self makes them bad and false. The Christian, *quâ* Christian, has divine qualities, but sees, and because he sees, only God.

Christianity reveals a Person, God Himself, who has adapted Himself to the lowest, yea, the vilest ; who is holy enough (for He is perfect in it) to bring love into all the recesses of the human heart, because never defiled Himself, and awake, even by its sorrows and its miseries, the want of, and to the enjoyment of, the love that has visited it. It has set, too, by a glorious redemption and atonement, the poor soul, that by love has learnt to delight in light, at liberty to enjoy it, because it is spotless in it, and the adoring object of the love that has brought it there.

I look around. What can I see ? Heathenism—men worshipping stocks and stones ; Christendom—what would often disgrace a heathen ; yet goodness and wisdom evidenced in the midst of it all. What can I think ? All is confusion. The

goodness and wisdom I see lead me in spite of me to God, and the thoughts of God confound me when I see all the evil. Philosophy, poor philosophy, would justify the evil to justify God. But when I see Christ, the riddle is gone: I see perfect good in the midst of the evil, occupied with it and then suffering under it. My heart rests: I find one Object that satisfies all its wants—rises above all its cravings; I have what is good in goodness itself; I see what is above evil which was pressing on me. My heart has got rest in good, and a good which is such in the midst of and above evil, and that is what I want; and I have got relief, because I have found in that One what is power over it.

But I go a little farther and I get a great deal more. I follow this blessed One from whom all have received good, and who has wrought it with unwearied patience, and I hear the shouts of a giddy multitude, and I trace the dark plans of jealous enemies, man who cannot bear good; I see high judges who cannot occupy themselves with what is despised in the world, and would quiet malice by letting it have its way, and goodness the victim of it. But a little thought leads me to see in a nearer view what man is: hatred against God and good. Oh, what a display! The truest friend denies, the nearest betrays, the weaker ones who are honest flee; priests, set to have compassion on ignorant failure, plead furiously against innocence; the judge washing his

hands of condemned innocence ; goodness absolutely alone ; and the world, all men, enmity—universal enmity—against it. Perfect light has brought out the darkness ; perfect love, jealous hatred. Self would have its way and not have God ; and the cross closes the scene, as far as man is concerned. “The carnal mind is enmity against God.” But oh ! here is what I want. Oh ! where can I turn from myself ? Can I set up to be better than my neighbours ? No, it is myself.

The sight of a rejected Christ has discovered myself to myself, the deepest recesses of my heart are laid bare, and self, horrible self, is there ; but not on the cross. There is none. And the infinite love of God rises and shines in its own perfection above it all. I can adore God in love, if I abhor myself. Man is met, risen above, set aside in his evil, absolute as it is in itself when searched out. The revelation of God in Christ has proved it in all its extent on the cross. This was hatred against love in God ; but it was perfect love to those that were hating it, and love when and where they were such. It was the perfect hatred of man, and the perfect love of God doing for him that hated Him what put away the hatred and blotted out the sin that expressed it.

There is nothing like the cross. It is the meeting of the perfect sin of man with the perfect love of God. Sin risen up to its highest point of evil and gone, put away, and lost in its own worst act. God is above man even in the height of his sin ;

not in allowing it, but in putting it away by Christ dying for it in love. The soldier's insulting spear, the witness, if not the instrument of death, was answered by the blood and water which expiated and purified from the blow which brought it out. Sin was known, and to have a true heart it must be known, and God was known—known in light, and the upright heart wants that, but known in perfect love, before which we had no need to hide or screen the sin. No sin allowed, but no sin left on the conscience. All our intercourse with God founded on this—grace reigning through righteousness.

It is a wonderful scene ! There is, in truth, nothing like it—nothing in heaven or earth, save He who was therefor us. The glory we shall share with Him ; but on the cross He was alone. He remains alone in its glory. Associated therewith Him nothing can be, save as it is the expression of the nature which was revealed and glorified in it. That we find ever in God who is thus known. Eternal life is become thus association with God. The rationalist would supplant the cross, by the progress of corrupt human nature—the cross which writes death on corrupt humanity, and brings in a new and divine man risen up out of that death, and a walk in newness of life.



FAITH NOT SIGHT.

The external course of events tells us nothing of what is really going on—that is inside it all. If

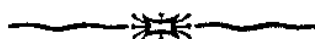
the external plannings of men or Satan further God's plans they succeed, if not, they come to nothing ; but what is really going on is inside them all. Thus they would not have taken Jesus on the Feast day, not to have an uproar, but he was to be the Paschal Lamb, and He is taken. The Jews would have often taken Him, but His hour was not yet come ; when it was, they take Him—their wicked plans succeed. When the heartless superstition of the Jews had the malefactors' legs broken, what was really doing in the one case was sending the man into Paradise.

To the outward eye what happened to Job were raids of Arabs and Chaldeans—ordinary predatory raids, and a violent storm blew down the house ; Satan was in it all, and behind him God arranging the purifying of Job's heart and our instruction in all ages.

The political plans of Augustus, as to the census of the Empire, brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus, and then it was not carried out for nine years, when Cyrenius was Governor.

All we have to do is to discern God's will, and have by faith the courage to do it. All His strength is power to carry us forward. It may seem all to turn out ill, or be a cross—it may be so, but we shall have the result of God's counsels and blessing by the way. Man succeeded in crucifying Jesus because however wicked the act on their part, it was just carrying out God's plans (see Acts ii. 23 ; iii. 14, 15 ; iv. 28). He knew His Father's will—sought only to glorify His Name—had faithful obedience to act upon it, though to man's eye it was the ruin of everything, every religious hope even, and so it was in man and in

flesh, but the birthplace of all counsels in glory, of that new thing in man wherein He will be glorified for ever, that wherein He was glorified in all He is essentially. The outside was wicked men's success, the end too of pious men's hopes—the inside what all blessing that ever was, or could be really and permanently, is entirely founded upon, and that wherein alone God is perfectly glorified. Christ learned and did His Father's will, Satan's power and man's wickedness were there, triumphed as no where else. It was the foundation of all true and eternal blessing.



IS SCRIPTURE TYPICAL?

A WORD ON INTERPRETATION.

Symbolism means types of the Old Testament applicable to things in the New. Both concur in stating that this is so. Moses was commanded to make the tabernacle according to the pattern seen in the Mount. Now if God made such a system, ought we to expect no more in it than gowns and curtains? The whole language through Scripture is framed on such a symbolical use, and the great facts of the New are the plain counterpart to the symbols of the Old. You must tear the warp out so that it ceases to be a texture before you undo this. Altars, tabernacles, the dwelling place of God, sacrifices, priesthood, the rock, the water, the anointing, the holy place, the mercy-seat, the blood shedding. I should go through every element in its whole structure of thought before I had closed the list of facts and objects presented in the Old Testament and taken up in the New, and which have entered (and this according to Scripture) into the conception of our re-

ligious thought. It is not a way of interpreting, but Scripture itself. Christ is the Lamb of God. He is a great High Priest entered into the holiest. And Paul goes further, telling us as to the history itself—"Now all these things happened unto them for types, and they are written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. x. 11). One, and only one, true meaning therefore is not the fact in this case.

Say Moses was foolish, and Paul foolish; but if *you* so interpret Scripture, you interpret it contrary to its nature and positive directions; that is, you do not interpret it, you correct it. I have the facts—important, very important, in the history of the people—important as a history of God's dealings with the people; and I get them avowedly pattern facts. Keep the imagination in check—all quite right. Look for doctrines in doctrinal passages, and here for details and illustrations—all right. But do not pretend you are teaching us to interpret Scripture rightly when you are directly contradicting it, and saying to it, You are wrong. It is not the Fathers who have said that Sarah and Hagar were an allegory. We do not follow *them* in such a point as saying, Does God take care for oxen?

If I use Scripture at all, and on the weightiest subjects, the rationalist's principle becomes impossible. It breaks down, the whole structure of Scripture itself. And I see that he does not merely check the indulgence of imagination in it, which is quite right, but rejects the idea of more or less. He declares that, "in whatever degree it is practised, it is equally incapable of being reduced to any rule." I do not know whether he rejects the Epistle to the Hebrews; but evidently that book is gone wholly if his principle

be true, and countless passages throughout the whole New Testament.

Temporal and spiritual Israel, as commonly used, I give him freely up. It is a mere abuse of words. I say, as commonly used ; because, in the common adaptation of prophecies, prophecies explicitly referring to Israel are applied to the assembly, where the subject-matter and principles are completely opposed. Ordained forms, and facts of history, may have a symbolical application ; but moral addresses refer to the objects and moral state of those addressed, and do not give us objects to interpret, but persons addressed. Zion means Zion when she is prophesied about. The prophecy concerns her, because it speaks to her on the moral ground she is on, and the arbitrary application to the assembly is entirely false, because the principal of relationship with God is different. A general principle, as that God is faithful or good, may be of course applied, with just care to see how it is used ; yet the people addressed are not symbolical objects, but moral persons, and the facts to happen, real. If we are to speak of the Lord's prophecy as to Jerusalem, I apply the same principle, but I deny wholly that in Matthew, Titus, etc., are spoken of at all. There may have been something analogous ; but its only direct application is to dealings yet to come, immediately after which the Lord will appear. I believe this because it says so. In Luke I have the siege of Jerusalem, and the language is carefully altered. I believe what is said in both passages. In Luke, whose gospel always looks out to Gentiles, the times of the Gentiles after the siege are distinctly spoken of before the signs that are to come.

Remark here how doubt is thrown on all. It is

asked, Is the application of types "to be regarded as the meaning of the original text, or an accommodation of it to the thoughts of latter times?" Now, note that the Lord instituted the Last Supper as taking the place of the Passover. The apostles apply in every passage these figures, so that the question is not if we are interpreting right; it extends to this, If the Lord and the apostles are merely accommodating, these figures or not? What does the rationalist think? He says, "Our object is, not to attempt here the determination of these questions, but to point out that they must be determined before any real progress can be made." The answer is, for every Christian the matter is determined. They *believe* in the Lord's and the apostles' use of them—man's uses now they judge by Scripture to see if they be just.

The use of any given type now is, of course, to be judged of when it is used. They are most instructive; and, fitting in with positive doctrines which warrant what is drawn from them, they become living pictures and illustrations of what otherwise would escape you. They may not, in our hands, serve to found a doctrine as a first revelation of it; but as a vivid illustration and suggestion of truth they are invaluable.

The rationalist insists on this because "The Old Testament will receive a different meaning accordingly as it is explained from itself or from the New. In the first case, a careful and conscientious study of each one for itself is all that is required; in the second case, the types and ceremonies of the law, perhaps the very facts and persons of the history, will be assumed to be predestined or made after a pattern corresponding to the things that were to be in the latter days." Now all this is confusion from beginning to end. It ignores the positive

statements of the volume pretended to be interpreted. And further, if the book be inspired, one Mind has formed it from beginning to end, and we *must look for a co-ordinated system.* If it be not, we find there is an end of predestinating facts or even statements. But we have seen that, if it is a true history, the whole system of the tabernacle was made after a pattern, which the Epistle to the Hebrews largely and specifically declares to be a heavenly one, and the tabernacle a pattern of things in the heavens. But we have this even more specifically defined. The law was a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image. There were sacrifices ; so Jesus was a sacrifice. But the Jewish were repeated, proving that sin was not for ever put away for him who came by them ; Jesus' was not repeated, because it was. There were many priests, because they died ; for us, but One, because He ever lives. There was a veil, and no one could go into the holiest ; now the veil is rent, and we have boldness to enter. The high priest stood, because his work was never finished ; Jesus is set down at the right hand of God, because His work is finished for ever, and so on. These were the outlines of this vast exhibition of God's ways, to be a key, so to speak, near the eye. But neither Testament is simply to be explained by the other. In some points there is contrast, as law and gospel ; in others, analogies ; in others, common principles ; in others, prophetic announcements. The only point we learn to have been hidden was the assembly. This could not be revealed, because it was based on the casting down of the middle wall of partition, as the Jewish system was on its being strictly kept up.

But, if God be the Author of the sacred

volume, it is monstrous to suppose there was not a preparatory leading on to the full revelation of God Himself, or that He revealed something which was wholly unconnected with and no way introductory to what followed. It was necessary to make distinct the difference between man's standing on the ground of his own responsibility, and grace—between requiring, however justly, and giving. And this, though prophets point to the giving, there is. But promises came before law; and even under law (a ministration of condemnation and death) there were ordinances which prefigured the way of grace, while the exacting of righteousness, which man had not, led him to the sense of the need which grace met. The understanding of all this rests on this: "They shall be all taught of God." Each part, as to its statements, is to be understood in itself; but, when simply understood, the correspondences and differences will appear, and rich instruction for man's soul be acquired out of them.

All his division of the rationalists, with its consequences, is in the air, and written without any kind of reference to the facts of the case. We do not assume anything about it. We take what is said in the book itself about itself, and find it verified in the richest and most instructive manner.

One would think the rationalist had never read St. Paul's Epistles, or the Hebrews, or indeed any part of the New Testament; for, as I said, he does not reason on its interpretation here, but against its contents. And man's fancies, and scriptural (that is, divine) expositions, are thrown together as of equal weight.



ERRATUM.—Page 200, 3rd line from bottom, for "temper" read "tamper."

HEBICH'S TUB.

A LESSON FROM EPH. IV. 16.

It is rather more than thirty years ago that a missionary of the Basle society, named Samuel Hebich, lived and laboured on the west coast of India.

He was a remarkable man,—fearless, earnest, and also more successful as a soul-winner among Europeans than any other of whom I have heard. The striking characteristics of his ministry were the *personality* of the Lord Jesus and the *personality* of Satan, and the conquest he made of the most determined opposers of the truth were many and striking.

One regiment that had been stationed at Cannanore were so powerfully affected by his preaching and house-to-house visitation, that no less than seven officers and most of their wives were truly converted to God, and were not ashamed to confess their faith in Christ. Several non-commissioned officers and others followed, so that ere it had left the station it had earned the sobriquet of "Hebich's Own."

From Cannanore, this regiment was sent to the French Rocks, a military station near Seringapatam; and after they had been a year in these quarters, the Christians especially invited their beloved friend to pay them a visit, which he gladly responded to. From one house to another, ac-

according to his wont, he visited, and, though with tenderness of manner, put the most searching questions to his children in the Lord. These elicited a fact which gave him no small uneasiness, namely, that the *prayer-meeting*, once so thronged and so much set by, had dwindled away till some were not sure that it existed at all.

His presence stirred up their hearts. Every night he held meetings, and they were fully attended not only by those who had good cause to love the man, and listen to his words, but by others from the neighbourhood, who had heard of him, and longed to obtain some blessing for themselves.

It was thus the writer found himself in the company of those thus gathered; and he was greatly struck by his first sight of the German missionary, as he stood behind a table with a large open Bible on it.

I shall endeavour to give his discourse on this particular occasion, as nearly as I can remember it, in his own language. There is a force and a pathos in foreigners' English that so materially helps one to remember the subject, that I shall not attempt to improve it.

He read the fourth of Ephesians, and expounded it till he came to the sixteenth verse, which he read slowly, and repeated the words, "*fitly shoined togeder.*"

He paused a few seconds and abruptly put the question, "Did you ever see a tob?" This home-

ly appeal roused the audience, and caused a smile to pass over every face.

“ If you go to P—— (a factory in the neighbourhood), you vill see some fery large tobs. You and I cannot make a tob ; it requires a cood carpenter to make a tob, or it vill hold no vater, because it is not made of von peece of ood, but of many, and the many *fitly shoined togeder*. Dere are four tings to make a coot tob.

“ 1. It must have a coot bottom.

“ 2. Each of de peeces must be fitly shoined to de bottom.

“ 3. Each von must be fitly shoined to his fellow.

“ 4. Each von shall be kept close by de bands outside.

“ Von peece may be narrow and de next peece be vide, yet it shall be a coot tob ; but if a leetle shtone or bit of shtick vill come between de peeces it vill not do at all. If de peeces are near, but do not touch, it vill not do at all ; and if all de peeces but von touch, and are fitly shoined togeder, and dis one fall in or out of de circle it is no tob at all. Now, if vee haf a cood bottom, and efry piece be fitly shoined to de bottom, and all are fitly shoined togeder from de top to de bottom, haf vee now a tob ? No, it vill not hold vater for von moment till de bands are put on. De bands press hard on each peece of ood, and den dey are more fitly shoined togeder.

“ ‘ Oder foundation can no man lay dan dat is laid, vich is Jesus Christ.’ Here vee haf de *cood*

bottom for our tob. It is perfect, and efry von dat truly believes is resting on dis cood bottom, and is fitly shoined to it by de Holy Spirit of God.

“ Dere are many who call demselves Christians who are not so joined, but vee are not speaking of dem now.

“ In de Acts of de Apostles vee read often of being ‘ filled vit de Holy Ghost,’ and ven gadered togeder for prayer vonce, de whole house did shake vid His power. Shust so now He fills vid peace and shoy de soul dat loves de Lord Jesus, and likewise de company gadered togeder in His name. Sometimes ! not always. Sometimes ! not always. Vy not always? Vee shall see. Vat is de shmall shtick or shtone between de peeces of ood dat make de tob? It is de *leetle quarrel*,—de *hard word*,—de *de dirty bit of money*, dat keeps broder from being fitly shoined to broder. Vat is de space between de peeces from top to bottom, troo vich you can see de light? It is de *coldness* dat you feel but do not tell. De major’s vife and de captain’s vife vill bow, but not speak or greet each oder as formerly, because vispering has come between dem. Vat is de peece of ood dat falls out de circle? It is de *proud, unforgiving spirit* dat efry von can feel is in de meeting, and vich causes all heavenly peace to run out. You are fery sorry dat you have no blessing, and you leave de meeting because it can do you no cood. You stay at home vit de debil, and become dry indeed.

Oh, beloved, *be fitly shoined togeder!* You haf no

power of your own. Dat vich shall keep you is de *encircling bands* of de love of Jesus from head to foot, and as dis power presses on each of you, so vill you become yet more closely shoined togeder. Den de Holy Spirit shall fill you to overflowing. Den all who come into your midst shall be refreshed, and de name of de Lord Jesus be glorified! Amen!"



CHRIST IN THE MIDST OF THE CHURCH.

He calls them His brethren, and sings in the midst of the Church. "Think what it is!—not, You may sing now, for I have accomplished redemption, though this is true; but I will sing! Christ leads our praises: He has associated us with Himself now that He takes up all our thoughts and feelings. It is praise for redemption, but it is every thought and feeling I can express to God. For He is a man; He knows what it is, as none of us ever will know, to bear God's wrath. It is over; it is gone for Him on the cross; and it is gone for us by His having taken it. When risen, He declares the Father's name to His brethren, and leads their praises. It is from below the praises go up, founded on redemption and atonement; but the expression of every thought and feeling that can be in my heart, as an exercised man down here, goes up in praise. Christ has gone through all this, enters into it all, and sings in the midst of the Church—a figurative expression, but true. That is, He is the Person who leads every feeling and thought of exercised persons, because He has gone through it all.

PEACE WITH GIBEON.

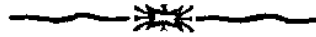
Joshua ix.

If acting faithfully, to every step of faithfulness the Lord will surely add more light ; only, it behoves us to take counsel of the Lord at every step. Peace with Gibeon only deprives us of victory, and brings upon us other wars and troubles ; for the presence of what is not of God always opens the door to Satan. This, perhaps, is not so much felt when all is in vigour in the soul ; but when there is decline, then the evil and consequence is felt. In the days of David there was a famine three years ; it was for Saul and for his bloody house, because he had slain the Gibeonites. All this arose from the little act of not taking counsel with God. When all was war, it appeared a convenient thing, a blessing, to find some peace and recognition from those who said "The Lord your God." It sounded like Rahab's believing voice ; and *in appearance*, with these far distant travellers, there was nothing wrong in peace—they were not of the forbidden and accursed race. But Israel asked not counsel of the Lord ; and it turned out they were of the accursed race, and it went nigh to separate between Joshua and the people. So cunning is the enemy, it is almost as bad, or worse, to lean for one's wisdom on the ways of God, as on one's own strength for the battles of God : peace with Gibeon and war with Ai end in defeat ; or in confusion and shame.

THE NIGHT OF THIS WORLD.

“ It is high time to awake out of sleep ; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” The night of this world is the absence of the Sun of righteousness. Let us clearly conceive this. In the busy and pleasure seeking course of this world, for him who has understanding, and to whom Christ is known, it is still night. The gloom of night is over it, but the day has dawned to his faith ; the Morning Star is arisen in his heart, but the world is asleep in the still-continuing darkness of night ; for indeed the night is far spent, but the world is asleep in the night. The waking soul sees, in the horizon, the Morning Star, the dawn along its edge, and waits for day. The heart is in the day, and walks as in the day. As Christians we have done with works of darkness. In conflict we are still, but our armour against evil, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, is the light in which we walk. The power of light, and truth, and godliness, and judgment of evil, which belongs to that day, is in our heart ; and the weapons and snares of darkness are foiled and detected, getting no entrance into, no hold on, the soul. We walk honestly as in the day ; we put on in our ways and heart the walk and character of Him who is the true light of it, the Lord Jesus Christ. Having the hope of being like Him there, we purify ourselves as He is pure ; we walk as He walked. We do not provide for the lusts of the nature which

belongs to the darkness to satisfy it ; but walk as Christ walked. Such is the Christian in view of Christ's coming, and bringing on this dark and benighted world the light and day of God in His effectual power, and are the two springs and character of Christian conduct—recognition of, acting up to, every relative duty in love, and knowing the time, the near approach of day to which he belongs. (*Cf.* 1 Thess. v.) “The night is far spent, the day is at hand.”



“WIDOWS INDEED.”

1 Tim. v.

The widow is often seen in Scripture as the object of the thoughts of God. But it is not until we come to the epistle to Timothy that we have the different kinds specified, with the indication of those who are widows according to the divine mind, those, in a word, who are really widows. Such the apostle directs Timothy, and us through Timothy, to honour, showing by the exhortation the place which they should ever occupy among the saints of God

Three characteristics are given of the “widow indeed.” She is “desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day” (*ver.* 5). A true widow, then, before God, will exemplify these characters ; and it is not a little remarkable that three widows are found in the gospel of Luke who exactly answer to the partic-

ulars of this description. The widow of Nain, whose son, "the only son of his mother," was being carried out for burial when met by our blessed Lord, as the Prince of Life, was truly the desolate one (chap. vii.). The poor widow who cast in her two mites into the treasury, who "of her penury cast in all her living," was surely one who trusted in God (chap. xxi.). And in Anna we find the last characteristic; for it is said of her that "she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served [God] with fastings and prayers night and day" (chap. ii. 37). It is possible that each of these widows might have been a "widow indeed"—Anna certainly was—but in the way in which they are presented by the evangelist, it is the three together that answer to this character.

Spiritually, nothing could be more beautiful than the widow as so portrayed, though naturally the heart would shrink from it. But it must be remembered that the desolation, which is her essential feature, is only on the side of earth; nay, it might be added with perfect truth, that her very bereft condition has been the means, in the dealings of "the God of all comfort," of her choicest blessings. It is precisely here where the application to the Church may be seen. It is when the Church realizes her widowhood, as far as earth is concerned, and in this aspect her desolation, as being without a single visible resource, that she enters most fully upon the enjoyment of the bound-

less affections of her Lord ; and not only so, but thereby her entire dependence on Him would be consciously intensified, and out of this again would grow her continual supplications and prayers night and day. In the "widow indeed" we have a perfect picture (ideal because perfect) of the Church on earth. The characteristics given are moreover seen in our blessed Lord Himself. He was alone, had not where to lay His head, and none on earth had fellowship with Him ; He trusted in God, and He was constantly occupied in prayer (Luke iii. 21 ; v. 16 ; vi. 12 ; ix. 18, 28 ; xi. 1 ; xxii. 41, 44). Every believer therefore should be thus distinguished, and will be in proportion as he is like his Lord.

The apostle having portrayed the true widow, supplies the contrast in the one, "that liveth in pleasure," who "is dead while she liveth." Such an one is false to her character, denying that she is a widow, and using her lonely condition as an opportunity to gratify her inclinations and worldly desires, instead of hearing the voice of Him who speaks to her through her sorrows, as to Israel of old, "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her" (Hosea ii. 14). So living she is dead—dead toward God, in the midst of her pleasures. We have the counterpart of such a widow in the Apocalypse, together with the certainty of her coming doom. "How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her : for she

saith in her heart, “ *I sit a queen and am no widow,* and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning and famine ; and she shall be utterly burned with fire : for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her” (Rev. xviii. 7, 8). Such is the doom of Babylon, which, while claiming to be the spouse of Christ, was nothing but an apostate harlot, who “ was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication” (Rev. xvii. 4). Further, the apostle gives directions as to the action of the assembly in relation to widows. It is very noteworthy that the first difficulty in the Church sprung up in connection with such. (See Acts vi. 1.) It shows that they were a numerous class even in the Pentecostal Church ; and it would seem, from the instruction given to Timothy, that a large number will always be found in fellowship with the saints of God. This is a blessed thought, revealing the beauty of God’s ways, even as one of old has said, “ God often dims the brightness of this world in order to attract the vision to the glory beyond.” If, therefore, He makes a widow, it is that He might wean her from earth, and win her to Himself. But the point here is, that the widow in her needs might be an embarrassment to the Church. Hence the apostle commands that none should “ be taken into the number under threescore years old,” etc. (*vs.* 9, 10). By this we understand, that

only those who answer to the description here given were to be formally linked with the assembly, *i. e.*, recognized as entitled to regular support. Others might of course be ministered to privately by the saints, or occasionally by the Church, but none but these were to be put down in the list of those who had undeniable claims upon the funds of the assembly. It would have saved the Church much perplexity if the wisdom of God, as here expressed, had governed in this particular. It will also be observed that age, in and by itself, does not give the needful qualification. She must not have been twice married, and she must be well reported of, both as to her home duties and as to her activities in the Lord's service. The character of her good works—works which are therefore according to the mind of God—might well be commended for consideration to many in a day like this of incessant and ever-increasing activity.

The younger widows are to be refused, *i. e.*, we judge, not to "be taken into the number." The reason is given. "For when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry: having damnation [or being guilty] because they cast off their first faith." Their "first faith" would probably mean that in the time of their bereavement, when the Lord drew them through their grief near to Himself, they devoted themselves entirely to Him and His service. But, losing heart for Christ, "they will"—or rather, they wish to—"marry," finding themselves unable in such a

state of soul to lean for all the support they need on Christ ; and thus they turn with longing desire to the succour of human affections and a human arm. An unsatisfied heart is the source of much sin, as the next verse most surely reveals. "And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house ; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not," fruitful source of unhappiness and sorrow in the church of God in every age and in every clime. The antidote is supplied. "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully" (*ver.* 14). The term "younger women" is perhaps general, though with special reference to widows. The home is the appointed sphere of service for all such, if they would be in subjection to the Lord, and in comparative shelter from the snares of Satan. One other word is given to define the responsibilities of believers towards the widows of their own families, and this in order that the Church may be free to "relieve them that are widows indeed."

We may, then, gather from the consideration of this Scripture some useful lessons. First we learn, as already expressed, what a heart God has for those who are truly widows. Evidences of this are found both in the Old and New Testament Scriptures. It follows therefore, secondly, that if we would be in fellowship with Him, they should

ever be the objects of our loving care and ministry. Lastly, we may gather from these directions to Timothy what an important sphere of service a "widow indeed" occupies before God. Anna is an example of this among the little remnant that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. In her continual fastings and prayers she had been brought into communion with the mind of God, while waiting for the advent of the Messiah. She was therefore led into the temple at the moment when the infant Jesus was being presented to Jehovah, and her heart was filled with joy and her lips with praise ; and she went forth as the messenger of the glad tidings of the Christ to those who had with her looked and longed for this blessed time. Where, then, are the "widows indeed" of the present day? Morally we occupy the same position as that of the little band in Jerusalem. Like them, we are expecting our Lord ; meanwhile God calls those who are truly widows to be occupied with fastings and prayers, that thereby they may bear up the whole Church with their intercessions, and thus be the means of kindling anew in many hearts the blessed hope of the Lord's return. There are many to serve in labours of love, but there is even a greater need for the service of those who, like Epaphras, know how to labour fervently for the saints in prayers. It is this service to which the "widows indeed" are called, and for which they have been divinely qualified. May the Church increasingly reap the fruit of their blessed service in this dark and evil day !

THE CHURCH AS WIDOW AND BRIDE.

“ *He is not here.* ” “ *I will come again.* ”

Mourning, she misses Him who is not here ;
Joyous she waits until her Lord appear,
Watching through widowed hours till night be
past,
Ready to raise the cry, “ He comes at last ! ”

Oh, blood-bought Church, unto thy Lord be true
Wait for thine absent One the midnight through
Glory awaits thee, glory all divine,
When thou shalt in His bright effulgence shine.

His constant care shall shield thy waiting hours,
His love thy solace be when tempest lowers ;
Himself thine all—then that bright morning tide,
When He shall come to greet thee as His bride.

Mourn that so few His love, His beauty know ;
Mourn o’er the many triumphs of the foe ;
Mourn o’er each act that gives Him cause to
chide ;
Mourn, when thou dost not in His love abide.

Rejoice, O Church ! for perfect shalt thou be ;
Rejoice, for ’tis *His* hand that mouldeth thee ;
Rejoice in His love—changeless as divine ;
Rejoice that thou art His, that He is thine.

Exultant Church, raise now thy song of praise,
And triumph with thy Lord in all His ways ;
Absent or present, ever unto thee
His constant love, His deep desire, shall be.

Time hastens on, the midnight hour is past,
 Even now the rays of coming morn are cast ;
 Thy widowed weeping shall be changed ere long
 To morning praises and to bridal song.

Expectant Church, still wait, still watching be,
 Until the joy be thine thy Lord to see ;
 His hours of absence soon shall all be o'er,
 And thou with Him shalt be for evermore.

O'er night's dark sorrow broods the Dove of peace,
 But wakening morn shall bid all sorrows cease ;
 And thy glad heart shall raise its joyous lay,
 While Morning Star leads on to perfect day,

When not a cloud shall dim thy wondering sight,
 Nor shall His glory be for thee too bright,
 Made meet to share it with Him on His throne,
 And claimed by Him as "His beloved," "His
 own."



**"I JESUS . . . 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."**

(Revelation xxii. 16, 17.)