

# WORDS IN SEASON.

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“A WORD SPOKEN IN DUE SEASON, HOW GOOD  
IS IT!”—*Proverbs* xv. 23.

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# WORDS IN SEASON.

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## “THE BEAUTIFUL GATE OF THE TEMPLE.”—*Acts* iii.

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How blessedly was the power of that “Name which is above every name” (*Phil.* ii. 9) displayed when, at the Beautiful gate of the temple, Peter and John said to the poor man, “lame from his mother’s womb,” whose only expectation was a trifling sum of money, “Look on us.” As he did so, did he observe them feeling in the folds of their garments for the coveted dole? No; not a movement of the kind did they make. But Peter, on the contrary, by a word cast every such expectation aside when he said, “Silver and gold have I none.” They were the distinguished and devoted servants of Him who has said, “Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine and the fulness thereof” (*Ps.* l. 10-12.).

But they were not there to dispense either the bounties of God as Creator or the accumulated wealth of the world. They carried that which neither purse nor scrip could contain, that knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ for which the heart of man is the only fitting repository. It filled their own hearts, and it filled them to overflowing; out of the abundance of the heart the mouth spoke. And, accordingly, Peter adds those few striking words which altered the whole character of the scene and circumstances: hear what

he says—"but such as I have give I thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." And the divine historian adds, "And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up, stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God: and they knew it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him."

Now, tell me, dear reader, what was it that made all this difference? What was it that Peter spoke of when he said "*such as I have*," and which he dispensed so freely and imparted so graciously to the impotent man? What was it that in an instant converted that poor, pitiable object, so familiar to the frequenters of the temple as a picture of misery, into a hale and hearty man, strong in wind and limb, as we may suppose? What was it that made this wondrous change? At one moment without strength—an impotent man, and without resources—a poor beggar! The next moment in the flush of health and strength, bounding along with alacrity, "walking and leaping," and so full of blessing that he is an overflowing vessel, entering the temple as a worshipper—"praising God"! Dear reader, if you don't know what it was, it only discloses a secret, undiscovered perhaps by yourself, viz., that you are as yet without the *knowledge and the power of the Name of Jesus of Nazareth* which Peter spoke of when he said, "Such as I have give I thee"! The man heard those life-giving words. His attention was aroused and awakened when Peter said, "Look on us." He looked; was it not with eyes never so opened before? And to those opened eyes and listening ears, God by His servant presents an object; to *his faith* is that object presented, and from his faith a response is

found. He looks; he listens; his feet and ankle bones, responsive, as it were, to the Name which works so wondrously, receive strength; he rises, stands, walks, leaps, with new-found muscular energy! And, beautiful lesson for the one who has just experienced the mighty power of God in salvation, he devotes the firstfruits of this heritage of strength to Him from whom it sprung! He enters the temple, the ostensible scene of Jehovah's presence; his lips are opened in praise to God, and he enjoys the communion of saints, for he accompanies Peter and John, and, as we read, "held" them.

Oh! the power, the virtue, the sweetness, the succour of that Name! How truly is it the "Name which is above every name"! I have read that a few persons once collected round a blind man, who had taken his station on the bridge over a canal in the City Road, London, and who was reading from a bible which had raised letters. Receiving from the passers-by of their carnal things, he was, though unintentionally perhaps, ministering to them spiritual things. A gentleman, on his way home from the City, was led by curiosity to linger on the outskirts of the little group. Just then, the poor man, who was reading in the fourth chapter of the Acts, lost his place, and, while trying to find it with his finger, kept repeating the last clause he had read in verse 12, "none other name," "none other name," "none other name." Some of the people smiled at the poor fellow's embarrassment, and, smiling, passed on. Not so this gentleman; he was remarkably affected and impressed, and moved away deeply musing. The words he had heard from the blind man—nay, from Peter, shall we say?—or rather, shall we say, from the Spirit of God?—rang like solemn music in his soul, and refused to be hushed,—"none other name," "none other name." He reached his home, rejoined his family, and retired to rest, but these divinely-winged words were still heard, "none other name," "none

other name," "none other name;" and when he awoke, though in more joyful measure perhaps, the strain continued, "none other name," "none other name," "none other name." The music entered his soul; and by the blessing of God, he awoke to a new life. "I see it all," he said, "I see it all! I have been trying to be saved by my own works, my repentance, my prayers, my reformation. I see my mistake now. It is Jesus who alone can save. He died the just for the unjust. To Him I will look. 'Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.'"

Thus was his soul brought into the light and liberty of the grace of God. The discomfiture of the poor blind reader was made use of in the sovereignty of God, to open the blind eyes of this gentleman to the power and preciousness of that "Name which is above every name." To Him be the glory throughout all ages. Amen!

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## H E A R T - E A S E .

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WE find put on record in this chapter (xi.) by Matthew, words which show us what was passing in the heart of John the Baptist, and words, also, of the Lord, which tell us of the thoughts of His heart, whilst here in humiliation and conscious rejection. We can thus compare them, because John and the Lord were in a measure contemporaries, and had passed through somewhat similar experiences.

John was the greatest of all the prophets, the immediate forerunner of the Lord Himself. Both he and his Lord had been the subject of prophecy, and his birth, as well as that of the virgin's Son, had been the occasion for outbursts of praise (Luke i, 68-79, ii. 13-20). His ministry had met outwardly with extra-

ordinary success (Mark i. 5). "There went out unto him all the land of Judæa, and all they of Jerusalem, and were baptised of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins." He seemed but to speak, and hearts were bowed down under the word like reeds, and men in numbers flocked to him, and were baptised by him, confessing their sins. And as is wont to be the case in a popular movement—yet never had there been such a movement before—some of all classes sought John's advice. Multitudes asked him, saying, "What should we do?" Publicans, also, the farmers of the Roman taxes, put the same question to this man, the son of Zacharias the priest, who was found, not in the temple, but by the Jordan, or at Ænon, near to Salem, where there was much water. The soldiers, too, solicited his advice (Luke iii. 7-14). Yet he flattered no one; he pandered to no vice or popular wish. Repentance he insisted on, and the production of fruit worthy of it (Matt. iii. 8) he inculcated on his hearers.

The movement was evidently of God. The excellent of the earth in God's eyes, heard of him and were baptised by him. And so popular did it become, that many Pharisees and Sadducees came also to his baptism. How many, had they stood in John's place, would have had their heads turned by the success of their mission, and with the eye blinded by popularity, have failed probably to see through the garb of hypocrisy in which these last mentioned had enwrapped themselves, as they drew near with the crowd to be enrolled among the number of his disciples! But he was not deceived. He perceived their hypocrisy, and unmasked it. Success did not turn his head, or carry him off his feet. Steadily and persistently, when at the height of his popularity, he announced the advent of the One whose shoe's latchet he was unworthy to unloose (Matt. iii. 11, Mark i. 7, Luke iii. 16, John i. 26-27). A special revelation too was accorded him (John i. 33); but this burning and shining light,

as the Lord subsequently described him (John v. 35), kept his place as a creature and as a servant. He was, he said, but the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord (John i. 23). He was but a messenger; yes, but a messenger of the Highest, the immediate forerunner of Jehovah Himself. Both Isaiah (xl. 3) and Malachi (iii. 1) had written of him. He applies Isaiah xl. to himself, whilst the Lord and the Spirit point us to Malachi iii. as written of him. There was something suitable in this, and the proper spirit of God's servant herein displays itself. It was but a little, in comparison, to be a voice of one crying in the wilderness. It was high honour to be singled out as Jehovah's messenger going before His face. Both were true of him. But of the latter John himself does not speak. With the Lord on his mind, and ever present as it were to his eye, the true servant could not exalt himself. He might, indeed he did, baptise with water; but the coming One would baptise with the Holy Ghost and with fire. He ever put the Lord Jesus Christ in the foreground.

At length that One appeared, and received baptism at the hands of John, unwilling though he was, as we read, to baptise Him, of whom he needed to be baptised (Matt. iii. 14). Never had such honour been put on one of Adam's race, as never before had such apparent success as had attended John's preaching been registered by any servant of God. Yet he kept his place, or rather was kept by the sovereign grace of God.

For when tested in another way, when popularity seemed to attend the Lord and to be diverted from John, who was told, "Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptiseth, and all men come unto Him," his beautiful answer shows the real work of grace in his soul. The disciple, jealous for the honour of his master, put John in the foreground, saying "He that was with thee," and "to whom thou

barest witness." But John gave his Lord the right place—"A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth. He that cometh from heaven is above all, and what He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth, and no man receiveth His testimony" (John iii. 26-32).

A little time after this, John's unique ministry came to an end. He was cast into prison because he reproved the king for his licentious conduct. But no deliverance had been vouchsafed him. The Messiah had appeared. Works of power had characterised Him, yet His servant languished in prison. Was that God's mind for His servant? If the Christ had really come, was John, His forerunner, to continue a captive in the hands of an adulterous monarch? With thoughts of this kind, it would seem, in his mind, the perturbations of a heart which knew not the secret of perfect rest in trouble, John sent two of his disciples to the Lord with the question, "Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matt. xi. 3). Was it only on behalf of his disciples that he sent thus to the Lord? Matt xi. 6 inclines one to think differently. In directing then attention to this moment of John's life, is one casting a stone at him? By no means: for the secret of true heart-ease for the servant of God had not then been revealed, in the full clear way that it has been to us. How often have many of us manifested forgetfulness of what we have heard about it, or slowness of heart to enter into it. Till we have attained to perfectness of practice in this lesson in the school of God, it will not become us to cast a stone at another.

The Lord's answer was characteristic, and has a voice for each one of us. Works of power He could do, which John could not (John x. 41). He might have astonished the messengers of the Baptist by a display of wonders, and have sent them back to their master overawed by the greatness of the One to whom they had put such a question. But He did not act thus. He might have spoken the word, and have made the walls of the Castle of Machærus fall down flat, as did the walls of Jericho before the ark of the Lord of all the earth. He could have sent an angel and rescued him, as Peter experienced when asleep in prison at Jerusalem. But he did not. No deliverance from prison was vouchsafed John. The Lord, however, would do what was of greater importance, He would establish the faith of His servant, and that of His disciples, on the unchanging rock of the written Word of God.

So He pointed the messengers to the then-common displays of His power in grace to men as a sufficient answer to their question; and as a proof, when the divine oracular word of Isaiah was remembered, of Who it was who was there: "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them, and blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me" (xi. 4-6). Blessings such as these to flow from Messiah's presence on earth, Isaiah had foretold (xxxv. 5-6, lxi. 1). He who came as Messiah was giving daily tokens of His presence. *That* was to be enough for John and for John's disciples. To the written word He turns him and them, of the fulfilment of which the messengers of the imprisoned servant had ocular and abundant proof. Now the written word does not alter, so the one whose faith rests on it has a sure foundation.

To that same resource—the Word of God—the Lord

turned the attention of those two who journeyed to Emmaus, to show them that what had taken place at Jerusalem had been foretold and was fulfilled. Their faith, as well as that of John and his disciples, was to rest on the written word. So is it, and must it be with us. And God has provided light and guidance for His saints amid much that would otherwise be perplexing, as He has told us the character of things that would be displayed in the age after the apostles had left the earth (1 Tim. iv. 1); the state of things that would be known amongst God's professing people in the last days (2 Tim. iii.); and even what saints would be familiarised with at the end of the days, when scoffers would rise up and deride the hope of the Lord's return (2 Pet. iii. 1). All has been foreseen, and provision is made for God's saints under such circumstances. What comfort and encouragement this is. No development of evil in the Church has taken Him by surprise.

But besides providing us with a picture of the last days, which surely, one must say, is a faithful delineation of them, God's Word would teach us the secret of real heart-ease in the midst of all that might disturb. This we learn from the Master Himself.

His experiences in ministry, and those of John, had been somewhat similar. At first He attracted crowds, "His fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and He healed them. And there followed Him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judæa, and from beyond Jordan" (Matt. iv. 24-25). "All men come unto Him," said John's disciples to their master. It was but the truth. It seemed a popular movement. But, like all such, it was evanescent. And now, in Matt. xi., the Lord has to pronounce a most withering

judgment on the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they repented not. Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum thus acquired an unenviable notoriety. They were identified with the rejection of the Master, but not identified with Him in His rejection. This last was the blessed portion, in which Andrew, Peter, and Philip, all of Bethsaida, had part, whilst their native town the Lord condemned.

From popularity to rejection John had passed. In prison, no one, it seemed, lifted a finger on his behalf; no deputations of men of influence waited on the king to remonstrate with him, or to solicit John's release—of that we may be sure. What did the world care for John? From popularity to rejection the Lord, too, passed. He felt what rejection was, though we must turn rather to the Old Testament for His expression of it. The prophetic word gives it, as He speaks therein to God. He felt it (Isai. xlix. 4, Ps. lxxix., etc.). And though all power was His, He felt deeply what He passed through, yet never exercised that power to crush His enemies, as man would like to do. "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father," He could say. What creatures they were in those cities to reject such an one! Their unbelief was anything but a light thing in His eyes, as we see from the way He upbraided them. But He keeps His place as a man, dependent, obedient, and confiding, and tells us the secret of heart-ease in such circumstances is to allow the Father to work just as He will.

"I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes, even so, Father; for so it seemeth good in Thy sight" (25, 26). He was satisfied for the Father to work as He saw fit. Did that excuse the unbelief of Capernaum, etc.? Not at all. It did not lighten their guilt. But it could give rest to Him. Despised, rejected, yet the only One by whom they could be blessed, it was

rest to His heart to see the Father work as seemed good in His sight. And it will be rest to our hearts if in somewhat similar circumstances. So He says, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." If He, who had all things delivered unto Him of His Father, thus walked in a rest of heart, which nothing could disturb, are we just to contemplate Him as we would a picture, admire Him, speak of Him, and turn away from such a contemplation as that in which we have no personal concern? No; He presents Himself to us as the Master, whose example His disciples are to follow. "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me," etc.

He was, He is, the Son of God—begotten before all worlds, and born in time as well. A mystery there was, and is, about His person, which none know but the Father. A secret there had been, we may say, about the Father, but a secret no longer for those who would hearken to the Son. "No one knoweth the Son, but the Father." Into that no creature can penetrate. "Neither knoweth any one the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." This was He whose ministry was rejected by God's professing people. The Son came revealing the Father, and they did not care to receive Him. Had His mission been rejected by the ignorant and idolatrous heathen, we might not have wondered. But God's professing people it was who turned a deaf ear to the voice of the Son revealing the Father; and the bitterest opponents He had were those who made the greatest profession; as the most determined opponents of Christianity in apostolic times were those who gloried in being part of God's earthly people. Israel, Jews they called themselves, and that was true as speaking of themselves after the flesh. "The synagogue of Satan" the Lord calls them, as viewed morally, in His last communication to His saints ere He comes for them (Rev. ii. 9, iii. 9).

In spite, then, of His rejection, the Father was working, and He was satisfied. Had men been before the eye, what could there have been but disappointment? "*Thou* hast hid these things from the wise and prudent." Men may and do disappoint, but God's work progresses. If we count on men, there may be much to dishearten; if we count on God, there is everything to encourage. "Revealed them unto babes." Yes; God's ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts.

Surely and persistently does His work proceed, in spite of all the attacks of the enemy. We may not always perceive the truth of this, because it is impossible in the thick of the conflict to measure how things are progressing throughout the whole fight. Who in the ranks in the battle can see how the plan of the General is being successfully carried out in the different parts of the field? We must ever be poor judges of the success of the work in the present. Who would have thought when the Lord's body was laid in the grave, that through death it was that He would overcome him that had the power of death, that is the devil: yet when defeat seemed most manifest, it was the prelude to a real and a substantial victory. Again, when Saul sallied forth from Jerusalem to Damascus, one might have thought the cause of Christ hopeless. But God let Saul start off on his journey, a would-be exterminator of Christians, to return to that same city a captive, and most devoted servant of the despised and crucified Nazarene.

So with the work in our day. We may not be able to see how it is progressing. Opposition where least expected may rise up; confidence in men may be rudely shaken; but all that seems disastrous may turn out to the furtherance of His work who makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He restrains. For God works steadily in pursuance of His objects,—His glory, the glory of His

Son, and the blessing of souls. So in the midst of the strife and din of battle, He would have His servants calm and in rest of heart, as they learn of the Master the secret of heart-ease at such a time, viz., to be satisfied to let God work *as He will, where He will, or by whom He will.*

“Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight,” may often come as a draught of clear, cold water to refresh the weary heart. Now were these words the expression of one who could not have struggled against circumstances? They came from Him who as God was Master of circumstances, but as man would cheerfully submit to them. Would such a spirit lead to the idleness or listlessness of fatalism? some might ask. Let such read the following chapter in Matthew, or the subsequent verses in Luke. The One who uttered those words continued untiring in service while it was day. May that be characteristic in some measure of both the writer and the reader of this paper.

C. E. S.

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## “THE GREAT SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP.”—*Heb. xiii. 20.*

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Great Shepherd of the flock of God,  
Thy lambs and sheep their voices raise ;  
They count upon Thy staff and rod,  
For strength and succour in Thy ways.

Our wand'ring feet are prone to swerve,  
Towards many a snare by Satan set ;  
But Thou the flock doth ceaseless serve,  
Nor sheep nor lamb can'st Thou forget.

Thy patience, Lord, though deeply tried,  
Has never failed, shall never fail ;  
The foe may scoff, the world deride,  
But Thou, our Shepherd, must prevail.

Poor, falt'ring lips address Thee, Lord,  
But falt'ring lips may yield Thee praise ;  
And feeding on Thy precious word,  
Tell forth Thy worth through pilgrim days.

Guide Thou Thy sheep, Thy lambs defend,  
Uphold them all upon Thy heart ;  
Until our thorny path shall end,  
In bright exchange for where Thou art !

O Lord, do Thou our steps direct  
Who art Thyself the living Way ;  
In love our waywardness correct  
Until the shadows flee away.

No more shall then our wand'ring feet  
And stubborn will Thy patience try—  
When Thou shalt all Thy ransom'd meet  
And fill the gaze of every eye !

Thy long-loved voice more sweet becomes,  
As gently Thou dost lead us on,  
Beyond the reach of earthly storms,  
To that bright scene where Thou hast gone !

Green pastures still Thy hand supplies,  
And cooling streams refreshment bring ;  
From that strong love which never dies,  
Do all Thy favours freely spring.

Thy care so great, Thy love so deep,  
The wolf shall ne'er Thy flock devour ;  
Thy feeblest lambs, Thy silliest sheep,  
Are sheltered by Thine arm of power.

O Thou Good Shepherd, gone before,  
Thy stumbling flock would follow Thee ;  
Until the stumbling all be o'er,  
And we Thyself in glory see !

Then Thou Thy flock shalt fold for aye,  
Thy sheep and lambs shalt number o'er ;  
Chief Shepherd, in that glorious day,  
Not one shall fail or grieve Thee more !

## “JOY IN THE LORD.”

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How blessed it is to find our joy in the Lord Himself; to be able to say of Him, “All my springs are in Thee.” This is a joy which surpasses every earthly joy—a joy which no earthly prosperity can yield, and which the lack of it cannot diminish. The Psalmist could say “I will bless the Lord at *all times*: His praise shall continually be in my mouth” (Ps. xxxiv. 1). And the Apostle Paul could say “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say Rejoice” (Phil. iv. 4). What a reality it is for us here in this world! How wonderful the grace which produces it! No matter what the circumstances may be, when the Lord Himself is distinctly the object before the soul, then He makes us to rejoice in Himself, and as Peter puts it, “with joy *unspeakable* and filled with the glory” (1 Pet. i. 8).

Just turn to Isaiah ix. 3.: “Thou hast multiplied the nation and increased the joy: they joy before Thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.” Here we have joy, and joy given by the Lord, too, but not joy in Himself. This is the result of their deliverance in the last days, when the Lord shall have subdued their enemies. And what a joy! Like “the joy in harvest.” We can picture to ourselves what this would be like. Harvest is a sign and mark of God’s power, as He makes the ground bring forth plentifully, and the earth yield her increase—and what a burst of joy as they finish their harvest and acknowledge the goodness of the Lord! Such, then, will be the joy of His earthly people Israel in the day of their deliverance and blessing.

But let us turn to Pss. iii. and iv. In Ps. iii. the Psalmist puts the Lord between himself and his enemies, and finds Him to be his shield—his glory—

and the lifter up of his head (v. 3). He cried unto the Lord and was heard (v. 4); then lies down and sleeps in quietness and peacefulness (v. 5), and when awake again there is no fear of ten thousand against him (v. 6).

In Ps. iv. he has a good conscience, and can therefore call upon God. He sees the sad state of all around; hears the cry of many, "Who will shew *us* any good?" as they look in vain for it around them: And not only does *he* know where to turn for those who raise that cry, but he finds for himself such a spring of joy that he can say, "*Thou* has put gladness in *my* heart, *more* than in the time that their corn and their wine increased" (v. 7). What a service of good, and blessing, and joy! This, you will notice, is not merely joying with harvest joy, but "*more* than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." One is rejoicing in the Lord's goodness in giving temporal prosperity. The other is rejoicing in the Lord Himself! Well may the soul in the enjoyment of this ask for the light of that countenance which produces it to be lifted up on others, especially on those *seeking good*. Then not only is there *joyfulness*, but there is *peacefulness*. "I will both lay me down in *peace and sleep*, for Thou Lord only makest me dwell in safety" (v. 8).

Now turn to Habakkuk iii. 17-19. This goes beyond even Ps. iv. It is a wonderful expression of confidence on the part of the prophet:—

"Although the fig tree shall not blossom,  
Neither shall fruit be in the vines;  
The labour of the olive shall fail,  
And the fields shall yield no meat;  
The flock shall be cut off from the fold,  
And there shall be no herd in the stalls:  
Yet I will rejoice in the Lord,  
I will glory in the God of my salvation!  
The Lord God is my strength,  
And He will make my feet like unto hind's feet,  
And He will make me to walk upon mine high places."

How very blessed and encouraging is this. Though everything should fail and be taken away—every earthly joy and comfort, yea, the very necessities of life vanish—still there was a spring which would never run dry, and the prophet would continue, in spite of all, to find his joy in the Lord Himself, the God of his salvation! It is not harvest joy, nor joy beyond it whilst surrounded by plenty, but joy in the midst of poverty and the failure of all earthly good. Who can give such joy as this, and at such times, but the Lord? and who, or what, can deprive us of it if our hearts are occupied with Him?

There is one more Scripture I would ask you to notice (Phil. iv. 11-13). And here we have the experience of one who knew what it was to have *plenty* and at times to have *nothing*; yet his joy was undiminished, for it was in the Lord! From the prison he could write "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice." "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (v. 4, 6-7). He did not expect the saints to do what he was ignorant of himself. No! He had sung praises in the inner prison with his feet fast in the stocks, and his back smarting from the cruelty of his jailor! Moreover, whether full or hungry, abounding or suffering need, his rejoicing was the same—his joy was in the Lord. Yes, he could give them *example* as well as *precept*. He could also say, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me." There is the same power for us; shall we be behind him in the use of it?

May we each know more of this wonderful joy—a joy which the Lord gives us IN HIMSELF as we are occupied by the Holy Ghost with His beauty and glory, and the wonders of His love, till that bright morning dawns without clouds, when we shall see His face, have His Name on our foreheads, and everlasting and unmingled joy be our portion!

W. E.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE PSALMS.

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THE Hebrews, ancient and modern, divided the 150 Psalms into *five* books, disregarding historical sequence or chronological order. The spiritual and soundly-instructed have owned that the Hebrew arrangement of the book must have been of divine ordering.

*The First Book contains Psalms i.—xli.* We have here a good deal of the personal history of the Messiah, also the covenant name “Jehovah” or LORD, which is written about 270 times, whereas “God,” the creation title, does not occur more than 50 times. As a suffering remnant of Israel, or rather Judah, is here recognised in their land, and the Messiah’s identification with them, as in Matt. iii.—this identification being historically *past*, and prophetically *future*—we easily account for so much of the life-history of Christ being given, and for the frequent occurrence of the covenant title *Jehovah*.

*The Second Book contains Psalms xlii.—lxxii.* The Judah-remnant, which occupies such a large place in the prophetic Scriptures, is here prophetically viewed as driven out from Judæa and Jerusalem, and undergoing a baptism of blood, but are cheered and sustained by the presence and promises of their Messiah. God does not *publicly* own this remnant, whom governmentally He has driven out of the land, and hence *Jehovah*, the relationship title, not being enjoyed, only occurs about 30 times; whereas *God*, the creation title, really characterising the people then, occurs about 200 times.

*The Third Book contains Psalms lxxiii.—lxxxix.* The whole history of the nation is here divinely sketched from her rise in Egypt to her settlement in millennial glory and blessing. The names *Jehovah* and *God* occur in nearly equal numbers.

*The Fourth Book contains Psalms xc.—cvi.* The successive

announcements of Jehovah's (Christ's) coming, and the blessing attending His reign and personal presence, are the grand subjects of these joyous Psalms, the *Jews* being regarded as the centre, and *Jerusalem* the metropolis of all earthly glory. The relationship of Israel to God being restored, *Jehovah* occurs about 100 times, and *God* about 20 times.

*The Fifth Book contains Psalms cvii.-cl.* This division is not so prophetic in character as the others, but is more distinctly moral. Jehovah's character and doings are grandly celebrated in songs unrivalled for sublimity and poetic sweetness and fervour. The songs of degrees, 15 in number (Psalms cxx.-cxxxiv.), while historically applying to the return from Babylon to Jerusalem, look forward to the various stages of Israel's moral return to *Jehovah*, the name of whom occurs 230 times and more, while *God* is only written about 30 times.

The direct application of the Psalms is to the Messiah and Israel, *not* to Christ and the Church—to a people under the moral government and disciplinary dealings of God. Judah will be restored to her land by Gentile intervention on her behalf, undertaken for political motives merely (Isa. xviii.), and will then be disciplined and scourged under the governmental anger of Jehovah; for have they not as a nation persistently rejected the Holy Ghost, persecuted the prophets, betrayed and murdered the Just One, and broken the Law which they faithfully promised to keep (Acts vii. 51-53)? These solemn counts in Israel's indictment will be pressed upon the conscience of the guilty nation, and will be fully owned by the God-fearing part of Judah, whose experience, prayers, trials, and confessions, are the subject-matter of many of these Psalms.

The dispensational character of the book, as a whole, has been greatly overlooked; and Christian standing, experience, and hopes have been imported into the book, when they are really not to be found.

There is, of course, much truth common to the saints of all ages, and a certain experience of God's goodness, which all may enjoy. But it is a fatal mistake in the apprehension of this book to read it as recording true, full Christian experience. The following blessings characteristic of Christianity, will not be found in the book of Psalms :

- 1.—The knowledge of eternal life (John v. 24).
- 2.—Sins forgiven and the conscience purged (Heb x.).
- 3.—Union to Christ in the heavens (Eph. i.).
- 4.—Immediate access to God, because the veil is rent (Heb. x.).
- 5.—The consciousness of relationship—"Father" (Rom. viii.).

The book of Psalms primarily regards a people under law and as the immediate objects of the earthly government of God.' W. S.

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## THE PSALMS.

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'FEW, comparatively, of the psalms apply wholly and exclusively to Christ. The great body of them express the working of His Spirit in the hearts of His tried ones. The difference, even where suffering is the subject, between those which are, and those which are not, exclusively applicable to Him, is very evident, and particularly between His sufferings from the hand of God and from the hand of man, even when this was under the visitations of God and the power of the enemy. It is worth while to note these points distinctly.

'Psalm ii. refers personally to Christ as Messiah, the Son of God, born in this world; viii., as Son of man. In xvi. we find Him formally taking His place among the godly remnant, treading the path of life through death, up to fulness of joy in

resurrection ; xx. and xxi. have, in a certain sense, also Christ alone for their subject ; xxii. clearly so. Sins are not confessed till xxv. The integrity of heart of the remnant is presented, or Christ Himself. Besides these, xl., though mainly of Him, is not absolutely so ; see verse 5. In xlv. He is clearly celebrated ; lxix. speaks also chiefly, but not exclusively, of Him ; see verse 26. In lxxii. we find Him again as Solomon ; ci., cii., treat also of Him as King in Israel, and as, though cut off, Jehovah the Creator. In cx. He is exalted to Jehovah's right hand, to be priest after the order of Melchizedec. In other psalms He is introduced, but He is not their personal subject.

'I do not call to mind others of which He is exclusively or pre-eminently the subject, though it is possible some may have escaped me ; my object is rather to give a certain number of distinct examples than a list of them. As regards the psalms which speak of His sufferings, the marks which distinguish those which speak of His sufferings from man and those which express His sufferings under the hand of God, are very clear and decisive. Thus Psalm xx., xxi., He suffers from the hand of man. The consequence is, xxi. announces judgment on man. So it is in lxix. : though other elements are found there, the psalm treats of the number of those who hate Him without a cause, who gave Him gall for meat, and in His thirst gave Him vinegar to drink ; and He desires that their table be a snare to them ; that their eyes be darkened, and that God should pour out His indignation upon them. So even in Psalm xxxi., though it has less of this character, yet it still has this distinctive mark of the looking for judgment on the wicked. (Ver. 17, 18.)

'I have already remarked that in sorrows from human persecution, on account of what is good, His saints can have a part. The pressure of it in connection with sins, and the desire of vengeance or

judgment, finds its accomplishment in the remnant of the Jews in the last day. In Psalm cii., where, though the enemies are seen, the sorrow of Messiah is traced to God's indignation and wrath, who has lifted Him up as Messiah, and cast Him down, even to the dust of death, no desire for judgment is expressed, but blessing and grace are the result. This is most strikingly displayed in Psalm xxii., where the atoning work of the cross is the distinct and definite subject. As soon as the Lord is heard from the horns of the unicorns, His first thought, as indeed it historically was, is to make known all the blessing of His God and Father's name, where in unclouded blessing in righteousness He now stood, to His brethren. Then He praises in the midst of the Church, then in the great congregation, all Israel in the latter day; then the blessing reaches all the ends of the earth in millennial mercies; then the seed afterwards born. To all, the word is that He has done this. No trace of judgment from Him who has borne sin and wrath for us, nor from Him who inflicted that wrath on Christ for us in the counsels of unutterable grace. Now, in the 69th Psalm we have the cross also, and not merely the wickedness of man—though that is fully entered into—but the trusting of God, and distress under the sense of sins. How is this to be distinguished from the atoning work of Christ? Here the difficulty presents itself fully; but if we wait patiently on the Lord, all difficulties of Scripture are inlets to light and blessing. The mark I have noticed as indicating sufferings from man, and other distinguishing ones, are clearly found in this psalm. Judgment is looked for on the enemies, an absolute and conclusive distinction in the very nature of the suffering; and there is another characteristic already noticed, but to our purpose here.

'We read, verse 26, "They persecute Him whom Thou hast smitten and speak to the grief of those whom Thou hast wounded." Here we have evidently

more than man's persecutions. They take advantage of God's hand upon the sorrowing One to add to His burden and grief. This is not atonement, but there is sorrow and smiting from God. Hence we find the sense of sins (ver. 5), though of course in the case of Christ they were not His own personally, but the nation's (in a certain sense we may say ours, but specially the nation's sins). But we have the clear proof that they are not atoning sufferings; because instead of suffering in the place of others, so that they should not have one drop of that cup of wrath to drink, others are associated with the Lord here in them. "They persecute Him whom Thou hast smitten and speak to the grief of *those* whom Thou hast wounded." When men are wounded too, when Christ is the companion with them—not a substitute for them—*then* atonement is not wrought nor the wrath of condemnation endured. Yet God has smitten and wounded. It is not merely man that has caused the suffering. Man comes in in malice to add to the sorrow. Thus we have along with the suffering from man at the epoch of the crucifixion (the special object of the psalm), bringing judgment on man, the third character of Christ's sufferings, the suffering under the government of God, at the epoch of His final sorrows, in which the remnant will have its part, and into which Christ entered for them, afflicted in all their afflictions. Hence, too, though in most deep waters, overflown, weary of crying, Christ is not forsaken—His prayer is to God in an acceptable time. Deep as is the distress, it has a character wholly and entirely contrasted with atonement, yet it is not the ministry of Jesus in blessing in the enjoyment of the light of His Father's countenance, but the conflict and agony of His soul when the power of darkness is at work. Another very striking fact in the path of the blessed Lord, which I alluded to, is this. During the whole of His life of service, all through, including Gethsemane, Christ

never addresses God by the name of God. He always says "Father." On the cross we know His words were, "My God, my God." In His life this title would have been out of place—not of course because it did not belong to Him whom He addressed, but because it was not the expression of the unclouded relationship and conscious blessedness of Sonship in which the blessed Lord always stood. On the cross God was dealing with Him about sin, and therefore as God, in His nature, majesty, righteousness, and truth. Here sin was to be dealt with as such by God, and the blessed One expresses according to truth the position in which His holy soul stood. We are permitted in wondrous grace to see Him in such a one. Infinite and wondrous grace it is. But the terms the Lord makes use of mark very clearly and solemnly the difference of the two positions in which the blessed Lord relatively stood. Till the cross the Lord walked in the enjoyment of the relationship of a Son with the Father, yea, an only-begotten Son knowing that the Father heard Him always. On the cross, as we have seen, all that God was against sin, He, made sin, had to feel, and meet, and endure, but then returned into the full joy of all that God and His Father was in righteousness. Redemption being accomplished, He brings His disciples into the enjoyment and joy of both. "I ascend to my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God."

J. N. D.

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"Nothing is so soon clouded as present dependence on and confidence in God."—J. N. D.

"Many have puzzled themselves about the origin of evil; I observe there *is* evil, and that there is a way to *escape* it; and with this I begin and end."—JOHN NEWTON.

## "THAT BLESSED HOPE."

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"COMING events," says the world, "cast *their shadows* before," and the world is right, for the events which are before it have only shadows to cast! But how different is the language of faith—"the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. iv. 18). That which is before the child of God; that which God has presented to faith, is the return of the Lord Jesus, "that blessed hope" of which Paul writes to Titus (ch. ii. 13), and so far from its casting shadows, it casts its own brightness upon the believer's path, and every onward step to the glory is more and more illuminated thereby. No other truth perhaps is so mighty a lever in the hands of the Spirit of God for detaching us from the world, as John writes (1 Jno. iii. 3), "Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure," and no other truth (*union excepted*) forms so strong a link between us and the risen glorified Man who is now on the Father's throne, as this "*hope in Him*," the hope of being like Him as well as being with Him, at His coming.

But let us look at a few of the various ways in which the Spirit of God speaks of this soul-cheering truth and the various connections it has in the Word of God.

I. In 1 Thes. i. 9, 10, we read, "Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God; and to *wait for His Son from heaven*, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." Now here we have it in its simplest character. These poor, dear Thessalonian believers, young converts of but a few months, first fruits for God of Paul's labours in Europe, and the recipients of his first apostolic letter—what a deliverance had been theirs! They were dead in their sins and buried in the moral degradation of Grecian idolatry; "having no hope

and without God in the world" (Eph. ii. 12). And as to the future, not only had they no hope, but there was nothing before them but "the wrath to come;" death with all its hideousness and "after this. the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27)! What a change was wrought when God's voice was heard, death distanced, idols abolished, and instead of the impending wrath, God's Son, their Deliverer, returning from heaven for them! From idols which were an abomination to Him, they had turned to the living God; from the service of idols to the loving service of the true God, and from the dread of the wrath to come to the hope and expectation of God's Son from heaven. This Scripture then connects our subject with the *Son of God*.

In 1 Cor. xv. 20-23, it is the coming of *Christ*. "Christ the firstfruits; afterward *they that are Christ's at His coming*." In this passage we also read these words, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." What we found in 1 Thes. i. 9, 10, together with this are scriptures which answer to John v. 25-28. "The hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." Dead in their sins and idolatries, the Thessalonian converts had heard a voice which was none other than the voice of the Son of God, "the living God." Accordingly they lived, nor lived only, but waited for Him, the Son of God, whose voice they had heard *once* when He called them to life, and would hear *again* when He should call them to glory! But the Scripture, in John v., also says, "the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear *His* voice." Is this also the voice of Christ as Son of God? The previous verse shows us it is rather His voice as *Son of Man*, for as the Scripture, in 1 Cor. xv. shows, since death came by man, resurrection must come by man also, and therefore it is as the Son of Man He calls forth the sleeping bodies of

His saints to surround Him in glory, and also as Son of Man He will call forth from their graves the wicked dead a thousand years later for the judgment of the "great white throne" (Rev. xx. 11).

Returning after this digression to 1 Cor. xv. 22-23, we observe this important statement, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's, at His coming." Headship of race is clearly the subject here. All who are in Adam die, perish in their sins; all in Christ shall be made alive, following in order Him who is the first-fruits. All who are Christ's at His coming, being of His race, stand in contrast to those who inherit death only, by reason of being in Adam as of his race. In a word, Christ, as Head of His race, comes to gather to Himself all those who are His, and who in that way are "in" Him. It is thus not "the rapture of the Church" only that we expect, but that of all those, whether Old or New Testament saints, "that are Christ's at His coming." This Scripture, therefore, connects our subject with *Christ* as the Head of His race.

In Rev. xxii., twice we read the words, "Behold I come quickly," and in verse 17 is the response, "The spirit and the bride say, Come." Just as distinctly here it is *not* the race of Christ that is in view, but *the Church's* peculiar joy as the bride. Her bridal affections go out to the One to whom she is affianced. And as in worship Christ leads the praises of the assembly, so here, when it is the expression of the longing desire of the Bride to welcome Him who is returning to claim her for Himself, the Holy Ghost leads the utterance of that one expressive word, "Come." This sums up all that she covets, even that He should fulfil His own word of promise and of cheer! Clearly this connects our subject with the *Bridegroom's* return for His Bride, the Church's peculiar joy.

Thus we have seen that the coming of the Lord is

presented in relation to God *as God's Son*, "the living and true God," in contrast with idolatry; also we saw the *Christ*, Head of His race, claiming all who are His, in contrast with the first Adam and his race; and lastly, the *Bridegroom* returning in answer to the loving, longing desire of the Spirit and the Bride, thus distinctively as the Church's Hope.

II. We must now look at another branch of the subject, viz., such scriptures as set forth what the hope of His coming *effects for us now*. "Ye have need of patience," says the writer to the Hebrews (x. 36, 37), "that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the *promise*. For yet a little while, and HE that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Here was a company of Jewish believers looking for the fulfilment of Jehovah's promises, and who instead of that had endured a great fight of afflictions, despoiled and reproached for the truth's sake. They had to learn as we, that "all the promises of God *in Him* are yea, and *in Him* amen" (2 Cor. i. 20). "The promise" would be received when He came who was the sum and substance of all the promises. Instead of earthly fulfilments, they and we shall receive "*the promise*" in His person, and this, and this only, is our consolation in the midst of whatever earthly sorrows the maintenance of divine principles in loyalty to Christ may impose upon us.

Again, in 1 Thes. iv. 13, 14, we read, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." The apostle had learnt that their hearts were distressed under the apprehension that their relatives and others who had fallen asleep (literally "those who have fallen asleep *through* Jesus,") would miss in some way the blessedness of His coming. This he met by assuring them that, so far from that, God would bring all such

sleeping saints together with Jesus; in fact, their sorrow became the occasion of the ministry of divine consolation, not only unto them but to ourselves, in every case in which the hand of death has been laid upon our dear ones who have died in the Lord, or, as our passage expresses it, have been put to sleep through JESUS. It is the One who has died for them Who has hushed them to sleep on His own bosom, and when God brings Jesus here a second time He will bring them with Him.

Thus for all those wilderness circumstances, which rightly enough bring sorrow to our hearts by the way—injury, reproach, false accusation, rejection, affliction, bereavement—this, and this only, is the divine consolation, than which, indeed, nothing could be more sweet, more solid, or more sustaining, “He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.”

III. Lastly, we will look upon what His coming *will* actually bring about for us. In Phil. iii. 20-21, we read, “For *our* citizenship has its existence in the heavens, from which, also, we await the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, who shall transform our body of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory, according to the working of the power which He has even to subdue all things unto Himself” (new translation of J. N. D.). How precious to learn from this that His first act, when at the word of His Father He leaves the Father’s throne, will be to conform these actual bodies of ours to His body of glory. The body of every saint will be assimilated, by the putting forth of the supremacy of His power, to that bodily glory of which He Himself is the archetype. Now this is an integral part of the work of salvation—“the redemption of our body” (Rom. viii. 23)—without which it would not have been complete, and accordingly the Lord Jesus Christ effects this “as Saviour.” Let us, then, note it well, that the very first result of His coming the second time is “unto salvation” (Heb. ix. 28), by bringing these bodies in which we taber-

nacle into the full value of His sacrificial work as SAVIOUR.

I Thess. v. 15 supplies the *next* result, albeit the whole is momentary. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Five times over have we here the appellation, "the Lord," and the reason is obvious. As in Philippians it was the putting forth the supremacy of His *power* as a Saviour "mighty to save," so here is it the supremacy of His *authority* as Lord. Like the General of an army assembling every man on the field, His shout is heard, and the whole company of the redeemed form rank! And as these bodies of ours yield to His power, and in a moment are changed to the like glory as His own, so shall we also respond to His assembling shout (as Lord both over the sleeping and the living saints), caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, thenceforth to be for ever with the Lord! Thus we see how characteristically the Spirit of God here connects the advent of the saints into each other's presence, and the presence of Him who assembles them, with His title of LORD.

Nor may we close without adding to these that peculiarly blessed breathing of the Lord Jesus, when He poured out the affections of His heart to His beloved and sorrowing disciples, which is found in Jno. xiv. 1-3. They were "His own which were in the world," and "He loved them unto the end." 'Twas impossible that He could be insensible to the breaking of their hearts which His departure would entail. Accordingly it is *they* who are His concern;

“you,” “you,” “you,” five times over, show here how He carried them in the bowels of His affections. Perfectly unique is this aspect of the Lord’s return. He installs (as the only thing which could assuage their sorrow) “that blessed hope” in those affections of their hearts which He had awakened and centred upon Himself. The depth of His own affection for them could not have been more tenderly displayed! Who would venture to unfold all that is expressed or implied in those matchless words, “UNTO MYSELF”? They remind us of the impassioned language of the bride in the Canticles, “He brought me to His house of wine, and His banner over me was love. Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love. His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me” (chap. ii. 4-6).

May every reader of these lines open his heart to “that blessed hope”; that divinely-given panacea for each wilderness experience, and that divinely-formed link for the affections with the person of Christ, as the Man in Glory who waits with listening ear for that word of the Father which shall set Him free to make us *like Himself*, and to place us *with Himself*, to His glory and joy for ever!

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## G O D I S L O V E .

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IN 1 John iv. 7, we get the character of God. God is love; and this is the family feature of the children of God, “Every one that loveth is born of God.” The righteousness and holiness of God have reference to the sphere of things created, but here we are shown the character of God in His own sphere. How sweet the thought, as the contrast with all that man is, that *God is love*: no selfishness there—no having to turn away from Him because one cannot get anything out. As rain on the thirsty ground, the soul draws in that thought, “God is love.” There you have a balm to soothe your soul

under all circumstances ; and not only that, but the mind is thrown into certain scenes where it finds that that love has been displayed. God, in His own glory, thought of poor sinners. *His* was the thought to send His Son to die that we might live through Him. Who and what were those for whom He was sent? Poor things "dead in trespasses;" particles of dust, driven round by Satan, going into the vortex of destruction. God could say, "they may be dead, they may be but dust in Satan's hand, but I will send my Son to give them life." Ah! throughout eternity we shall find nothing so to rejoice in as God's thought of sending this Son of His love to give life to dead sinners. Christ given to us as eternal life, in all the death in which He found us. I should have been dead for eternity, if God had not interfered to give me life in His Son, and a nature capable of enjoying all in the glory.

When I say, "God is love," what do I mean by it? Why this, that God sent His only-begotten Son that we might have life in Him. We still carry about the old nature ; but, blessed be God, many a time as Satan has caught me, he has never destroyed me ; there is the propitiation,—I am inside, sheltered by the blood, and forgiven.

What should I do if I had to carry the burden of last week's failure ! What, if only looking at yesterday's failure ! It would be like phosphorous eating into the tenderest part of one's body ; but I have got One who is able to restore my soul, One who does continually and *entirely*. You are finding how different you are from Christ, but He is the propitiation all the way till you see Him and are like Him. Love in you is very different from love in God, acting in His own eternity, showing love by giving His Son to give you life, and power, and love. Love in God comes out with this thought of separating us from all that we are, into His own blessedness. G. V. W.

## AN EARNEST APPEAL.

IF the reader of these lines is yet in sad uncertainty as to what eternity will be to him, and where he will spend it; if he be still far from Christ and utterly astray from God; if he be up to this time a neglecter, if not a rejecter, of the great salvation; if his feet till now have only travelled that broad road that leads to but one destination—the lake of fire, in other words, an eternity spent with the devil and his angels; oh! may he now at length give heed to the voice of love and mercy, that beseeches him to escape for his life. “Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die?”

The well-known Dr. Guthrie writes as follows:—“Because we know what it is to have been captives, we are the more fit to address you. We know that you are not happy, and never can be so while you live in sin. Its pleasures perish in the using and pain in the recollection; and surely it is madness, the worst form of insanity, for a man to stake eternity on the chances of a to-morrow, and purchase short-lived joys at the expense of eternal happiness. “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked; they are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest;” in storms a raging ocean, and in summer’s serenest day ebbing or flowing, and breaking its swelling billows, like the world’s joys, on a beach strewn with wrecks and withered weeds. Seek Christ, seek your peace through Him; seek it in Him; and saved yourself, yourself plucked from the wreck, oh, remember the perishing—let the first breath and effort of a new life be spent for others. I present you with an example; and in the words spoken for a fellow-sufferer’s life, see what you should do for a fellow-sinner’s soul!

‘During a heavy storm off the coast of Spain, a

dismasted merchantman was observed by a British frigate drifting before the gale. Every eye and glass were fixed on her, and a canvas shelter on the deck, which was almost level with the sea, suggested the idea that even yet there might be life on board. With all their faults, no men are more alive to the claims of humanity than our rough and hardy mariners; so the order instantly sounds to put the ship about. Presently a boat is lowered, and starts with orders to bear down on the wreck. Away after that drifting hulk go those gallant men, over the mountain swell and roaring sea. They reach it; they shout: and now a strange object rolls from the canvas screen against the lee shroud of a broken mast. On being hauled into the boat it proved to be the trunk of a man bent head and knees together, and so dried up and shrivelled as to be hardly felt within the ample clothes—so light that a mere boy lifted it on board. It is conveyed to the ship and laid on the deck. In horror and pity the crew gathered round it. These feelings suddenly changed into astonishment. The miserable object shows signs of life. The seamen draw nearer; it moves, and then mutters—in a deep sepulchral voice mutters—“*There is another man!*”

‘Rescued himself, the first use the saved one made of speech was to try to save another. Learn that blessed lesson. Be daily practising it. And so long as in our homes, and among our friends, and in this wreck of a world which is drifting down to ruin, there lives an unconverted one, so long as it can be said “*There is another man!*” oh! let us go to that man and plead for Christ; let us go to Christ and plead for that man—the cry, Lord save me, I perish, changed into one as welcome to the Saviour’s ear, Save them, or they perish.’

Surely the more we are convinced that the day of grace is fast hastening to its close, and judgment is at the doors, the more should we evince deep, earnest, unwearied activity in awakening those with whom we

come in contact to the imminent danger, the frightful jeopardy in which they pass their lives. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets. But He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Luke xiii. 24-28).

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## LUKE AND ACTS.

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THE opening words of "the Acts of the Apostles" naturally throw us back upon "the former treatise" which the writer had made to Theophilus, and thus form an indispensable link with "the gospel according to Luke."

In this way we have two treatises before us, in evident connection, and yet in the greatest distinction. Of the former treatise it may be said in brief, that it gives the blessed fact of Christ having won the world for Himself and for God and for the redeemed ones, by His victorious resurrection, and departure to the right hand of the majesty on high. Of this present treatise it may be stated, that by the Lord's ascension into the heavens, in His own righteous title as Son of Man, He is established there by the glory of the Father, as Lord and Christ, as well as the last Adam—the Head and beginning of the creation of God.

The former treatise is occupied with Jesus as Son of Man come down from above to this earth, by the

mystery of the Incarnation, whilst the treatise in the Acts is concerned with this same Jesus taking a place in heaven as Son of Man (where man never was before) by the glory of His resurrection.

The former treatise must be therefore a narrative "of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up," whereas the Acts needs be a revelation by the Holy Ghost descended from the Father and the Son, to bear witness of the ascended and departed Lord.

Indeed, the respective openings and introductions of these two treatises from St. Luke to his "most excellent Theophilus" tell us plainly another and important difference. In the former, they "from the beginning, were *eye-witnesses* and ministers of the word," for Jesus was in their midst, so that many took in hand "to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us." Whereas, in the Acts, it was necessary that "of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us," . . . one of these should "be a witness with us of His resurrection," for Jesus had been taken away out of their midst and been carried up into heaven.

It is important to remember that as the eternal Son, "the Firstborn of all creation," all things in heaven and that are in earth were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. It is in His sovereign title as Creator and God, that He therefore holds the heavens and all that are therein, as well as the earth and every thing that is therein; nor has He surrendered one jot or tittle of His glory, or His rights to the whole creation, because sin and Satan have entered in. On the contrary, these two treatises show us that as the eternal Son, one with the Father, and with the Holy Ghost, in essential deity, He has added to all these glories another and a new one, by uniting Godhead and Manhood in His own person.

By the mystery, and yet the glory of the Incarnation, it was that He made an opening for Himself, by which to enter into this world in the double character of Son of God and Son of Man, that in this way He might connect Himself with the overwhelming ruin, as God manifest in the flesh. The former treatise, in its two introductory chapters, tells us the time was come for this new work of redemption-power to be applied to a ruined and morally-fallen creation, by which to bring it out from its chaos into another Headship, and under another Man, the last Adam. Originally, and when "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," when the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the earth, it was "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." In a material creation, "God said, Let there be light, and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness."

What a key this handy-working in a material creation (by which it was all brought out into form and beauty) gives us to the door which opens into the secret power of God's operations upon a ruined world, and on behalf of fallen creatures. After thousands of years the Holy Ghost comes in a second time, not to move or brood upon the face of the waters, but to announce the glad tidings that the heavens had been occupied above, about the moral ruin and wretchedness of the earth beneath. Beyond all the activities of the angel of God's own presence with Zacharias in "the temple of the Lord, at the altar of incense," or even the annunciation "to a virgin espoused to a man named Joseph, of the house of David," it is of prime importance to see that God and the Holy Ghost hold all the instruments in hand, and keep them in tune, that are chosen as auxiliaries to this opening of mystery.

Whether these elect vessels of His good pleasure are taken from the ranks of principalities and powers

in the heavenly places, or out of the family on earth by genealogy and birth, for the accomplishment of His purposes in redemption, all are of one mind and heart—"behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word." Nor is it enough to notice the opening harmonies between the heavens and the earth, or the concurrence between God and His chosen vessels, touching the conception and birth of the Son of God, and of His forerunner; but they were filled with the Holy Ghost, as they spake one to another, or made melody in their hearts to the Lord. All is vocal and joyful, from the heavens above to the earth beneath, as indeed they may well be, for the love of God to the world rises into its own height above all the ruin of sin and Satan, to bring in life into the midst of death, and command the light in the face of Jesus Christ to dispel the darkness. "God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," is the link.

Nor is the divine rebuke on the unpreparedness of Zacharias in any way out of keeping with the perfectness of the entire scene; for if by the decree of Gabriel, the priest of the temple (wrapt up in the typical altar, and its incense) was to "be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed," he is made willing in the day of God's power, and breaks nobly through all the restraints and shadows of the law.

On the birth of John, the messenger of our Lord, this momentary silence of the priest is ended, and in fullest concord he quits the formality of the temple and its order of priesthood, to take his new position as a prophet, and being filled with the Holy Ghost, prophesied of One who was greater than the temple, and would embody its glory in Himself.

How readily does the dumb priest of Israel give out his utterances as the anointed prophet of a new day, and become the expositor of this new order of

God, which has come in upon the moral chaos of a world which lieth in the wicked one, to redeem it again unto Himself under the new name and title of its Deliverer.

Well does Zacharias bear witness to God, Who brought in the Life and the Light of the world in the First-born child, and find his delight in the fact "that God saw the light that it was good."

Under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, he likewise morally divides the light from the darkness, as he celebrates the birth of the Lord, and His messenger or forerunner. "Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and has raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David; . . . that we should be saved from our enemies, and might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our life." And again, "Thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the dayspring (sun rising) *from on high* hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

In far earlier days Joseph had dreamed a dream. "And behold, the sun, and the moon, and the eleven stars, made obeisance to me"—"and his brethren envied him, but his father observed the saying."

Our awakened and anointed prophet puts the lights of the material heavens into eclipse, by this "day-spring from on high which has visited us," to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death! It is the moral and ruined condition of the earth, and all that is therein, which now passes before the eye and heart of the Creator who made it. Creation had its greater light to rule the day, and its lesser light to rule the night, and there they abide

fulfilling His decree for fruitfulness and blessing to every living creature.

But beyond the seasons, and seed time, and harvest, and the open hand which satisfieth the desire of every thing that hath breath, there is this moral relation of man to God as a sinner, and Zacharias was the first to break in upon this moral darkness, by bearing witness to the tender mercy of our God, whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us. "And God saw the light that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness; and God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night"—and this original creation order is maintained morally and spiritually in the new order of Redemption.

He who thus came into this world as the Life, and to give life; He who walked through it as the Light, and said, "whosoever followeth Me shall not abide in darkness, but have the light of life," teaches us in this treatise (chapter xi.) "if thy whole body, therefore, be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light." A life beyond any which Adam had when he stood for awhile in the image of God, is heralded by the heavenly host, as they proclaim "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good pleasure towards men"; and a light, beyond all the greater and lesser lights of the firmament in the heavens, is also declared by Zacharias in his days of prophecy.

Outside these treatises we may behold this same Jesus, having tabernacled in the world as the Life and the Light of men, and communicating the same to all that would receive Him, ascend up to where He was before, that He might take His new place as the exalted Son of Man, in the glory of God on high. It is with Him there, as seated on the right hand of God, that we are by grace, and by virtue of accomplished redemption, united in life, being likewise made the righteousness of God in Him.

Life and Light, having been refused on earth on the Cross, have travelled up to the heavens in the risen One, and are presented afresh by the God of all grace from that height, to men who are morally dead in trespasses and sins, in the world beneath. "But God, who is rich in mercy for His great love wherewith He hath loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Sin and death, the grave and corruption, man in the flesh and the whole power of Satan, have been equally overcome and set aside by the effectual work of Christ in His sufferings and blood-shedding on the Cross. Life, Light in the glory, divine righteousness, and eternal redemption, are alike made ours in Christ before God, and have been handed out to us on the other side of death and judgment and the grave, "where the Lord lay," and we, as believers on Christ, are established both as to title and possession in them by God the Father, "who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

In correspondence with those operations of Christ and of God towards us, by death and resurrection in His Son, we are viewed and addressed, as "circumcised with the circumcision of Christ." "If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God," is become the new order of God, and of ourselves as new creatures in Christ, as united to the last Adam, Beginning of the creation of God. Our only true consistency below, is *now* to be consistent with our place and position above, "for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God; when Christ our Life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

It was necessary, in following the life and the light which came into this world when Christ brought them in, and which went out of the world when He carried them back, as the rejected One, to the heavens, that

they might be opened out again to the eyes of men from the eternal glory, to travel along the pathway of these precious scriptures.

The new centre of God's testimony and of the Holy Ghost's operations, is thus transferred to the risen Son of Man in the glory, and we are one with Him there, in God's eternal favour and the Father's unchanging love. Indeed, Luke differs from Acts in these very particulars, viz., that the latter opens the heavens to us by the ascended Son of Man, who has taken His place there in glory, all things below being put under His feet in the double title of their redemption and His Lordship, whilst He is also exalted as Head of all principality and power, and Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

Man is thus, in the Person of the Son, in a heavenly position as the last Adam, Beginning of the creation of God. And the Holy Ghost has entered consistently upon His new work as the glorifier of Jesus, by coming down as the Pentecostal Spirit to take possession of us in the Father's name, and to dwell in us as the members of Christ, and to be the pledge of the blessed hope of that day when the Lord will come a second time and receive us to Himself, that where He is, there we may be also. These considerations of life, light, righteousness, and glory in the risen Christ, with God the Father, in the holiest where He dwells; and we, by grace as new creatures, established there in unclouded fellowship with the Father and the Son, under the anointing of the Holy Ghost, have taken us far away from the former treatise.

J. E. B.

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“The power of evil is below the power of God. He disposes of it, removes it, turns it to blessing, annuls it, as He sees fit. The light of His countenance does this for faith. And the soul rises above evil and rejoices in God. The light of His countenance in trouble is altogether Himself.”  
—J. N. D.

## PRAISE TO THE LORD JESUS.

Lord Jesus, once again  
We lift our hearts to Thee,  
Attracted by that lowly grace  
Which nowhere else we see !

The path Thy feet once trod,  
Our feet essay to tread ;  
And follow as we feed on Thee,  
The ever-living Bread !

While on Thyself we gaze,  
Our hearts enraptured glow ;  
Thy glory, Lord, Thyself imprints  
Upon Thy saints below !

Lord Jesus, Saviour blest,  
Divest our souls of care ;  
Soon shall we see Thy glorious face,  
And in Thy glory share !

How precious, holy Lord,  
To dwell upon Thy love ;  
Its sweetness here so fully proved,  
Its endlessness above !

Thou, Lord, these hearts hast won  
For Thine eternal joy ;  
And Thine eternal praise shall be  
Our ever-blest employ !

Communion with Thyself  
Is heaven on earth begun ;  
What will it be to view Thy face,  
God's well-belovèd Son !

The bright, eternal day,  
Shall know no shadows, Lord ;  
Thy beauty and Thy glory there,  
Shall endless bliss afford !

To see Thee face to face,  
This, this indeed, shall be  
The crowning joy of all the joys  
Of God's eternity !

## OLD TESTAMENT LESSONS.

## SAMUEL.

THE Old Testament is full of histories, which are written out for us by the Spirit of God, and designed to give instruction through living examples. Precepts and doctrines are not wanting, but it is in support of these that the narratives are given us, supplying caution from the failures, and encouragement from the devotedness and successes, of men of like passions with ourselves. So the Holy Ghost appeals to us by the great cloud of witnesses—not observers, but victors—to run our race with patience, as they ran theirs.

In this connection Samuel is mentioned by name. It will be therefore a privilege to which the Word entitles us, to look at some part of Samuel's history, and trace a little of the example he sets us, to learn its lessons.

Strictly, Samuel was not a priest of Aaron's family, being descended from Izhar, and not from Amram. But Eli, who was in the Aaronic line, through Ithamar, failed grievously, and his sons fell under God's special rebuke and judgment. The position of priest given to Samuel was, therefore, his by God's sovereign act, superseding the priest of regular carnal order. Indeed, a certain character attaches to 1 Samuel from this election, together with God's further election, recorded in it, of David to be king instead of Saul, the man of the people's choice.

Samuel's story, as that of a priest by divine election, speaks forcibly to us, who to-day are a priesthood through the elective grace of God alone.

He first appears to take an active part in his nation in the 7th ch. God's ark had not occupied its proper place for twenty years: That ark was a special figure of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ; and truly, yet mournfully, it may be said, even His own have

not accorded to Him His right place in these solemn and closing days. "And all the house of Israel lamented after Jehovah." Souls that are to-day in harmony with this lament will be able to translate and apply Samuel's advice in ver. 3, "Put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you." What is it that has so attracted even real believers, and ensnared them? Have not the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life"? Are not these the handy baits of Satan, that have allured the thoughts and hearts of God's own people, by slow but sure degrees, off from His ark? "Put them away," "and serve Him only."

Israel did so. Confessedly they took again their right position before God.

"And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto Jehovah."

Why Mizpeh? It was the place of that witness-heap of stones where Laban invoked the watchful eye of Jehovah to rest on him and Jacob, when absent one from another. And now, hard-by that witness-heap, the people gather and Samuel prays. Jehovah saw, Jehovah was witness, and Jehovah heard that prayer. His "faithful priest" (ch. ii. 35), himself dependent, intercedes on behalf of the nation that has begun to judge its ways (repentance).

And they "drew water and poured it out before Jehovah." God had appointed (Num. xxviii. 7) that the strong wine should be poured out unto Him "in the holy" of the tabernacle. This was an expression of earthly joy—but what of "water"? Was it not at Mizpeh an acknowledgment that they had, on the one hand, lost their joy, and could not bring it into His presence as He had appointed? On the other hand, it might express their own weakness and helplessness, as Jacob uses water speaking of Reuben, "unstable as water, thou shalt not excel." Both would be true of them, and the lowest place befitted them before God—unhappy and helpless before Him.

In this genuine confession of their true condition lies the real secret of ensuring a blessing from the Lord.

But also, "they fasted that day." That which they owed to God—joyless—they expressed in life, by this abstinence, nor sought out of their own resources to fill the blank. "And said there, We have sinned against Jehovah." This completes the picture. Joyless, helpless, refusing self-supply, and guilty.

An accurate statement, which has its full counterpart to-day, and one easily discerned.

But our business is in chief with Samuel; what part does he take in the midst of all? He prays for them; and it was doubtless in answer to his prayer that the people are brought by God to own their state.

There is no grace in a creature—and a redeemed creature, too—more acceptable to God than that of dependence. It was the grace of the life of Christ on earth before God; and with it sprang the fact, "I do always those things that please Him." It is for this that a creature is formed—to lean on his Creator; and in such leaning the Creator becomes exalted. Marvellous indeed it is that the ever-blessed Son of God should have humbled Himself to go such a place, taking freely among men the form of a servant, with the double object of honouring God by working out His will, and at the same time "leaving us an example that we should follow His steps." "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

What a spectacle! He who made the worlds, is found, while tabernacling here, ever and anon praying to His Father. "Cold mountains and the midnight air, witnessed the fervour of His prayer." Samuel prays here, ver. 5, and again in ver. 9, and in ch. viii. 6. Prayer is at once his resort when the people displease him by wanting a king. In ch. xii. 23, he says, "God forbid that I should sin against Jehovah in ceasing to pray for you."

David, Daniel, Nehemiah, unite in the same ex-

ample; and in the New Testament we read:—"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." "Pray without ceasing." "I will therefore that men pray everywhere." "Continuing instant in prayer." "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." "The fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

But the gathering of Israel together was a provocation to their old foes the Philistines, who came up against them. What could be done? At once "Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto Jehovah." On behalf of a joyless, helpless, resourceless, and guilty people, about to fall under the sword of their enemies, Samuel burns to God the sacrifice that specially anticipates how Christ will glorify God on the cross. The sweet savour (literally, smell of delight) rises up, together with the cry of dependence from the faithful priest, just as the Philistines drew on to battle. Jehovah hears and sees alike, and with His great thunder discomfits their assailants, and also gives themselves strength and courage, so that they go forth from the witness-heap and "smite" and "subdue" the invaders. Indeed, the Philistines "came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of Jehovah was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel." Israel recovers, too, their cities which the Philistines had taken, together with the coasts thereof.

It would seem, then, that the success given them was just as thorough and complete as had been their prior confession and self-judgment before God.

The lesson is obvious.

Our path into blessing, full and rich, lies through unreserved confession of what we are, and of what we have done, crying mightily to God alone, with no plea but the infinite worth of the cross of Christ, whose eternal "smell of delight" rose up before God's throne from Golgotha, and which the God of all grace now delights to own, and to answer to.

Verse 15: "And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life."

The dependent man (as we have before seen) whose reliance is on God alone, through the sweet savour of Christ, secures victory for the people, and then is established in honour among them and over them.

Verse 16: "And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh." Why not to many more places? Why those three instead of any other three? He lived at Ramah, and other notable towns were readily accessible, and had their needs, too.

Doubtless there is a value for us in this note of the three towns visited by Samuel. And as no reason is added in terms, the names themselves, whose significance is well known, will guide us safely if our hearts are simple.

The name Bethel signifies the house of God; and here was the first sphere of Samuel's service.

The name Gilgal signifies "a rolling," and sprang from Joshua circumcising the people there, and so rolling away the reproach of Egypt from off them (see Josh. v.).

Mizpeh—the "watch-tower"—we have noted, was named from its witness-heap.

Ramah signifies a "high place."

It is the "faithful priest" and dependent man, who lives in the high place, figure for us of "the heavenlies," whose first sphere of service is in and about Bethel, the house of God, who next rolls the world's reproach off as in circumcision, and who then turns to his "watch-tower" on guard against evil and patiently listening for the shout of the Lord.

At Ramah, also, Samuel "built an altar unto Jehovah." He lived where he worshipped, and he worshipped where he lived. Life and worship go together with such a man. Residing in the heavenly places, a Christian to-day should, indeed, be a faithful priest—his worship in the holiest, or third heavens,

now that the veil is rent—and his life should be the presentation afresh of the life of the Lord Jesus, manifest in his mortal body. His daily life should be a sweet savour to God, as being a reproduction of the life of Christ. A heavenly man in the position given him, he has a wilderness path as a pilgrim below, and step by step it is his privilege to be absolutely dependent, so that nothing of self is expressed, but only what God would bring out; and that is Christ, and that is worship, as it flows from his heart.

It is an overwhelming question, but may the still small voice put it to each heart: Do you live Christ?

Then, as a ready and sure consequence, the house of God will be the first sphere of your activities. If a man lives Christ, the circle of the affections of Christ will be the first circle that interests such an one. Tell him the holiness that becometh Jehovah's house for ever, and he will lend himself to maintain it. Tell him of a feeble knee, or of a hand hanging down, and the life of Christ in him will go out to heal the broken-hearted, and to minister strong consolation and power by the Word, so that the weak shall say, "I am strong," and the cast-down wax bold.

What a mission, believer, is yours. Live at Ramah, tend your builded altar; then to Bethel, and uphold the interests of Christ in the house of God; but all in the truest dependence, drawing your supplies from the Lord alone.

But is a believer unconcerned for those who, all around him, are not of God's spiritual house? Surely the more he enjoys his blessings, the more he longs for others to share them. His priesthood is "royal" as well as "holy," and no snares in the world will be able to check his yearning over his fellow-men. He must go out to them, but not to adopt their ways; no, for Gilgal is crucifixion applied to self, the judgment of death brought home by faith to the individual, and carried into practice by reckoning one's self dead indeed unto sin.

Is it not a strong reproach that any soul saved by the blood of Christ, and delivered "out of this present evil world," should permit or allow any moral link with it to be still maintained? Nay, let him accept the truth of Gilgal, and roll all such reproach away.

Having life in resurrection, his first act is, as across Jordan, to sacrifice, that in true self-judgment, he may feed upon the old corn of the land. He is still on earth and in the world, but being not of the world he can use no worldly ways even in his royal priesthood, nor can he in his daily business allow himself the energy of the flesh to win success. Thus Gilgal follows upon Bethel.

Once more. Samuel went next to Mizpeh, the watch-tower—the witness-heap. On his own side what witness does he bear! What watching does he keep up! For us, it is the coming of the Lord that should distinguish our testimony; it is more especially, while entering into the patience of Christ, still to be watching, ready, listening, girded, till He come. Shall the day of the Lord come upon us as a thief?

If Gilgal be neglected, and souls settle down in well-watered plains, His sudden call may well be a shock of surprise like an alarm of thieves in the dead of night.

What are all the earth's wines apart from Him! Do not blood-bought hearts long to see His face? Do not the Spirit and the bride say, Come? Can we, redeemed at such cost, allow ourselves to be surfeited with things that perish in the using?

Nay, Gilgal towards them all, and Mizpeh, our hand upon the latch, as we listen through the darker hours, for the Bridegroom's early call.

By birth we are heavenly men, and should live at Ramah, having an altar there, worshipping in all the joy of blessing.

The light of the holiest, showing us our true selves, will beget the deepest dependence as expressed in prayer. Heavenly and prayerful, Christ's objects be-

come our objects too, and Bethel attracts our hearts in service first. Beyond this, we are glad to apply the Cross to all the scene around us, though glad equally to accredit the royalty of our priesthood to any in the scene who will but allow it. And, while worshipping with true delight, and serving at every open door, not to improve the world but to rescue out of it, we look for "that blessed hope," the appearing of the glory of our Great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

E. C. P.

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## "THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE SAY, COME."

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"DOES Christ find your thoughts in unison with the word put forth by 'the Spirit and the Bride,' because you really want Him to come? Not only, as like Stephen, wanting to get away from the stoning into His presence; but the Bride wanting the Bridegroom—passing through a dark night, keeping her affections fixed on Him."

"Are you wanting Him to come according to that character of love,—not from mere selfishness, but as having such a taste of His glory as the bright and morning Star, and because of being the complement of His joy in the Father's house?"

"Do you ever yearn for ability to enter into His fuller glory? Is He saying, 'I cannot take My glory without you sit down with Me'? Ah! am I saying, 'It is not the crown, not the glory, it is Thyself, Lord, whom I want'?"

"The bright and morning Star is an entirely new glory. There were hearts bound to Him when down here, which traced Him up into heaven; and ever since then a people's eyes have looked up, and their hearts have been expecting Him. It is a title of glory connected with the hearts of His people. How

blessed for any to say, 'I have watched through the night to get the first glimpse of Him; my heart is so attached to that Lord, and all my blessedness so connected with Him, that I cannot help being constantly on the look out for the first glimpse of Him as He descends from heaven into the air.'

"If there are people down here waiting, knowing that Christ is coming to take up the saints, they must be longing for Him to come, otherwise they don't know the position of the Bride and the Spirit saying 'Come!' The Bride is the vessel in which the closest relationship of the Lord Jesus is formed. The child of God has the affections of Christ in his soul, and can only turn from being occupied with Christ in heaven to be occupied with whatever the Lord is occupied with down here. We get our rest amid all things in knowing that He *is* coming. The Spirit reveals Christ, and speaks of the glory to come. He is the great power for everything in the assembly.

"When the light of a returning Lord breaks in upon the soul, how many a want is felt that the heart never knew before! If you could know that the Lord were coming to-morrow, would there not be a thousand thoughts of need in your mind; a looking also to see if there were withal to meet the need of the thirsty? 'He that is athirst, let him come.' This word brings before the soul the thought of need, of *parchedness*, before that need is felt. It tells thirsty ones that they can come to this Rock which was smitten that the waters might flow for ever in order to meet every need. This gushing stream tells of the readiness of Him from whom it flows to fill the thirsting soul.

"'Even so, come, Lord Jesus!' There is exquisite beauty in His word, 'Surely I come quickly,' being thus immediately taken up by the Spirit and the Bride, and answered in language known to faith (see Rev. xxii. 17). Often the very duties of the servant may be allowed to interfere with the bright burning

of this hope in a heart where it *is* burning. It ever burns brightly in the heart of Christ: and as soon as the last members of His body are gathered in, that promise will be fulfilled. If the light only burns with a flickering gleam in my heart, there is ever, in all brightness, in *His*, the thought of coming quickly. The heart of the individual believer gets its power in the hope of His coming being *ever present*. We have to judge our ways, our whole course, in the light of it. This (Rev. xxii. 17) is the only passage in which the Spirit is presented with the Bride—very touching it is, connected with wilderness circumstances; the Spirit in that character speaking thus: saying, “Come!” What has the Bride to do with the wilderness, save as Rebecca passing through it?

“It will be a marvellous scene when Christ presents the Church to Himself—when the Last Adam takes that Bride of His to share His glory. Ah! not only that; but it is oneness with Himself that characterizes us. What the heart feels is the being looked at as belonging to Himself; formed out of Himself, as Eve out of Adam. That the Father sees us not only in a relationship that links us up with the Son of His love, in the glory, but in such a relationship that the Lord Jesus could not do without us. The Bridegroom must have the Bride up there.

“If you follow Him in His course down here, from the babe in the manger to the Cross, and see Him in resurrection on the Throne of God, the circumstances are very different, but ah! it is the same Lord Jesus. It is *Himself, He Himself*, is the object of love, and we know that we are for His own self in the glory. What is the distinctest thing on which the heart rests? It may be the earth-side now which one may see, but when we behold Christ Himself, it will be the heaven-side, in the full unhindered energy of the Holy Ghost; having hearts responsive to that blessed grace which brought us there.

“Ought He not to be jealous if He is not the only

object before our souls? He not only says, 'I am the bright and morning Star,' but, 'Surely I come quickly;' presenting Himself with all the savour, all the attractiveness, of what He is. Have some of us who have known Him for years, not found the attractiveness of His beauty deepening in us? What is all we have learnt of Him here compared with what it will be to behold Himself, to look on His face—the One who died for us, the One who loved and watched over us from our infancy—oh, with what *tender gentleness* watched over us! Is there not the consciousness in our hearts, *how often* He has given the grace we felt we stood in need of? But besides that we are to have His mind in all that meets us in the wilderness, there is another sort of communion—communion with the desire of His heart, going forth in 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus!' At times our hearts are drooping, we are hardly bestead; but what is all we can pass through here, if we are consciously able to respond to Him, 'Even so, come'? Thus having really communion with that heart of His, whose every thought is the Father's will, and Who has been waiting eighteen hundred years to come and take up the people given Him by the Father: He the Bridegroom, they the Bride. How blessed to be able to enter into the desire of His heart to the utmost, responding in communion with it, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus!'" G. V. W.

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"My faith hath no bed to sleep upon but Omnipotency! The good-will of the Lord and His sweetest presence be with you."—*Samuel Rutherford*.

"I am sure the saints at their best, are but strangers to the weight and worth of the incomparable sweetness of Christ. He is as new, as fresh in excellency every day, to those that search more and more in Him, as if heaven could furnish us with as many new Christs (if I may reverently say so) as there are days betwixt Him and us; and yet He is One and the same."—*Ibid*.

## GOD FOR US ; OR, OUR JUSTIFI- CATION.

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SINNER, thou art the man whose moral ruin, guilt, and sin are conclusively established ; and the result announced in chapter iii. and latter half of verse 19 of the inspired Epistle to the Romans—every mouth stopped, and all the world subject to the judgment of God. Your sinnership and guilt are unquestionable. God has proved it, facts confirm it, and thou standest before Him self-condemned and inexcusable. What, then, remains, but to pronounce sentence? The verdict of the jury and the sentence of the judge have been announced in open court and in the light of day. The trial has been long, most patient, as also most righteous.

What a scene for God to look down upon!—a guilty world, and every mouth stopped, whether philosopher, heathen, or the dispensationally-favoured Jew. Awful silence! None to help, none to deliver! The silence of the scene of ruin only broken by the sob and groan of the creature. Is there none to seek after God? “None,” is the divine answer (chap. iii. 11). Where are the company of the righteous? “There is none, no, not one” (ver. 10). Where are the good on earth? “There is none, no, not one” (ver. 12). God has Himself searched man for righteousness, for goodness, but has not found *one* particle of either in the ruined creature. From the centre (the nature) to the circumference (the circumstances) there is absolutely nothing for God, nothing for His heart to delight in or His eye to rest upon: all, all is utter ruin and misery.

Now, dear reader, just turn to your precious English Bible, and read verse 21 of the third chapter of this epistle, which unfolds *God's* Christianity,—“But now the righteousness of God.” We like exceedingly

this divine "but." It is used in sharp contrast to man's total inability to deliver himself or work his way out of his awful state of guilt and misery. Just see how blessedly it comes in after that picture of man in death and sins in Eph. ii., verse 4. "But *now*," that is, after the proved guilt of Gentile and Jew. O how every word is like God Himself! What a truly grand expression we meet with in this interesting passage:—The Righteousness of God.

How much we lose by not strictly adhering to the form of sound words! Depend upon it, dear reader, there is a positive spiritual loss in substituting theological terms for Scriptural ones. The habitual employment of the phrase, The Righteousness of *Christ* (which nowhere occurs in Holy Scripture), instead of "The Righteousness of *God*"—alone used in the writings of Paul—shew that, at least, there is the germ of wrong thought in the mind. We have termed the latter a truly grand expression, and so it is. The truth and meaning of it should be known and learnt by every saved soul. But what means The Righteousness of God? It signifies God's consistency with Himself, with His nature, in freely and righteously justifying a sinner believing on Jesus. It is not said to be imputed, could not be; but "righteousness" is imputed,—a very different thought, and one most fully elaborated in chapter iv. of our epistle. The imputation of righteousness to the believer is on the ground that the Righteousness of *God*, witnessed by the law and the prophets (chap. iii. 21), is NOW declared in the Gospel of God's grace to guilty sinners.

This magnificent phrase is God's answer to many a question raised in the poor hearts of His people. O what certainty! What security and blessedness to know that God, in fullest consistency with His very nature and character, is FOR US! Not simply that His love has been set upon us, or His mercy exercised toward us; but God *is* for us, and will be all along

the way: surely this is our soul's boast and triumph! Dear saint of God, can He ever cease to care for thee? Could He fling thee aside as a broken, worthless, forgotten thing, after having saved thee and given thee to know His heart's deep love? To entertain the question even for an instant is to stain His glory, slight His grace, and assail His very nature. Thou art justified according to the righteousness of *God*; and were He to spurn thee from Him, He would lose His character in sight of creation, and deny Himself. But that were impossible. You could sooner pluck the sun from the expanse of heaven, than a believer out of the heart of God. In every trial, in every sorrow, in every joy, in time and throughout eternity, God is FOR US. Here is the soul's grand anchor; here our triumph-shout. God's very righteousness *for us* is our boast now and evermore.

God for us necessarily sets all believers on precisely the same ground as to justification. Thus, verse 25 refers to the dear old saints in the times prior to the Cross, while verse 26 speaks of those living since the Cross. God, whom we feared, whose glory—the absolute standard for the perfection of the creature—we have come short of, is here acting for us, yes, even for us, the ungodly. How rich the grace! "Christ Jesus, whom *God* hath set forth a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness." *Now*, I can confess my sins and sob out my tale of guilt as did the prodigal, with the father's arms on his neck and the kiss on his cheek. God is FOR US. O it is a magnificent truth; my guilty soul can hide itself in Him. No word of reproach from His blessed lips; no grudge or reserve in His blessed heart. God is for us, in the revelation of His own nature, as "just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." All this is not cold, abstract doctrine; nor is it meant merely to remain in the memory and intellect. It is God's truth for the conscience and heart—to clear the one and rest the other.

The Righteousness of God is "unto all," such is its universal aspect; and "upon all them that believe" is its application (verse 22). God has thrown His own character over the believer. He is wrapped round and about in its plies and folds. God is thus the Rock of thy soul. Thou mayest fear and dread when the eternal Rock of Ages totters, but surely not till then. Thou art as safe and secure as is the Rock itself.

You will observe that Jesus is faith's object in chap. iii. 26; but in chap. iv. faith takes, shall we say? a wider view. It rests on "*Him* that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (vs. 24-25). O yes, God is for us. Grand was that morning which ushered in our eternity; the dawn of that summer morning which will never set in clouds! Blessed morning, when God raised up Jesus our Lord from among the dead! Blessed answer to the agony and death of Calvary! The resurrection of Christ was God's work and act in delivering-power and grace. Yes, we learn at the empty tomb that God is for us. The angels kept high court in the cave of our Lord; they sat, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus *had lain*. Hallelujah! He is risen. GOD IS FOR US. The cross declares it; the resurrection demonstrates it.

May the Lord bless thee, dear reader. W. S.

"Oh, what I owe to the file, to the hammer, to the furnace of my Lord Jesus, who hath now let me see how good the wheat of Christ is, that goeth through His mill and His oven, to be made bread for His own table."

"Why should I start at the plough of my Lord, that maketh deep furrows on my soul? I know He is no idle husbandman, He purposeth a crop. O that this stony, withered, barren ground were made fertile to bear a crop for Him, by whom it is so painfully dressed; and that this fallow ground were broken up!"—*Samuel Rutherford*.

## A SONG IN THE NIGHT.

(TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.)

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Look on high !  
 Darkness flees and morn draws nigh.  
 Tears of anguish shed at midnight,  
 Shine like pearls in morning sunlight ;  
 Thus our sorrows end thro' grace  
 In the light of Jesus' face—  
 Look on high !  
 Morn draws nigh.

O how near  
 Beams Thy coming, Saviour dear,  
 When the trumpet-tone resounding,  
 Every heart with rapture bounding,  
 Knows the home-call come at last ;  
 Conflict, toil, and suffering past—  
 Yes, 'tis near,  
 Saviour dear.

Jesus, Lord,  
 Let the promise of Thy word  
 Stir our souls with deeper yearning,  
 Fan the flame and keep it burning,  
 Till we fall Thy face before,  
 Satisfied for evermore—  
 Jesus, Lord !  
 Sure Thy word !

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“ Love thinketh no evil : if you were not Christ's wheat, appointed to be bread in His house, He would not grind you. But keep the middle line, neither despise nor faint (Heb. xii. 5). You see your Father is homely with you : strokes of a father evidence kindness and care ; take them so. I hope your Lord hath manifested Himself to you, and suggested these or more choice thoughts about His dealing with you.”—*Samuel Rutherford.*

## “THIS MAN RECEIVETH SINNERS.”

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REMEMBERING the word “freely ye have received, freely give,” I desire to pass on to others who may not before have noticed it, what has been a real cheer to my own soul.

In Luke xv. 2, “This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them,” the word “*receiveth*” is the same word translated “*waiting*” in ch. ii. 25, and ver. 38, “*looked*.” Also Titus ii. 13 and Jude xxi., “*looking*,” and several other passages, which I need not here quote, but which can easily be seen by looking at a Greek Concordance. It means, “to lie in wait for”—“look out for”—“eagerly expect”—“receive.” Now this, to me, is exceedingly beautiful. It recalls those lines in one of our hymns—

What a Saviour Jesus is,  
Oh what grace, what love is His.

And the rest of that chapter (xv.) is just as though He had turned round upon them and not only justified His action, but startled them by shewing how far they fell short of the real truth in their indictment against Him. This He did by unfolding that lovely parable with its threefold character of divine love.

The charge of the Pharisees and Scribes conveys much more than appears at first sight; but how far beyond *their* actual charge, were the real facts as unfolded by the Saviour! Did He receive them when they came? Or did He lie in wait for them? Ah, He did far more than that, blessed be His name. He went out to *seek* them! Yes, He *seeks* them. His *eyes* look for them—His *feet* run after them—His *hands* grasp them—His *shoulders* carry them—and His blessed *loving heart* loves them all the way home and for ever. And if cold-hearted Pharisees grumble on *earth*, there is joy and rejoicing in *heaven* (ver. 7-10).

Did He ever tire in His search? Never! never! "Until ye find it" (ver. 4) speaks volumes of the untiring and painstaking love of the Good Shepherd, who "gave His life for the sheep" (John x. 11). Does He ever weary of His burden as

The Shepherd's bosom bears each lamb  
O'er rock, and waste, and wild?

No! Never! "Having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them unto the end" (John xiii. 1). They have the strength of the two *shoulders* of the Almighty Shepherd, the security of the two *hands* (John x. 28-29), and the love of the two *hearts* (Rom. viii. 39). Then if He never tires, may we not sing—

Jesus, of Thee *we* ne'er would tire?

Blessed, Good, Great, Chief Shepherd, the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls! Does He not know how and when to lead His sheep into the green pastures, and by the waters of quietness? He does. Well may it be said of Him, "From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, the Lord's name is to be praised" (Ps. cxiii. 3). When the sun goes down (for it does go down here), then we must sleep and rest, and commence again when it rises, and thus continue the praise until we reach the end; then the true Isaac will be *on the look out again* (Gen. xxiv. 63), and the meeting will take place. But *what a meeting!* What a sunrise! A morning without clouds; a day in which there will be no sunset; and He whose name is worthy to be praised, shall have praise unceasingly. "Lord Jesus, come."  
W. E.

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"Our wisdom is to hold fast by the Word of the Lord, come what will. Outward trials are but instruments of purification, and of trying the heart as to faith. The Word is the test of all for the soul, the inward measure of its condition before God, and the infallible ground of confidence."—J. N. D.

## “THE MARTYRS OF JESUS.”

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### PAGAN PERSECUTIONS.

‘THE first was under the Emperor Nero, thirty-one years after our Lord’s ascension. Multitudes were apprehended; they were covered with the skins of wild beasts, torn to pieces by devouring dogs, fastened to crosses, wrapt up in combustible garments that when the daylight failed, they might, like torches, serve to dispel the gloom of night. For this tragical scene Nero lent his own gardens, and thus the shrieks of women burning to ashes supplied music and diversion for their circus! The second was under Domitian, in the year 95, and 40,000 are supposed to have perished. The third began in the third year of Trajan, in the year 100. The fourth was under Antoninus. The fifth began in the year 127, under Severus, when great cruelties were committed. The sixth began in the reign of Maximus, in 235-7. The seventh, which was the most dreadful ever known, began in 250, under the Emperor Decius. The eighth began in 257, under Valerian. The ninth was under Aurelian, in 274. The tenth began in the nineteenth year of Diocletian, in 303. In this dreadful persecution, which lasted ten years, houses filled with Christians were set on fire, and whole droves were twisted together with ropes and cast into the sea. It is related that 17,000 were slain in one month. In this fiery persecution it is believed that not less than 144,000 Christians died by violence, besides 700,000 that died through the banishments, or the public works to which they were condemned.’—*Dr. Beaumont.*

### PAPAL PERSECUTIONS.

“The woman drunken with the blood of the saints.”—*Rev. xvii. 6.*

‘According to the calculation of some, about two hundred thousand suffered death in seven years under

Pope Julian ; no less than a hundred thousand were massacred by the French in the space of three months ; the Waldenses who perished amounted to one million ; within thirty years the Jesuits destroyed nine hundred thousand ; under the Duke of Alva, thirty-six thousand were executed by the common hangman ; a hundred and twenty thousand perished in the Inquisition ; and a hundred and fifty thousand by the Irish massacre, besides the vast multitude of whom the world could never be particularly informed, who were proscribed, banished, burned, starved, buried alive, smothered, suffocated, drowned, assassinated, chained to the galleys for life, or immured within the horrid walls of the Bastile, or others of their Church or State prisons. According to some, the whole number of persons massacred since the rise of the Papacy amounts to fifty millions !—*J. C. Gray.*

#### PROTESTANT PERSECUTIONS.

Alas, we cannot deny that history records that there have been these also ! Who have clean hands—who ?

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“And white robes were given unto every one of them ; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”—*Rev. vi. 11.*

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## DISCIPLINE AND ITS RESULTS.

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“HE humbles us and proves us, that we may know what is in our heart—feeds us with the bread of faith. But it is to do us good in our latter end. When the trial is met in the truth and power of spiritual life, it developes and brings out much more softness and maturity of grace, a spirit more separated from the world to God, and more acquainted with God. Trial cannot in itself confer grace ; but, under God’s

hand, it can break the will, and detect hidden and unsuspected evils ; so that the new life is more fully and largely developed. God has a larger place in the heart, there is more intelligence in His ways, more lowly dependence, more consciousness that the world is nothing, more distrust of flesh and self. The saint is more emptied of self and filled with the Lord. What is eternal and true, because divine, has a much larger place in the soul ; what is false is detected and set aside. There is more ripeness in our relationship with God. We dwell more in the eternal scenes into which He has brought our souls. We can look back then and see the love which has brought us through it all, and bless God with dependent thanksgiving for every trial. Such only purge away the dross, and confirm us in brighter, fuller, clearer hope, and increase our knowledge of God, self being proportionately destroyed.”

J. N. D.

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## P R A Y E R .

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“WE thank God when we pray before we receive the answer ; because, knowing in our hearts by faith that God has heard and answered us, we bless Him before His answer comes outwardly, and this is just the proof of faith. This confidence gives wonderful peace in the midst of trials ; we may not know how God will deliver, but we are sure He will, and rightly. He has all at His disposal. It is Himself we trust, and in looking to Him the heart receives a real answer on which it relies. The circumstances and the Word try the heart. Confidence and divine deliverance rejoice the spirit. One knows, and before the deliverance comes, that God is for us. The taking counsel in the heart is very natural, but not faith. It wears and distresses the spirit. The sorrow tends to work death. The soul, even though submitting, preys on itself : it is turning to the Lord which lightens the soul.”

J. N. D.

## NOTES ON EPHESIANS IV. 1-6.

THE first verse of this chapter is a continuation of chap. ii., chap. iii. being parenthetical. The first two chapters explain the mystery "in few words" (iii. 3-4), and display the glory, power, and greatness of the "God of our Lord Jesus Christ," and all the blessing which is centred *in* His Christ. Lest, however, we should be so awed by these unfoldings as to despair of ever living them in practice, and in accordance with the condition which is ours in Him, God graciously bends down, ere the fourth chapter is written, and makes us *at home* with Himself by His revelation as the *Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ (ver. 14); telling us of the indwelling Spirit as the *power* for practical walk (ver. 16); of the Christ dwelling in the heart as the *Object for faith* by the way (ver. 17); and the surpassing *love* of Christ, who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we *ask* or *think* (ver. 20); telling us, finally, that the work we have to perform and the pathway we have to tread, is not in our poor strength at all. We have but to *bend*, and results will be "according to the power that worketh in us."

Already has been unfolded the utter breakdown of dispensational distinctions—the Gentile (ii. 2) learns his distance from God, the Jew finds himself equally judged (ii. 3); but over this chaos the love of God, that "*great* love wherewith He loved us" (ii. 4) rises with quickening power, above the darkness, and death, and ruin (ii. 5), and declares how in Christ Jesus "ye are made nigh," the middle wall "broken down," the enmity "abolished in His flesh," while out from the *two* great classes "one new man" is formed, and "in Christ" we see a "new creation."

God further declares in His own specific way, the threefold blessing which is ours as belonging to this

new order, viz., in ver. 18, the *work of Christ*, the *Spirit's power*, and the *Father's presence*; and following upon this, the character of blessing connected with each Divine person is strikingly introduced. In ver. 19 we have the *household of GOD*, and in connection with *God* come into relief "*saints*" of all dispensations, who, ignorant of the mystery now made known, yet had faith in God, and approached Him on the ground of sacrifice, in God's appointed way, and whose names have been recorded by God Himself in Heb. xi. as a "cloud of witnesses" to His unfailing love and tender care, and the histories of whose lives have come down to encourage *us* to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us," and "run with patience the race that is set before us, looking off unto Jesus, the beginner and finisher of faith."

With *what* a "family," *what* a "household" has God surrounded Himself! Men of "faith," "saints" of God, who were above and beyond dispensations, whose title to form part of such a household was no birth-tie of this earth, but who were born of the Spirit of God "from above"; the Abrahams, the Moseses, the Davids, the Joshuas, who boldly stand out on the landscape as the living witnesses for God in the darkest days; and God has made us fellow-citizens *with them*; God has taken the believer out from Jew and Gentile, and brought him on to a platform *with them*, the grand worthies of Old Testament history. No more are we looked at as "strangers from the covenants of promise," and "foreigners to the commonwealth of Israel," but far beyond all that, "made fellow-citizens with the saints," "of whom the world was not worthy" (Heb. xi. 38), and members "of the household of God," for "God is not ashamed to be called *their* God" (Heb. xi. 16). All the promises of God in Christ are yea, and in Him Amen; for "in Christ" tells of a Headship where saints form the race, and which introduces us as "heirs according to the promise" of Abraham's God (Gal. iii. 29). This

race, as we learn in 1 Thes. iv. 16, takes in all the "dead in Christ," yea, as Eph. i. 4 clearly tells us, all who were "chosen in Him before the foundation of the world," and leaps over Israelitish boundaries, Jewish hopes, and covenant blessings, to find in Christ Jesus the Man of God's counsels, and His delight, the sole Repository of all true blessing for the "Israel of God" (Gal. vi. 15-16).

Not only, however, has God thus brought us into this circle of blessedness with Himself and His saints, but in verses 20-21 He unfolds to us a further blessing which is ours in connection with *the Lord*, in which we alone can share, for this is the fulfilment of the revelation given by the Lord Himself to Peter, in Matt. xvi., when, having had revealed to him by the Father the wondrous truth, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God," he received the answer, "*I also say unto thee, That thou art a stone, and upon this Rock I will build my church.*" This Church was not then in existence, it had yet to be built; the truth on which it would be built was the Father's revelation to Peter, and that this revelation was never forgotten by the one to whom it was revealed, is clearly seen when Peter, in his letter (1 Pet. ii. 4-6) "to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," tells them how, coming unto the Lord as unto a Living Stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, they, as living stones, are built up in accordance with the prophecy which Peter now brings to bear from Is. xxviii. 16, and which Paul still further dwells on in the verses before us, and in detail describes the growing building and Jesus Christ as the Corner Stone, which He could not be until He had become Jesus on earth (Matt. i. 25), nor until He was made Christ in heaven (Acts ii. 36).

Fitting into the Corner Stone, and forming a compact "foundation" for the addition of further stones, came the apostles and prophets of New Testament history and thus stone after stone, from Pentecost

onward, was fitly framed together, and "the building" continues to grow "unto a holy temple in the Lord." In this temple no Old Testament saint will ever share; 'tis a portion and a privilege peculiarly our own.

But there is another aspect, too, in which God has been pleased to view us—not as a *household* in connection with *God*, nor yet as a *temple* in connection with the *Lord*, but as a *habitation* in connection with the *Spirit* (ver. 22). The latter is not looked at as being built, but as a dwelling-place already, in the midst of which God by His Spirit dwells. Collectively, then, upon this earth the saints form this dwelling-place of the Spirit of God. Since the day when the Holy Ghost came down to this earth to dwell for the first time (Acts ii.), onward up to, the rapture of the saints (1 Thess. iv. 14-18), this habitation is looked at as *complete*, and all that belongs to it is maintained and kept inviolable by the Spirit of God, on behalf of Christ until He come. This is not the only place, however, where Paul dwells on this. Three times does he dilate upon this theme, and each time in a different way. In Eph. ii. it is a "habitation," in Heb. iii. 6 it is a "house," in 1 Cor. iii. 17 it is a "temple." Most suitable are these distinctions to the truth before us. A "habitation"—consistently with the scope of the previous portion of the epistle—speaks of the privilege which it is to be in such a sphere, but conveys no thought of *responsibility*; a "house," though (as it is termed in Heb. iii.), *does*—it tells of *order*, of *regulation*, of a *master*, and of the responsibilities which attach thereto; a "temple," however, speaks of the *character* of the Person who dwells there, and the holiness which in consequence becomes it.

In short, then, we are brought on to a platform with Old Testament saints as members of the household of God; are being built together and growing up a holy temple in the Lord; and *are* built together upon this earth, so as to form a distinct and absolute sphere

of privilege, responsibility, and holiness, in which God by His Spirit dwells.

Is it to be wondered at, that with such a portion as was his, before the Apostle's mind, and being so in the power of it, he should refuse to take his prison cell, and his prison chain, from the hands of a Roman potentate, and declare himself to be really "the prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ?" In such a household, such a temple, such a house, a Roman cell dwindled into unimportance; for if such a God, such a Lord, such a Spirit, had allowed him to be thus taken prisoner, surely it was all for blessing. He looked not upon himself, nor yet on his fellow saints, as in any other sphere but that of the *house of God* upon this earth: how qualified, then, was *he* to beseech them to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith" they were called, when he could do so under such circumstances as these! It is no *goad*, however, that Paul uses to *drive* the saints to a proper walk. Written, as this epistle was, at a time when the general ruin was setting in, he seeks, not to occupy them *with* the ruin, but to give them an object altogether beyond it; and if the possession of such a portion as Paul here details do not lead saints to a worthy walk, *nothing will*.

But what was the calling of which they were exhorted to walk worthy? It was no calling such as Abraham's, who was called out from country, kindred, and father's house, to a place on this earth—the land of Canaan; but more exalted was *this*, for it was a calling from earth to *heaven*. Then, as citizens of *that* country we are called to walk here. The prison cell was only an episode by the way; the calling was above and beyond all that.

God views us walking not as once we walked, but has given a rainbow hue to colour the whole scene through which we pass—that whether in our house, or in the street, or in the workshop, or at the counter, or in a prison cell, we are walking in the House of God, where the Spirit dwells; we are walking beneath His

searching eye; we are enjoying the privileges of such a sphere, are set according to the responsibilities which belong thereto, and the holiness that ever becomes it; and in this wondrous spot the voice of God is heard calling us to where He dwells, and where we are already seated in Christ, reminding us of the citizenship which is ours by title and by right, and beseeching us by the mouth of His Gentile Apostle to walk worthy of that calling wherewith we are called. And how careful God is in all that pertains to His things. Not only does He tell us *where* we walk, and why we should "walk worthy," but He likewise tells us *how* we can do it; so, continuing, Paul dwells on the manner and behaviour which become a citizen in such a dwelling-place, beneath the eye of a divine Master.

If we think of the Person and the place, could we be aught else but lowly? What high thought could we entertain of ourselves, did we dwell on the grace which has set us there, and the Divine power which has brought it about; for has He not told us, "by grace are ye saved through faith; and *that* not of yourselves; it is the gift of God"? "With all lowliness." Yes, for God by His Spirit dwells there, and His eye is upon *me!*

But it is not merely what we are to be in ourselves; but there is our attitude towards others—"and meekness" towards those around us with whom we daily come in contact in this same sphere, and where we are called to manifest the Spirit of Christ, who was the meek and lowly One in all His ways on this earth.

But in manifesting lowliness and meekness towards others we may fail to get any response; lest we should weary, then, and fail in maintaining the lowliness and meekness so consistent with the habitation in which we walk, and the Divine Person who dwells there, the Apostle adds "long-suffering" as that which must necessarily follow in the train of those graces which should characterise the saints of God.

Is "lowliness" in ourselves, "meekness" towards others, and "long-suffering" in the midst of perverseness and pressure, *all* that the saint has to think of?

Nay, for all this can be in exercise whilst the heart may be set in righteousness and lack the loving forbearance so much needed for a worthy walk; hence, "forbearing one another in love" concludes the four-fold description of the manner in which we are to comport ourselves as saints with a heavenly calling.

But there are circumstances in the Christian pathway which even these principles would not cover, though they would be most valuable, and indeed indispensable, for a right walk and action in every detail in the house of God. The moral behaviour of the second verse is, however, but that which is to prepare the saint for the doctrinal firmness as to the truth of God in the third, without which the lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, forbearance, and love, would but form a loop-hole for the most terrible evil to creep in; for alas! how often do we find the lowly, meek, long-suffering, forbearing, loving saint of God, admirable as he is, absolutely fail the moment the truth of God, in its unswerving maintenance according to God's principle of unity, calls for his firmness and support! Hence we are told to endeavour "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace."

Ere the Lord Jesus departed out of this world, He called His disciples around Him, to bid them farewell, and spoke to them of the Comforter coming to this earth after His departure—"the Spirit of *truth*" (John xiv. 16-17); "the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John xiv. 26); "when He is come, He will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John xvi. 8); and "when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into *all truth*: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear,

that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come, He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Truly it is the showing time now. "Show me Thy way" had Moses asked in a bygone day of the Jehovah who called to Himself in a "separated" path, and suitably did the answer come (Exod. xxxiii. 16)—"My presence shall go with thee." But when Moses waxes bolder, and longing to see His face, cries "show me Thy glory," he had to be refused, for, "Behold," said the Lord, "there is a place by Me"—an empty place which a *Man* was yet to fill—"no man can see my face"—hid as it was in the cloud of glory—"and live;" but, "I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by;" "I will make all my goodness pass before thee: . . . thou shalt see my back parts; but my *face* shall not be seen."

The old economy passed away, still the empty place remained by the side of God, and His glory was hidden from the eye of man; then it was the God of Grace bent down in love, to declare the mystery hid in His bosom from the beginning of the ages (Ephes, iii. 9) and to open out His glory, as otherwise it never could have been. From the Father, the Son came forth, to tell out the pent-up secret of the heart of God; the story of that lowly, meek, long-suffering, forbearing, loving Man is written on the unerring pages of the inspired Word, and the history of that Cross, with all its shadows and its glory, is "written on our hearts by the Spirit of the living God," The sepulchre of Joseph, in the garden where the tree stood on which He bare our sins, held at the close of that wondrous pathway the precious body of that despised Man, who kept whilst here, in perfect dependence and obedience, the whole truth of God, which His mind, and heart, and voice had told out.

But the morning of the resurrection came, and, "raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father," He could now reveal a fresh truth to Mary in John

xx. 17, whilst He connected it with His departure from this earth. Meeting His disciples in the upper room in Jerusalem afterwards, He "breathed on them" the Holy Ghost, and gave them power to act for Him, during His absence, in the remission and forgiveness of sins. But the full time had not yet come—an entirely new order of things was to be introduced—and in Acts i. the Master ascends; in chap. ii. the Paraclete descends to take His place until He return, and to *keep* in His absence the truth of God in all its Divine unfoldings in one blessed Unity, and to show it unto us, to "teach us all things," and to bring to our remembrance whatsoever He has said unto us. So that, whilst on earth, we have the Holy Ghost maintaining inviolably the truth of God against every attack and onslaught of the enemy; and, looking up, we see the answer to the longing cry of His people of old, the empty place filled up "at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. xii. 2), and the *glory of God revealed* in the *face* of Jesus Christ.

To take the place of Jesus then upon this earth, as sent from the ascended Christ, did the Holy Ghost come down, to maintain for Him, in the very spot where He was rejected, that Unity which combined in its character the whole revelation of God in relation to His people, of which the Holy Ghost was to be the exponent and the power.

In the habitation of God upon this earth, where the Spirit dwells, was this truth to be harmoniously maintained in spite of the error and wickedness of man, and there it was to be shown, and there upheld before the eyes of all who shared in its privileges, responsibility and holiness. Hence it is that each and all are called upon to endeavour to keep this Unity in the uniting bond of peace, for the separation of one single part from the other would be productive of disorder, and would cease to make for peace.

No doubt does the Apostle leave as to what this Unity is, for in its sevenfold completeness does he

summarise its doctrinal points (chap. iv. 4-6). Our responsibility as regards this Unity pervades every circumstance of daily life, whether in the home, the church, or the world. The truth of the "One body" was not to be maintained at the expense of other truths equally precious, for in seeking to maintain this, the "one Spirit" might even be set aside, and His guidance, power, and instruction made of none effect.

Whilst, however, the truth of the "One body and one Spirit" reminds us that personally we are still upon this earth, yet how good of the Lord to connect with it and press upon us the fact, that we have a prospect which is beyond it, and which fixes the eye of the waiting saint upon the "One hope" of the calling, which is to cheer us by the way.

Nor was the truth of "One Lord" to be set aside by any human pretension, for the *Lordship* of Christ conveyed an *authority* of which the privileges of *Christ* and the example and work of *Jesus*, were but the precursors and the foundation in relation to the saints, and added to this the "One faith"—"once delivered to the saints" (Jude iii.)—comprising as it did in its magnificent range the death, resurrection, and ascension of *Jesus*, whether in its figurative and symbolic revelation of bygone days, suited to its dispensation; or in its fulfilment in the present age, when the hope of the patriarchs, the theme of the prophets, and the songs of the divine minstrel had found their realization in the Man seated upon the throne of the Father and at the right hand of God. *This* was to find its place; for even the maintenance of truth ecclesiastically as to the one Body or the one Spirit would be of none effect if the foundation truths of the Gospel were to be let go or loosely held.

Moreover, the place of separation in this world, which "One baptism" indicated—the burial of the Jew with his covenants and promises, and the Gentile with his distance and sins, and their introduction together in the name of the Triune God, on the new

ground which He owned, and where He was owned by a separated people—had its place in this marvellous Unity, but was in no way made more prominent, nor was it less pronounced than any other part of this sevenfold Unity of the Spirit of God. No question was this for party creeds, but a principle in the House of God.

Still a further truth which the Spirit of God was to keep before us was that of "One God and Father:" with what wide, encircling arms did this truth stretch! The breadth of its range was only equalled by the manner in which it narrowed itself to an individual soul. Marvellous was it to know God, and to know Him *as* God; how much more so to know that same God as Father, to whom we now have access by the Spirit; and oh the peace connected with that name first mentioned by Jesus to the woman at Sychar's well (John iv. 23), and so peculiarly associated with this dispensation of the Grace of God, unrevealed as it had been to the saints of a previous day! "One God and Father"—how this brings in its claims upon us, whether as creatures or as children, and permeates every circumstance in the social, domestic, or business life. Shall a saint endeavour to keep the truth of membership of the Body of Christ and ignore the relationship of creature or of child?

The Spirit of God sundered none: each truth He displayed and maintained in one blessed Unity: and the Gentile Apostle, from his Roman prison, besought the saints of that day, and its voice has come down to us in this, that with all lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, forbearance, and love, they should use diligence to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace. What watchfulness, what prayer, what obedience, what dependence, would this require on the part of each! But they were in a privileged place; a Divine Power and Person dwelt in their midst; and so he had courage to exhort them. The ruin was setting in, and a testing time was approaching, but he would not occupy them with the ruin and sorrow, but would give them an object beyond it.

No unity of brethren was this (Ps. cxxxiii.) which might at times necessitate, if endeavoured to be kept in peace, much sacrifice of truth for the sake of it; no oneness of the Body was this (1 Cor. xii. 12-13) which was beyond the power of man to interfere with or to mar; no oneness of communion was this which John loves to recall (John xvii), as the Son's desire to the Father ere His departure out of this world; but it was "the Unity of the Spirit" which flowed from the presence of the Spirit of God upon this earth and the mission which He had to fulfil.

How anxious should we be, then, to heed His teaching, to be careful students of what He shows to us (that no one truth may be sought to be advanced and pressed at the expense of another), and in each and every relationship in which we stand towards God, found endeavouring to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called."

W. R. H.  
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## THE LORD'S RETURN.

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Oh Lord! 'mid joy and pain,  
We long Thy face to see;  
Naught surely will the heart detain  
That's bent on seeing Thee.

Thyself doth fill the eye,  
Thyself the heart doth fire;  
Naught but Thyself can satisfy  
'The love Thou dost inspire!

Oh, come then, blessed Lord—  
Thy saints delight to sing;  
Naught but Thy long-expected word  
Can full redemption bring.

We would not ling'ers be,  
But haste Thy coming, Lord;  
Naught but the joy of seeing Thee  
Can perfect bliss afford!

When breaks the dawn of day,  
 And shadows all are fled,  
 Naught then shall hinder full display  
 Of what Thy word has said.

When at the Father's voice,  
 Thou risest from His Throne,  
 Naught but the objects of God's choice  
 Thy glory then shall crown.

Thy sleeping saints shall rise,  
 The living changèd be ;  
 Naught but Thy call of glad surprise  
 Could summons them to Thee.

Thy well-known voice of love  
 Shall lift them up on high ;  
 Naught but Thy coming from above  
 Can loose each earthly tie.

Life's storms around us rage,  
 And sorrow's cup flows o'er ;  
 Naught but Thy coming can assuage  
 Life's ills for evermore !

Our hearts within us burn,  
 Thy blessèd face to see ;  
 Naught, Saviour, but Thy lov'd return  
 Can bring felicity !

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THEN AND NOW—*Ex. xix., 2 Cor. iii.*

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It once was thus :—the storm-capped mound,  
 The thunders echoing loud and deep,  
 The solemn cordon stretched around,  
 Bade me, a sinner, distance keep ;  
 For Thou, O God, wast unrevealed,  
 To see Thy glory was to die :—  
*Now*, through th' eternal covenant sealed  
 In Jesus' blood, I am brought nigh,  
 And in Thy presence undismayed,  
 A sinner reconciled through grace,  
 With unveiled eye behold displayed,  
 Thy fullest glories in His face !

## LUKE I.—III.

WE shall find in the Gospel of Luke that the Son of the Father's love not only found an opening for Himself, by which to come into this world, as the Son of Man by Incarnation, but "all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up," defines the objects and marks the circle of the Spirit's operations, in the form of testimony from God to the nation, and to mankind.

If we recall the prophecy by Zacharias, we shall see a final proposal on the part of God to the people of Israel, to bring in the blessing, and to establish them in prosperity and peace, by deliverance out of the hand of all their enemies, through the Horn of Salvation which He had raised up in the house of His servant David. Indeed, this compendium of prophecy by the man whose mouth was opened (after the discipline and teaching by which Zacharias became the fit vessel for this new prophetic office) should be diligently pondered in all its parts, if we would understand what God has now taken in hand "in remembrance of His holy covenants," or the "oath which He swore to our father Abraham," and which He "had spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."

Two men are upon the earth, upon whose ministry and reception all promised and covenanted blessings hang. One of them—John the Baptist—"filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb," as the Prophet of the Highest; and the other, Immanuel, or God with us, "a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

John carries his credentials with him, as "*sent from God*;" but the Son carries His own prerogatives, and these are personal, for "*He came forth from God, and went to God*," leaving nothing on our part but to say, "and we beheld His glory, the glory

as of the Only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Besides credentials and prerogatives, there were things in which one loves to look at these two in common. For instance, as to John, "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the desert till the day of his shewing unto Israel;" whilst of Jesus it is said, "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him."

The similarities and the dissimilarities are of equal interest, for if John accepted the leathern girdle and the desert, as suited to a prophet who "came in the way of righteousness," it became Jesus to take another path as "filled with wisdom and the grace of God," that in the Sanhedrim of Israel He might confound or astonish the doctors of the temple with "His understanding and answers."

It is to be remarked, in ch. iii., with what care this treatise connects the public ministry of John with the great names, reigns, and dates, of all who were public in the outward world, when the time was come for "the prophet of the Highest" to carry into their midst his testimony of another kingdom, "the kingdom of heaven;" and of another king, the "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords." We read, "the word of God came unto John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness, and he came into all the country round about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." The ministry of Jesus, and of John, though concurrent, were not identical, and took their respective differences not merely from the manner in which the children grew and increased, but mainly from the previous fact of whence they individually came, and whither they went.

Accordingly, John insists upon the claims of God under the law, and convicts the people of forfeited blessings under the righteous government of God, for they were nationally groaning under their Roman

oppressors, and therefore the record of their names, and styles, and their respective governorships and tetrarchies.

Outside all this moral condition of the people before God, as the Jehovah of Israel against whom they had rebelled, and outside all the consequences of this rebellion, on account of which God had sold them into the hands of their enemies, John accepts his place as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight." Nor will the "prophet of the Highest" be restricted by their actual state of moral degradation on the one hand, or political oppression on the other, but utter his cry in the midst of violence and defeat: "Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

But besides a convicted people, John would have them a converted people, in true and honest confession of their sins; and thus he speaks to the multitudes that come out to him to be baptised. He tests them by "the axe at the root of the trees," and encourages by "the fruits meet for repentance;" likewise he tries them by their fleshly confidence in saying "we have Abraham to our father," and encourages them by the assurance "that God is able to raise up children unto Abraham."

Thus John would not gather them after the pattern "of the evil generation," who turned the wilderness of former days into a provocation, and respecting whom God said, "they shall not enter into my rest," but would have them morally a repentant people and an expectant people, prepared for One that should come after John, "whose shoes' latchet he was not worthy to stoop down and unloose." The people, the publicans, and the soldiers are sifted morally, and put to the proof or driven back, whilst the godly Remnant are encouraged by John's testimony to the Messiah,

“He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire; whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and will gather the wheat into His garner; but the chaff He will burn with fire unquenchable.” Thus John, in the way of righteousness, has sifted and tried the multitudes by the axe and by the threshing floor; and let those who will, go away again from the place of separation unto God, to accept things as they are, and be content with their servitude in the cities and towns where they dwelt. But what will be John’s path, and where will the messenger and forerunner of the Lord be directed?

In harmony with the prophecy of Zacharias, John takes his stand with the God of Israel, upon the sure and unfailing ground of “the Horn in the house of David,” and of “the oath to Abraham,” the “promises to the fathers,” and above all, “His holy covenant,” and all these cluster round the Messiah, to be fulfilled in His own person, by the redemption of His people.

Of all the rivers in Israel, or the land of Immanuel, there was but one that was connected with “the Ark of the Covenant of the God of the whole earth,” through which Joshua led the people, as a triumphant nation, to make them a great name under heaven. And now, in the day of their disgrace, and of God’s displeasure, where shall the Baptist “prepare the way of the Lord,” but at the very spot, where the priests’ feet *then* touched the brim of the river? They will begin their new history at that river, and recall every memento and token of the oath, and the promise, and the holy Covenant, of which Jordan was then the pledge. Bright and happy in these remembrances, and brighter still in the knowledge that “the Day-spring from on high” had visited them, John leads this expectant Remnant to the river Jordan, and, like another Gideon, tests them by the water. And they abide the test—not of hands or knees now, nor of drinking or sipping, but of baptism itself, in the confession that all expectation from themselves

was cut off, and that they were in Jordan with John, in the hope that they and "all flesh should see the salvation of God" as they come up out of its depth.

John has thus found a new starting point between Jehovah and His beloved people, and has connected them with their promised Messiah and Deliverer; but where can Jesus find a link of association for Himself, and with whom, is now the question? Will He own His forerunner, and will He acknowledge this as the prepared way, and these as the straight paths?

There is not an instant's hesitation on this momentous point, either by the Son upon the earth or the Father in heaven: "Now when all the people were baptised, it came to pass that Jesus also being baptised, and praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The angel of the Lord, and the glory which shone round about, had guided the shepherds to Bethlehem, where they found Mary and Joseph, and the babe in a manger—when the heavens had given out to the earth its choicest treasure! But now the glory, and the "good-will towards men," have found their new associations, with a broken-hearted and repentant Remnant. The glory, and the peace on earth, and the good pleasure, have travelled out of Bethlehem to Jordan, and there the Holy Ghost waits upon the Messiah, and the excellent of the earth, in whom is all His delight, to identify Him and them with the voice of a Father's love, and with the opened heaven. The Son of God is in their midst as their Saviour, Lord, and Christ; and what a guarantee has this believing Remnant, by the descended Holy Ghost, for their largest expectations; that all promises, and oaths, and covenants will take their pattern from the heavens, and open themselves out in like manner, in their appointed seasons, for blessing to Israel, the Gentiles, and the world!

## RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

## I.

EVERY child of Adam is of necessity placed in the relation of a creature to the Creator. All owe their being to Him (Acts xvii. 25-28). In this sense He is the Father of all (Ephes. iii. 14-15, iv. 6), and so Adam is called God's son (Luke iii. 38).

As creatures, dependent on God daily and hourly, confidence in Him as the Creator should always have characterised each one of us. For as Creator He takes thought, and has a personal care even for animals, even for all to whom He has given life (Jonah iv. 11, Matt. vi. 26, Luke xii. 6); and how much more does He care for those who must have an everlasting existence. Worship, then, and service should unhesitatingly have been rendered to Him by all the human race (Rom. i. 25). But in this, as Daniel boldly told the heathen monarch, Belshazzar, he had grievously failed: "The God in whose hands thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified" (Dan. v. 23). So that king, convicted by the prophet of his impiety, and of his failure as a creature, as he sat enthroned amid all the splendour of oriental sovereignty, passed away that night from earth to await, as far as we know, his doom, when he shall be summoned before the great white throne. Responsibility as a creature he could not shake off, though his failure in reference to it was enhanced by the opportunity God had offered him of profiting by the well-known history and example of his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar.

As creatures all of us have failed, all have sinned; so to nothing but misery and everlasting perdition could we have justly looked forward, had not God acted, in the sovereignty of His grace, to quicken some, and to bring them into new relations to Himself as saints, as servants, and as of His household, &c.

Of what grace does this speak? Grace naturally foreign to the heart of man, and which has its origin only in the heart of God. For who of men would naturally entrust their interests on earth, and the carrying out of their purposes to those who had sinned against them, and had evinced a life-long disregard of their wishes, if not a bitter enmity to their person? But it is out of such that God sets some apart as vessels devoted by Him to a holy use, *i.e.*, saints, sanctified in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. i. 2), chosen by Him "to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thes. ii. 13, 1 Pet. i. 2).

His servants, too, such are (1 Pet. ii. 16, Rom. vi. 22), and He has none others on earth; all His work in this world, which is done by creature instrumentality for the advancement of His kingdom and the glory of His Son, being carried out through them. Of His household, likewise, they are reckoned (Ephes. ii. 19), for He would not keep them at a distance, though they only deserved everlasting banishment from His presence. In these relations to Him we, who believe on His Son, shall be found for ever. The character and sphere of service may, and assuredly will change. We shall not be always on earth, and in a scene where God's authority is disowned. For on high, when for ever freed from all toil and trouble, enjoying the Sabbath-rest which awaits us, His name, with that of the Lamb, will be on our foreheads, the token to all to Whom we belong; and the privilege will still be ours of being engaged in His service: for "His servants shall serve Him" (Rev. xxii. 3). And in a special relation to God will Christians then be displayed, peculiar to those who are now His habitation on earth by the Spirit, for they will be His holy temple, in which He will dwell for ever (Ephes. ii. 21). What delight He must take in those of His creatures who are redeemed by the blood of Christ!

Saints, servants, of His household, His people, His

dwelling-place, His temple, His elect, and His called-ones, what relations are these to God, we may well say, of which we can make our boast. Now all these are connected with the revelation of Himself *as God*. Favours, privileges, they surely are, in which none of us, and, we add, no creature, would ever have thought we should be called to have a part; yet they do not exhaust the list of our privileges, for in another character God has been pleased to reveal Himself. He is our God, for we are His redeemed ones. He is *our Father*, too, as born of Him, which is relationship to God in the closest and best sense. We are His children by birth, born of water and of the Spirit (John iii. 5). We are also His sons by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. iii. 26).

C. E. S.

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## THE SECRET OF PEACE IN TRIALS.

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“WE are foolish as to difficulties and trials, measuring them by our strength instead of God’s, who is for us if we are His. What matter that the cities of Canaan were walled up to heaven, if the walls fell at the blast of a ram’s horn? Could Peter have walked on a smooth sea better than on a rough one? Our wisdom is to know that we can do nothing without Jesus—with Him, everything that is according to His will. The secret of peace is to be occupied with Him for His own sake, and we shall find peace in Him and through Him, and be more than conquerors when trouble comes; not that we shall be insensible to trial, but find Him and His tender care for us. When the believing soul is under trial, the recurrence to God as its resource and hope is the natural movement of faith. Nor is there a sweeter time for the soul that trusts Him than the time of trial. This supposes, indeed, the will to be broken, and the heart subject, and God’s love to be known. When this is not the case, the trial through grace works submission and is then removed, as the soul finds its happiness in the wise and holy will of God, and in the fruit it bears.”

J. N. D.

## A MILLENNIAL SCENE.

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“ Rejoice ye Gentiles with His people.”—*Rom.* xv. 10; *Rev.* vii. 9-17.

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JERUSALEM'S warfare is ended; her iniquity is pardoned; and the glory of the Lord is risen upon her: and the Gentiles shall come to her light; and kings to the brightness of her rising. Countless myriads of converted heathen from the dark corners of the earth, gathered in by the preaching of the everlasting gospel (chap. xiv. 6-7) from every people and tongue under heaven, just before the close, are seen flowing to the city of the great King, to behold the glory of the Lord, and to worship before His throne. With what wondering eyes will they gaze on the heavenly brightness as they draw near to the Holy city; what bursts of praise as they wave their palms of victory and cry, “Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb,” whilst ALL the angels which stand round about the throne fall upon their faces as they take up the strain, and add their AMEN. One of the elders, apparently not joining in the worship, delights to explain that these are they which came out of the great tribulation which had come upon the whole world; and who, by faith, had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple (there is no temple in heaven, nor any night there). And He that sitteth on the throne shall spread His tabernacle over them [not “ *dwell among* ” them]; they shall neither hunger nor thirst any more, neither shall the sun at all light upon them, nor any burning heat, for, “the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a TABERNACLE for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain” (Isa. iv. 5-6).

Satisfied with the travail of His soul, the Lamb Himself shall feed them, and lead them to the heavenly springs—and God Himself, wondrous grace! “shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

There is no reason to suppose that any of those who have heard and refused the gospel in this day of grace, and are left behind when Christ comes for His saints, will be found in the white-robed multitude. Rejecters of God's mercy, they had not received the love of the truth that they might be saved, and for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie (2 Thes. ii. 10-11). They will be ready to receive the mark of the Beast, and for such there is no salvation.

Solemn thought for the unconverted !

J. M.

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## THE HEART OF MAN AND THE HEART OF GOD.

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**THE HEART OF MAN.**—"It is from the heart of man, descended to the lowest step in the scale of intelligent beings, resembling, alas ! the beasts in his desires, Satan in his pride, a weak slave in his passions ; strong, or at least proud in his spirit and in his pretensions ; having the knowledge of good and evil, but in a conscience which condemns him ; by reason of sufferings, sighing after something better, but never attaining it ; having the want of some other world than this material one, but fearful of getting to it ; having the feeling that we ought to be in relationship with God, the only object worthy of an immortal soul, but at an infinite distance from God in his lusts, and animated by such a desire for independence that he is unwilling to admit God to the only place which becomes Him if He is God, and seeks consequently to prove that there is no God ;—it is from the heart of man, capable of the highest aspirations, with which his pride feeds itself, and of the most degrading lusts, with which however his conscience becomes disgusted ;—it is from the heart of man, that God forms the divine harp on which all the harmony of His praises can resound and will resound for ever."

**THE HEART OF GOD.**—"We see, in effect, in the cases of the woman of bad life (Luke vii.), and of the other one whom the Lord met at Jacob's well (John iv.), how the Saviour's love attracted the heart, when once the awakening

of the conscience had created in the heart the want of His goodness. There was then produced a confidence which revived the heart, turned it aside from evil, a confidence which no human being knows how to inspire, and which delivers the soul from the evil influence which surrounds and possesses it, as well as from the fear of man, to turn it towards God with a sincerity which demonstrates that it is in the light with God, but which demonstrates also that the goodness of God has found its way to the heart, in such sort that it has no desire to get out of a position in which all the evil that is found there is manifested, and manifested where all is love, and where one can rest because all is known. It is a love which inspires confidence, because, when all is known, God remains always love. Here is the divine character of Christ, to be the *light* which makes all manifest, the *love* which loves when all *is* made manifest, which knows all beforehand, which produces great uprightness in the heart, because it is a comfort that such a heart should know all. Such was Christ on earth: one was with God. The sinner who would have been ashamed to show himself to man, could hide his face in the bosom of Jesus, sure of not finding a reproach there. Not a sin allowed (if there had been, confidence would not have been established, because He would not have revealed the Holy God), but a heart which through the midst of the sin, received the sinner in His arms; and it was the heart of God. Christ was all that in this world, and He was much more than my poor pen could tell; yet man rejected Him. He was *all that* through opposition, hatred, outrages, and death; but all was in vain as regards man." J. N. D.

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## THE LOST SHEEP, AND WHAT IT COST THE SHEPHERD.

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MANY years ago a devoted servant of the Lord, who has since fallen asleep in Christ, in giving some recollections of his early life and ministry, among other experiences related the following deeply interesting incident, substantially reproduced in his own words. It so forcibly and beautifully

illustrates the two incomparable Scriptures, Luke xv. 2-7 and John x. 11-17, that we have great pleasure in bringing it before the notice of our readers, especially the unsaved, and we pray that it may be pondered, and the heart thereby directed to that blessed One, who for the glory of Him who sent Him, and for our own eternal blessing, came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10).

"I was seated one evening, at the close of a cold February day, in my little parlour in the farmhouse where I lodged. I had chosen this habitation, rather than any in the neighbouring village, because I was here located in the midst of my work ; and the event will show that my choice was not ill-made.

"I had had a hard day, and was now resting myself, seated comfortably before my peat fire, having just opened an interesting volume, when a knock was heard at the door. My landlady having answered it, announced to me that a very poor man, unknown to her, desired to see me. Of course I gave him instant admittance. I had never seen him before, and he appeared to me a most wan and desolate-looking being. He introduced himself by most humbly craving pardon for interrupting me at that unseasonable hour ; but he had one son—he feared the boy was dying, and he was most anxious that I should visit him. As it was now late, I replied that it should be one of my first cares the next morning to call to see him ; but he was not to be put off in this way. He persevered, urging his request by the unanswerable argument of immediate necessity. He declared that just before he quitted home to seek for me, the lad had been seized with a fit of coughing, which his mother feared would have ended him ; he had got over it, but was so much exhausted that she dreaded lest another like it might be the last. A sick call of such a nature should never be neglected, nor, if possible, postponed. I therefore rose immediately, and wrapping my dreadnought around me, as a defence against the bitter mountain wind, I prepared to follow my conductor ; my conscience meanwhile rebuked me for not having sooner made acquaintance with this family, of whom I now heard for the first time. But on arriving at their cabin on the mountain side, I could scarcely be surprised that I had not discovered it before. It was a complete Robinson Crusoe's hut, shut out from the

rest of the world so entirely, that, until I was close upon the door, I had not observed the trace of a human habitation.

“During our walk of about three miles, I had endeavoured to enter into conversation with my companion, but he was unwilling or unable to respond to my remarks, and I came to the conclusion that he was, like many other people of this district, in respect of Divine truth, utterly ignorant, and almost unimpressible. After upwards of an hour’s toilsome walking (for the road which in some places led over steep hills, was in others scarcely passable on account of the heavy marshes), we entered the miserable hovel. I looked around me, and at first found no sign of any inhabitant, except an old woman who sat crouching over the embers of a peat fire. She rose as I entered, and with the natural courtesy of the Irish poor (let them be ever so wretched), offered me the low chair, or rather stool, on which she had been seated. I thanked her, and passing on to the object of my visit, discovered in one corner of the hut a heap of straw, on which lay the poor sufferer. Some scanty covering, probably his own wearing apparel, had been thrown over him, but as to bed or bed-clothes, there was none discernible in this miserable dwelling. I approached, and saw a young lad, apparently about seventeen or eighteen years of age, evidently in a state of extreme suffering and exhaustion, and, it was to be feared, in the last stage of consumption. His eyes were closed, but he opened them on my approach, and stared at me with a kind of wild wonder, like a frightened animal. I told him, as quietly as possible, who I was, and for what purpose I had come, and put a few of the simplest questions to him respecting his hope of salvation. He answered me nothing; he appeared totally unconscious of my meaning. On pressing him further, and speaking to him kindly and affectionately, he looked up, and I ascertained from the few words he uttered, that he had heard something of a God and future judgment; but he had never been taught to read. The Holy Scripture was a sealed book to him, and he was consequently altogether ignorant of the way of salvation as revealed to us in the gospel; his mind on this subject was truly an utter blank.

“I was struck with dismay and almost with despair. Here was a fellow-creature, whose immortal soul, apparently on the verge of eternity, must be saved or lost for ever; and

he lay before me now—the hand of death close upon him ; not a moment was to be lost ; and what was I to do ? What way was I to take, to begin to teach him, as it were at the eleventh hour, the very first rudiments of Christianity ? I had scarcely ever before felt such a sinking within me. I could do nothing—that I knew full well. But, on the other hand, God could do *all* ; I therefore raised up my heart, and besought my heavenly Father, for Christ's sake, to direct me in this most difficult and trying position, and to open to me, by His spirit of wisdom, a way to set forth the glad tidings of salvation so as to be understood by this poor benighted wanderer.

“I was silent for a few moments whilst engaged in inward prayer, and gazing with deep anxiety on the melancholy object before me. It struck me then that I ought to try to discover how far his intelligence in other things extended, and whether there might not be reasonable hope of his understanding me when I should commence to open to him (as I was bound to do) the gospel message of salvation. I looked down upon him with an eye of pity, which I most sincerely felt, and I thought he observed that compassionate look, for he softened towards me as I said—

“‘My poor boy, you are very ill ; I fear you suffer a great deal.’ He replied with difficulty, ‘Yes, I have a bad cold ; the cough takes away my breath and hurts me greatly.’

“‘Have you had this cough long ?’ I asked. ‘Oh yes, a long time, near a year now.’

“‘And how did you catch it ? A Kerry boy, I should have thought, would have been reared hardily, and accustomed to this sharp air.’ ‘Ah ?’, he answered, ‘and so I was until that terrible night—it was about this time last year—when one of the sheep went astray : my father keeps a few sheep upon the mountain, and that's the way we live. When he reckoned them that night, there was one wanting, and he sent me to look for it.’

“‘No doubt,’ I replied, ‘you felt the change from the warmth of the peat fire in this close little hut, to the cold, mountain blast.’ ‘Oh ! that I did ; there was snow upon the ground, and the wind pierced me through and through ; but I didn't mind it much, I was so anxious to find father's sheep.

“‘And did you find it ?’ I asked, with increasing interest. ‘Oh yes ; I had a long, weary way to go, but I never stopped until I found it.’

“‘And how did you get it home? You had trouble enough with that, too, I daresay. Was it willing to follow you back?’ ‘Well, I didn’t like to trust it, and besides, it was dead beat and tired, so I just laid it on my shoulders, and carried it home that way.’

“‘And were they not all at home rejoiced to see you, when you returned with the sheep?’ ‘Sure enough and that they were. Father and mother, and the people round that had heard of our loss, all came in next morning to ask us about the sheep—for the neighbours in these matters are mighty kind to each other. Sorry they were, too, to hear that I was kept out the whole dark night; it was morning before I got home, and the end of it was I caught this cold. Mother says I will never be better now, God knows best—anyways, I did my best *to save the sheep.*’

“Wonderful! I thought. Here is the whole gospel history: the sheep is lost; the father sends his son to seek for, and recover it; the son goes willingly, suffers all without complaining, and in the end sacrifices his life to find the sheep; and when recovered, he carries it home on his shoulders to the flock, and rejoices with his friends and neighbours over the sheep which was lost, but is found again.

“My prayer was answered; my way made plain; and by the grace of God I availed myself of this happy opening. I explained to this poor dying boy the plan of salvation, making use of his own simple and affecting story. I read to him the few verses in the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke’s Gospel, where the care of the Shepherd for the stray sheep is so beautifully expressed; and he at once perceived the likeness, and followed me with deep interest while I explained to him the full meaning of the parable. The Lord mercifully opened not only his understanding but his heart also, to receive the things spoken. He himself was the lost sheep; Jesus Christ the good Shepherd who was sent by the Father to seek for him, and who left all the joys of that Father’s heavenly glory to come down to earth and search for him, and other lost ones like him; and as he, poor boy, had borne without murmuring the freezing snow storm, and the piercing wind, so had the blessed Saviour endured the fierce contradiction of sinners against Himself, and the bitter scorn and insult heaped upon Him, without opening His mouth to utter one word of complaint;

and at the last had laid down His precious life, that we might be rescued from destruction, and brought safe to our everlasting home. Neither will He trust His beloved ones, when rescued, to tread the perilous path alone, but bears them on His shoulders rejoicing, safe to the heavenly fold. My poor sick lad seemed to drink it all in. He received it all; he understood it all. I never saw a clearer proof of the power of the Divine Spirit to apply the word of God.

“He survived our first meeting but a few days. I had no time to read or expound to him any other portion of Scripture. At times we could hear nothing but the stifling, rending cough; at others, he slumbered heavily for a little; but whenever he was able to think and listen, these verses in the fifteenth chapter of Luke satisfied and cheered him. He accepted Christ as his Saviour; he earnestly prayed to be found of Him, to be carried home, like the lost sheep, in the heavenly Shepherd’s arms. He died humbly, peacefully, almost exultingly, with the Name of ‘Jesus, my Saviour and my Shepherd!’ the last upon his lips.”—*The Dying Boy and the Lost Sheep*, R. T. S.

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## URIM AND THUMMIM.—*Exod.* xxviii. 30.

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“THESE Urim and Thummim are the things I want to speak of particularly. ‘Lights and perfections’ the term means. And these things are one: the ‘lights’ are the ‘perfections,’—they are two ways of speaking of the same thing.

“‘God is light;’ He is ‘the *Father of lights.*’ That is to say, all partial displays of glory, of whatever character, come from Him as Source.

“And so does God display, in His various dealings with us, His various attributes; in one thing His holiness shining out pre-eminently, in another His truth, in another His love, and so on. Thus He adapts His greatness to our littleness, speaking to us in language that we are able to bear, that we may apprehend Him more as He desires we should.

“The ‘lights’ in the breastplate are the ‘perfections,’ the various perfections, of God Himself. These many-coloured

jewels are the manifold display of the divine excellency. And mark, these jewels are crystalized lights—*unchangeable* perfections. It is not a display, passing however great. In the rainbow, the token of God's covenant with the new earth brought through the judgment, you have what is essentially similar in character, but it is the display of God in one act. The whole diversified display of divine glory, I believe,—the whole spectrum of colour—banding the storm of divine judgment in the cross. 'Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him.' But however God might thus be at one time displayed, it is for all time that He is displayed; for He is always the same, and that is what is marked here. The jewels never lose and never change their light; and so is God always the 'Father of lights,' always 'without variableness or shadow of turning.'

"Mark, now, where these stones are found. They are upon the breastplate. And where is the breastplate? Upon the heart of the high priest. The stones press upon the heart of Israel's high priest. Surely we know now what that means,—that the one who goes to God for man (and that is what the priest does) must be one who has upon his heart before he goes, and as going, all that God Himself is. Only Christ could be, or was, that; but all that God is, in every attribute of His—every colour, so to speak, of the light—is there upon His heart abidingly; so dear, that He can never forget it, never lose sight of what is due to God in any one solitary particular.

"But even that, taken by itself, would not qualify Him for a mediator. There must be something else, and there is. The mediator-priest springs from the tribe of Levi—'joined,'—third son of Israel; for in resurrection (of which these 'thirds' manifestly speak) alone can He 'join' or bring others to God. In Himself personally He is indeed, we know, a Levi—'joined'—only begotten and first-begotten—Man to God; but in resurrection is He priest-Levite to join as Mediator others. This He is perfectly in heart as office; for upon these jewels, 'graven upon them with the engraving of a signet' ('Set me as a seal upon thine heart,' says the spouse in the Song of Songs), are the names of God's people,—here, of course, the names of the twelve tribes of Israel; for us, the type of all the people of God. These twelve names are engraven upon the jewels, so that you

would have to break the jewels in pieces to get them off. There they abide, unchangeably as the jewels themselves. In the light of the jewels you read the names. They are identified with the display of the lights and perfections of God Himself; so that here is One upon whose heart the people of God dwell, unfailingly and unchangeably connected with the display of the glory of God. Standing as He does on the one hand for God, on the other for man, it is not as if these were two separate or separable things with Him, much less things that might be in opposition to one another; they are things seen together, as the names written upon the Urim and Thummim jewels—typically, the divine perfections.

“Beloved, that is what the Lord Jesus Christ is; that is how He abides before God now, the blessed One who can never forget what is due to God, never the need of His people, never the righteousness which must be displayed in the blessing itself. Aye, for blessing, there must be righteousness! and again, thank God, for righteousness now (such the value of His work), there must be blessing! There is no discord then; there is the very opposite. The blessing of the people is the very way in which the glory of God is to be displayed. God takes them up for that very end; not merely to bless them and retain this, too, but to show it forth in blessing them, to the end ‘that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.’

“Thus the names are upon the breastplate, and the breastplate upon the high priest’s heart. How glorious the Person upon whom all this is fulfilled—in whom Godhead and manhood meet in One!—Immanuel!—in His own person “God with us.” And oh, beloved friends, marvellous as the cross is (surely the most marvellous thing that could be), yet we do Him wrong if we thought of that prepared body of His as if it was *only* prepared that He might go to the cross in it. No, He has taken it to take it for ever and ever; He has taken it as the equivalent of these bored ears of the Hebrew servant which signified perpetual service, when he might have gone out free. Think of One who looked down upon us when we had all gone astray from God—‘turned every one to his own way’—and seeing how we had fretted ourselves against the will of God, and

esteemed as bondage His easy yoke, Himself took up that slighted path of obedience—took up that service which we had so disparaged—never again to relinquish it, becoming Himself the ‘Leader and Perfecter of faith,’ ‘learning obedience’—He to whom all was due—‘from the things which He suffered!’

“How can we apply this now? First of all, of course, to Christ our great High Priest, who is passed into the heavens; but as a principle for us, and an important one, we may apply it this way: If we seek and obtain a divine answer as to anything in the Church down here, what characteristics will it have to prove itself a divine answer? Well, surely these two which the Urim and Thummim imply. God must first of all have His place in it. We must see the jewels, the lights and perfections, whole and altogether there. But then across the jewels must be seen the names of His people too. Love—divine love—to His people must characterize it, as well as love for God. Nay, the apostle asks how he who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, can in fact love God, whom he hath not seen.

“Here are two things that will surely characterize every divine judgment—every judgment of the Priest with Urim and Thummim. If God is light on the one hand, He is love on the other. As partakers of the divine nature, we must be doers of righteousness on the one hand; on the other, we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. Nay, as light and love are one in God, however much to us they may be two, so we may be sure of this: that whatever is not righteousness is not love, as whatever is not love is not righteousness.

“Remember, the Priest who has the Urim and Thummim alone can give the divine answer. In a true judgment of anything God must be first ever, but in indissoluble union with His people, as *He* holds them together, blessed be His name, the true High Priest, upon whom is the breastplate of righteousness; as He will hold them fast forever!”

F. W. G.

“God cannot cast off for ever those who trust in Him; light will spring up. There is relationship with God, and faith counts on it. So that the heart can plead its extreme sorrow and trial with a God whose compassions are known.”  
—J. N. D.

## LESSONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT.

### THE PRECIOUS STONES ON THE HIGH PRIEST'S DRESS.

“ONYX-STONES, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate,” were directed to be taken from the children of Israel, as part of their willing offering to Jehovah. (Ex. xxv. 7).

In Ex. xxviii. 9-12, we find two onyx-stones were to be fitted, one on each shoulder of the high-priest, in a golden “ouch,” having the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, six on each stone, graven upon them like the engravings of a signet; so that “Aaron shall bear their names before Jehovah upon his two shoulders for a memorial.”

This was an indispensable part of the customary official dress in which the high-priest ministered; and God makes herein a special appointment for the purpose of displaying before Himself, in “memorial,” the names of all the tribes of His people. Not that God needed, or ever needs, on His part, anything to remind Himself of the chosen objects of His care. It is not necessary to Him, though it was to be “before” Him. But it was to be a “memorial unto the children of Israel.” God desired they should enter into His thoughts of them, and understand what the thoughtfulness of His heart was about them, by this manner in which He dealt with their names.

Each particular is of importance. The names were engraved, sunk in the stones; six were on each stone; they were arranged in the order of birth; each stone was in an “ouch” of gold, and placed one on each of the shoulders of the ephod.

To engrave like the engravings of a signet would effectually prevent erasure, or any casual injury such as might easily occur either to writing, or to a raised

or embossed letter. Protection was best secured by this method; they could not be rubbed off, or be blotted out.

To put six names on each stone would group them, while equally distributing them.

The arrangement in the order of their birth gave a precedence after a natural rule—not an arbitrary one.

The setting made of gold introduces a special thought peculiar to that material. Gold is the divine in beauty; or, as the cherubim of gold in Ex. xxv. are called in Heb. ix., cherubim of *glory*, this latter term may concisely express its value.

The position, on the shoulders, is the place of power. There, Rebecca carried her pitcher; the twelve men carried up the twelve stones out of Jordan; and Samson, the gates of Gaza.

By this arrangement, Israel was to learn how securely each tribe was kept, and watched over; how equally they were sustained; how their family interests were all considered; while the peculiar beauty of the stone itself put a lustre on every name, and the surrounding brilliancy of the gold added a privilege of glory in token of Jehovah's favour bestowed upon them.

What a "memorial unto the children of Israel." Displayed in a security that all shared alike, whatever their tribal characters might be; lustrous with reflected light, and encircled with a glory that was the gift of God. And this on "the shoulders." Established in might, where failure could not come.

It is a picture of devoted power engaged with an object just suited to bring out into display what it could do. Power occupied not in the bare sustaining of a weight, but in sustaining it with beauty and glory attached untarnished, and in full manifestation.

Now the law had "a shadow of good things to come." And "for our sakes, no doubt, this is written." How the power of God is now pledged in Christ Jesus to maintain all believers, whatever they may per-

sonally be, comely before God with the preciousness of His Son, and joint-heirs with Him of the glory soon to be revealed!

But there is a further use of precious stones in the priest's dress to which we will now look. They are employed in "the breastplate of judgment" in the following way.—(Ex. xxviii. 17-21.) Twelve different stones are used, named separately and in order. They are arranged in four rows (most probably as the four sides of a square, leaving a centre open to receive the Urim and Thummim), each in its gold enclosure; each bearing the name of one tribe engraved upon it. The expression, "according to the twelve tribes" (ver. 21), seems to suggest that the order in which they were arranged was that of the plan of the camp; an order purely eclectic, with Judah, not Reuben, set first. The position of Urim and Thummim in the breastplate would then correspond to that of the Tabernacle and its glory in the midst of the camp. The breastplate itself was made of fine-twined linen, with decorations of blue, purple, scarlet, and gold. Apparently, it could be folded together (ver. 16) and enclose its jewelry.

Its name, "breastplate of judgment," may be first noticed as giving a significance of value. For often has the term "judgment" been linked with the idea of condemnation. But the original term, much like the English one, has a varying force, frequently expressing a happy, at other times an unhappy, meaning. It does mean condemnation, but also it means estimate and discernment. And as the Urim and Thummim were in the breastplate, by which the mind of God was made known, some have connected this with the name, and regarded it as the breastplate for discerning God's mind. The more simple thought, however, is that of *estimate*, expressive of the heart's estimate of its object, the twelve tribes. In ver. 30 it will then read, "And Aaron shall bear the estimate of the children of Israel upon his heart before Jehovah continually."

And what is God's own estimate of those whom He blesses? How will His affection be found to express itself towards them? It will take a *separate* stone for each name, and a *different* one in each case. Affection will individualise, while power may collect and group. Affection will assign the sapphire, or the emerald, or the beryl, as it discerns a personal suitability. Affection will arrange in special order, too, though not that of nature; it will rather choose that which affords a gratification to itself, by displaying its own character in its actings. Affection will put a gold enclosing to each stone, whatever variety of colour or grace each stone exhibits. Each name has its brilliant gem, and is sunk in it, its colour all to itself, and its setting of glory complete, also, around each one.

What greater joy has true love than to take its objects one by one, and bedeck each with the best it can find, according to that which truly suits it?

And when the heart of God is the source and fountain of the love, who, or what, shall limit the grace, the beauty, the loveliness, the glory, with which He shall abound towards us in all wisdom and prudence? When God Himself sets out to adorn some object, that in the ages to come He may show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards it in Christ Jesus, what measures, what ordering, what colours, what lengths and fulnesses, and depths and heights shall He gather and bestow, in order to bring home some fair conviction of what His heart is!

Ah! There goes a poor blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious, haling folks to prison in exceeding madness, because they cared for God's Son. What a doom must await him. Surely, *if left to himself*. But the blessed God would not do that; He found in that heart of enmity supreme opportunity to forgive a bitter enemy, new-create him, make him partaker of the divine nature, enrich him with grace upon grace, make him an heir of glory, presently to have a new

name all to himself on a white stone, beyond all attack, or fault, or thief, for ever and for evermore  
Such is God's heart!

Mark again the varied thoughts conveyed by the different ordering of the names on the two shoulders, and of the names upon Aaron's heart. (Ex. xxviii. 30.) On the shoulders, the place of power, the names are collected and put six together on one stone. Does not this carry home the truth of the Lord's *personal* love to each of His redeemed ones now? And does not the different colour of each stone tell of the varied beauty He puts on each saint? While further, to enclose each in gold, being such, suggests not only the display in glory, but display in glory as the expression of that varied beauty, which His personal love made the particular saint the vessel for exhibiting.

We are assured of personal favour from Divine love, favour varied to its recipients, and which varied favour each shall declare publicly when the glory that all shall share shall be revealed. "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!"

Finally, we may ask, Why was all this revealed and put into our hand? Surely that we should walk worthy of God, who hath called us to His own kingdom and glory. The clearer joy we have in His love, the more effective now its power in us must become; and it is as we dwell upon His revelation and search it out, that that joy grows deeper and clearer to our hearts. Only welcome every precept, doctrine, example, shadow, that brings into fuller light the revealed mind of God and the glories and graces of Christ.

E. C. P.

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"If Christ had been as wilful and short as I was, my faith had gone over the hill and broken its neck; but we were well met—a hasty fool, and a wise, patient, and meek Saviour."—*Samuel Rutherford.*

## THOUGHTS ON PSALMS XLII. AND XLIII.

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IT has been remarked by another, that "faith gets to what is above circumstances when nature is overwhelmed by them." And how true this is, for "faith is the substantiating of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb. xi. 1.), and faith has to do, not only with things unseen, unshakeable, and eternal, but with God Himself, Who is above all circumstances, and Who is able to lead the heart when overwhelmed to the Rock "higher than I," and to teach the one who trusts in Him deep and blessed lessons in the circumstances which, may be, he could not learn elsewhere, and which shall redound to His praise throughout the eternal ages.

Surely it was no little trial that led the psalmist to express himself as he does in ver. 7 Ps. xlii.: "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy water-spouts: all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me." Keenly must he have felt the reproof of his enemies, "Where is *thy* God?" His tears day and night, his mourning as with a sword in his bones, tell us that; and as to outward circumstances, what could he say? how could he answer them? He does not attempt to do so; he does what is far wiser and better, he pours out his soul to God: "O *my* God," he says, "my soul is cast down within me." If he cannot reply to his enemies, if he cannot point to any outward sign of His intervention on his behalf, yet he knows God, his God, as the *living* God, and to Him he turns in his distress, and like the hart on the mountains panting after the water-brooks, so his soul thirsted after Him with whom is the fountain of life, who is "the fountain of living waters" (Jer. ii. 13). And he is encouraged. The One who, when his spirit was overwhelmed within him, knew his path (Ps. cxlii. 3)

comforteth him ; God, who comforteth them that are cast down, leads him to the Rock higher than he ; and he says, "why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God ; for I shall yet praise Him"—for if God is the *living* God, what can the enemy do? "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine," says the stripling David, "that he should defy the armies of the living God?" and if His loving-kindness encourages the weak one to put his trust under the shadow of His wings in the *daytime* (ver. 8), what else shall he do in the *night season*, but sing and pray to Him "Who giveth songs in the night," as Paul and Silas did in a later day (Acts xvi. 25), to Him in whose hand was his life and breath—"the God of my life" (compare Ps. lxiii. 7, Job xxxv. 10). For although he may be weak, and totally unable to cope with enemies mightier than he is, yet like the conies of which we read (Prov. xxx. 24-26), a feeble folk, little upon the earth, but exceeding wise, he knows a place of safety, a refuge, a home,—“I will say unto God, *my Rock*.” The One who commandeth His loving-kindness (ver. 8) has revealed His name as the resource of His people, His redeemed, and "the name of the Lord is a strong tower ; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe" (Prov. xviii. 10). "Be Thou my strong habitation (or, a rock of habitation), where-unto I may continually resort" (Ps. lxxi. 3).

Deep and blessed lessons these to learn—what God can be to a weak and sinful one who trusts in Him, and waits on Him. In ver. 9 he has addressed God as his *Rock*, and now in Ps. xliii. 2 he says, "Thou art the *God of my strength*." What matter, then, his weakness, if it clings to Almighty power? Strength made perfect in weakness: "out of weakness made strong," is one of the triumphs of faith in Hebrews xi. ; and if faith can plead, "When I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not until I have shewed Thy strength (or Thine arm) unto this generation,"

God, who delights to answer the faith He gives, says, "Even to your old age I am He: and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you" (Isa. xlv. 4).

"To God our weakness clings, through tribulation sore,  
And seeks the covert of His wings, till all be o'er."

And when the end is reached, the desired haven, the Father's house on high, the voice of joy and praise will be heard alway, "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they will be still praising Thee." (Ps. lxxxiv. 4).

In Egypt, Israel had no song; in the wilderness they had occasional bursts of praise, though soon, alas, changed for murmuring; but in Zion, where praise is now silent (Ps. lxxv.), songs shall yet ascend to Jehovah, from hearts made glad by Himself. "Satisfied with My goodness, saith the Lord" (Jer. xxxi. 12-14); "I will go unto the altar of God, unto God, *my exceeding joy*," saith the Psalmist; "Yea, upon the harp will I praise Thee, O God, *my God*"—"the living God," "God of my life," "*my rock*," "*my strength*," "*my exceeding joy*," "*my God*." What He is, and what He can be for those who know His name, and put their trust in Him, learnt in circumstances of sorrow, trial, and difficulty, in a dry and thirsty land where no water is! And this ending in praise, untiring praise and worship from those who have reached the desired haven, where the whole heart will for ever praise Him for having brought us through a path of peril and sorrow, home to His own rest!

"So He bringeth them unto their desired haven."

W. R. H.

R.

"He speaketh with my reins in the night season; and in the morning, when I awake, I find His love-arrows, which He shot at me, sticking in my heart. Who will help me to praise? Who will lift with me, and set on high His great love?"—*Samuel Rutherford*.

## GLORY TOGETHER WITH CHRIST.

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WHAT will it be *Thy face* to see,  
 Lord Jesus, Lord of all !  
 On Thee to gaze, 'mid glory's blaze,  
 In worship prostrate fall ?

What will it be *Thy saints* to see  
 In all Thy beauty dressed,  
 Thyself among the heav'nly throng  
 Adoringly confessed ?

What will it be *Thy home* to see—  
 The Father's house above ;  
 To walk in white with Thee in light,  
 In that blest scene of love ?

What will it be *Thy throne* to see,  
 And sit with Thee thereon,  
 With Thee to reign,—God's Lamb once slain,  
 His overcoming One ?

What will it be *Thy Bride* to see,  
 In bridal beauty there,  
 With undimmed eyes, the Bridegroom's prize,  
 Henceforth divinely fair ?

But oh ! when we *Thy glory* see,  
 (The Father's answer giv'n,)  
 What rapture will our hearts then fill ;  
 That, that alone, were heav'n !

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“I know no sweeter way to heaven than through free grace and hard trials together ; and one of these cannot well want the other. O that time would post faster, and hasten our longed-for communion with that fairest, fairest among the sons of men ! O that the day would favour us and come ! I am sure a few years will do our turn, and the soldier's hour-glass will soon run out. Madam, look to your lamp, and look for your Lord's coming.”—*Samuel Rutherford.*

## LETTERS OF INTEREST.

## COLOSSIANS I.

R——, 5th July, 1860.

MY DEAR ——,

Hitherto I have been unable to give you any further notes of the lectures on Colossians. In great mercy and grace God has on each occasion brought the hearts of the saints into increasing communion with the Lord Jesus Himself as risen, and Head over all things to the Church, which is His body—and this is the great desideratum in these last days.

For nothing will give thorough and steady deliverance from all the power and all the wiles of Satan, whatever form these may assume, but this individual consciousness of association with the risen Christ in life—death and all it could touch left behind in His tomb—and we, freed by His death, one in life everlasting with the Living One. “Because I live, ye shall live also.” Then, connected with this is Rest—rest of heart, I mean, in His heart: not merely rest of conscience—which there is in the fullest way; for is not He the Firstborn *from the dead*, where He lay in love on account of our sins? but having borne them, He “was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father.” And more than that, us who were dead *in sins* God has quickened together with that blessed One Who was dead *for our sins*, so that we are even now children of the resurrection. But that is not all. He is not only our Life, as head of His Body the Church, but *we* are members of His body. Now this not only reveals life, but it reveals love—love which is a kind of *natural* or befitting thing—“For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church.” Thus we get this rest. We are His own body, which He cannot but nourish and cherish; so that our comfort and blessing, and sense

of His love, is the very dearest object of His heart as to this relationship. What a divine spring of gladness and peace, and brightness too, is the consciousness of being in this intimate union (one Spirit) with that blessed One, and being besides the objects of His love and delight, as we travel the brief journey to meet Him. We are on our way from Mesopotamia to the Land of Desire, where He dwells. O happy day! when we shall see Him, and bless Him for all His love, and hide our faces for wondering worship of His infinite condescension in ever setting His love on such worthless, thankless ones as we are. But in this, too, we must say, "So it seemed good in Thy sight."

But I was going to give you a few particulars of the subsequent lectures—though now I fear my strength will not permit me.

We have only come to the beginning of the 15th verse, the recapitulation on each occasion opening out fresh springs of blessing in Him, so as to detain us over and over again on the prayer from verse 9.

Two great things came before us in the 3rd verse and the subsequent ones. First, the ground of the thanksgiving; and second, the occasion of it. He thanked God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—praying always moreover—for the hope laid up for these Colossians in heaven. O this was the joyful thing to the Apostle, that God had brought into living and everlasting connection with heaven, a fresh group of Satan's bond-slaves, by the word of the truth of the Gospel. O the sweetness of that word "heaven" to the Apostle—and never more than at this time in his prison—Satan raging on earth. But all his malice could not touch heaven nor their hope *laid up* for them there. He might worry and harass them here, but that could be but for a moment. "All the bliss to which they tend, eternally shall last." What a blessing: not to be looking for signs and an earthly inheritance, but to have a place and portion in *heaven*, inalienable and unailing, and to be looking for His

coming. Who is to bring us there. Many a cloud may darken these lower skies, and many a storm toss our frail bark, but far above all clouds, and in a place untouched by them all, is our Life and our portion in heaven. Our hope enters into heaven; and there, fast in the Rock of Ages, our anchor keeps us steady, outriding in faith and hope the darkest hour. That was his thanksgiving. It was to God. He begins with Him. How bound up Paul was with the interests of Christ, with the filling of the house with guests!

But how could he give such assured thanks, having never seen these Colossians? O, he had heard of their faith in Christ Jesus and love to all the saints. This is the second point that came before us. He had heard of their possessing the two grand distinctive features and characteristics of the divine life—faith and love. Faith which brings the soul to Jesus, and love which embraces all the saints. Faith which fled to Jesus as the *friend* of sinners, and which binds the soul to Him as the everlasting Saviour: the one stay and confidence of the heart that has found out that it has none anywhere else. "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but *faith* which worketh by love." All ordinances go for nothing, and the want of them is no bar. Faith brings to Jesus, and the soul lives of Him and to Him. Faith strikes its roots in Christ—dead and risen—and is a living channel for the inflowing of His grace, His love, His sympathy, His strength. It connects with Him, and so finds Him wisdom, righteousness—yea, all it wants. Ah! it could have none else. No wisdom for faith but Christ. Is it after *Christ*? No righteousness for faith but Christ—*God's* righteousness: O how dear, as the expression of the excellency of His work on the bitter Cross! This righteousness is the meed of His travail, and dear beyond expression on this account.

But, then, if faith thus looks upward, not only to

heaven, but to *Christ Jesus*, love looks around to all who are His. O the tender look of love on the precious ones of Christ—all radiant with His comeliness, unknown of the world; but O, seen in His bosom, graven there. It is the sight of them *there* that endears them as *here*. All are alike precious as ransomed by His blood; and all are alike dear to Him as the gift of His Father. All alike hated of Satan and the world; but objects of the interest, and ministry, and communion of heaven. Thus does love enfold the saints in its bosom, as did Ruth the whole people of Israel: "*Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.*" The heart expends its love for Him on them. Are they sick?—He is sick. Are they tried?—He is tried. We do it unto Him. And there is a glory and honour in being permitted to serve the beloved of such an One. O the honour of being entrusted with the care and blessing of one even of *His* sheep, of *His* lambs! But only from Himself can we learn how to care for them. Ah! He cares for us day by day, and we have but to do to them as He does to us. Happy service! All in the very bowels of Jesus Christ. Thus, too, we come to know Him better. Many a thought of love we come to know of in His heart towards one and another, which we should never have dreamt of had we not come to learn it thus. And we, too, are ourselves enfolded in ever so many hearts because we are dear to Him. He binds us thus to each other *in Himself*. Lose we one friend of earth in following Him, we find a thousand of heaven. Ah! ten thousand *in Him*. *In HIM*. EVER *in Him*. All empty pipes, but filled to the full in Him. All drinking of and sharing in, what we get of and in Him. He the bond and the object of each in all! Farewell, dearly beloved.

J. R.

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"I fear that I adore His comforts more than Himself, and that I love the apples of life better than the Tree of life."—*Samuel Rutherford*.

## RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

## II.

PARENTAL relationship, whether natural or spiritual, is of God, who has been pleased to originate the former before introducing the latter, so that when such a spiritual relationship should be revealed and formed, His people might the better understand the privileges and blessings connected with it. For as we see the unfolding in the Word, step by step, of God's thought and provision for the welfare of His creatures upon earth, we come to discern what surely must have been in His mind, and the joy for His heart to which He looked forward.

Who can now doubt, that when Adam was put by the Lord God in the garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it, and all the animals were brought to him to be named, that Jehovah was looking forward to the day when the Son of Man shall appear in glory, and all creation be subjected to His sway? Again, reading, as we are privileged to do, of what passed in God's mind as He looked on His creature Adam, then alone in the garden (Gen. ii. 18), it is not too much for us to declare that He had already in His thoughts the accomplishment of that purpose (which is still future), to make a marriage for the King's Son. So when instituting the relationships of parent and child, it can be no presumption on our part to assume that He had before His mind the day, when He should be able to announce that such a relationship could exist between Himself and some of the children of men. For by Him, as was fitting, it was first made known. In both Testaments we read of it. In the Old, it is in connection with the people of Israel: in the New, it is in connection with those who are really His saints on earth; and therein we learn that the

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the Father of those who believe on Him.

This distinction, just noticed, it is important to bear in mind. In Old Testament times, in keeping with the dispensational teaching of the day, when God took up the nation of Israel to be His people, and He to be their God, the redemption enjoyed and the relationship known were national, not individual. Israel was God's son. With us it is different. Each saint now is God's child, and He is his Father; and everyone who has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of his sins is to know, by the gift of the Holy Ghost bestowed on him, what it is to cry, "Abba, Father." Further, it is helpful to remember that, in the Old Testament, it is God who is the Father of Israel: in the New Testament, the first person of the Trinity is the One whom we address by that name; He is God the Father.

Let us trace this out a little more in detail.

To Exodus iv. 22, 23 we must first turn, in which we read God's message by Moses to Pharaoh, King of Egypt,—“Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my first-born: and I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve Me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy first-born.” It was significant and instructive that God sent this announcement to the proud Egyptian monarch, and not to Israel. To him was it to be made known; he was to hear that the nation of slaves, over whom he had ridden roughshod, was the son, the first-born of Jehovah of Hosts. It was significant, because it showed that God was not acting in accordance with the thoughts of man in such a matter. For who could have supposed that He would have passed by the dominant, highly-civilised, and cultivated race of the day, to espouse the cause of, and to form so close a tie between, Himself and a nation of slaves? It was instructive, likewise, for, considering the condition of that people, the announcement of such a relationship

to God in heaven was a manifestation on His part of pure, sovereign grace. What had they done to deserve it? Nothing. In what condition were they when that revelation was announced? In that of hopeless and abject misery (Ex. i. 13, 14; ii. 23); and announced it was, not to them to nerve them for the conflict, but to their taskmasters, the Egyptians, to make them set the people free. The people's condition, then, was no barrier to the existence and assertion by God of such a relationship to Himself. The Egyptians looked down on them, and loathed, or abhorred them (i. 12); but Jehovah was not ashamed to be the Father of such a people, and He would make the proud and haughty monarch know it, and subsequently have proof of it. Pharaoh might disavow all knowledge of Jehovah (v. 2), and refuse compliance with His commands; but the night of the 14th of Abib would come, in which he should bewail the death of his first-born, and learn in that bitter way what a wonderful privilege it is to be in such a relationship with the One, true, and living God.

This tie once formed, God never broke nor disowned. The failure of the people could not dissolve it, nor will God ever forget it. Hosea (xi. 1) reminded them of it in the past; Jeremiah (xxxii. 8-9) predicted that which will give them joy from it in the future:—"Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble; for I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born."

Of this relationship Moses had reminded the people, ere they crossed the Jordan (Deut. xxxii. 6); and Jeremiah in his day sought to impress it on them (iii. 19), but all to no purpose, so captivity had to be

their lot, and centuries of sorrow have that people now known. Indissoluble, however, is that tie. Of this Isaiah, too, bears witness in the language put by the Spirit of prophecy in the mouths of the godly remnant of the future:—"Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; Thy name is from everlasting" (lxiii. 16); and again, "But now, O Lord, Thou art our Father: we are the clay; and Thou our potter; and we all are the work of Thy hand" (lxiv. 8).

Of everlasting grace this speaks; of the unchangeableness, too, of God's purpose it is a proof. Israel did not deserve such a favour, that is clear. If they could ever have deserved it, they have certainly forfeited all claim to it. But it was not, it is not, a question of deserts. The question is one of God's sovereignty; He formed the tie of His own will. He will never break it, nor will He cease to avow it. What comfort is all this for us, who now know God the Father as our Father as well as our God.

A Father! What are the thoughts connected with the enjoyment of such a blessing? On this we are not left in doubt. Each of us who have known our natural father may form some idea of what is involved in that parental tie. Some, however, there are who from circumstances have never known an earthly father's care or love, though they bear in life their parent's name. Such a state of things should not be the experience of God's children in these days. He desires that they should know the Father; so the Holy Ghost is given to us, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father." And what each of His children may find Him to be, He desires them to understand directly from Himself; so He graciously teaches us about it in His own Word.

"A Father of the fatherless, ..... is God in His holy habitation" (Ps. lxviii. 5). He cares for and protects those who have no natural protector. On this His

people can count. Pity, too, for His children He feels, and as is needed will give proof of it, for "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust" (Ps. ciii. 13, 14). What consideration on His part thus to speak, calling attention to that earthly tie, which is of Himself, and to the feelings towards the offspring which are implanted in the breast of an earthly parent. What should we think of that parent who had no pity for his children? An unnatural father, all would call him. Alas! amongst men such a character is not unknown; yet it is but natural and right for an earthly father to feel compassion for his children. The relationship in which he is towards them should call it forth spontaneously, as circumstances require it. Now all that such an one should feel for his own, that God our Father really feels for His children, only, of course, with an intensity and depth beyond the capability of the creature to exhaust, or even to fathom. "He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." Precious, surely, should that word "remembereth" be. An earthly parent may forget it or ignore it; God never will. His compassion can be always counted on by those who fear Him.

But other characteristics there are proper to a parent. He trains his child as is needed, chastening him, too, betimes as wisdom combined with love may direct. Such, too, are the dealings of our Father with His children. "If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." How the Spirit of God would encourage the saint, when passing through trials and sorrows here for the truth's sake. Would any cry out in bitterness, "Hath God forgotten to be gracious?" The answer comes—"We have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us

after their own pleasure ; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness" (Heb. xii. 8-10). Many an earthly parent acts capriciously ; our Father does not. Many a trainer of the young deals with them without telling them why ; but if God puts His children to school, as He surely does, He graciously intimates the object He has in view—viz., that we should be partakers of His holiness—and He gives a word of encouragement, "My son, despise thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him : for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (ver. 5, 6).

Again, not only has He tender pity for His own, and takes such pains with their training, but, like an earthly father, He delights to enrich them by tokens of His parental love. Of this we are taught in the Gospels :—"Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you : for every one that asketh receiveth ; and he that seeketh findeth ; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone ? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent ? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him ?" (Matt. vii. 7-11). These, be it remembered, are the words of the Only-begotten Son, who was in the bosom of the Father when He uttered them, and was therefore fully competent thus to speak. They are part, too, of the revelation of the Father by the Son given to us in the New Testament, and so would carry us into another branch of the subject, teaching not only what is implied in the thought of a father, but what is unfolded to us of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Father, too, of all who believe on His Son.

## LUKE IV.

THESE meditations have guided us to behold the original and material heavens, when violated and forfeited by Satan and the first Adam, re-entered by "the Word made Flesh," and taken up in righteous title by the perfect obedience of the second Man. Satan had held his palace and his goods in peace, ever since the fall; but a stronger than the strong man had entered the house, to spoil his goods, and take away the armour wherein he trusted, but not until these rights of the Son of Man had been challenged and disputed.

For He was "led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil." The voice from heaven had doubtless roused the liar and murderer in his palace, and he came forth to see who this Son of Man might be, who was thus the object of God's favour and delight.

This illustrious stranger, whoever he might be, was found in fashion as a man, and genealogically as the son of David, which was the son of Abraham, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.

The tempter would cross the path of this second Man, and did: yea, Jesus Himself submitted to the trial, "and in those days He did eat nothing, and when they were ended He afterwards hungered;" and through this need or want it was, that the devil sought an opening or assailable point for his temptations against no one less than the proclaimed Son of God.

Adam was only this by title of creation, and was thus entered on the genealogy of the registry of God; but this Son who had come into the world by the mystery of the Incarnation, was eternally such in His own essential Being, one with the Father, and had

now become one with the human family, so far as taking up flesh and blood, though ever apart from sin.

It was a plainly admitted fact between the heavens and the earth, that the Adam who was made out of the dust of the ground, though in the image of God, by the breath of life, had sold himself into the hand of the tempter by disobedience, and thus broke loose from God, and earned death as the wages of his sin.

The relationship of God with man, and of man with his Creator and with creation, were thus in question—yea, more than this, for God in righteous judgment had driven him out of the garden, condemned to eat bread by the sweat of his brow, the ground being cursed to bring forth thorns and thistles.

The rights of God and the wrongs of man; the usurpation of Satan and the works of the devil; the groaning creation and a lost world; life and death; heaven, earth, and hell; the glory of God, as celebrated "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," had brought forth from the Father the Son of His own love.

In the midst of these ruins, and of this revolt, Jesus stood—the only One equal to claims, and calls, and occasions such as these. Adam had forfeited God's image, and his position and title, by disobedience, and now the Son of Man will enter the field, and maintain the combat with no other weapon than His perfect obedience unto death—for it was to be finally in this stronghold of Satan that all was to be recovered which had been lost, and the devil's power destroyed.

In due time "the Father of Glory" would Himself turn the grave of death, and defeat, and corruption, for his saints who had been swallowed up thereby, aforetime, into an open and empty sepulchre of victory and renown, because of Him who lay there for three days, in proof that He could not be holden of it. But of the eater it was that this Mighty One brought forth meat, and, in the very place of Satan's power, made even death itself the stepping stone to

the right hand of God, and found a new register of titles to the eternal glory, and to other Headships that Adam never had to lose, but which were hidden in God from before the foundation of the world. But how will Satan lay his wiles, and practise his deceits in the presence of the last Adam, as the hungry Man in a wilderness—not in the garden which God had planted, and in which He walked with the one in His own image ; but in a sin-ruined creation, with the devil to confront Him as a tempter? “And the devil said unto Him, if Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.”

In His own Sonship, and in His own inherent rights, He held by undisputed title both supremacy and sovereignty—from everlasting “He spake and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast”—as the prophetic Spirit, when David sung by that minstrelsy, bears witness. But now the Son was in fashion as a Man upon the earth, and obedience was His place ; besides this, He had taken the form of a Servant, to be dependent and subject. Had He commanded, it would have falsified His new relations as a Man and Servant, whose meat was to do the will of Him who sent Him.

No, “He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted,” and accepted all the circumstances, taking them from the hand of God as precisely suited for the hour of His temptation, answering, “it is written that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.”

The devil’s first trial was upon the highest point, viz., the attempt to move Jesus out of the place of the obedient Man, and the dependent Servant, by the exercise of an independent will, and the display of power to turn stones into bread, which would have been the fatal proof of discontent and dissatisfaction with the path into which the Spirit had led Him.

The second Man is perfect in His allegiance to God, in the midst of all that was against Him, and

thus wins this glory back for God and Himself. Baffled and foiled, but not yet defeated (save on the strongest point of all), the devil tempts Jesus by "showing Him all the kingdoms of the world," and offered to give Him all this power, and the glory of them, if He would only worship him.

But will Jesus own the usurper, as having God's authority to put up and set down as he pleases, in dispensing the power and glory even of the kingdoms of this world to whomsoever he will? Nay, He will not even notice such proposals, except to disclaim them all by saying, "get thee behind Me, Satan," and to reverse these temptations by adding, "it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

How blessed it is to see that forfeited and lost relations and positions are now won back from the enemy's hand, and made the occasion of strength, and glory, and honour both to God and to man—for tempted and tried to the utmost, the devil could only bring out the proofs that this last Adam is the obedient Man, the dependent Servant, and the worshipping One. A last and only temptation remains; for if this Son of Man will hold fast His integrity, and not break His allegiance to God in the wilderness, nor accept of Satan the glory of the world as viewed in a moment of time from the top of the high mountain, Satan can only tempt Him to presume upon the love and favour in which He stood with God.

So "he brought Him to Jerusalem, and set Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down from hence; for it is written, He shall give His angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee; and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone." But equally does Jesus refuse presumption upon love, answering, "It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

With what satisfaction, what joy, do we read these

triumphs of our blessed Lord over the wilderness, and its wants, and His hunger, as well as over the high mountain, with all its blandishments and allurements of the kingdoms of this world, and over the pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem, and the special temptation, as He looked down upon the city of the great King, to presume on God's faithfulness, and angelic hosts employed on His behalf! Every weapon in the armoury of the great deceiver employed, but only to bear witness to the voice from heaven, and the Dove which descended upon Him, that "Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And when the devil had ended the temptation he departed from Him for a season—for Man, in the person of Christ, had said, "get thee behind Me, Satan." The heavens were opened over Jordan upon the Messiah, "true Ark of the Covenant," and the elect people; and now the earth is to be opened to Him, who has displaced Satan, and commanded him to make way. True, it is a victory over the powers of darkness, not as yet by might (to follow in its time), but by "My Spirit, saith the Lord;" and it should be wonderful in our eyes to behold this moral triumph over Satan, by the unswerving obedience and thorough devotedness of the Son of Man.

Man was not only a driven-out creature, but had become *morally* a sinner before God, with a fallen nature; and this led him to be an easy prey to the spoiler, led captive by the devil at his will. But the rights of Christ, both personally and morally, to be in the world, have been avouched by God from the heavens, and on the earth by His defeating Satan. He has entered into the house, and will make Himself acquainted with it from one end to the other, and carry outward every purpose of grace and power as the glory of God may require. He has won for Himself a title and a place on the earth, and is Master of the position to all intents as regards God and Satan; but what will Israel, and the Gentiles, and the world,

say and do, as He comes out in His wondrous ministry, to show Himself to them as their Saviour and Deliverer?

J. E. B.

## HERE AND THERE.

HERE, 'mid these desert sands, we still press on—  
 Marked by the footprints of our Saviour, gone  
 Before His pilgrim saints to find a rest  
 For them amidst the mansions of the blest !  
 How often here the desert storms arise  
 To blot those footprints from our straining eyes ;  
 Or, as we languish 'neath the noontide heat,  
 The mocking mirage of some cool retreat  
 Allures our flagging steps, to find, dismayed,  
 No springing well, no spreading palm trees' shade,  
 But bleaching bones to warn us, and to tell  
 Of those, alas ! who followed it and fell !

But *there*, on that blest shore, no Peter weeps  
 Over his Lord forsworn ; no Mary steep  
 Her Saviour's feet in sin-repentant tears,—  
 For sin is not : and ever as the years  
 (Time's gauge no more) in endless cycles roll,  
 Thou only, Saviour, shalt suffice the soul !

J. F.

“ Brother, remember the Lord's word to Peter, ‘ Simon, lovest thou Me? Feed My sheep.’ No greater testimony of our love to Christ can be, than to feed, faithfully and painfully, His lambs and His sheep.”

“ It hath pleased my Lord so to line my heart with the love of my Lord Jesus that, as if the field were already won, and I on the other side of time, I laugh at the world's golden pleasures, and at this dirty idol that the sons of Adam worship. This worm-eaten god of theirs is that which my soul hath fallen out of love with.”—*Samuel Rutherford.*

## “CALL IN THE DOGS.”

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I DO not know a more blessed fact for any of the children of men to learn than what God says of Himself by Isaiah the prophet (chap. lv. 8, 9)—“My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” Had not this, indeed, been so, not a particle of blessing, here or hereafter, would have reached us. Never did David give finer or more fruitful evidence of his profound knowledge of God than when he exclaimed,—“Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are great, and let me not fall into the hand of man” (2 Sam. xxiv. 14).

Were God to deal with His creature man as men deal with their fellows, terrible, truly, would be our fate! Take the case of the Ninevites for an example, and Jonah's conduct therein. He would have had judgment, relentless judgment, poured out upon the city of Nineveh in any case; but how different were the thoughts of God! Directly that these poor Gentiles humbled and afflicted themselves before Him, He became the relenting One whose boundless compassion found vent in the words, “Should not I spare Nineveh?” And when the Lord Jesus was upon earth, and was opening in the heart of the woman of the well of Sychar (John iv.) channels for the water of life to flow in eternally, His disciples prudishly marvelled that He should be speaking with such a woman! When He sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, and received the heart-broken homage of such another (Luke vii.), Simon concluded, in his worldly wisdom, that had He been a prophet, He would have spurned her from His feet and repulsed her from His presence.

And when, in yet another instance, He was appealed to (John viii.) that He might sanction the stoning of the guilty one, by the same word stirred He the consciences of the accusers and disarmed them, that He might in the presence of guilt, and even infamy, fill the place that divine grace assigned Him as the uncondemning One, saying, "Go, and sin no more." The Boanerges, or sons of thunder (James and John), sought that fire from heaven should descend on those who received not the Master in His pathway of grace and mercy, but "He turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." When the 5,000 hungered and fainted, the disciples would have sent them away fasting; but He who knew what the pangs of hunger were, said, Give ye them to eat, and failing that, He fed them to the full! When the multitude rebuked blind Bartimæus, who had called for mercy, and would have stifled his cries, the Lord stood still and commanded him to be brought, that He might give him all his desire. When the disciples similarly rebuked the Judæan mothers for bringing their beloved children into His presence, He Himself again interposed, saying, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."

Surely, were no other instances adducible, here were enough to establish how the mighty volume of the goodness and grace of God rises above the low levels and the narrow limits of men's thoughts and men's ways, breaking the bounds they would impose, and therein making good the words so blessedly spoken by the mouth of Isaiah so long before.

Nor is the case of the Syro-phenician suppliant by any means an exception. Let us not imagine that the Lord was indisposed to relieve her distress, or unwilling to listen to her cry. Such a thought would dishonour the blessed Lord, and falsify His grace. From the beginning He was resolved to assuage her

sorrow, and to grant her all her request. He was bent upon blessing her, and bless her He must and He would. But, that the blessing might exceed her desire both in its breadth and depth; that she might know herself, yea, that she might also know Himself; that she might have her new-born faith stirred, stimulated, strengthened, and, when established, that it might be accredited and rewarded with an immeasurably blessed response—He led her through those salutary and progressive exercises which brought out into beautiful relief its unabashed fervency, culminating in that final and effective word, "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table."

An incident lately met with in Mr. Moffat's missionary experiences illustrates very effectively how the surpassing grace of God to Gentile dogs stands in contrast to the pride and prejudice of men's hearts, what even the world's poet terms—

"The inhumanity of man to man."

The Hottentots of South Africa were formerly very much ill-treated by some of the Dutch farmers, who pretended they had no souls. Mr. Moffat once proposed to hold a religious meeting in such a family. When all was ready, instead of beginning, he leaned forward and peered into the distant and dark parts of the room. On the farmer's inquiry what he was looking for, Mr. M. replied, "I am only looking for the Hottentots." "Hottentots, is it, you want?" said the farmer, harshly; "Hottentots! *call in the dogs!*" Mr. Moffat, making no remark, opened his bible, and read very solemnly Matt. xv. 27, "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." After some little silence, he read it again. The farmer being still unmoved, Mr. M. read it once more, looking him, at the same time, full in the face. At once the farmer roared out, "Stop! I can stand it

no longer ;” and then added, “Call in the Hottentots ! Call in the Hottentots !”

Oh ! beloved reader, think of the mercy which responded so richly to the faith of the woman of the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, that faith that *would not be denied*. The Lord had said, “Let the *children first* be filled” (*i. e.*, Israel after the flesh). Ah ! in effect, says the woman, I do not now claim the children’s place or portion ; but even while they are feeding, the dogs which lie under the table may catch the crumbs as they fall ! Her faith referred not only to the blessing which she must get, but to its bestowal *there and then*.

Beautiful, blessed faith, gladdening the Lord’s heart beyond all that Israel rendered ; eliciting that divine answer, that boundless response, “O woman, great is thy faith : be it unto thee *even as thou wilt*.”

May every reader of this paper know the blessedness of exercising a faith that will not be denied, and of receiving such an answer in mercy as cannot be exceeded.

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## “HOW AM I TO BE SAVED?”

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LET me first ask, dear reader, do you really *want to be saved* ? Perhaps you reply, “Of course I do.” Pardon me, there is no “of course” in the matter. It is the ruin of thousands that they do *not* want to be saved. The real reason why so many from around us have gone down to the blackness of darkness for ever is that until death overtook them—when they may have known something of the anguish of despair—they were never really concerned at all about their souls’ eternal welfare ;—in a word, they never sought or desired salvation. No one can truly affirm that he wants to be saved, but that God wants him to perish.

Wherever throughout the whole world there is a man

or woman this day to be found who really desires and truly seeks salvation, God throws open the door of mercy to such an one, and encourages him or her to enter into blessing. Alas! alas! hundreds and thousands around us are content to go on, day after day, partaking of God's mercies while rejecting the God who gives them; content to be at a distance from Him, not caring to know the God who created them—the One "in whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind" (Job xii. 10).

I ask, then, if you really wish to be saved; for if you do, I am bold to say you are already on the way to salvation. How, then, are you to be saved? God has given the answer,—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” God points you to a Person, and presents this Person to you as an Object for your faith to embrace—a real, living, divine Person; One who was eternally God, and in time became man, and as Man has gone into heaven, made Lord and Christ, having been raised from the death that He died as a sacrifice for our sins, now exalted and glorified at God's right hand. There He is for you, if you believe on Him, and for you as a living, loving Saviour, the One who loved you and gave Himself for you.

And why are you to believe on Him? Because for you *who want to be saved* He has finished the *work* of salvation. Only think of the magnitude of that work! One Man doing the work which was needed for countless millions of lost sinners, that they might be rescued from eternal misery. He has died for your sins according to the Scriptures. He has borne the judgment of God due to you; in your place and stead He has suffered. The wrath of God spent itself on Him, that you might escape it. All the waves and billows of divine indignation broke upon His holy head, that you might never pass under them. He died the Just for the unjust, to bring you to God.

You cannot believe on the Person and not possess

the value of His work ; neither can you possess the value or participate in the efficacy of His work, and not believe on the Person.

But you ask, "What is believing on Him?" Well, to believe on God's Son is to receive God's testimony about Him. "This," says Christ, "is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." And again, "He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar ; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son" (1 John v. 10). "By grace are ye saved through faith."

"And what is faith?" perhaps you will ask. Well, like light, and heat, and electricity, and the wind also, faith is better to be understood by its operations and effects than in any other way. Faith bows to the judgment God has pronounced upon men as sinners, and owns it to be holy and just. Faith takes God's side against one's self ; so that we condemn ourselves and justify Him. Faith listens to God's voice, and rejoices that He speaks. Faith gives heed to what He says, and seeks to respond to it. Faith accepts what He gives, and rejoices in it. Faith submits to God's righteousness, disclaiming any of our own. Faith obeys His bidding, cleaves to Him with purpose of heart, refuses to be denied the eternal blessing it craves, and says with Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (ch. xiii. 15).

"Ah!" perhaps you say, "I have no faith like that." But Scripture, I think, makes no promise to *great* faith or *much* faith. What I have set before you indicates the character and quality of faith by its operations and results ; the things which characterise it as it works. The true quality of faith is to believe God, against even the workings of our own minds ; to trust God, though we comprehend Him not ; to get into God's presence, though none know so well as He and ourselves how unfit for His presence we are.

And thus through faith is salvation; for God is a Saviour-God, and has provided for us a Substitute—a divinely-suited Substitute, for He was eternally God and perfectly a Man, a sinless, spotless Man—and that holy, harmless, undefiled One has died for you who believe on Him, has put away your sins by the sacrifice of Himself, and thus you have eternal life through His name and eternal salvation through His precious blood. It is a living, loving Saviour you have to do with—that divine Person who is now and for ever a Man in glory; and it is by His work of sins-bearing, by His sacrifice of Himself, that salvation becomes God's free and sovereign gift unto you.

It is not having a correct creed which saves the soul. It is not by our prayers or our tears, our sighs or our cries, that we are saved. It is not by our taking a seat on the penitent's form, or plunging into an imaginary fountain, or adopting a flaunting livery, or resorting to extravagances under the public eye! Salvation may exist and may be known where these are found, but they constitute accessories which, in many cases, do but hinder and disfigure it. Salvation is of the Lord, and whatever is not of Him is not salvation.

May my reader know what full salvation is, even entire and everlasting deliverance from sins committed and from sin's dominion; from Satan, his snares and his seductions; from self in every shape, and from the scene through which we are passing;—in place of all which every saved one can say, I am compensated ten-thousand fold by having a Saviour in glory, towards whose presence I am every day travelling, and whom I ever-longingly look for, because He said, and must needs fulfil His word, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am there ye may be also."

## THE FEASTS OF THE JEWS.

(JOHN VI. AND VII.)

NOTHING is so helpful to an understanding of any passage in God's Word as to have clearly before the soul the scope of the Spirit's teaching in that portion of Scripture in which it is found. And God, in His infinite wisdom, invariably gives us at the outset a clue to the scope of His teaching therein, by carefully following which we may unravel any difficulties we meet with on our way. Thus, for example, while Matthew opens by tracing our Lord to David and Abraham—the depositories of Jewish *promises*—so preparing us for the presentation of Jesus Christ as their Messiah to Israel in fulfilment thereof, John starts with His eternal being, above and beyond all earthly dispensations! Now the Word, the divine expression of God's mind, was in the Person of the Lord Jesus made flesh, and tabernacled among us; and, as in the flesh, He came unto Israel, His own people according to the flesh, and His own people received Him not (verse 11). And this, indeed, is the clue to Christ's attitude towards Israel as depicted in this gospel; for throughout it we find Him, not as in Matthew presented to Israel and rejected by them (Matt. i.—xii.), but rejected at the outset according to verse 11, and acquiescing in His rejection, and taking His place as rejected in Galilee (chap. iv.); but meanwhile taking cognizance of what purported to be the worship of Jehovah, but only in every case to supersede the observances which He found. For, in fact, if Christ was rejected, the observances were no longer Feasts of *Jehovah* (Lev. xxiii. 2), but, as the Spirit in John's gospel describes them, Feasts of the *Jews*. And for a striking confirmation of what has been said, we may turn to chapter xiii., where we find no mention of a "Feast of the Jews;" it was, indeed (to use the

Spirit's term), "*the* Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come when He should depart out of this world." Thus John alone, of all the Evangelists, gives us no account of the Passover-supper (John xiii. 1, 2), but we get instead opened out to our souls the present priestly service of Him who came from God, and has gone to God, and who, having loved His own who were in the world, loves them to the end.

Let us, then, keep before our minds, in reading chapters vi. and vii., that Christ is therein viewed as rejected by, and accepting the rejection of, His people Israel, and as therefore superseding these Feasts of the Jews.

Now, a careful reading will, I think, shew that there is a distinct line of thought running through these chapters, and it is this which I propose to develope. But, first, it might be helpful to consider briefly what the "Feasts of the Lord" were. We shall find by a reference to Lev. xxiii. and Deut. xvi. that they were three in number—namely, the Feast of Passover, the Feast of Pentecost or Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles.

The teaching of the Passover is so distinct that it could admit of no doubt to any reader of the Word, prefiguring in a very perfect way the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, and the shelter for the sinner from the judgment of God beneath His blood, and the sinner's identification with Christ in death by feeding on the roasted Lamb. And even if any doubt did exist as to the application of the type and its fulfilment, it would be set at rest by 1 Cor. v. in which the Holy Ghost declares that "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us."

The applications of the types of Pentecost and Tabernacles are not so apparent; still, the teaching on them vouchsafed to us by God leaves us in no uncertainty on the subject. Thus we find, in the case of the Feast of Pentecost or Weeks, that the seven

weeks from which it took its name were to be numbered from such time as the Israelites began to put the sickle into the corn (Deut. xvi. 9), while in Ex. xxxiv. it is specially called the Feast of the First-fruits of wheat harvest; and we find the antitype of this in Acts ii., for then, as the Spirit pointedly remarks, the Feast of Pentecost was "*fully come*," and the first-fruits of the Corn of wheat which had fallen into the ground and died, were manifested in the disciples gathered with one accord in one place, and sealed with the Spirit; while the Feast of Tabernacles, taking place as it did after the harvest and the vintage (Deut. xvi. 1), and being observed by Israel when in the Land, dwelling for seven days in booths, in remembrance of their wilderness wanderings, will find its antitype (for as yet, of the three Feasts, this alone is not yet "*fully come*") after the harvest of the earth—that is, of Gentile apostacy—has been reaped, and the grapes of apostate Israel trodden in the wine-press of the wrath of God,—after Christ shall have cleared out of His kingdom all that offends, and His people Israel are reinstated, and at rest, in Emmanuel's Land.

With this brief outline of the Feasts before us, we may turn to chapter vi., which commences with the mention of the Passover. And it would appear that the proximity of the Feast gave colour to the Lord's discourse which follows, though His teaching is not confined to this, but, starting with the Passover in *Egypt*, it passes on in the same chapter (in connection with what had passed consequent on His feeding the multitude) to the manna in the *wilderness*, and finds its sequel in chapter vii. in the Feast of Tabernacles in the *Land*; though that as to its fulfilment, as we shall see, is postponed by the Lord until we, the first-fruits of the wheat, are safely garnered. And in tracing this connection, it is to be regretted that in that portion of our Lord's discourse in which the Passover is specifically alluded to (verses 51 and 53),

our English version fails accurately to render the original. But it may help those who cannot read Greek, to remark that the word rendered "eat" in those verses, "If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever," "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you," in each case refers to a definite, past, completed action,— "If any man have eaten," "Except ye have eaten,"— the identification by the sinner of himself with Christ *once for all* in death, which results for him in everlasting life; while in verses 54, 56, 57, and 58, the word used for "eat" is a different one from that in verses 51 and 53, and signifies to "chew," and being in the present tense, gives us the present and continuous effect of feeding on Christ, the Manna, for our wilderness journey. Thus we read in verses 54, 56, 57, and 58,— "He that (in continuance) is eating My flesh and drinking My blood, hath eternal life;" "He that is eating My flesh and drinking My blood, dwelleth in Me and I in him;" "He that eats Me, even he shall live by Me;" "He that eats this Bread shall live for ever." All these verses (let us repeat it) refer not to the sinner's identification with Christ's death, which is his life, but to the *saint's* feeding on Him in the wilderness journey.

Let us now follow our subject into chapter vii. We have started from Egypt sheltered by the Blood of the Pascal Lamb; we have crossed the wilderness, fed and sustained on Christ Himself; we are now in the Land. Will the Lord recognise this Feast of Tabernacles? His brethren, indeed, would have Him do so. "Shew Thyself," say they, "to the world." "My time is not yet come," the Lord replies. "I go not up yet unto the Feast; for My time is not yet full come." He will indeed go up, but it will be when He has trodden the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God (Rev. xix. 15). Meanwhile, He abides in Galilee, but afterwards goes up about the middle of the Feast, and by His teaching prepares the way, not

for its observance, but for the setting aside of the Feast of Tabernacles, and the substitution for it of that of Pentecost, the Feast which, as we have seen, finds its antitype in the dispensation in which we are, characterised as it is (not as the true Feast of Passover was, or the true Feast of Tabernacles will be, by the presence of Christ on earth, but) by the absence of Christ, and the presence of the Holy Ghost. And while in beautiful harmony with this we find no direct mention of Pentecost in John—for Christ was still on earth—we find the Lord, in verses 33 and 34, announcing His departure from the earth to Him who had sent Him; thus paving the way for the further announcement of that other essential which hinged on His departure, the presence of the Holy Ghost. For on the last day of the Feast, after the seven days in which Israel were bidden to dwell in booths had been accomplished, on the eighth day—the resurrection morn beyond the Sabbath-keeping of the earthly people—the day of the holy convocation (Lev. xxiii. 36), “that great day of the Feast,” which He had refused to grace with His presence, He stands and cries,—“If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink,” announcing at the same time that the result to any who responded in faith to His call would be, not as in the wilderness to Israel, the mere quenching of thirst from the Rock that followed them, but that out of his belly should “flow rivers of living water;” the believer thus himself becoming a source of blessing to others, inasmuch as (when Christ had departed, and the Holy Ghost had come) he would be the receptacle of the Holy Ghost. “For this spake He of the Spirit, which they which believe on Him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” In order that the Holy Ghost might come down, the Lord Jesus must go up, as He says, “It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will

send Him unto you" (xvi. 7). Thus we find the Lord refusing to grace the Feast in the sin-polluted Land, and superseding it (till such time as all that offends shall have been cleared away) by the Feast of Pentecost, which finds its fulfilment in the present period, which (let us repeat it) is characterised by an absent Christ and a present Holy Ghost.

And now, in conclusion, let us glance at the time when the Feast of Tabernacles will be observed in Emmanuel's Land. We shall find that both it and the Passover are enjoined in Ezekiel, though here it is not called the Feast of Tabernacles, but the Feast of the seven days, and that for the reason that the millennial age is the true antitype of the Feast (xlv. 21-25). But here again there is complete silence as to the third great Feast, the Feast of Pentecost: and this, too, is beautifully consistent with the teaching which we have observed in John; and that not only for the reason that Pentecost will then have met with its fulfilment, but also that the Holy Ghost, though not indeed absent, will not (when Christ is again present) characterise as now the period.

Thus having started from Egypt sheltered by the Blood, we have crossed the wilderness sustained by feeding on Christ Himself, but having failed to keep the Feast of Tabernacles in the Land which refused Emmanuel, and which He in turn refused, we have turned aside, in this present interval between God's past and future dealings with His earthly people, to observe the Feast of Pentecost; the King of the Land having gone into a far country to receive for Himself there a kingdom, and to return; and from thence, when the heavenly crop shall have been safely garnered, we shall return with Him, not indeed to keep, as Israel will do, the Feast of Tabernacles in the Land, but as priests of God and Christ to reign with Him a thousand years. Blessed indeed will be the portion of God's earthly people, Israel, in their bright day; but far more blessed, both now and then, is

ours, who are already associated by the Holy Ghost with an absent, heavenly Christ!

J. F.

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## WALKING WITH GOD.

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To walk with God, what can  
 With this for saints compare?  
 Obedient to His holy Word,  
 We should not dare  
 To stir a step until  
 He clearly leads the way  
 (No matter how the many go);  
 With God then stay.

Man must make haste, nor can  
 Afford for long to wait;  
 Keep near to God, if thou would'st be  
 Nor fast, nor late;  
 But going as He bids,  
 He leading all the way,  
 Till ends thy desert toil and test  
 In glorious day!

Poor things, at best, are we,  
 Yet fully known by God,  
 Who calls us now to walk with Him  
 Along the road:  
 And grace shall keep thy feet,  
 Where grace has placed them here,  
 And grace—God's grace—shall soon complete  
 His counsels there.

Where Christ the Son shall be  
 (Our Lord and Saviour He),  
 Thou with Himself shalt dwell,  
 Who died for thee:  
 No more the tempest blast,  
 The battle and the strife,  
 But perfect bliss enjoyed at last,—  
 Eternal life!

E. R. W.

## THE LORD'S LAST VISIT TO JERUSALEM.

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“And Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles, to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify Him: and the third day He shall rise again” (Matt. xx. 17-19).

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THIS Scripture sets before us truths of the deepest import to every soul. It tells us of the things which were looming before the Lord Jesus, and casting their sad and solemn shadows upon His holy path on earth! Repeatedly had He visited Jerusalem before, but never before to do what had now to be done, or all else was utterly in vain. Therefore He takes the disciples *apart in the way*. He leads them into the privacy and retirement of His own presence apart from all beside, and says to them, “Behold.” This word would alone suggest how momentous were the things of which He was about to speak. It was no ordinary communication He had then to make, but a solemn disclosure, in a few terse and striking words, of all that should befall Him in and about the city of their solemnities, “the city of the great King.” That all that which was written of Him might be fulfilled, He must needs go up there. As we read in Luke ix. 51, “It came to pass, when the time was come that He should be received up, He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.” *What* came to pass? That His face was *stedfastly set* to go there.

Oh! dear reader, have you ever thanked God for that?—thanked God, that His Son, the blessed God-man, Christ Jesus, did, (1) when “the fulness of the time was come,” assume humanity in wondrous self-humiliation, and, (2) “when the time was come that He should

be received up," did in even deeper humiliation set His face stedfastly to go to Jerusalem, there to be maltreated in cruel barbarity, and to die the death of a malefactor? Have you ever thanked God, dear reader, for having given us such a Saviour as that?

But there are just seven things I want you to notice here, and then *an eighth*.

1. He was to go up to Jerusalem—"for," said the Lord, "it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," &c. Can you not see what a depth of bitterness, what a keenness of anguish there was for the blessed Lord in this? Terrible as it was to suffer as He and to die as He, how much more terrible so to suffer and so to die *where* above all other places He should have been received with Divine worship and with Royal acclamation as Jehovah, their Messiah and their King!

2. "The Son of Man shall be betrayed;"—and here again, we may say, what added grief and pain would be His in consequence of this being the act of one of that little group then surrounding Him, and to whom He was confiding the things which wrung His heart to the uttermost!

3. The chief priests and scribes would condemn Him to death. These were the heads and representatives of His own people and nation. And again we remark on the sorrow upon sorrow that this would occasion; that His own people, His own nation—nay, the most exalted and most cultured of them, who ought to have profited by the instruction of Moses, and the prophets, and the Psalms—that these should have been they who compassed His death, and more,—

4. Delivered Him to the Gentiles! Thus they refused, rejected, repudiated, disowned, and disallowed the Head Stone of the Corner! and, yet further, they delivered Him with specific objects!

5. "To mock," (6) "to scourge," and (7) "to crucify Him"! They wanted Him to be insulted; they desired that He should be made to suffer cruelly;

they thirsted for His blood, crying, "Away with Him;" "Crucify Him;" "His blood be on us and on our children"!

But *you* have not done these things, dear reader, I almost hear you say; *you* had no hand therein! Do notice how wide-spread was the rejection, the dishonour, the condemnation of the holy Sufferer, the one and only Saviour! He would have gathered Jerusalem, but she "would not." His foremost apostle, even within earshot, denied that he knew Him. The one who was purse-bearer to the twelve betrayed Him to His enemies. The heads of the nations, its religious authorities, compassed His death. The Gentiles became their ready tools. They that sat in the gate spake against Him, and the drunkards made songs about Him. Was there this general, this universal concurrence in scouting Him (save as His grace preserved His own), and will you say you are unable to find yourself in any of the varied elements which were alike in this—the being against Christ? "He that is not with Me, is against Me"—solemn word for all who have not made a stand for Him! Nevertheless, in the same chapter we read, "Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

But, let us thankfully record, there is an eighth thing,—the "eighth" speaks of resurrection, and so we read, "And the third day He shall rise again." The Lord Himself teaches, that "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John xii. 24). This was His prophetic joy; He had the harvest in view, the ingathering of the sheaves of blessing. He would rise again, and then would not be "alone," but in the joy of association with a redeemed and ransomed company. Oh! my reader, how blessed to see that resurrection was certain for Him even before His death had come to pass, and—for all who believe—death as a judicial thing has been passed through in

the person of Him with whom we died and with whom we are risen.

Let me, however, point out from our chapter (Matt. xix. 29-34) how simply and how surely faith gets its coveted blessing. Do you ask, how am I to get it, and how am I to know when I have got it, and how am I to experience it, and how am I to enjoy it? To all this the answer comes—by *faith*. Faith may be difficult to define and to explain, but it has one marked feature which is unmistakeable,—it is intensely real and in earnest. Quite needless is it for you to ask if you have faith, but very needful you should ask yourself whether you are intensely in earnest as to your real state in the sight of God. If you are, God is at the bottom of it. It is the goodness of God that leadeth thee to repentance—that is, leads thee to the discovery that thou art lost, and must eternally perish but for the mercy of God! My reader, have you ever yet cried for mercy as one who knows that man's eternal misery were inevitable were it not for God's mercy in Christ Jesus? Oh! for a thousand tongues to thank God for His mercy! May every reader of these pages join to swell throughout eternity the anthem of unending and untiring praise to the God of our salvation.

“Nothing but mercy 'll do for me,  
 Nothing but mercy—full and free;  
 With sins so vile—what but the blood  
 Could cleanse my soul before my God?”

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“There is nothing I am now doing, bright as it may be to me now, which will continue to look bright, I mean in heaven, unless Christ be the *object* of it. It is the life of Christ you have to manifest. One believer in bed sick, another running over the earth preaching, another in prison for the truth's sake, but each just where the life of Christ is to break forth and shine the most brightly.”—*G. V. Wigram.*

## RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

## III.

“No man (rather, no one) knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man (or, any one) the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him” (Matt. xi. 27). An announcement this is of very great importance. For,—

1st. It acquaints us with the blessed fact, that there are intelligent creatures who can know the Father when revealed to them by the Son. Of His competence to reveal Him we are elsewhere fully assured. For He knows the Father (John viii. 55); He had seen Him (vi. 46); and He ever was and is in the Father’s bosom (i. 18). Moreover, in seeing Him men saw the Father (xiv. 9); and those who knew Him knew the Father (viii. 19). Yet, though He only of all that ever walked on earth had seen Him, on three distinct occasions the Father’s voice was heard by others; viz.,—at His baptism by John (Matt. iii. 17); at His transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 5); and in response to His request, “Father, glorify Thy name” (John xii. 28). On the first occasion, John the Baptist heard it; on the second, Peter, James, and John were privileged to listen to it; on the third, the crowd heard a sound, but evidently did not understand what was said.

2nd. The Lord’s words in Matthew speak of the Father as distinct from the Son, thus telling us of plurality of Persons in the Godhead, a truth indicated in the Old Testament (Gen. xix. 24; Isaiah xlvi. 16), and fully revealed in the New, wherein we are taught of their number and relative position to each other; viz., the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost (Matt. xxviii. 19). The Son is, and must as Son be, distinct from the Father, as the Lord told the Jews (John viii. 16, 18), and subsequently stated to His disciples,—“I came forth from the Father, and

am come into the world ; again I leave the world, and go to the Father" (xvi. 28). His departure to the Father ought to have been a cause of rejoicing to them, for "My Father," He said, "is greater than I" (xiv. 28). Yet it is also true that He and the Father are one (x. 30).

3rd. Those words reveal to us the Son acting according to His sovereign will, who is both God and man—the eternal Son, as well as the Son of God born in time. Hopeless, then, must it ever be for any to know the Father who refuse to hear Him. Hopeless, too, for any to be able to know the Father, unless the Son is pleased to reveal Him. All, therefore, are dependent on His sovereign will in grace, if ever they are to know the Father. But who thus spake? and when? The answer to the first question is, It was the only-begotten Son of God (John iii. 16, 18 ; 1 John iv. 9), who was the First-born of all creation as well (Col. i. 15).\* The answer to the second question is, that He declared this after His rejection by the Jews had been openly manifested. What they must lose who refuse Him He thus plainly intimates, as what He would reveal to those who received Him He distinctly sets forth. To the gospels, then, must we turn to learn from His lips about the Father: not to get a description of His appearance, for no man hath seen the Father, save He who is of God; but to apprehend what He is as there told out—His desires, His ways, His acts—set forth for our instruction, who, born of God, are capable of knowing Him who is our Father, and of enjoying the relationship of children. In all the gospels have we teaching about this. Matthew and John are full of it; Luke more sparingly introduces it; Mark very seldom refers to it. This is

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\* The former of these titles reminds us of what is called His eternal generation, "begotten of His Father before all worlds," or, as has been elsewhere expressed, "begotten from everlasting of the Father." The latter title reminds us of His relation to and pre-eminence over all creatures, as one born into this world.

to be accounted for by the different aspects of the Lord Jesus Christ which the four Evangelists were directed to set forth.

Matthew and John are full of it, yet there are marked differences between them in this. The latter speaks of Him as the Father, what He is and does who is the Father. Matthew very commonly speaks of Him as the Father of those who are truly disciples of Christ. Hence the Lord therein frequently refers to Him as "your Father;" whereas, not till the resurrection is an accomplished fact, does the Lord in the gospel of John call Him aught else but The Father or His Father.

Let us turn first to the latter gospel, so full in its teaching on this truth, yet not more full, surely, than was His heart, who as the only-begotten Son delighted to reveal Him, and that on each occasion in a manner suited to His audience. His audience, we say. Not that He waited for a crowd, or a company even, to be assembled ere He would reveal anything of it. For in the dark hours of night, or at the well-side, ere the shades of evening had begun to lengthen over the landscape, He was willing to reveal truth about His Father to a solitary listener, and in characters, too, none would have surmised. Who else, indeed, but the Son was competent to dwell on such a theme? And who save the only-begotten Son of God, the eternal Son, could reveal God the Father? And to whom should such a revelation be made? By whom could it be really entered into, and enjoyed, but by those who should come to know what it is to be God's children, and God's sons? Such want to know the Father.

Nicodemus went to Jesus by night, as a Teacher, he owned, who had come from God. But that interview did not end till he had heard of God giving His only-begotten Son, "that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world ;

but that the world through Him might be saved." Here was a revelation of God the Father as One who desired the salvation of guilty creatures, and who provided the needful sacrifice in the person of His only-begotten Son; or, as this truth was afterwards expressed by the Evangelist in his first epistle, "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John iv. 14). The necessity of the new birth the Lord had dwelt upon at the outset of His interview with Nicodemus,—a truth, and a blessing to which that teacher was personally a stranger. But He would not let that interview terminate without telling him of the mission on the part of God of His only-begotten Son. The introduction here of the only-begotten Son implied, of course, the truth and revelation of the Father, not as a new relationship into which He was pleased at the incarnation to enter, but of that in which He had always been to Him, whom Nicodemus only viewed as a Teacher sent from God.

A little later, on the Lord's journey from Jerusalem to Galilee, we read of Him at Jacob's well, there conversing with the woman of Sychar, with whose past and present history He shewed her He was fully acquainted. To her also He speaks of the Father. He had left Jerusalem, the centre of Judaism, and the city in which was His Father's house, and communicates to her, a Samaritan woman, and hitherto a staunch upholder of the Samaritan schism, thoughts about true worship, and of Him whom He set before her as the object of worship. "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him" (iv. 21-23). The woman had spoken of the place for worship, but not of the Person to be worshipped. The Lord spake to

her of the Father as the Object of worship. She had not raised such a question; and considering the Lord's reply, "ye worship ye know not what," her silence on this point was befitting. But His heart (surely we may say it) was full of the revelation it was His joy to make known. So He tells her of the Father, and of Him as seeking worshippers.

We might have pictured the Almighty as needing to be propitiated, ere He would receive the homage due to Him as Creator from those who craved the permission to render it. But to learn that He is the Father, and as such is seeking worshippers; that men and women like her, deserving only everlasting perdition, might worship Him in that relationship; this was new indeed, and wonderfully gracious. In some private abode at Jerusalem—the name and locality to us unknown—He had spoken to Nicodemus of the mission of the only-begotten Son, and by consequence of something of the acting in grace of the Father. Now to this woman, when alone with Him, He unfolded the desire of the Father's heart to find amongst members of the ruined race of Adam, when become subjects of that grace revealed to Nicodemus, those who could, and should worship Him in the consciousness of filial relationship. Nicodemus had not asked Him about the mission of the only-begotten Son of God; this woman had not asked about the Father; but the Lord would have the joy on each occasion of making known the truth, which could minister rich blessing to souls. He made God the Father known as One desirous to save the lost, and as the One who was seeking from such a company His true worshippers.

But the Evangelist passes on, introducing to his readers in the following chapter the narrative of the impotent man healed at the pool of Bethesda, with the instruction that flowed out of it. The Lord, persecuted by the Jews because of what He had done, answered them in language which only increased their

opposition,—“My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (v. 17). God the Father had been working, and they were ignorant of it. For not only did He compassionate His guilty creatures, and in proof of it send His Son to save them who should believe on Him from the everlasting consequences of their guilt, but He had never rested whilst sin was rampant on earth, and man was suffering in his person or in his circumstances, because he had sinned. The Father had been working in grace all along.

Of old, before the fall, God had rested from all His work, which He created and made (Gen. ii. 3). Of that rest in the past the Sabbath was a reminder ; but man having fallen, that rest did not continue, for His creatures' condition, the consequence of sin, had called forth on the part of God activity in grace and in power, of which the healing of that impotent man was a sample. In their zeal for God, as they thought, they were clearly going contrary to His mind and practice in the past, as well as in the present. “My Father worketh hitherto,” attests that as to the past ; “and I work,” proved it as to the present. Their opposition evidenced that the revelation about the Father, vouchsafed on this occasion by His Son, was one quite new to them. “The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do.” The Son by His acts, as well as by His words, was therefore revealing the Father ; but God's professing people knew it not. Activity in goodness characterised the Father, as all might see.

Now, there is a danger lest the thought of divine mercy should weaken in the soul the sense of divine holiness. There was a danger too, unhappily illustrated in the Jews, of rejecting the Son on the plea of owning God. In view of all this the Lord revealed something more, viz., that “the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son ; that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son

honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him" (v. 22, 23). So judgment must overtake the rejecters of the Son, who came from and was sent by, the Father. On the other hand, life everlasting each one should have who heard the words of the Son, and believed the Father who had sent Him. It was a perilous thing to reject the Son who came in His Father's name.

In the following chapter the Evangelist conducts us to Galilee, the only narrative in this gospel of the Lord's ministry in that northern district subsequent to the Baptist's imprisonment by Herod. Now, to the crowd around the Lord who had crossed the lake to follow Him, after He had fed them in the wilderness, He presents His Father as the giver of the true bread from heaven (vi. 32), explaining that He was that Bread, which came down from heaven to give life unto the world. But in a double character of a giver is the Father here introduced: He gives the true bread, and He gives people to His Son. "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. . . . For this is My Father's will, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (vi. 37, 38, 40). Yet more. He draws men to His Son. For we read: "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard from the Father and hath learned, cometh unto Me" (vi. 44, 45).

Thus far we have had a revelation of what the Father is, as made known in His ways in grace towards men. The Lord begins this teaching with the announcement of the way man's spiritual need can be met. From that He passed on to make known

the present desire of the Father. He is seeking worshippers; but such a class is only formed of those who are first made subjects of divine grace. Was it then a new thing for the Father to take an interest in and care for, men on earth? No. He had been working in goodness and in grace ever since the fall of man; the works of power wrought by the Son attested this, and His presence amongst men was the proof of the earnest desire of the Father to minister life and salvation in all its completeness to those who were dead in trespasses and sins. The Son had come as the Bread from heaven to give life unto the world. Every one who shall believe on Him He will raise up at the last day; and all such are examples of the Father's power in grace, for none can come to the Son except the Father which hath sent Him draw them. There was a power then working, of which the unbelieving Jews were in ignorance,—a power put forth by the Father to gather souls to Christ, and thus to gather them out of the world to Him, who is not ashamed to call them brethren (Heb. ii. 11).

Hence the revelation of the Father in this gospel now changes somewhat in its character. It has set Him forth as seeking the best interests of fallen creatures; it will now present Him more in connection with those who have been drawn by Him to His Son, a company of people who are each and all really His children. For with the coming of Christ there was made plain, what indeed had been always true, the need of a divine operation on the soul by the word and the Holy Ghost. The individual must be born of God. The Jews declared God was their Father (viii. 41). Nationally that was true; but that could not secure to the individual everlasting blessing. This they had not understood, for they had not been subjects of divine grace, and they showed that in the enmity they manifested against the Lord, as He told them: "If God were your Father, ye would love Me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither

came I of Myself, but He sent Me" (viii. 42). Something more was wanted than subscription to a creed, or the resting in national privileges. If God was their Father, they would partake of a new, the divine, nature, and then become special subjects of divine paternal care.

In the tenth chapter this last is alluded to, as the *Lord announces the perfect security of His sheep*: "My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and my Father are One" (x. 29, 30). We have heard in the sixth chapter of the Father's gift to His Son. Reminded of that here, we also learn how secure the sheep must be if kept by His hand; but surely this also intimates how precious they must be to the Father. He will never drop them, nor allow even one of them to be plucked' out of His hand; nor can there ever be any divergence in counsel or will between the Father and the Son as to the present and ultimate security of the sheep, for He and the Father are One.

From the assurance of security we pass on in the twelfth chapter to the blessings of true discipleship, and the awful future for those who reject the Lord. If any man serve Christ, him will His Father honour (26). If any man reject Him, the word which He has spoken will judge him at the last day (48). A clear and most important announcement, which showed the earnest desire of both the Father and the Son that souls should be saved. With the echo of these words sounding in men's ears (ver. 44-50), and with the reminder that He was sent from the Father, and spake what the Father had said to Him, the Lord's public ministry as set forth in this gospel came to an end.

Henceforth He is found only with His disciples, till apprehended by the officers on the night before His Cross. To them He continues the revelation of the Father, telling them first of His own home on high—His Father's house, whither He was going to prepare

a place for His disciples, for whom He will come to receive them to Himself, that where He is there they may be also (xiv. 2, 3). This tells us of His desire for His own, and of His Father's willingness to have them there; for who could have a home in that house without the Father's sanction? But between the Lord's departure and return an interval was to elapse, so another Comforter would come to be with the disciples, sent by the Father at the Son's request, and in His name (xiv. 16, 26). Hence of His Father's ministry to His saints consequent on His departure the Lord here assures us, and tells us on what conditions we may count on the Father's love (verses 21, 23). Now, that ministry would not be fulfilled by sending merely the other Comforter. It would also be exercised by the Father in making the living branches of the true vine fruitful for Himself, and He would be glorified by the disciples bearing much fruit, and so should they be the disciples of the Son (xv. 2, 8).

After this, in the seventeenth chapter of the gospel, the Lord hands them over to the keeping and care of Him He has thus revealed, whilst He Himself should be absent on high, after first going to the Cross that the world might know that He loved the Father, and as the Father had given Him commandment, so He would do (xiv. 31), manifesting thus in His death, that which He had always displayed in life, the fruit of the divine nature, love and obedience.

He had come from the Father; He had revealed Him; He would ascend to His Father. But ere He went on high, He sent that message by Mary Magdalene—a joy surely to Him to give, to her to convey, and to the disciples to receive—which, whilst marking the difference there must ever be between Him and them, told of grace in which they shared: "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God and your God" (xx. 17). The same divine Person is God and Father of Him and of us. C. E. S.

## ETERNAL BLISS.

AND shall we, Lord, Thy glory see,  
Entranced with all Thy beauty be,  
At home, for ever dwell with Thee  
Throughout a long eternity?

What joy, what bliss 'twill be!

And shall we, too, the glory share,  
And know no more a want or care,  
In righteousness "fine linen" wear,  
And Thy blest image fully bear?

What joy, what bliss 'twill be!

And shall the glory and the grace  
Revealed to sons—a chosen race—  
For ever shine in Thy blest face,  
And of our sins be left no trace?

What joy, what bliss 'twill be!

Yes, Saviour, yes; all this, and more,  
When we above earth's mists shall soar!  
Then shall the glory yield its store,  
And we the Father's house explore!

What joy, what bliss 'twill be!

Oh! Saviour "come," Thy saints oft cry,  
And lift in tears a longing eye;  
But soon shall cease each sob and sigh;  
And when we meet Thee, Lord, on high,

What joy, what bliss 'twill be!

Then, then shall we, caught up above,  
Enjoy the fulness of Thy love,  
Thy faithfulness adoring prove,  
Nor ever from Thy presence move:

What joy, what bliss 'twill be!

The glory then shall all be Thine!  
Thy saints shall evermore recline  
Their hearts upon Thy love divine,  
And each shall in Thy likeness shine!

What joy, what bliss 'twill be!

For ever dried, the eyes which weep ;  
 For ever saved, God's lambs and sheep ;  
 From earth, from graves, and from the deep  
 Thou, Saviour, shalt Thine harvest reap !  
 What joy, what bliss *to Thee!*

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## ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

[AN EXTRACT.]

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“THEY who deny eternal punishment *as inconsistent with the attributes of God*, do not really believe in the same God as we. This, to any mind which reflects, is self-evident. For it is God Himself, who is revealed in His attributes. They, then, who hold that what Jesus revealed as to God is inconsistent with the attributes of God, as they themselves believe of God, do not believe in the God whom Jesus revealed. To speak the truth thus plainly (mournful as that truth is) is *alone real faithfulness to God and true charity to men*. It is Jesus who said, ‘He that believeth not, shall be damned’ (Mark xvi. 16).

“Since the rejection of truth, as well as unholiness of life, will have to do with the final doom of man, then, not to state the truth as explicitly as we can ; to allow truth and falsehood to be jumbled together in one ever-shifting kaleidoscope of opinions ; to allow that all may have an equal chance of being right, and so (since they are contradictories), that all have an equal chance of being false, is treason to the truth of God, and cruelty to the souls of men.”

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“Unhappily, we don't find many now with whom Christ is first, second, and third ; in fact, that He is the Rock whence *all* supplies are drawn. If you see any beauty in Him, and say ‘*I desire that*’—God will work it in you.”—*G. V. Wigram.*

## “WHAT GRACE BRINGS, AND TEACHES.”

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THE grace of God not only “*brings* salvation to us;” but it *teaches* us, “that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live *soberly, righteously, and godly*, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope,” &c. (Titus ii. 11-14). The reader would do well to turn to the passage and read it all.

Now, this is very important in this day of high-sounding profession, but of low walk and practice. The remark has often been made, and many still affirm, that if free grace is preached, and men are told they are eternally saved, then they can live as they please and enjoy their sins. Let this Scripture furnish the answer to such statements.

But, first of all, we must remark, *grace does save us*. We cannot be too clear as to this. “The grace of God *brings salvation*.” We are “justified freely by His grace” (Rom. iii. 24). “By grace are ye saved, through faith” (Eph. ii. 8). No one is saved by works, prayers, tears, or penance. It is the blood of Jesus Christ which cleanseth us from all sin (1 John i. 7), and faith in Him which saves the soul (Acts xvi. 31).

It is not thy tears of repentance, or prayer,  
But the blood, that atones for the soul;  
On Him then believe, and a pardon receive,  
Not in part, but indeed in the whole.

There can be no mistake as to this, if Scripture is to guide us. The free, unmerited favour of God brings to us, in all our deep need, the very thing we require—salvation. It makes no demands, and lays down no conditions. Grace, fettered by conditions, would be no longer grace (see Rom. xi. 6). It *brings* salvation, and the sinner *takes* it and *rejoices* in it. Then comes the lessons which it teaches; and it is well that this practical side should be pressed a little more.

First, "Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts." What an answer to those who think "free grace" would give license to sin! Is this continuance in sin—"denying ungodliness and worldly lusts"?—denying oneself everything which has not God as its object, or which springs from the world in any shape or form, and is therefore worldly lust. Could anything be more opposed to continuing in sin after conversion?

This becomes a very real thing to the Christian, because he still has the evil nature within him, although converted, and will have it to the end of his history here on earth; therefore, there is within him that which would answer to all the ungodliness and worldly lusts around, hence he is called upon to *deny* these things.

Next, "We should live *soberly*." It is striking how this is insisted on throughout the New Testament; yet, alas! how often forgotten. Look at the soldier as he advances to meet the foe; he does not march with a light, jaunty, flippant manner to meet the approaching enemy, nor does he under-rate his foe. Nay; but with sobriety and earnestness depicted upon his very countenance, the grim determination to conquer or die in the attempt.

Let us not forget that the Christian has no mean foe to cope with. Yea, he has foes within and foes without,—an evil heart inside, and Satan and the world outside. What need to "be sober, and watch unto prayer"! (1 Pet. iv. 7). What need to keep firm hold of the reins, and hold in self, which is always ready to break bounds! This is not being morose, nor even legal; but holy liberty, carrying out this needful lesson which the grace of God teaches, so as not to give Satan a point of attack. We must not forget, he is never off his guard if we are off ours, and he is always ready to cause us to sin.

Then comes another very important lesson,—"*righteously*." This shews what our lives are to be in respect to our neighbours, and those amongst whom we move and with whom we have dealings.

For instance, how many people there are who contracted debts before the grace of God met and saved them, and at that time had no conscience about it whatever. Are these debts to be paid now? Most surely they are! If not, it is not righteousness but *unrighteousness*. Indeed, are there not many who profess to be saved, whose consciences seem to have been drugged, and who think little or nothing of contracting debts? They seem never to have learnt this lesson of righteousness which grace teaches. How sad is this in the case of a sinner; but how much worse in that of a professed saint of God.

Let such remember that the Word of God says, "Owe no man anything" (Rom. xiii. 8). May the Lord graciously give us more of those conversions which carry the converts to their creditors, saying, "The Lord has saved my soul now; I owe you some money, and I am come to pay it."

This is practical righteousness, and one of the lessons of grace, and what we want to see practised. Nothing could be more lamentable and humiliating than to hear it said of any saint of God, "It would be well if he paid his debts ere he began to preach, and pray before others."

May God press this lesson upon the hearts of all His people. To all who need such a word, we would say, "Friend, take back those stolen goods; give up those unrighteous possessions; pay thy debts! Then thou wilt prove thy faith by thy works (James ii. 22), and thy testimony will leave its mark. Till that is done, let not thy profession be so loud; God prefers obedience to sacrifice."

One other lesson remains,—"*godly*." Our whole lives must be under the eye of God—to please Him. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Cor. vi. 20). To live godly, is really to live continually under the very eye of God, and therefore to reproduce Christ in this world; and that is what delights the eye and heart of

God. It was so with Paul ; he could say, " For me to live is Christ." Doubtless this will entail persecution for those who do it ; but let us not forget that unto us " it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Phil. i. 29) ; and " all that will live *godly* in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. iii. 12).

Thank God, there is cheer in the midst of it all—" Looking for that blessed hope," &c. We know not how soon He may come and take us to Himself. His last word was " quickly ;" therefore, what must characterise us in the meantime as believers is,—Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts—Sobriety—Righteousness—Godliness—Looking. May we all learn these lessons well, and practise them constantly.

W. E.

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## LUKE IV.

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" AND Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and there went out a fame of Him through all the region ; and He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all"—the bud and the blossom seem to open and promise fair ! It is at Nazareth, where He had been brought up, that He opens out His commission, when they delivered unto Him the book of Esaias ; and when He had opened it He found the place where it was written, " The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor ; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

We are come to a point of great moment in the history and ways of our Lord, viz., that after He had been accredited by the voice from heaven, and after He had morally overcome the tempter, and com-

manded Satan to get behind Him, He comes forth in His gracious ministry, and charges Himself with all that the commission in Isaiah lxi. 1 contains. He owned the righteous judgment of God upon Adam, and the groaning creation all around Him when He entered it, and altered nothing on His own behalf, though He was "before all things, and by Him all things consist." On the contrary, He accepted a place in the world and its condition as He found it, and as the fall of man had made it. "She brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." So He made *this* His starting-place, in recognition of the holiness of God, and His righteous government in the world, and rested not, nor failed, nor was discouraged, till acquainting Himself with the sources and the consequences of human alienation and distress, and tasting of each cup in His daily path, He perfected Himself by His living sympathies, to be known as the "Man of sorrows, acquainted with griefs." Everyone in trouble of heart could trust Him; everybody in sorrow of spirit might be sure of Him; whilst the guilty conscience went away in peace. Come when they might, at morning, noon, or night, they found in His compassion and love that which proved itself divine in Him; for He carried their confidence, and lifted their thoughts up to where God dwelt,—and yet proved itself to be perfectly human by the thousand ways in which His skilful hand and look could embrace the entire compass of their feelings, and give relief and satisfaction to the heavy-laden.

Such an One, and thus practised by those thirty years of His unwearied and devoted life, now comes forth upon His public ministry, and makes Himself responsible for all that Isaiah had prophesied, and which; under the anointing of the Holy Ghost, He now takes upon Himself in their midst. "And He closed the book, and sat down; and the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on

Him. And He began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

Shall we enquire what the marvellous effects must have been upon those to whom He spoke? *Eyes* were fastened on *Him*; Scriptures had been fulfilled in their *ears*; "and all bare Him witness, and *wondered* at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth." What could have been said and done which had not been? Could there be anything lacking on His part, or was it wholly on theirs, that they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" They were only looking at Him according to the flesh, and speaking of Him after the manner of flesh and blood, and had in this way lowered Him to their own level, so that to their thoughts He was no more than the son of Joseph! Their hearts had not risen up to the fact of who and what He was, in relation to God; nor had they accepted Him according to the light of Isaiah's prophecy, which He had just read to them. For who could He be of whom the prophet spoke, but this self-same Jesus, upon whom the Spirit of the Lord rested, and who, in Old Testament forms and names, had passed before their fathers as the Jehovah-Jireh and the Jehovah-Shammah, by promise, and oath, and the holy covenant? If they could receive it, Jehovah-Jesus was now His new title for faith, or the Jehovah that healeth thee; and in this character He stands in the midst of Israel "to open their eyes, to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." If they are not willing to accept Him as their Jehovah-Jesus, nor ready to step into the blessing in "the acceptable year of (Jehovah) the Lord," they must forego the blessing and the glory which He had brought to them in His own person, and perish in their own reasonings.

Refused by them as the Jehovah-Jesus, He will take His place amongst them as a prophet, to convict them under another ministry, as Elias and Eliseus had done with their forefathers, saying, "No prophet is accepted

in His own country." He utters His parable of the many widows and the many lepers in Israel, in the time of Elijah and Elisha, but only to add to this fact the sovereignty of God as to the one in Sarepta and Naaman the Syrian; and upon this sovereignty He retires, away from their suspicions and unbelief.

To the eye and heart of Jesus, "the widow of Sarepta" did but mark the state and condition of Israel, as bereft and desolate, and condemned by the woman of Sidon for refusing the acceptable year of Jehovah and Him who preached it. But grace would find a sphere for its exercise outside Canaan, and lepers beyond Israel, as Elisha had in his day, when he healed Naaman the Syrian. And so will Jesus-Jehovah, for "all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill, "that they might cast Him down headlong." He gives them a proof of who He is, by putting the sentence of death upon their wrath, "and passing through their midst, went His way."

"The acceptable year of the Lord" was come; and He who announced it, and was there to usher it in, as the Jesus-Jehovah, would have gathered them under all the promised and covenanted blessings of the opened book of Isaiah. But this Jehovah of olden days, now come in the flesh, was not accepted: neither as a convicting Prophet, like to the times of Elias and Eliseus, would they accept Him; and so He went His way. They parted company.

Besides "the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth," He carried almighty power with Him into the midst of Israel, if so be they might recognise "the right hand of the Lord," and celebrate His glorious triumphs, not indeed over the horse and his rider, but by a greater deliverance than that from the Egyptian oppressor at the Red Sea.

In the synagogue of Capernaum, "there was a man

which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried with a loud voice, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art; the Holy One of God." The devil, who had crept into the Garden of Eden as the serpent, was now doing the work "of the boar of the wood and the beast of the field," in spoiling and treading down the vine which Jehovah had brought out of Egypt and planted. The sweet psalmist had aforetime plaintively declared this to the ear of Israel, saying, "Thou didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land; the hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars: she sent out her boughs to the sea, and her branches to the river. *Return*, we beseech Thee, O God of Hosts; look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine." And now Jehovah is come down to challenge the lion, and the boar, and the unclean devil; and to eat of the fruit of the vine, and gather its tender grapes in His hand. "This day," He says, "is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears;" and if they are ready for His ministry *in power*, He will verify Isaiah's prophecy, and David's psalmody, and His own commission to the very letter. Jesus had personally overcome Satan in the wilderness, and the high mountain, and at the pinnacle of the temple, and commanded him away; and in this title He rebukes him at Capernaum, saying, "Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not." And the fame of Him went abroad into every place of the country.

Nor would Jesus, under such an anointing, and with such a commission in His hand, suffer the sun to go down upon such a scene of human misery, and of the breaking down of His people by the wild beast and the boar. He hears the cry, and measures the need, and meets it to the full. "He laid His hands on every one of them, and healed them." And thus, in His un-

wearied grace, He is either preaching to the poor, or healing, or delivering the captive, or recovering sight, or setting at liberty the bruised.

Nor is this all, for, before the sun had gone down, "devils also came out of many, crying, Thou art Christ, the Son of God. And He rebuking them, suffered them not to speak: for they knew that He was Christ." But Jesus sought not witness from such, and those who should have owned Him and accepted Him were dumb. Devils knew right well that He was the Christ, and confessed Him in the higher relation as Son of God; but, alas! those to whom it would have been life from the dead so to have received Him, only saw Him after the flesh as "the son of Joseph"!

And now Jesus-Jehovah had proved, both by word and deed, who He was that had' come amongst them, and how competent He was to lift up the entire burden and weight of the oppressor's power from off them; and if the people of His own country were the slowest to own it and receive Him, He would not further reprove, but leave them under the rebuke of the unclean devils, who confessed Him to the full. He has described His first circle, having risen upon Israel with healing in His beams, if the virgin daughter would arise and shake herself from the dust; otherwise the sun may set upon these proffered intimacies (and it did), and He betake Himself to a yet further testimony. "And when it was *day*, He departed, and went into a desert place: and He said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also; for therefore am I sent. And He preached in the synagogues of Galilee."

J. E. B.

## THE FOLLOWERS OF THE LAMB, AND THEIR REWARD.—*Rev.* xiv. 1-5.

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“And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written upon their foreheads.”

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THE Lord Jesus having returned, and taken to Him His great power, is seen standing on Mount Zion, the seat of David's royalty ; not as the King in His glory, but as the once-suffering Lamb, with His companions in tribulation, the faithful remnant, who had followed Him at all cost, and whose name He now confesses before His Father and before the angels ! His name and His Father's name are written upon their foreheads—an expressive figure of the boldness of their confession of their Lord, and in marked contrast with those who had received the mark of the Beast on their foreheads. He gathers them around Himself, and, as when on earth, “when He was *alone* He expounded all things to His disciples,” so here the scene is laid outside the royal glories and official dignities of the kingdom, and He takes them aside and makes Himself known to them privately, not as a condescending superior, but in the unreserved intimacy of a friend and fellow-sufferer. In all their afflictions He had been afflicted with them, and He is not ashamed to call them *brethren*. They are the suffering remnant of the Psalms—Judah and Benjamin ; His brethren of Matt. xxv. 48, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto *Me*.” [How like the “*Me*” of Acts ix., “Why persecutest thou *ME*?”]

Blessed encouragement for those who, in these last days of Laodicean indifference, have kept the word of His patience, and have not denied His name. “I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, and My new name.” But

better far than all beside will be *His own secret approval.*

“Blest answer to reproach and shame,  
Graved on the stone of white.”

A voice is then heard from heaven, “as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder.” Loud peals of heavenly minstrelsy break upon the ear; yet soft and harmonious, as the voice of harp-singers playing on their harps. It is the song of the victorious martyrs. Slain in the final tribulation for the word of their testimony, they are gathered in to complete the first resurrection, but not added to the Church. “I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God; and those which had not worshipped the Beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years” (chap. xx. 4. Compare ch. vi. 9; xii. 11; xv. 2, 4). Their song is peculiar to themselves, as it were, a *new* song. They sing before the throne. The crowned elders and the hosts of heaven listen in silence. Their place, too, is distinct and peculiar. The sea of glass, which in chap. iv. was unoccupied, is now seen mingled with fire, and peopled with these overcomers.

The 144,000 are privileged to listen to the song of these heavenly minstrels, but none on earth could *learn* that song but themselves; *they had passed through the same fiery trial*, but not a hair of their heads had perished. They formed a connecting link between earth and heaven. In virgin purity they had kept their garments unspotted from the idolatrous abominations of the great harlot. They were without guile and faultless.

May we not suppose that in the coming day of glory, the swellings of the heavenly chorus will sometimes fall on the ears of the earthly worshippers, in the holy city? “He will joy over thee with singing” (Zeph. iii. 17). Heaven and earth are not far apart;

'tis but a step from one to the other. It was so when *suddenly* a multitude of the heavenly host gave glory to God in the highest, within sight and hearing of the shepherds who kept watch over their flock on that memorable night. Louder praises will shortly resound to His glory from the same angelic hosts!

“If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be. If any man serve Me, him will My Father honour” (John xii. 26).

J. M.

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## THE HEAVENLY PROSPECT.

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LORD, while in faith I wait  
 The promise of Thy word,  
 I love to antedate  
 The bliss it will afford.

What joy, when I shall see  
 Thy face, my Saviour, Lord,  
 Nor by Thy glory be  
 Consumed or over-awed.

Thy voice shall then declare,  
 In accents soft and low,  
 “The journey's ended where  
 For Me ye'd shame and woe.”

And grace shall take my hand,  
 Shall lead me forward still,  
 Within the promised land,  
 Where all Thy will fulfil:

To join the ransom'd throng  
 Around the throne above;  
 To sing the endless song  
 Of Thine unending love!

'Tis there angelic hosts  
 Excel in power and might,  
 And wait upon Thy will  
 With ever-new delight!

Soon gazing on the Lamb,  
 They'll view Thy heart's desire,  
 Thy Bride, Thy wife, *with Thee*,  
 In beauteous attire !

And know Thee satisfied  
 For ever with her love,  
 Together glorified  
 In highest courts above !

'Tis *this* my heart sustains  
 While through life's scenes I haste,—  
 God's rest for me remains  
 Beyond the dreary waste.

E'en now, my Saviour, mine,  
 The Lover of my soul ;  
 Thy face doth on me shine,  
 Thy voice my steps control.

The Spirit, too, is giv'n  
 To fill my heart with joy,  
 The earnest now of heav'n—  
 Blest scene of sweet employ.

Scene of untiring praise,  
 Scene of unending bliss,  
 Where on Thy face we gaze,  
 And find our heaven in this.

God all in all above !  
 God all in all below !  
 Displayed in light and love,  
 Eternal praises flow !

A. R.

D.

Worthy, worthy is the Lamb who hath loved us, and washed us in His own blood. I would counsel all the ransomed ones to drink and be drunk with the love of Jesus. O fairest, O highest, O loveliest One, open the well ! O water Thy burnt and withered travellers with this love of Thine.—*S. Rutherford.*

## OLD TESTAMENT LESSONS.

## JOB AND NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

THE opening of the record of Job tells us that he "was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil." So far satisfactory as to *himself*; very satisfactory indeed. Whether unusually so or not, in those days, the reader may be left to say; but in these present days, it would be quite an exceptional person of whom such a description would be written. Yet he moved in no ordinary circumstances. He had seven sons and three daughters; owned 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 she-asses, and a very great household; "so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east." Under all these serious cares, uprightness and the fear of God distinguished him. So much so, that after his sons held in their houses family feasting, he, in his fear lest they had even in heart dishonoured God, offered burnt offerings on their behalf continually. It would be difficult to find a more conscientious person.

But Job had much to learn. He was, as the narrative goes on to unfold, a man of intelligence, and his capacities were well-employed. But is it enough to go through this life active and honourable in doing its business, benevolent (xxix. 12-16), and God-fearing too? Follow Job's story. By successive efforts of Satan, allowed of God, Job was stripped of all he possessed, his family was cut off, and lastly, his three friends, who came to bemoan him, each rebuked and reproached him severely. It is not our purpose to disentangle the threads of their arguments; alike they fail to convince Job. But in chap. xxxviii., "Jehovah answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" And Jehovah adduces the range of creation, proving the feebleness of man.

In chap. xl. 3-5, Job does not answer the inquiry, but he does own, "I am vile; what shall I answer

Thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further."

It is a great thing for an upright man to find that, after all, he is "vile"; it is a lesson slowly learned by any. Job, however, admits it to God. Yet it is not the truth, precisely, that was wanted in chief. It was right so far as it extended, but something else was needed.

So Jehovah again answers Job out of the whirlwind, for He will continue to teach until His servant learns. Oh, how slow our hearts are to enter into the thoughts, and ways, and lessons of God! He speaks; and we do not even perceive it is His voice (1 Sam. iii.). He speaks again and again. What patience in Him; what dulness in us! It is the Infinite and the Only-wise caring for a "grass-flower," for its own good. He gives the ear to hear, then He speaks, and the ear scarcely cares to listen, and little receives His words.

But Jehovah "answers" Job this time, not by the scope of creation at large, but by two items of it; "behemoth" a symbol for power, and "leviathan" a symbol for pride of skill in addition. What can Job say to the ever-blessed First Cause of both these?

In chap. xlii. 1, Job answers, "I know that Thou canst do everything, and that no thought (device) can be withholden from Thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? Therefore have I uttered that I understood not, things too wonderful for me which I knew not. Hear, I beseech Thee, and I will speak; I will demand of Thee, and declare Thou unto me. I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." He owns God in the supremacy of power, accepts the teaching of behemoth, and also, in the supremacy of wisdom, leviathan; God could *do* everything, and no cleverness could by concealment outmatch Him.

Behemoth was the chief of the ways of God, and it

must be He who made him that can make His sword to approach unto him. What is man in presence of Power so declared?

Leviathan with his comely proportions, and superior to every snare, is king over all the children of pride. Will you lay your hand upon him? Remember the battle; do no more. Vain man, with sword, and spear, and dart, can't penetrate his scales. What is man in presence of Him who was his Author? "Who, then, is able to stand before Me?"

"Power belongeth unto God." "Wisdom and might are His." "He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding. He revealeth the deep and secret things; He knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with Him." "Lord, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him?"

Then, as Jehovah had asked, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel?" &c., Job *now* takes his right place in reply, as one who not only darkened, but *hid* counsel.

Have the words of God fallen effectively on our hearts, so that we both hear what they are and *feel their intended value?*

"I am vile" is true enough; but what of God? Which is the greater attainment, to learn and own what man is, or what God is? For the man who knows God, will both own what himself is, and also will judge his ways as well. I am vile in myself, and what I do is—I hide counsel without knowledge. Henceforth, the lesson learned, Job must demand of God, for he perceives Him, and therefore, too, abhors himself.

What an Instructor; what a school; what a scholar; and what progress! By sorrows that have long become proverbial, the divine Instructor led the scholar on, until he was able to take in the truth both as to himself and as to God. The steps and the result are recorded in full for us; and as we read the record, there rises the solemn inquiry, Do we now

surrender to the claims this record makes on us, or are we needing to be passed through corresponding trials to bring our wills, and ourselves also, to nothing? God supreme in power and wisdom, and we in dust and ashes!

In the relations of men one to another, it is comparatively easy to preserve honour and maintain integrity. Social convenience, and comfort, and respectability claim these, and visit the breach of them on the offender. But has not this very fact tended to obscure in the mind what man's relations are towards God? Now it is just this—what man, the created, is in the view of his Creator—that needs learning, and learning by *all*. Nebuchadnezzar must be taught it as well as Job. The narrative in Dan. iv. gives the familiar story of God's ways with Nebuchadnezzar by which he learnt the same lesson.

God gave the king a twelvemonth's warning of what He was about to do. He had established Nebuchadnezzar, like a head of gold, the chief of the Gentiles, supreme ruler. But as he walked in the palace of his kingdom, he spake and said, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" His thoughts centred in himself; his power was acknowledged, and his skill was shewn in great Babylon, the house of the kingdom. He claims the city as the display of the honour of his own majesty, and an effect of the might of his own power. God's supremacy was entirely ignored.

At once, he was driven from among men to dwell with the beasts of the field, while seven times passed over him. No sheltering roof was his, still less a palace, but exposure to the dew of heaven; and he ate grass like oxen. From being the highest man on the earth, he was reduced below the lowest of his subjects, and his very body changed to resemble the inferior creatures, the birds of the air. How did he lose "the honour of his majesty" and "the might of

his power"? Could not the man who built great Babylon take care of himself? "There fell a voice from heaven." Great Babylon, and its might, and majesty, and honour, are nothing before that "voice."

In Gen. iii. 10, that voice stirred the conscience of Adam.

In Gen. xxii. 18 and xxvi. 5, that voice called out the faith of Abraham.

In Num. vii. 89, that voice instructed Moses.

In 1 Kings xix. 13, it called the truant prophet, Elijah, out of his cave.

In Isa. vi. 4, it shook the door-posts of the temple in the sight of abashed Isaiah.

In John v. 25, it calls dead souls to life; and in ver. 28, 29, dead bodies from their graves, both of just and of unjust.

Pause before this witness of that voice a little! Reader, has it stirred your conscience yet? Has it found response from faith in your soul? Have you gladly learned from it? Has it called you back from a bye-path? Has it ever echoed His majesty, so that your heart confessed to it, even to the entire surrender of self? And in the joy of life out from death, can you listen eagerly for its summons both to living and to dead, to rise and meet Him, the Lord, in the air?

"There fell a voice from heaven." And away the haughty monarch, the head of gold, must go—go into temporal judgment for his folly and pride. Not final judgment; for God has a lesson to teach him, and one which he will surely learn. Seven times pass over him—a perfect period of action—and the result is declared in the verses that follow. He blesses the Most High.

"Most High" is that name of God which is directly connected with the rule of the earth, and as such He is now acknowledged. The king had before ascribed to himself as an effective ruler that which he should have accredited to God alone. He now more than reverses this, for he *blesses* the Most High, and asserts

the perpetuity of His rule! He ascribes to God His right place and character!

Then, "all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing." Man is reckoned in his right place too. King and subjects alike, what are they before God? "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou."

Strange it is that a creature should have to be so taught the true place he holds before his Creator. Job needed it; a thousand years after, Nebuchadnezzar needed it; and to-day, more than two thousand years have gone on, yet still it is a lesson unlearned by most, as the surging will of man is continually showing.

Note, in closing, the king was established in his kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to him, but the lesson was effectively learnt and retained. Again he tells us, I praise, and extol, and honour the King of heaven; and, as to man, those that walk in pride, He is able to abase!

Here lies the secret of creature-happiness; own, not in words merely, but from the heart, God is supreme—the Creator absolute. But what do we see? On every side it is, increasingly, I, I, and man's will asserted, with God forgotten or disregarded; but, "thus saith the High and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." What a contrast. It is self, and everlasting distance from God; or, it is a bowed will, and the Creator exalted, who, since the cross, is "Saviour-God," reconciling hearts to Himself by the blood of His Son! His claim upon us is true repentance, *i.e.*, the judgment of myself and my ways; His gift, then, is eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

Job and Nebuchadnezzar were reduced to the lowest circumstances of personal experience to be taught the necessary lesson. For us, it is declared and unfolded in many a story as well as in theirs. Have

we learned it—learned what a privilege it is to take the lowest place of all, the one that really fits us, and there let the blessed God do just what He, in His own wisdom and love, sees best for us? It will not be the bestowment of Job's wealth, or of Nebuchadnezzar's majesty, but it will be a richer joy of soul than all the world could give, a joy in Himself which must go on deepening through all eternity! My reader, can you with adoring gratitude say that that joy is yours?

E. C. P.

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## THE APPROBATION OF THE LORD.

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IT should be joy to anyone who loves the Lord Jesus to think of having His individual peculiar approbation and love; to find He has approved of our conduct in such and such circumstances, though none know this but ourselves who receive the approval. But, beloved, are we really content to have an approval which Christ only knows? Let us try ourselves a little. Are we content, so long as good is done, that nobody should know anything about us—even in the Church to be thought nothing of? that Christ alone should give us the "white stone" of His approval, and the "new name which no man knoweth save only he that receiveth it"? Are we content, I say, to seek nothing else? Oh! think what the terrible evil and treachery of that heart must be that is not satisfied with Christ's special favour, but seeks honour (as we do) of one another instead! I ask you, beloved, which would be most precious to you, which would you prefer, the Lord's public owning of you as a good and faithful servant, or the private individual love of Christ resting upon you, the secret knowledge of His love and approval? He whose heart is specially attached to Christ will respond, "The latter." Both will be ours if faithful; but we shall value this most; and there is nothing that will carry us so straight on our course as the anticipation of it.

J. N. D.

## RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

## IV.

IN pursuance of our subject, we must now turn to the other Gospels. We have seen traced out in that of John the revelation, first, of what the Father does in the activity of divine grace to those who need life, and deserve judgment; and next, how He cares for those whom He has given to His Son.

Coming to the Gospel of Matthew, the Lord first presents Him as the One with whom those, who are disciples in truth, are brought into relationship, and have become partakers of the divine nature. His character, therefore, and His ways are to furnish them with instruction for their walk through this scene. So the Lord often calls Him "*your* Father," besides speaking of Him at times as *His* Father; for obviously there might be occasions when He could only fittingly speak of Him in relation to Himself. Two examples will make this plain.

For the first, let us turn to Matt. xv. 13, where He replied to His disciples, on being told that the scribes and Pharisees who came from Jerusalem were offended by His rebuke, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." Now, what were His words in John vi. 44, 45? "No man can come to Me, except the Father, which hath sent Me, draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto Me." It is plain, since they rejected His teaching, that they had not heard from the Father. They were not God's children. Had He said on that occasion "*your* Father," it would have reminded the disciples of the relationship in which *they* were to God; but saying "My heavenly Father," the Lord would impress on all the

absolute necessity of hearkening to *His* Father, and of being plants of His planting.

A second example is met with in Matt. xviii. 10, where the Lord is warning the disciples against despising a little child, assigning as a reason that "in the heavens their angels" (*i.e.*, those of the heavenly host who represent them in the presence of God) "do always behold the face of My Father which is in the heavens." "My Father," He said, not "their Father," because it was not here a question of the relationship of the little child to God. The angelic ministry referred to is quite independent of that, being God's provision for the creature as such. Their need of salvation is taught in succeeding verses.

But when addressing disciples, taking them on the ground of their profession, He tells them of His Father as their Father. None but He of course could understand the full blessedness implied in such a relationship. Still, where it existed it was a very real thing. His Father was the Father of all those who were His disciples in truth. Such, as born of God, were partakers of the divine nature; hence the character and ways of their Father should be displayed by them. No one on earth has seen God the Father; yet something of Him should be learned by men from the walk, the daily life of the Lord's disciples; and their Father would be glorified, as men saw that which was right, and owned that it was right, practised by His disciples. Of this the Lord speaks in the sermon on the mount: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in the heavens" (v. 16). Something of what He is would thus be set forth.

A new motive is here presented. Ezekiel had declared that the name of God was profaned among the Gentiles by the people of Israel, captives in a foreign land, and there manifesting by their evil ways what they were. Now, ere God can sanctify His name through their restoration (Ezek. xxxvi. 20, 23),

the Lord taught His disciples of the opportunity and of the service entrusted to them in causing, by their good works, men around them to glorify their Father who is in the heavens. As His people, Israel ought to have shown the Gentiles what it was that was well-pleasing to God. As His children, the disciples should be illustrations of the moral character of their Father.

In daily life this should be ; but there would be occasions to call for it in a special way. Of such He reminded them when giving directions for their conduct under persecution ; for, loving their enemies, praying for their persecutors, and being merciful as their heavenly Father is merciful, they would be His sons who maketh His sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. Thus they would be perfect, as their heavenly Father is perfect, profiting by the revelation given of Him who is kind to the unthankful and to the evil (Matt. v. 44-48 ; Luke vi. 35, 36). The Lord had spoken of persecutions to which they might be exposed, and persecutions at the hand of those who professed true zeal for God, and who were reckoned on earth amongst God's people. The Highest, then, whilst owning them *as His sons*, would not of necessity shield them from the hatred and opposition of their fellows. Rather would it be the occasion to shew forth who and what was their Father.

But more. If God was their Father, they had to do with Him who seeth in secret, as well as to represent Him in their ways before men. He seeth in secret : this was to be remembered when engaged in those things which are commonly known amongst men as religious duties. So the Master continued His instruction : " Take heed that ye do not your righteousness\* before men, to be seen of them ; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in the heavens" (vi. 1).

In a threefold way could they practice this—viz.,

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\* " Righteousness," not " alms," is the better reading here.

in almsgiving (2-4), in prayer (5-15), and in fasting (16-18); but in whichever of these ways they practised righteousness, remembering from whom was their reward, they were to do it to Him who seeth in secret. This the Lord impressed on them. Their Father's eye was on them. Their Father was well acquainted with that which they were doing; He would not forget it. "Thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee"\* (4, 6, 18). What encouragement! and at the same time, what a wholesome reminder! There is something, too, very gracious in the Lord's teaching here. "Thy Father," He said, not "your Father," referring thereby to the birth-tie formed between each true disciple and God. Each can say, "He is my Father;" and, if finding himself alone on earth from whatever cause, with none to turn to here, there is always that eye looking down on him, the eye of his Father who seeth in secret. The eye of his Father. One sees in Ps. cxxxix. what an uneasy feeling the saint experiences under the sense of God's eye being on him, till he gets hold of God's thoughts (14-18). The eye of my Father being on me should produce no such uneasiness; rather the contrary, assured that neither locality nor darkness can hinder that eye resting on me. On Peter at midnight, sleeping between two soldiers in prison, and on Paul at night in the storm, when for many days neither sun nor stars had appeared, that eye looked down. The lights in heaven could be obscured by clouds or thickness; but nothing comes between our Father's eye and the object it would rest on, for He seeth in secret: a word of comfort, yet a word of warning also; for is there not a danger of forgetting before whom we are, and who beholds us?

The Lord now speaks of prayer. Vain repetitions are needless, for "your Father," He declared, "knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him" (8).

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\* "Openly" should probably be omitted in each case.

He not only sees each one, but knows all about each one, being cognisant of all that of which each has need. What confidence should this impart. God is my Father, and He knows what things *I* have need of before I ask Him. But how often has each one surely in the past forgotten this, even if there have been times when the soul has stayed itself on the remembrance of it. Is prayer then unneeded, a useless exercise? It is unneeded as the medium for informing God of what it is that we are in want; but it is not an exercise thrown away, when the child unbosoms and unburdens itself to its Father who is in heaven; for it is the appointed way of relief for the heart of the creature thus to pour out its requests to God. So the Lord goes on to teach the disciples how they were to pray, and in doing so teaches them about the Father, who has a kingdom, who daily cares for His children, and who can act in grace, forgiving them when they have sinned.

As to His kingdom, it will come, so they are told to pray for it—a kingdom which embraces heaven and earth, a kingdom really bounded only by the limits of created things, a kingdom which shall last for ever and ever. For doubtless the petition, “Thy kingdom come,” looks on beyond millennial times for its full accomplishment, even to the eternal state, when, all things having been subdued to the Son, He Himself shall be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all; for then He will have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father (1 Cor. xv. 25-28). Yet ere this is effected, to which we are taught to look forward, the heavenly saints will experience an answer to this petition in measure, as they will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father throughout the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. xiii. 43). For it is our Father’s good pleasure to give us the kingdom (Luke xii. 32); but into it only those on earth now enter who do His will (Matt. vii. 21).

If any ask, Who is our heavenly Father? the answer comes, It is God, who shall reign with undisputed sway for ever and ever. All that has resisted His authority, and every-one who has attempted to thwart His purposes, will then be completely and finally vanquished. Nor that only, but for ever and ever will such be obliged to acknowledge His might, and the impossibility of successful resistance to His will. Now, sin is rampant on earth; ere long, it will seem to triumph for a season. But He who is our Father will triumph fully in the end. To that He looks forward, and teaches His children to do the same. For it is not from lack of power that He has not already interposed. His will is done in heaven; it will be certainly done on earth. Nor is it from lack of interest in His saints that He lets them suffer. He is their Father; but He waits till the set time has come to deal finally with the power of darkness. His long-suffering is salvation (2 Pet. iii. 15). Of this, each one of His children is an illustration.

Almighty power then is His, yet combined with tender pity and constant thought for His children here on earth. Of 'old, in the wilderness, Israel experienced Jehovah's care, as they went forth on the week-day mornings to gather the needed supply of manna provided for that large encampment whilst they were taking their rest. They slept, but Jehovah was working—raining down for them food for the coming day, in the strength of which they could go forth for the ordinary occupations of life. Now, His children are to acknowledge and to prove that He daily cares for them. It is the part of a father to provide for his children; it is characteristic of our Father that He cares daily for His. "Give us this day our daily bread" teaches that, and the Lord's instruction about the birds and the lilies is to impress it on us (Matt. vi. 25-34, Luke xii. 22-31). "Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them.

Are ye not much better than they?" Again, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Matt. x. 29-31). To guard us from anxious care, we are told that our Father feedeth the birds. To keep the heart calm and confident in danger from enemies, the Lord reminds His own that they are of more value than many sparrows. Yet how slow, surely many a one will say, is he to learn these lessons based on the revelation of the Father.

But not only are we dependent creatures, we are also sinful creatures, and need, how often, forgiveness at His hand. Yet this will our Father extend to us, if we act as His children, showing a forgiving spirit toward others (Matt. vi. 12, 14, 15); and a later revelation reminds us that failure on our part does not break the link of relationship between the saint and God (1 John ii. 1). A most gracious intimation for the heart when it may specially need it.

All-powerful then in the universe, yet ministering to the weakest, forgiving the undeserving, and willing to direct and to deliver His children from evil; such is our Father as set forth in this prayer by His Son. Nor need we fear to trouble Him by presenting our requests. Though He is God, who orders all things in heaven and earth, He would set each one perfectly free before Him to tell out his wants, since His Son has told us, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; . . . If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in the heavens give good things to them that ask Him" (Matt. vii. 7-11).

Another branch of this subject should be noticed, viz., the feelings of the Father's heart as revealed in the Word. And, first, in relation to Him who is His well-beloved Son? In the hearing of many dull of

understanding, and unable to appreciate the truth which He was revealing, the Son, ever in the bosom of the Father, told out, as He only could, some of the secrets of that bosom, both when speaking in parables and when speaking plainly to those around Him.

In two parables He set this forth: the one, that of the husbandmen and the vineyard; the other, that of the marriage supper for the king's son. In the former, related by the three evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the preciousness of the Son to the Father is declared. Messenger after messenger had been sent by the owner of the vineyard to receive its fruits from the husbandmen, but all in vain. What, then, was to be done? The husbandmen had slighted the messengers, and worse, had even put some of them to death, thus evidencing the spirit which animated them, and showing the treatment they justly deserved at the hands of the owner of the vineyard. But he was slow to anger, unwilling, if it could be averted, to pour out on them the vials of his wrath. Not a word had come from the husbandmen expressing regret for the past and promising amendment in the future. No suppliant came seeking for the owner's forgiveness. Obdurate these men had proved; unsoftened, unsubdued they remained. What could be done? In Luke xx. 13, the lord of the vineyard is described as taking counsel with himself. "What shall I do? I will send my beloved son." In Mark (xii.6), the preciousness of that son to his father is dwelt upon. He had yet "one son, his well-beloved; he sent him last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son." Knowing, as we do, of whom the Lord spake—of His Father and of Himself—we are taught the Father's affection for His Son, as the object to Him most precious; willing, indeed, to send Him, but only as the last resource!

In the parable of the marriage supper for the king's son, found in Matt. xxii. 1-14, we are taught of the Father's delight in His Son, and of the desire that others should share His joy. But all this fell on hearts

estranged from God. The effect of the first parable on such was to make the chief priests and Pharisees seek to lay hands on Him; the effect of the second parable was to make the Pharisees take counsel to entangle Him in His talk. Known, of course, to the Lord beforehand was all this, yet it did not deter Him from uttering those parables; for if the chief priests and Pharisees could hear them unmoved, others might profit by them, and many in after ages get refreshment from what He then unfolded of the feelings towards Him of His Father's heart, which brings out to us the greatness of the grace displayed in sending His Son. Yet not till we see Him in the glory conferred on Him by His Father (John xvii. 24), gazing on Him as arrayed in all the tokens of His Father's love, shall we understand, as far as creatures can understand it, what divine parental love is in its fulness.

Yet, thank God, we are not to be spectators merely of its display. We too share, and shall share for ever, in the Father's love, of which the Lord spake when on earth. To whom it can flow forth, we read; and the parable of the prodigal son illustrates it, as the father therein welcomes to his bosom the one who had sinned against heaven and before him. We know of what the Lord was really speaking, desirous to acquaint men with His Father, and to tell out something of His love. Many and many a one has found light and warmth flow into his heart as he has perused that parable; and, if the Lord tarries, many more may experience the same blessing. The story is told so touchingly; the scene is described so graphically. None need be afraid to cast themselves on His Father. None can say they cannot understand what it was the Lord intended to teach, yet none can fathom the love of which He was speaking. Thank God, none are asked to do that; but they are invited to share in it.

## SUPERIORITY OVER CIRCUMSTANCES.—

*Phil.* iv. 6-9.

IN this epistle the Christian is viewed as passing on through a mixed, unattractive, and discouraging scene. The experience connected with this is realized, and the necessary exhortations, negative and positive, are given by the Apostle. There is much to discourage. He finds himself in prison; enemies begin to preach, supposing to add affliction to his bonds. He has to exhort the saints, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves. Do all things without murmurings and disputings." Of those who should have been a comfort to him he has to write, "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." Even those who made him rejoice, by the exercise of their gift (i. 14), give him sorrow by the way in which they appear to act towards those who are not one with them about certain truths; so that he has to indicate that such a course is not pressing toward the mark, and that God was interested in the matter, and would reveal what they were otherwise minded about. Then there are those over whom he weeps, the enemies of the cross of Christ!

Amidst this conflict he seeks to attract the saints to Christ, who as Jesus had gone the way before them, making Himself of no reputation, and thus leaving them an example. He refers to the consolation in Christ; tells them to "rejoice in the Lord;" attracts their eye onward to the prize, and upward to the Saviour, whom they look for (as in 1 John iii. 2). In view of this, he exhorts them to "stand fast in the Lord," and then reminds them that "the Lord is at hand."

With the contrast before him between what is above and what is here below, the Apostle writes, "I am in

a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better," and who would gainsay it?

This leads up to the secret of superiority over circumstances—"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." While on the way to our rest, the rest that remaineth for the people of God, we are apt in view of circumstances to desire to be at once where there shall be no more sea,—emblem of trouble and unrest. But we find that *where we are* we can be at rest by the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keeping our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Observe, this is obtained by prayer and supplication. The peace of Christ is different in two ways: first, it is *given*, "My peace I *give* unto you" (John xiv. 27); second, it supposes us *in* the storm, and keeps us from being overwhelmed by it (John xx. 21). On the other hand, the *peace of God*, first, is ours consequent upon letting our requests be made known unto God; second, it gives us the sense of being *above* the storm—in the calm of His presence. *Peace with God* is also different, being obtained once for all on the principle of faith, as in Rom. v. 1, and based upon the sacrifice of Christ, as in John xx. 19-20. *Peace with God* is connected with the conscience; the *peace of God*, with the heart and mind.

From being thus *with God*, as in Phil. iv. 6, we are prepared for the instruction as to how God, the *God of peace*, can be *with us*: "Whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things . . . do; and the God of peace shall be with you."

Oh, beloved, how often we miss being blessed, through brooding over trouble, and consulting with others, or with our own hearts, instead of coming to God as directed. We may not get the answer we desire, but we are always sure of this: "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus," and then we are free to think on and do "those things," and thereby have the God of peace with us.

In Ps. lv., we find when David was in trouble he said, "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest" (ver. 6); but he learns another means of flying away and being at rest, and yet remaining *where he was*—"I will call upon God" (ver. 16). The result of this is that he is sustained and able to turn to others and say, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord and He shall *sustain* thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (ver. 22). From Ps. cix. we learn that when lying tongues were let loose upon him, he says, "But I will give myself unto prayer" (ver. 4). So with Jesus, the perfect, yet dependent Man. When grieving over the cities, wherein most of His mighty works were done, He looked upward (Matt. xi. 25). When men were filled with madness against Him, He went out into a mountain to pray (Luke vi. 12).

From all this we learn that for us, surrounded as we are, something more than the energy and resources of nature are required. "Even the youths," the prophet tells us (Is. xl. 30, 31), "shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." Here the thought is again supplied: we, as it were, rise to God, and are thereby fitted to go on here—to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint. Well may the same prophet say, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee,

because he trusteth in Thee. Trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting (the Rock of Ages) strength" (Is. xxvi. 3, 4).

And now, do we know the blessed *reality* of all this—how to be sustained, to have our strength renewed, and to get our hearts and minds kept? As in Malachi's day, so now, the word comes from *above*, "I change not . . . Prove me."

J. B.

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## THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES.—*Heb.* xi.

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THIS chapter has been happily termed by an ancient writer, "The Roll-call of the Illustrious Dead." Here the Spirit of God calls the names and proclaims the deeds of the noble army of witnesses. Can time, distance, or change erase the name or blot out the individual history and special circumstances of any saint from either the heart or memory of God? Impossible. Your tears, your soul exercises, your words, services, and deeds are carefully preserved in the archives of heaven; all will have an eternal answer in glory, for all about the Christian bears the impress of resurrection. Did we say all? Yes, all save your sins and iniquities, of which God says, "I remember *no more*" (*Heb.* x. 17). Most precious words! Over the tomb of God's forgetfulness of your sins the trumpet-blast of resurrection will never, no, *never* sound. Blessed be His Name!

Some of those dear, godly saints whose names are inscribed on these divine and everlasting records are *now* about 6,000 years old; they yet live unto God, as truly as they did when on earth (*Luke* xx. 38). They have entered into rest. No cloud will ever overcast their sky. No bursting heart, no wasted cheek; no sob or pang of sorrow can ever again have their place amongst the "cloud of witnesses" who are now and for ever in the presence of the Lord.

Now we—all believers on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *not* a class of such—have been assigned *their* place of testimony on earth, and our histories and lives are being written: only *their* “well done” has been penned, *ours* will be spoken. The battle between truth and error, Christ and Satan, is yet raging; and as we are rapidly nearing the end, the conflict deepens with intensity of purpose on both sides. A clear issue is before us all. Heaven or earth: which? Christ or Satan: which? Beloved Christian reader, these are times which demand a whole-hearted and passionate love for Christ and His people, accompanied with unswerving devotedness to your high and holy mission, which is to live for and serve in practical sanctification of spirit, soul, and body, Christ our precious Lord and adorable Saviour. There must be no trimming of the truth, nor a compromising policy ever thought of, by anyone who would earn the grand title, “Thou man of God.” In love, thought, and spiritual interest embrace all who love Christ, irrespective of the numerous ecclesiastical walls of separation which, to our common shame, divide the beloved saints of God. But jealously guard the divine standards of truth and holiness; never lower or adapt these to suit altered times. Bring people up to them; on no account bring them down to fit the state of Church or world. Divine wisdom is needed to scripturally adjust the claims of grace and holiness.

“Faith,” which is named 24 times in our chapter, is the divine principle by which saints in all ages and under all circumstances have lived, suffered, and pleased God (verse 6). It is the happy link, moreover, which connects us—of New Testament times—with the worthies who have preceded us, and with the apocalyptic sufferers in the future.

What an interesting moment is this in the history of the Church! The forces are marshalling for the final conflict. Let each one see to it that he is on *God's* side, which is most certainly the winning side.

Hold aloft with firm grasp our holy banner, with its sacred inscription, *Christ and Him crucified*. The almost-resistless waves of error and wickedness are rolling along, and swamping the intellectual and nominal faith of thousands: "*nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure*" (2 Tim. ii. 19). There is a *Rock* immoveable as the very throne of God, set in the midst of human wreck and ruin, and he who rests thereon partakes of the security and stability of the rock-foundation itself. Gathered in our weakness on *God's* sure foundation now, we are—O how safe! and when "the elements meet, and the wild roar of a wrecked world fills the universe with fear," our rest, our glory, our triumph will be unutterably grand.

Now, while cultivating increasingly largeness of heart towards *all* who love our Lord Jesus Christ, never bid for popularity, numbers, or money: you can only do so by surrendering the truth, or by adapting it to the whims, or by accommodating it to the "convenience," of persons. Faith in God and in every letter of the written word is indispensable. The mass of professing Christians are drifting away from the text of Scripture, and thus are tossed about by the waves of doubt and conflicting opinions. The Christian *alone* who has his anchor cast upon the Word of God, can ride in safety through the billows of a stormy scene like the present. All is breaking up. Crash, wreck, and ruin in Church and State is the *human* look out. Statesmen fear it, the world dreads it. But the truth and word of God "standeth sure"; and we fear not the threatening cloud, nor tremble at the coming storm. "The LORD sitteth upon the flood" (Ps. xxix. 10), and Jehovah reigneth at all times, through all ages, and under all circumstances. May God bless His own in these closing hours of high-handed impiety and rebellion, and keep His blood-bought in the hollow of His mighty hand.

## THE VALUE OF THE BLOOD OF JESUS.

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IN Mr. John Williams' account of his devoted and self-denying labours in the gospel among the South Sea Islanders, he speaks of the conversion of a native named Vara, a chief at Aimeo, a remarkable instance of the power of divine grace. He says: "In the time of their ignorance he was a procurer of human sacrifices, and on one occasion the king, Pomare, sent to him an order to obtain one immediately. Vara, rather at a loss to satisfy this imperious demand, going in search of a victim, saw his own little brother crying after him. As soon as he saw him he turned round, struck him on the head with a stone, and killed him; and having put his head in a basket, sent him to Pomare. When his mother bewailed the death of her child, and charged him with cruelty for killing his brother, he abused her, and said, 'Is not the favour of the gods, the pleasure of the king, and the security of our possessions, worth more than that little fool of a brother? Better lose him than the government of our district!' This implacable and unmerciful heathen became through divine grace a humble and devoted Christian, and to the day of his death adorned the doctrine of the Saviour-God."

Mr Orsmond, who visited him in his dying moments, gives the following account of his death:—

"On seeing his end approaching, I said to him, 'Are you sorry that you cast away your lying gods, by which you used to gain so much property?'

"He was aroused from his lethargy, and with tears of pleasure in his eyes, he exclaimed, 'Oh, no, no, no. What! can I be sorry for casting away death for life? Jesus is my rock, the fortification in which my soul takes shelter.'

"On being asked on what his hopes of future happiness were founded, he said: 'I have been very wicked, but a great King from the other side of the

skies sent His ambassadors with terms of peace. We could not tell, for many years, what these ambassadors wanted. At length Pomare obtained a victory, and invited all his subjects to come and take refuge under the wing of Jesus, and I was one of the first to do so. *The blood of Jesus is my foundation.* I grieve that all my children do not love Him. Had they known the misery we endured in the reign of the devil, they would gladly take the gospel in exchange for their follies. Jesus is the best King; He gives a pillow without thorns.'

"A little later he was asked if he was afraid to die, when with almost youthful energy he replied: 'No, no. The canoe is on the sea, the sails are spread, she is ready for the gale. I have a good pilot to guide me, and a good haven to receive me. My outside man and my inside man differ. Let my body rot till the trump shall sound; let my soul wing her way to the presence of Jesus.'"

Dear reader, have *you*, like this poor *blood-stained* savage, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ known what it is to be *blood-cleansed*? "We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." Could there be a viler specimen of "blood-guiltiness" than this fratricide, this procurer of human sacrifices? Yet he was cleansed from every stain by the precious blood of Christ—blood for blood. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." May God grant that through faith in the blood of Christ you may truly be **WHITE AS SNOW.**

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How is it there is so little praise? Because there is so little appreciation of Christ, and of how that blood of His has cleansed us and given us a place in glory.

Are you occupied with the person of Christ alone? You cannot have Him as the object of your life, unless you are occupied with Him Himself—the centre of all the divine glory.—G. V. W.

## LETTERS OF INTEREST.

## "AMAZIAH."

INDEED, dear —, as you allude to it, weak is the moral effort we make in the service of Christ. But it has occurred to me lately, with comfort, that though weak, service to the Lord by a believer in this world is the sublimest moral sight in the creation. For angels serve with a consenting nature, and in a consenting system. We serve against all within and all around; the flesh, and the world, and the devil. And I cease to wonder that the Church is called into such dignity and such nearness to the throne in the kingdom. Yes, and let me ask, Is there not a solemn warning to us in the history of Amaziah in 2 Chron. xxv., to watch the state of our affections towards the Lord, and not be satisfied by the mere performance of duties or services without a heart engaged in the midst of them?

For we read of Amaziah that he did what was right, but not with a perfect heart—*i.e.*, as I suppose not "heartily as unto the Lord." He did what he did, perhaps, through fear of the law, or to keep good accounts with his own conscience; but in his doings he had no care about Jehovah, or His pleasure, or His glory, and was indifferent as to the state of his affections towards Him.

And what, after a time, was the result of all this? Terrible, indeed, and more than we could have easily believed. He gets the victory over the children of Edom. In this, and in his previous actions, such as avenging the death of his father, and in dismissing the army of Israel, he had done right according to the letter of the command, and to the voice of the prophet. But his victory becomes the occasion of manifesting how hollow everything may be where there is no perfect heart, no reference to God in our doing, no

affection for Christ, and no concern about the coldness or barrenness of our poor hearts towards Him.

Amaziah gets a victory. But Amaziah's heart not being already possessed by the Lord, this victory gets possession of it, becomes the master of it, and seats itself supreme there. Accordingly, he is lifted up, he boasts, and is proud. The victory he gets over Edom becomes the victor, or the master of his heart, because that heart was empty, not filled with the Lord. He, therefore, as full of his victory, boasts, challenges the king of Israel, and suffers loss and dishonour in the battle. But even more. The gods of the conquered Edom become the gods of his own heart ; he worships them. He adopts the spoils, the captives of his own hand in war, as the deities to whom he bows down ! Monstrous folly !

Is not this written that we may learn to what a length of blindness and stupidity, as well as to what a length of madness and self-destruction, the heart may be hurried that has not by faith invited and seated the Lord in it, or does not what it does in reference to Him ?

The victory he gained became the *master* of his heart, the gods whom he had conquered became the deities of his heart ! because the Lord had not previously been the object of that heart. It was, therefore, empty, though "swept and garnished," for the entrance of any gods or any masters. And the flush of victory becomes its master, disposing of him to his destruction, and the spoils of victory became its gods, holding him up as a very wonder of human and moral degradation.

O, it is a serious word. We truly have to confess the coldness and barrenness of our hearts towards the blessed Lord ; but still, let this be our grief and our confession, and never let us be indifferent to the state of our affections towards Him, or satisfied, as we may assume Amaziah was, in merely doing with our hand the thing that is commanded, with the heart all

the time unengaged about Him who has commanded it. What is done should be done "heartily, as unto the Lord."

J. G. B.

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EPHESIANS iv. 30, v. 1-3.

DEAR BROTHER,—I have been interested just lately by what is written in this Scripture, and send you a few thoughts on it:—(1) A Christian in apostolic days was sealed with the Holy Spirit of God, and he knew it. (2) He was forgiven of God, and he was conscious of it. (3) He shared in the love of Christ, and was sensible of it. (4) He was a saint of God, and was reminded of it. Very great were these favours, and for the most part very wonderful, yet each of them could furnish ground on which to base most practical exhortations for every-day life. Sealed with the Holy Spirit of God, the Christian was not to grieve Him. Forgiven of God in Christ, they were to forgive one another. Loved by Christ, they were to walk in love. As saints, they were to refrain even from the naming among themselves of those unclean ways by which men are so often defiled. Their being thus exhorted showed into what, unless watchful, they might fall. The terms, however, in which they were addressed proved that they never could be lost. For God had forgiven them, and they were sealed unto the day of redemption.

C. E. S.

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How sweet is the contemplation of the whole spirit and ways of Jesus when here! How the very atmosphere of heaven, and love, and holiness surrounded Him, and spread from Him, and, blessed be His name, is spreading still! May we catch much of it, my dear brother, the little while we are in this sad scene, so as to be channels of the blessedness in Jesus to the helpless victims of Satan. In a few days we shall see Him; let us cheer one another until then.

How far before us were the first disciples of our Lord in one thing—the one thing, I may say—unbounded attachment to His person! He was, indeed, their all. Little light and little everything, but adoring thoughts of Him. They had their all in Him, and they liked to have it so. A. R.

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### THE ALTOGETHER LOVELY.

SURE you cannot now be said to see Him face to face, as you shall do a few days hence when ye shall be with Christ. He is here with us in a drop, or the tenth part of a night's dewing of grace and sweetness; but He is there in His marriage-robe of glory, richer, more costly, more precious, in one hem or button of that garment of Fountain-majesty than a million worlds. Oh! the well is deep! You shall then think that preachers, and sinful ambassadors on earth, did but mar His praises when they spake of Him, and preached His beauty. Alas! we but make Christ black and less lovely in making such insignificant, and dry, and cold, and low expressions of His highest and transcendent super-excellency!—*S. Rutherford.*

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A heavenly life will never be found, save in one who is in present communion with Christ about the place to which He is leading us; and a heart can never be abiding in communion with His heart and be identified with the world that does not know Him.

The grand expression of His love is that He will come *Himself* to fetch us, to carry us to His Father's house. No other *to-morrow* is given us by the Spirit but Christ in heaven coming to take us up there.

G. V. W.

## “WHITE AS SNOW.”

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### ADDRESS ON HEBREWS IX.

IT is wonderful how Satan has succeeded in bringing in these things around us—“the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life”—between us and God, while the conscience is bound and silent, and the flesh is gratified, so that the things that perish absorb our minds, and a person goes on calling himself a Christian, and believing there is an eternity, and yet not knowing where he is going! There is the thought of responsibility to God, and of the time coming when there will be a judgment in respect of it, and then they hope they will be right; but they have no link with God at all, and in the meantime they enjoy themselves. Satan occupies them with that, and the heart does not pierce through to God. They are brought up with religious habits, but the conscience would make them uneasy with God, and the heart is not inclined for God, so He is kept out as much as possible. Men have got away from God, or why should the thought of Him make them uneasy? They are occupied with other things.

It is a solemn thing to meet God, and everyone must meet Him,—“There is nothing secret that shall not be made known, and hid that shall not be manifested.” It is not God’s way that anything should be hidden; He blots it out—brings it to the light now in grace instead of in judgment, for those who believe. But “all things are naked and opened to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.” You have *all* to do with God, and many here may not know what terms they are on with Him. They would not deny it all—that “for every idle word men must give account”—but Satan fills the mind with the world, and keeps the heart occupied with the things which perish, that they may perish themselves, and tries to lead them to open sin too.

The word of God comes calling them out of that state. God has interfered in grace before the time of having to do with him in judgment—that is what Christianity tells me—before they have to give account.

I can't stand before God in sin, that is clear. Everyone has the consciousness that sin can't be in heaven. Every man has a conscience,—he may have a false rule, but it is there ; and therefore we know sin won't do with God. The easy-going man, who says, "God is good," lowers Him to his state, instead of preparing to meet God. God *is* good, but His way is not to allow sin. He fits the person for Himself, and not Himself for sin. "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with Me ;" and we can see there would be no joy in heaven if it were not so. We know we have sinned, and sin can't be in God's presence, and then we try to slur it over. But God won't—He can't—give up His holiness, or allow sin. He can't call evil good, darkness light, and put bitter for sweet. I see I have sinned, and I am lost,—not that He can't save me.

Man's heart can have no pleasure in God as he is, and God can have no pleasure in sin, so there can be no link. But *He can cleanse us*. The unconverted man thinks heaven is a happy place, and he wants to be happy ; but put him there with his present feelings, and he would be glad to get out ! Sin clearly cannot be there, and the things that are your pleasure and delight are not *one* of them there above, and what *is* there *you* have no pleasure in. We know it ; we may not think of it. We find, first, that God is holy and I am not, and we can't get on ; but before the fruits of responsibility come, God has interfered in Christ. He has come to deal with our sins, before He deals in judgment. The very thing that would come into judgment has been dealt with.

We want the conscience made perfect. Jewish offerings could not make it perfect ; Christ *does*. He makes us feel the sins, but He makes the conscience

perfect. It is remarkable the way the Holy Ghost presses the word "eternal" in this chapter (and in one place where only it is used, the "eternal Spirit") to show it was this intervention of God doing a work which from His nature is perfect and complete, and it has an eternal character and value.

When as a poor sinner I get to see this work, my conscience is perfect and His love flows freely; when by Christ I believe on Him, I have the sense of divine favour in my soul, and my conscience is perfect. As to my walk here, my conscience must be incessantly vigilant, but as to God all is clear. Conflict with Satan, the flesh, and the world, but I have only Christ between me and God. I have not my sins, for He took them. I have nothing but the perfectness of Christ before me. We have conflict down here, and have to walk consistently. A loving child is always a child, but he tries to walk to please his Father; he finds difficulties and trials, but his place with God is settled by a work that is finished, and never can be added to.

There are three ways in which He speaks of this here: first, "He has appeared once in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," that is one point; the next is, "He was offered to bear the sins of many"; and the third, "He appears now in the presence of God for us"—He is always in the presence of God every instant for us.

First, we get the great, immense truth as regards God,—“He came to put away sin.” When I speak of sins, it is as to myself. He appeared “in the *end of the world.*” That expression is little thought of. The history of man’s responsibility has been gone through; his condition is sin before God. There was in God’s sight what was hateful to Him. Innocence is gone; man never will be innocent again. In heaven there is no sin, but you won’t be innocent there; you have got the knowledge of good and evil.

People dream about, and talk of man being in God’s image, &c.; but it is man’s thoughts, not God’s. “Man

has become as one of us, knowing good and evil." The conscience is there ; that was not in Adam before the fall. He was there to till the garden, and bless and praise God for His goodness. God was the object of his praise. He had not to make a difference between good and evil ; and therefore when he was tested it was a question of obedience—there was no evil : that would have been God creating evil. He might have eaten of that tree as well as any other, if God had not forbid him. Now we have something quite different. Sin is here.

The time is coming when there will be nothing under God's eye but *righteousness*,—not innocence. A new heavens and earth wherein *dwelleth* righteousness. We are between the two, when sin is under God's eye, and what is to be done? God says, "Where art thou?" and all the man has to say is, "I was afraid, and went and hid myself." That is what he is doing now ; he is afraid, and goes and hides. God drove man out, and there is no way *back* to the tree of life. You may go *forward* to it in grace ; you can't get back to innocence. You have got sin and sins, and the moment God's voice reaches the ear of your heart, the man is afraid. The feeling he has to the Source of all blessedness is fear. It is a terrible thing ! No thought of God, or love to God, or delight in God, or intercourse with God. They ask for temporary blessings, but there's not a trace of real fellowship with God ; they are "without God in the world."

Then we get the immense and blessed truth, that He came into the world as it was, instead of waiting until man should give account. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses." He must have righteousness ; He could not slur over sin.

Righteousness is the authoritative judgment of the thing, and holiness delights in good and is abhorrent of evil. Holiness and unholiness can't be happy together. Through our fall in listening to Satan, a

wide waste of sin was here in this world under God's eye. God was thoroughly dishonoured. If we had *God's eye*, and ran over what is thought, and said, and done in this town for twenty-four hours, what should we see! What an awful thing it is. When callousness is taken out of the heart, and holiness is there, the soul sees what man is. The heart would sink if it were not for sovereign grace. Wretchedness, and misery, and corruption, and degradation are there, and we shut ourselves up in comfortable drawing-rooms (perhaps too comfortable in that sense); but if that evil got into our company, what should we do? If we were with God, and loved our neighbours as ourselves, it would not need to come into our company for us to feel it.

Into this world, at enmity to Himself, full of sin and sorrow, the Son of God comes, and is made sin. He looks for some to have compassion, and finds none; He is betrayed and forsaken, and He has to say, "This is your hour and the power of darkness." Everything gets darker and darker. As He goes on He says, "Beware of men." Just think of the Lord in grace saying that! He tested the world then, and that tests His obedience and love; and when He comes to the cup He says, If it be Thy will, let this pass. He bore everything with patient meekness, but *that* His perfectness shrank from, and—such a solemn word!—it was not *possible* for it to pass. That cup *must* be drunk, or you will have to drink it. Never would God have made that blessed One suffer if it were not necessary for you. *You were a sinner.* The very thought of it made Him "sweat as it were great drops of blood."

What a state for you to be in! Something that made it *necessary* for Christ to suffer! absolutely necessary to drink that cup! Love and obedience were perfect—the victim perfect, and the offering of the victim perfect—*all* perfect, and that stands entirely alone.

I get perfectness as it is nowhere else in the very

fact of His being made sin, and without that God could never have His glory. The fullest righteousness in the judgment of sin, and at the same time perfect love to the sinner. He had a baptism to be baptised with, and He was straitened till it was accomplished. When God is perfectly glorified there is no straitness of the love, and grace goes out to you without stint because God is perfectly glorified by the blood which is on the mercy-seat, and in the place of sin where you wanted it, for you were in sin. Everything in God has been perfectly glorified at the point where He was made sin. The blood is put under God's eye, and we can go freely to all the sinners in the world and say, *grace reigns*.

That is the first point here: "He appeared to put away sin." Then comes the personal question—"He was offered to bear the sins of many;" that is, people in their sins—not what God required; and there we get the portion of the sinner, the individual portion. Death has come into this world, and is the judgment of man in this world.

Then comes the question of the soul. God had breathed into man the breath of life, and the *soul* does not return to dust. Where does it go? "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." The question of the conduct of man before God, is *after death*.

The apostle then takes up the intervention of God. "*As it is appointed,*" &c., "*so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many,*" &c. Now it is not only God glorified, but the other part of the great day of atonement—the scape goat. I have all my sins confessed by Christ as His on His own head already, and then I get the conscience purged. I have done such and such sins—I admit it all; God grant I may feel it more and more. The nearer you get to God, the more you see the horribleness of sin; and where do I see it most of all? On the cross.

My sins, then, were borne; that's the second

great truth. The world crucified Him, and the disciples fled. He bore the sins all in His own body on the tree, in the darkness with God. It was a real thing. Such suffering none can fathom. What the holiness of God felt sin to be; the heart of love that always dwelt in the bosom of the Father felt the curse. We know it was suffering; and if the work were not done then, simply, perfectly, and for ever, it never could be. When He looks at the believer, therefore, He looks across the blood, and that makes it impossible for Him to see the sins. What gives peace is that, though I can never value it as I ought, there is *One* who does, and that one is God. I desire to, more and more. He denies the work of Christ if He imputes one sin to him that believes. "When He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down at the right hand," &c. Therefore the conscience is perfect. I see in that blood-shedding that my sins were borne.

Then what a blessed thing it is to say, I am *bound* to believe I am as "WHITE AS SNOW." I know unbelief works, and Satan's wiles come in, and it is His will you should feel your sins and be broken down about them and judge them; but it is a *sin* to doubt the efficacy of the work of Christ in the eyes of God. He is always there, the testimony that God has accepted His work. Instead of judging me for my sins, when we (believers, I mean) appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, we find that the very One who bore the sins is the Judge! How can He impute them? If through grace my soul has seen the efficacy of His work, and my conscience is made perfect through His precious blood, I can look for Him with joy. The One who died for me, the very hope of the heart is to see His face with joy. "I shall be satisfied (when I awake) with Thy likeness;" and then He will have nothing more to do with sin. To them that look for Him will He appear the second time *without sin* unto salvation, because He has not to deal with it again; it would be denying Himself and His work. It is to

receive us to Himself, and to see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied, and have us in the glory with Him. Not content with sending, He comes Himself to fetch us. His heart is *set* on us. He has purchased us for Himself, and He is coming to take us to the glory; and when I come to the judgment-seat, it is as a glorified saint I get there. That is the second point.

The third is the continuity and perpetuity of it all. "Now to appear in the presence of God for us." He is always there, our *righteousness*. Not an instant for the believer that Christ is not representing Him in God's presence. This is representation. I get the work done that puts away sin for God's glory, and when He comes again it is to receive me to Himself. Meanwhile, I cannot look up to God without finding divine righteousness mine in His presence. What! am *I* in the presence of God? *Christ* is there *for me*. Instead of lowering the thought of God or allowing sin, righteousness and holiness is all met, and God is glorified; the work is done; my sins were borne on the tree, never to be mentioned; and for poor weak ones down here (the more we feel our weakness the better) He is there always for *you*. When I look up, there He is *for me*. That is the ground the believer is on with God: the conscience perfect, and Christ representing him. He is left down here to get his senses exercised and tried, and to represent Christ; there service comes in; but as to God's presence, that side is settled. I have boldness to enter into the holiest, the work being done which put away sin. In full assurance of faith the veil is rent, and we "walk in the light as God is in the light."

What a blessed place, beloved friends,—perfectly reconciled to God; the conscience perfect, and finding in the grace and blessedness of the Lord what has hold of the heart and makes Him precious to it; and instead of having nothing in heaven that the heart desires, the very thing that I desire above all things in the world is to be there to see Him!

The soul has an object of affection beyond being merely happy. God has given us for the object of our affections what is sufficient for His own (conscience must be purged first); there I get the heart. What a thought! He gives the Holy Ghost and the new nature to make us able to enjoy it, and that draws the heart away from the world to Him that loved us and gave Himself for us! and who will come and receive us to Himself. Meanwhile, there are two things. You have (1) to represent Christ in the world, because you are there, and (2) He is in you. If I look up it is perfect; and then I am set responsibly not to make out if I can be with God, but to show forth Christ down here; and we shall soon find the need of vigilance.

If God made His voice heard, "Where art thou?" what could you say? If you are in Christ, it is very simple and all adoration. Are you really walking in that blessed affection of heart to God, knowing and believing the love God has to you? When we have the sense of divine love in its tenderness and constancy, we do know it. Can you say, "We love Him because He first loved us"? There is no uncertainty as to the object. If you say, "If I could only love Him"! then I say you do care about Him! Have you the real sense of His love to you in the gift of His Son? The conscience is perfect then, because it is impossible for Him to see sin where He sees the blood of His Son.

The Lord give us to walk with Him in the consciousness of divine favour—the conscience perfect—that you may manifest Him every moment!

J. N. D.

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Put Christ's love to the trial, and put upon it burdens, and then it will appear love indeed: we employ not His love, and therefore we know it not.—*S. Rutherford.*

## RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

## V.

IN the foregoing papers, we have gathered up something of the revelation as set forth by the Son, of His Father, who is called in other parts of the New Testament, as being their author, the Father of lights (James i. 17), the Father of spirits (Heb. xii. 9), the Father of mercies (2 Cor. i. 3), and the Father of glory (Ephes. i. 17); all instructing and comforting statements for those who are His children. For it will not satisfy His heart to be merely as Creator the author of lights, mercies, or glory. He desires to have saints, subjects of divine election, and gathered out in time from mankind at large, who shall know His parental love, and enjoy for ever the privileges and the portion He designs for His children. But who are these?

Of divine election angels are subjects (1 Tim. v. 21); as being holy, too, are they characterised (Mark viii. 38; Rev. xiv. 10). But relationship to God as children is peculiar to the elect of the human race. They only of God's creatures are connected with Him by the tie of birth, though angels, as deriving their existence from God, are called in the Old Testament His sons (Gen. vi. 2; Job i. 6; ii. 1; xxxviii. 7). But in the New Testament, none but those who share in redemption by the blood of Christ are called the children of God. Now it is God who makes this known. He might, of course, had it pleased Him, have rested contented with knowing the relationship of Father to His children—a joy for His own heart, and a secret to be kept in His own bosom; but He desired that the children should know of the birth-tie which exists between Him and them, and of the privileged position before all other creatures which He has deigned to bestow on them. For not only are they His *children*, they are also His *sons*, and will enjoy the privilege of adoption for ever.

A word here on the meaning of these terms. *Child* tells of the birth-tie between the parent and itself, than which nothing can be nearer. *Son* speaks of the position enjoyed before others: "Not a servant, but a son" (Gal. iv. 7). One might adopt a person to be one's son, but only one's own offspring could be one's child. In human arrangements, children have not always the place and privilege of sons. An illustration may help the reader. Abraham had several children by his wife Keturah, as well as Isaac by Sarah. All of them could call him father; all were his children; but Isaac alone had the privilege and position of his son. He gave all that he had to Isaac (Gen. xxv. 5), who was known by all as his son. The inheritance was his, and his alone (Gen. xxiv. 36). To be Abraham's offspring was one thing, to be his son was quite another.

With us who are God's children it is different. We are His children, and we are His sons. All the privileges which belong to His sons are ours in the greatness of His grace. Both nearness to Him as His children, and position before Him as His sons He has designed for us to enjoy for ever and ever. Moreover with the birth-tie, as well as with the privilege of being sons, is linked the inheritance. Rom. viii. 17 speaks of it in connection with the former: "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." Gal. iv. 7 speaks of it in connection with the latter: "If a son, then an heir through God." It is evidently the desire of our Father that we should be acquainted with His purposes about us. Purposes, we say, because the entrance upon our inheritance is still future. What it is, Ephes. i. 9-14 would teach us; meanwhile, we there too learn that we have the Holy Ghost now given to us as the earnest of it, until the redemption of the purchased possession; for as yet the Lord Jesus Christ, with whom we are joint heirs, has not received it.

A passage in Old Testament history we may well

here recall. There was a memorable day in the life of the patriarch Abraham, when God told him to survey the land which he should possess. He had just yielded to Lot. As the meek one, he did not strive for his place or rights. He allowed his nephew to choose his place of sojourn, which like a selfish man he did, though outwardly in appearance giving way to Abraham. Lot journeyed east, choosing for himself the well-watered plain of Jordan. Lot chose; Abraham left his interests in God's hands. Who was best off? History will tell us. Lot lifted up his eyes, and coveted the best pastoral district for himself. Abraham subsequently, but at God's command, lifted up his eyes to behold the land which was his. "And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever" (Gen xiii. 14, 15). Wherever, then, he looked around, his eye lighted on part of the land of his inheritance, which God had promised to give to him. But all his security for the possession of that land was in God's promise; no other token as to it was vouchsafed him.

Like Abraham, we have the promise of an inheritance; and, like him, wherever we look around our eye lights on part of it. Northward, southward, eastward, westward Abraham looked, but only looked on the land which would some day be his. Northward, southward, eastward, westward we can look, and still only look on part of our inheritance. But upward, also, we can turn our eye, and there, too, it rests on part of our inheritance. Nowhere on this globe can we take our stand to look around, or to look up, where the eye will not rest on some part of that portion which is ours as heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. On *some part*, we must say, for as yet we have not surveyed it all. Abraham could walk through the length and breadth of the land of his

inheritance. We as yet are unable to survey the extent of ours. Of its limits we have heard, but have never seen them. Like Abraham, we must leave earth ere we can enjoy the inheritance promised us ; but, differing from him, we have not only the word of our God about it, but the Holy Ghost has been given to us as the earnest of it (Ephes. i. 13, 14). Most extensive is it, since it embraces heaven and earth.

And what the proper portion of God's child is, a little word of the Lord Jesus Christ's, when on earth, recorded in the fifteenth chapter of Luke, shall tell us, in the words of the father to the elder brother: "Child" (as it really is), "thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." Such is the place, and such is the portion of God's children—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. And though revealed comparatively late in the world's history, we can see it was no after-thought with our God ; for the inheritance destined for Israel, and on which they entered, though never in any sense in its completeness till the days of David and Solomon, comprised the territory which they conquered east of Jordan (Numb. xxi. 24, 35 ; Deut. ii. 24, 31 ; iii. 12), as well as that on the west—a figure of earth and heaven, which we shall inherit with the Lord Jesus Christ.

God's children. This speaks of a class, a company of His creatures, chosen out of the children of men—born not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the living and abiding word of God (1 Peter i. 23). The characteristics of the word, here described, as the instrument by which the children are begotten, tell us of the character of the life of those who are the subjects of the new birth. It is incorruptible and everlasting. Born again ; born, or begotten, of God. In such terms are they spoken of. Born again shows it is an operation of God quite distinct from natural generation. Born of God reminds us of the grace He thus manifests to them. If we ask, What moved God thus to act? the answer can only be furnished by

Himself, whose mind no creature can fathom, and of which none, as we have said, could know anything save as He was pleased to reveal it. "Having willed it" (or, "of His own will") "begat He us by the word of truth," is the answer furnished us by the Word (James i. 18). Sovereign will, which none can bend, and which none can successfully oppose, moved Him to have creatures of the human race in the relationship of children to Himself. Nor is this privilege confined to one nation upon earth; for the evangelist John declares, "As many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name; who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 12, 13). *Children*, not *sons*, is the term, for John never writes of *sons* till he has carried his readers on to the eternal state. Then, and then only, does he so describe God's saints. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Rev. xxi. 7). Paul, on the other hand, writes of both as now true of the saints.

We have spoken of the inheritance as our proper portion, if God's children. Connected with that is the condition in which we shall enjoy it, viz., the being in glory. In this, creation has a deep and personal interest, for its condition, made subject to vanity, must remain unchanged till we are in glory. Then it "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God" (Rom. viii. 21). Hence we understand its joy depicted in the Word at the prospect, as well as at the establishment of the kingdom in power. The joy at the prospect, when the Lamb takes the book to open the seals, John has put on record in Rev. v. 13, 14. "Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth,\* and in the sea, and all that are

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\* This is different language from that of Phil. ii. 10. There, by those "under the earth" the lost are referred to. Here, creatures neither human nor angelic are intended.

in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen, and the elders fell down and worshipped." Unanimity will pervade non-intelligent creation at that time. Every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and in the sea will be in accord in the earnest desire for the redemption of the purchased possession. Now, the whole creation groans and travails in pain together. When the Lord comes back in power, its key-note will be changed, and created things will accord Him a glad welcome. "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the fields be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord; for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with His truth" (Ps. xcvi. 11-13). What a contrast it will be, creation rejoicing instead of groaning. But another contrast, truly awful to think of, will then be displayed; creation rejoicing with one accord, whilst many of the human race will be angry at the return of the crucified One to reign, and will combine to keep Him out, if possible, of His earthly kingdom (Rev. xi. 18; xvii. 14; xix. 19).

We have spoken of the way by which we become God's children. How wholly dependent on His grace are all those between whom and Himself the birth-tie has been formed. By the word He begets them. Then He had to speak, and to speak to His sinful creatures, ere such a relationship could be formed. Had He not willed thus to speak, no creature could have shared in such a privilege. Had He not spoken, and that to each subject of divine grace individually, none of Adam's race could ever have become His children.

The thought, the desire, the carrying out of it were all of Himself. Creatures formed to enjoy divine

parental love should for ever surround Him. Joy indeed would be theirs ; but joy too would be His, a joy which never ends, as the Lord has indicated in the feast consequent on the return of the prodigal. "They *began* to be merry." Over whom did the father rejoice? Over one who deserved no favour, but the opposite, at his hand. No wonder the evangelist, John wrote "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God. Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know if He (or it) shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 1, 2). Joint heirs with Christ ; in glory with Him ; and like Him : these favours will characterise us who are God's children.

How God delights to tell us about the present and about the future ! Now are we children of God. By and by we shall be like His Son, bearing the image of the heavenly One (1 Cor. xv. 49) ; or, as elsewhere expressed, our body of humiliation changed into conformity to His body of glory (Phil. iii. 21). And since that will then be true, *moral* conformity to Him should characterise each one of us now. For as born of God we are partakers of the divine nature, and as such should be imitators of God, as dear children (Ephes. v. 1), doing "all things," we read, "without murmurings and disputings ; that ye may be blameless and harmless, children\* of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world ; holding forth the word of life ; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain" (Phil. ii. 14-16).

On this line of teaching John dwells in his first

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\* "Children" is the word here.

epistle, in which, telling us of the characteristics of the divine nature, in that God is light, and God is love (1 John i. 5 ; iv. 8), he reminds us of the manner in which they were displayed in the Lord Jesus on earth, viz., in obedience and love, and sets Him before us as the One from whom we are to learn, and to shew in our walk what it is to be partakers of that nature. It was nothing new in the world's history for God to have children from amongst men. Every saint as born of Him is, and was, His child. But the revelation of this relationship to the individuals awaited the coming of His Son, though, as we have seen, something of the character of God as a Father was at an earlier time made known. The Son, however, having come, what is suited for those who are God's children becomes a subject of divine revelation.

On this, as we have said, John particularly dwells. In the gospel he had written (i. 18), "No one hath seen God at any time ; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." In his epistle he writes (1 John iv. 12), "No one hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us." What God is, whom no one hath seen, was declared by the Son. What He is, whom no one hath seen, saints know about, who love one another, for He then dwells in them.

Born of God, righteousness should characterise us (1 John ii. 29). Born of Him, brotherly love should be in action (1 John iv. 7), loving those who are born of Him (1 John v. 1). All this is instruction for God's children in common, flowing out of the character of the nature of which they are all partakers. And on this the apostle dwells pretty fully, recognising at the same time different stages of Christian life, some being babes, some young men, and some fathers, and for each class he has also a suited word, as may be seen in 1 John ii. 14-27.

For each and all of His children has God a Father's

heart. Here we can say nationality cannot come in to separate. One family it is, one company. The Lord died, the evangelist John tells us, not for the nation of Israel only, but that He should gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad (John xi. 52). Hence the privileges of some as children are the privileges of all who are born of God. So Paul, writing to the Galatians, who as Gentiles had never been enrolled as burgesses of the earthly Jerusalem, could tell them that as Christians they were children of the free woman, as Isaac was, and belonged to the heavenly Jerusalem which is free, he writes, and "our mother" (Gal. iv. 26). For they, like us, lived after the cross of Christ. What a difference that made, as the Syro-phenician woman can attest—a privilege of the children she knew well, but only to own that it was not hers. The children have their place at the table, the dogs are underneath it, so can only eat of the crumbs which fall from it (Mark vii. 28). Whilst the middle wall of partition was to be maintained she could only be as a dog, and could not occupy a child's place. Thank God, it is not so now. All believers on the Lord Jesus are born of God, and thus are members, through divine grace, of His family, and are to look forward to the Father's house as their abiding, everlasting home.

C. E. S.

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## THE WORD OF GOD.

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The word is *very* nigh unto thee.—*Deut.* xxx. 14.

Thy thoughts are *very* deep.—*Psalms* xcii. 5.

Thy testimonies are *very* sure.—*Psalms* xciii. 5.

Thy testimonies are righteous, and *very* faithful.—  
*Psalms* cxix. 138.

Thy word is *very* pure.—*Psalms* cxix. 140.

His word runneth *very* swiftly.—*Psalms* cxlvii. 15.

D. S.

## LAST WORDS OF J. G. BELLETT.

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“Thou hast given him his heart's desire ; . . . Thou hast made him exceeding glad with Thy countenance.”—*Ps.* xxi. 2, 6.

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CLASPING his thin hands together, while tears flowed down his face, he said,—“My precious Lord Jesus, Thou knowest how fully I can say with Paul, ‘To depart and to be with Christ; which is far better.’ Oh, how far better! I do long for it! They come and talk to me of a crown of glory—I bid them cease; of the glories of heaven—I bid them stop. I am not wanting crowns, I have *Himself*—Himself! I am going to be with *Himself*! Ah, with the Man of Sychar; with Him who stayed to call Zaccheus; with the Man of John viii.; with the Man who hung upon the cross; with the Man who died! Oh, to be with Him before the glories, the crowns, or the kingdoms appear! It is wonderful! wonderful! With the Man of Sychar alone; the Man of the gate of the city of Nain; and I am going to be with Him *for ever*! Exchange this sad, sad scene, which cast Him out for the joy of His own presence! Oh, the Man of Sychar!”

My pilgrim days are waning ;  
The voice of Him I love  
Has called me to His presence  
In my Father's house above.  
Long, long, by faith, I've known  
Him,  
But now I'm going to see  
The One that sits in heaven—  
The Man who died for me !

But ere I left the desert,  
I longed that I might know  
What joy His blessed presence  
Could give me here below.  
A few more fleeting moments;—  
Oh, I would nearer be !  
My precious, loving Saviour,  
The Man who died for me

He gave me all I asked for,  
And more than I can tell ;  
He filled my heart with rapture,  
With joy unspeakable !  
The loving hand of Jesus  
Seemed gently laid on me—  
I had for my companion  
The Man who died for me !

The glories of the kingdom  
Are coming by and by ;  
And I shall see my brethren—  
Be crowned with them on  
high.  
I know that I shall reign,—  
But before it all, for me  
There's a time *alone with Jesus*,  
The Man who died for me !

Yes, put to sleep by Jesus,  
 Is what I think of now ;  
 To be for ever with Him,  
 Before Himself to bow !  
 O yes, *with Him* who stayed  
 to call  
 Zaccheus from the tree ;  
*With Him* who hung upon the  
 cross—  
 The Man who died for me !

It is the Man Christ Jesus,—  
*With Him* I'm going to dwell ;  
 The very Man of Sychar,  
 Who sat upon the well ;

Who filled the outcast woman's  
 heart,  
 And gave her eyes to see  
 That He was God's Anointed—  
 The Man who died for me !

To leave this world that cast  
 Him out,  
 And be with Him up there,  
 Before the kingdom glories  
 Or the many crowns appear !  
 Oh, the Man of Sychar !  
 Himself I then shall see ;—  
 PERFECTION OF PERFECTIONS,  
*I long to be with Thee !*

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## LUKE V.

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IN the foregoing group of chapters, we behold Jesus-Messiah, the Son of Man on the earth, having veiled Himself in the form of *a servant*, that He might wait upon, and serve to the uttermost, those on whose behalf He came ; but besides this, He was in fashion as *a man*, and ever and anon acting up to the height of His title as the Anointed One—whether before God in perfect righteousness, or as against Satan, “who possessed his goods in peace.” Like as in olden and typical days, Jonathan and his armour-bearer separated themselves from the formal and external order of the kingdom when in the hand of Saul, to pass over to the Philistines' garrison that was on the other side, so we see the Messiah and His forerunner, John the Baptist, come forth, on a secret but mighty errand, under the direction of Him that ordereth everything after the counsel of His own will. Moreover, none of those in the kingdom of Saul knew anything of the mission till the time came. And Jonathan said, “Behold, we will pass over, and discover ourselves to these men. And there was trembling in the host, and in the field, and among all the people ; the garrison, and the spoilers, they also

trembled ; and the earth quaked : so it was a very great trembling." So, in like manner, "when Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him ;" and they took counsel together to put Him to death, but in vain till His hour was come.

As Son of Man He had thus made His title good, against all opposition and gainsaying, to the world which Adam had lost ; and Jesus had won a place in it, and taken His position therein as free to go about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him. John had gone before His face to make ready a people prepared for the Lord, saying they should believe on One that should come after Him. And now, "it came to pass as the people pressed upon Him to hear the word of God, He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret," for "the kingdom of God" which Jesus preached had been forfeited, and "the word of God" been corrupted. What could He bring to them, or lead them to (having gathered them around Himself), but the word of God, by which man lives, and the kingdom of God in which He dwells ?

So "He sat down and taught the people out of the ship" the lessons which He had learnt from His youth, and which served Him as His trusty weapon, when He used it as "the sword of the Spirit" in the presence of the tempter, and disarmed him by the words, "It is written, it is written." According to the word of God, the earth was not only His, but the kingdom, and the glory ; and these are upon His heart, to confirm the truth of God made unto the fathers. Now "when He had left speaking, He said unto Simon, launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught," for Jesus has yet to prove that He is not only Lord of the dry land, but Lord of the seas and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea. And Simon answering, said, "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing : nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net. And when they

had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes ; and their net brake."

Come from above, equal with the Father ; come into the world, God manifest in the flesh ; entered into the strong man's palace, as Son of Man ; having made good His claims of heirship to Israel, and the promises to the fathers, as Son of David and Son of Abraham ; resisting the usurper and his temptations, in the forty days' combat, He has wrested all out of the hands of Satan, as the god of this world. Another, and a new Man, is upon the earth, to win everything in the title of His obedience unto death, which Adam lost by transgression, and He has begun His victories. "Get thee behind Me, Satan," was His first. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me" was the next, when He found the place, and stood up to proclaim "the acceptable year of the Lord," and to fulfil in the ears of the multitude "the deliverance of the captives, and liberty to them that are bruised," according to the ancient prophecy by Isaiah. Nor does He merely make good the liberty and "the deliverances" embodied in this great commission, which He announced in the synagogue of Nazareth : but as come forth from the heavens, He has brought into this earth the grace and the power of God for the establishment of the kingdom and the glory.

As Son of Man, too, according to Psalm viii., "made to have dominion over the works of Thy hands" (though not then "crowned with honour" at the right hand), He uses His title on the dry land and on the sea in favour of God and man, and against the whole power of the devil, compelling demons (as He commanded them to come out) to exclaim, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus has thus brought Satan to His feet, in the confession of who and what He is. The temptation in the wilderness began with the challenge, "If Thou be the Son of God," but now throughout the whole range of this first walk of the Lord in the midst of men, they say, "What a word is

this ; for with authority and power commandeth He the unclean spirits, and they come out," in the full confession of the Son of God.

The next character in which the Lord acts under this commission, given forth to Him from the Spirit of prophecy, is from the ship on the sea, and is to get its witness from the fishes that dwell therein. This, too, is His right as "Son of Man," according to Psalm viii. "The beast of the field" shall in like manner be ready to honour Him, when the time comes for Him to ride into Jerusalem as her King, sitting upon the colt, the foal of an ass.

The Lake of Gennesaret is as distinctive to us, in revealing another glory of Christ, as was the synagogue of Nazareth by the prophetic commission which He came forth with, under "the Spirit of the Lord," to proclaim in their midst. This change of scene from the land to the sea, and from the synagogue to the ship, is also in moral keeping with His own change of position and ministry, in anointing others with Him and making them fishers of men. Jesus has not only entered the strong man's house and spoiled his goods, but He now enters on His own positive mission, and brings back "the word of God" into the house in His new rights, and preaches "the kingdom of God" under the title of His own anointing as the Son of David.

Besides all this, it was a new meeting-place and starting-point for Simon and his partners, which were in the other ship, to whom they beckoned that they should come and help them ; "and they came and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink." The Son of Man, in the exercise of His Lordship, as commanding "the abundance of the sea," surrounds Peter and the partners with these unmistakeable proofs of His power and greatness, yea, of His goodness too ; so that their nets brake, as to what had been directed into them, and the ships began to sink under the weight of the blessing, and their proved

insufficiency to contain the multitude of fishes. Confronted and confounded in the presence of such an One, thus made known, Peter is convicted as he measures the distance between the Son of Man and himself, and "fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." The sentence of death is thus written upon Peter's conscience, by the presence of infinite power and grace, which has brought in nothing but unbounded blessing; so that Peter, so to speak, judges himself, and goes away with the broken nets and the sinking ships. How good this morally is for each of us in the divine intimacies with this Son of Man, those alone know who have been on the Lake of Gennesaret and in the ship with the Lord! "And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men."

Nor ought we to quit this scene for another without gathering up for ourselves the precious lessons which it teaches. The moving and commanding power throughout is Jesus, be it the sea, or the boats, or the nets, or the fishers: and these give the true knowledge to Peter (as this same Lord did in other ways to Saul of Tarsus, on another occasion) of the difference and distance, witnessed by the confession at Jesus' knees, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." But these conditions would never suit Him, whose delights were with the children of men; and at the very moment when Peter's unfitness was written upon his conscience, the heart of Jesus found His delight in this confession of "a sinful man." They are suited, and precisely suited, for this new fishing of men; nor can any take part in it, from that time to this, who do not make their acquaintance with Christ on the same footing, and the selfsame terms. "And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all and followed Him."

This new action from the Lake of Gennesaret has now begun, and men are the objects on the part of God in the heavens, and the Saviour-Jesus upon

the earth. "Sinful men" sought, and found, and gathered around Christ, the great expositor and exemplar of "the word of God," which He preached, as introductory to "the kingdom of God," which He came to set up. It was not likely the devil would quietly allow this twofold testimony to the word and to the kingdom to be introduced by the Lord without renewed opposition, and of another kind. Personally defeated and overcome, as Satan had been in the wilderness, on the pinnacle, and at the high mountain, and the unclean devils cast out everywhere, even from the man whose name was legion (chap. vi.), what new weapons of war could he devise, by which to resist these glad tidings by Christ and the twelve apostles whom He called around Him? He finds new emissaries in the midst of Israel itself, and makes enemies out of priests and scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees—the advocates and supporters of a system in which "the word of God had become of none effect through their traditions," and as a consequence, both as to their religion and to themselves as worshippers, Jehovah said, "this people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me." The devil (as we have seen) could not maintain his hold upon men by the unclean spirits which possessed them, and so takes up a new position against Jesus, as the Christ, and the twelve apostles, in their testimony to "the kingdom of God," and the coming King of this kingdom.

This opposition Satan maintains throughout this former treatise, and stirs up the enmity of the rulers against this new doctrine in their midst, and the new place which the Lord now takes amongst "sinful men," to say to the man whom they had let down through the house-top, "Son, be of good cheer, thy *sins* be forgiven thee." But the exercise of this power of the Lord-Jehovah, both to heal and to pardon, as witnessed by the sick of the palsy, "who arose at the word of Jesus, and took up his bed, and went

away to his own house, glorifying God before them all," is turned into an opportunity of accusation by the great deceiver, and the doctors of the law who were sitting there. "And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?" The *power* of the Lord "present to heal," and the word of God *in grace* present to forgive "sinful men," were alike passing strange to those who were outside the circle which had Jesus as its centre.

Nor is the next action of the Lord's in "eating and drinking with publicans and *sinner*s," a whit more intelligible or acceptable to them. Indeed, how could it be to scribes and Pharisees, who washed their hands oft, and made clean the outside of the platter, and in all other respects were self-satisfied, yea, the more so, because of these very washings which they had practised on themselves. "And Jesus answering, said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick; for I came not to call the righteous, but *sinner*s to repentance." Precious Saviour! we may well say to one another, who at one and the same time found His meat in doing the will of His Father who sent Him, and was equally at home as He "ate and drank with publicans and *sinner*s." Jesus further maintains His doctrine and His practice, and, we may add, His new rights "in power and grace" to be with men that are *sinner*s, and their title and liberty as such to be in the presence of such an One, in the confidence of His love which had brought Him there. Thus in our chapter, Jesus has drawn His elect after Himself, and their natural and ordinary places are to know them no more for ever; and this was justifying the Lord against His adversary and the accusers.

Peter and his partners have left their fishing, and their ships on land—or, as it is written, "they forsook all and followed Him." The man full of leprosy and the leprosy have parted company, and he goes to the

priest (as bidden) for a testimony and proof of who He was that had put forth His hand and touched him. The man taken with a palsy has left his bed, or only taken it up to carry, in proof of the power that was present and bade him do it ; moreover, the sinner and his sins have separated one from the other, in token of Him who had forgiven them. And now, "the publican called Levi," sitting at "the receipt of custom," is to be called out by the power and grace of Him that has found, not only the man that was a sinner, but the man who is a publican ; and Jesus "said to him, follow Me ; and he left all, rose up, and followed Him."

Without a moment's hesitation or reserve is Levi thus attracted to the person of Him who called. Nor is there a suspicious thought as to what he has forsaken, when viewed in the presence of the One he follows. On the contrary, happy and free in heart towards the Lord, Levi makes Him a great feast in his own house, before he quits it in company with Jesus. Moreover, he catches the spirit and idea (so foreign to the scribes and Pharisees), and comprehends his Master's mind, so that a "great company of publicans and others sat down with them." Alas, as to all around, who could not understand these ways into "the kingdom of God," and stood aloof from those who accepted them. Jesus leaves *them* to interpret the riddle of the children of the bride-chamber, and the days when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them ; or else, the parable of the piece of new cloth upon the old garment, and the rent made worse ; or yet further, the new wine and the old bottles, by which *both* perish,—and then departed. As the Messiah, He has come forth as "the day-spring from on high," and visited His people ; as the Bridegroom, He has in spirit led the elect children into the bride-chamber, but only to pass out of it again, because of the unreadiness of the nation of Israel for its celebration, or to drink wine in "the kingdom of

God." He is thus refused in His social character amongst men, and He passes into a larger circle of testimony, if peradventure the power and grace in which He walked through the midst of mankind might be accepted by some.

J. E. B.

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## EBENEZER.

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Ebenezer ! yes, we said it  
 When the first cold mist o'erspread,  
 And the way we sought to follow  
 To our straining eyes was hid ;  
 When the earth around us seemèd  
 Undulating 'neath our tread ;  
 When the first heart-cry of anguish  
 Rose on high to Christ, our Head.

Ebenezer ! when the meaning  
 In the Saviour's presence known—  
 As the light shone through the darkness—  
 Dried the tear and hushed the groan ;  
 Is it not faith's valuation  
 Of His wondrous words and ways ;  
 And of His interpretation  
 Of the dark and shadowed days ?

Yea, we know it, and the knowing  
 Bringeth present, lasting peace !  
 Yea, we know it, and the showing  
 To the burdened brings release.

**Ebenezer ! Ebenezer !**  
 Can our lips from song refrain ?  
 " He hath said, shall He not do it ?"  
 'Tis " clear shining after rain."

Ebenezer ! all shall utter  
 When beyond the grief and care,  
 When the last sigh heaves the bosom,  
 Banished ev'ry doubt and fear.  
 Heart-cry of each happy pilgrim,  
 As with joy he enters in ;  
 " Hitherto the Lord hath helped us,"  
 'Tis through Him the rest we win !

J. M. I.

## LOVE.—1 *Corinthians* xiii.

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THE connection in which *love* is introduced in the thirteenth chapter of *Corinthians* must, I suppose, have struck most who study God's word. It bears the same impress of power and of suitability which ever characterises His word. May we, therefore, led by the Spirit, the inditer, dwell upon it for a little.

The cause of all the mischief in the *Corinthian Church* was a remarkable one—one which testifies surely of the great goodness of God. It was the abundant grace and goodness of God acting upon *unsubdued flesh*. The testimony of Christ was *confirmed* among them (i. 6); they were in everything enriched by (or, perhaps, *in*, as it is in the 4th verse) Him, in all *utterance* and all *knowledge*. But though there was much gift, grace was not in the same proportion. The seed had been cast abroad richly, but the earth had not been deeply ploughed up; consequently, it much mixed its own productions with the gift of God. The testimony which had been brought among them was estimated by some external characteristic, rather than *as* the testimony of God, as with the happy *Thessalonians* (1 *Thess.* ii 13). And consequently, one was for Paul, another for Apollos, and another for *Christ*, shewing that in a sectarian, independent spirit we may stand even *for Christ*, or apparently for Him.

Their moral standing, too, shewed that there was not much depth of earth. In chap. iv., They were full, they were rich, they reigned as kings, without the more faithful saints; they found themselves comparatively at ease in the world, a state which rendered them an easy prey to a *doctrine* which, in chap. xv., assured them that there is no resurrection of the dead; a doctrine which could not so readily suit one who had to say, "I die daily." Even when terrible evil came in, it did not disturb the light complacency of

the flesh. Chap. v., They were "puffed up," and did not rather *mourn*, that he which had done the deed might be taken away from among them. The same lightness of work, too, made them bad judges about Christian liberty; for Christian liberty does not consider so much what we *may* do, as what will be for the glory of God and the welfare of *the brethren*.

The same state of mind made them also but badly prepared for the use of spiritual gifts which were so richly amongst them. Chap. xiv. 20: Every one of them had a psalm, had a doctrine, had a revelation, &c., a thing which he does not check, but regulates; therefore, he says, "Let all things be done unto *edifying*." It is only in the Spirit we can handle rightly the things of the Spirit.

It is really to meet this state of things that the apostle introduces this digression in the midst of his discussion about gifts; for without it, gifts—I might say, even graces—would split up the Church of God. He proposes it as the tempered mortar. "Though I speak," he says, "with the tongues of men and of *angels*, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." It is that which gives *fulness* to the sound, like the high priest's bells of old, the bells of the sanctuary. And though I have prophecy, and know all mysteries, and all knowledge (a thing, by the way, which pretty clearly defines the gift of prophecy, so often mentioned in the New Testament), and though there be all *power*, too, so as to remove mountains; yea, and even though apparent *grace* and *devotedness* come in, so that we either crumble our property into bits (see Greek) to bestow it on the poor, or give even *our body* to be burned, and yet have not *love*, we are profited nothing.

What a declaration at the hands of God, that nothing external—power, devotedness, whatsoever it be—is of value before God, without that *love* which makes it of savour to Him, and of real refreshment to others. "*Love*," he says, "beareth long, and is kind.

Love envieth not ; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up ; doth not behave itself unseemly (and this love teaches us our place,—Eph. v. 21) ; seeketh not her own (and therefore, of all things, most of Christ,—Philip. ii. 21) ; is not easily provoked ; thinketh no evil." It is remarkable that the *quieter* fruit of the Spirit indicates more of His *power* (Gal. v.)—"Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Love is *holy* in its tastes and feelings ; it "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth *with* the truth ;" in kindness of spirit, "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." How fully, then, does he let us into the real and noble nature of Love. It is the highest of all. Those things which we are so apt to glory in, as setting *us* forth, tongues and prophecy, are only arguments of our imperfection ; they are only to supply our mutual need, and are in us imperfect. "We know in part, and we prophecy in part," until we obtain the perfect state of things. But when all need is satisfied, all imperfection is done away, love will still find its full element, as it will for ever have to do with the God who is love.

I have dwelt upon this because it may be particularly suitable to us in present circumstances. Contention against evil has been, I believe, the great thing to which God has called us latterly. This has broken through, in some measure, that false love, or charity, which is perhaps the great sin of this professing age, and which is just a counterfeit of the true. That false charity lets anything become of God's truth, rather than speak out faithfully, and disturb the robber of his prey. But it is required of *stewards* that they be found faithful. A man may dispose as he will of his own property, but if he dispose, in the same ready way, of another's, we remind him that he must be just before he is generous ; and so, the truth is God's property, of which we cannot dispose, save as He guides us by His Spirit ; and He would have us care-

ful of the trust. We are all in this sense *stewards* of the mysteries of God.

Paul, we find in Galatians ii. approached his elder Jewish brethren with something of trembling, lest through his own weakness he, by any means, should run, or had run, in vain. But when God's truth was really in question, he gave place by subjection not for an hour, but withstood Peter "to the face because he was to be blamed."

As I have said, thus it has been; and very much there is all around that obliges us to contend. Yet, meanwhile, let us seek to be careful, that whilst contending against evil, we *love fervently*, and cherish *all that is* and *all who are* of the truth. The apostle John, after telling them in the 4th chapter of his first epistle not to believe every spirit, "but try the spirits," &c., then returns to his more pleasing, and still more incumbent, occupation. Verse 7: "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God." It is "the bond of perfectness," Paul tells us in Colos. iii. 14, which throws its golden charm around all. We are so apt, in securing one truth, to let go another known one. "Him that is *weak* in the faith receive ye," &c., does not conflict with "Beloved, follow not that which is evil" (3 John 11).

I add no further. To see these two things combined—steady faithfulness against evil, on the one hand, and yet frank, confiding, upright, and hearty love, where it is fairly warranted—surely this were happy for us. It would lead one to say, "The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are *ended*"! Our Lord Himself is coming. Happy indeed to be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless!—*Extracted from "The Present Testimony," dated 35 years ago.* G.

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Who knoweth better how to bring up children than our God?—*S. Rutherford.*

THE circumstances attending the introduction of the gospel into Europe, as recorded in the word of God, are necessarily of exceptional interest to us as Europeans, and these circumstances were threefold. First, there was a remarkable vision given to Paul by night, the immediate cause of his going to Macedonia; second, there was a spirit of divination, giving a spurious countenance and support to the apostle's testimony; third, there was a sudden earthquake, of so mighty a character that the very foundations of the public prison at Philippi were shaken.

These were the supernatural accompaniments of the entrance of Christianity into this quarter of the globe; and by these things God signalled the inauguration of that wonderful gospel-work which, though long clouded, crippled, and corrupted by Papal ascendancy, has continued to fructify and bear fruit through the wide world.

But our immediate subject is the "man of Macedonia." Paul and his company go by Troas, Samothracia, and Neapolis, direct to Philippi, one of the Macedonian cities. There he finds a company of women who receive the word, one of whom was Lydia, whom Paul baptised, and whose hospitality they confidently accepted. But where was the man?

Again, there was a damsel indwelt of a demon, who persistently followed them, and cried, "These men are the servants of the most high God," &c., until Paul, being grieved at the patronage of an evil spirit, turned upon her, and cast out the troubler. This brought about the discovery of the man,—such are the wonderful ways of God! The apostle and his companions are dragged into the market-place, falsely accused, their clothes torn off, their bodies beaten with many stripes, and they are then handed over to the jailer of the common prison, with the injunction to keep them

securely. Of this Paul speaks in i Thes. ii. 2, saying they "were shamefully entreated at Philippi."

All this, however, was but the prelude to God's wonderful intervention on the behalf of His distinguished servants. Sorely smitten, their backs bleeding with many stripes, and with no success, as yet, in finding the "man of Macedonia"; occupying a cell in the deepest recesses of the prison, their feet fastened in the stocks, worn and weary, hungry and cold, and in darkness,—unable to find rest in sleep, they spend the midnight hours in prayer and in praise! And as the music of their Christian songs breaks the silence of the prison, penetrating cell after cell, the prisoners listen to the unwonted sound, and for the first time hear the melody of Christian worship.

Yes, and while still these melodies are floating in the air, suddenly, from wall to wall, from roof to floor, reverberates the sound of a mighty earthquake, rocking the whole fabric like a reed bowed with the wind, so that the solid foundations built into the earth are shaken, and instantly every barred and bolted door flies open, and every fetter is loosed!

The hardened jailer had treated his prisoners, Paul and Silas, with more than magisterial severity; the inner prison and the stocks clearly indicate this. And after this cruelty, he retires without remorse to sleep unconcernedly upon his bed! The music, borne upon the night air, disturbed not his heavy slumbers, nor stirred his seared conscience. God must come in for that, and *God did*. It was He, and not the jailer, who kept the prison that memorable night! He awoke the jailer, and what an awakening it was! Not his body, or his mind only was awakened, but his soul was, for the first time, aroused to a discovery of that precipice on the brink of which he stood, disclosing to the servants of God, in the same instant, that *this* was the "man of Macedonia!"

Filled with terror, he draws his sword for his own self-destruction; but Paul becomes his saviour; and

no sooner is a light obtained than he springs into their presence, and falls at their feet trembling with dismay. He who had so unfeelingly "thrust them in" now "brought them out," and exclaims, "Sirs, what must I do *to be saved?*" What mean these words on the lips of a worshipper of idols? Clearly they tell of the moral revolution that had taken place in his soul, and surely they suggest that one way or another—perhaps by overhearing some public testimony of Paul and Silas—he had heard of man's lost condition, his need of a Saviour, and the work of Christ on the cross.

The "man of Macedonia" in this discovers himself, the knowledge of which in divine power is salvation. "Come over and help us"—the voice of all Europe, we may say—is traced to its mouthpiece, and divine grace has found its object. But Europe and her need was nothing to the jailer; it was he, the individual, whose conscience was burdened, who wanted relief. Whither must *he go?* to whom must *he turn?* how must *he be saved?* Simply, and suitably, comes the inspired answer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," and, such are the overflowings of grace, it is added, "and thy house." "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house."

Thus is the divine work accomplished that memorable night, and he, in "the same hour," bathes their bleeding backs, receives baptism at their hands, makes them the honoured guests of his house, and rejoices with his family, believing in God! Then was the jail no longer their jail, for it was turned into a temple for Christian prayer and worship, and the scene of a Christian baptism; and the jailer was no longer their jailer, but a Christian brother, the host of the beloved servants of God. The moral earthquake greatly surpassed the physical one, for God had a wonderful work before Him to accomplish in Europe, of which these were but the firstfruits, to the praise of the glory of His grace.

And now, dear reader, may we ask if you have yourself ever passed under such experiences as the "man of Macedonia?" Have you ever had your conscience aroused by God to the discovery of your real condition as a sinner, so that in terror and dismay you have exclaimed, "What must I do *to be saved?*" All along the centuries of the Christian era, from the first to the nineteenth, God's word has stood its ground, and stands before you to-day,—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” May your heart, as did the heart of the jailer, open to this blessed truth, and find immediate joy and peace in believing.

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## “THE LORD'S SUPPER.”

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To eat and drink of this feast was to recognise the virtue of His sacrifice: *i.e.*, to *express* participation (1 Cor. x. 18). It was, therefore, to be eaten with *thanksgiving*. The remembrance of what Christ had accomplished must be accompanied with *that*.

No supplication was needed, because it is a *finished* work; a *full* remission, which the supper records. To pray about the *forgiveness of sins* would be discord with its voice. It would (quite unintended, it might be) be a reproach upon the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. It would be building again the things which Christ has destroyed; and, in the language and sense of Gal. ii., making Him the minister of sin; making His blood like the blood of bulls and goats; only the *remembrance*, and not the *remitter* of sin.

But to surround it with *thanksgiving*—to wait on the past with *praise for redemption*—this would be honouring the work of the Lamb of God which the feast sets forth. And, accordingly, it is always as thus accompanied that the Scriptures present it to us.

Jesus, on taking the bread and the cup, gave thanks (Matt. xxvi.; Mark xiv.; Luke xxii). He did *nothing*

*else.* The words "blessing" and "giving thanks" are, to all moral intent, used in the same sense. And in the like mind, the apostle calls it "the cup of blessing which we bless." The cup, at the taking of which *we bless*, or speak well of the Lord, because, by that death and blood-shedding of Jesus which it sets forth, He has richly entitled Himself to praise, or to have His name spoken well of, which is worship. And again, when speaking of it, he says, that when the Lord parted the bread and the cup among the disciples, He simply "gave thanks" (1 Corinthians xi). In the passages which refer to the supper, it suitably takes the form of an Eucharistic feast, or a season of thanksgiving for the remission of sins. It says, as another once observed (at least it has in it this voice), "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more" (Proverbs xxxi. 6, 7). This is so indeed. It is this precious, strong drink which reminds us that our misery is gone, and that our heavy hearts have been lifted up. It tells us, not like the blood of bulls and goats that sin is *remembered*, but that sin is *remitted*. This is its peculiar, characteristic voice. To *give thanks in company with it is harmony; to pray about our sins is discord.* Such is the simple character which the Scriptures put on the Lord's supper.

Many, indeed, and various have been the *additions* which human religion has attached to it; but the word of God reproves them. The bread and the wine are laid on the table as bread and wine: there is no warrant for consecrating the elements, or separating them by some process to the service of the Lord.

Neither, I believe, have we warrant for asking God to bless us in the observing of this service; simply because it is rather our worship, or setting forth of His praises, than a waiting on Him for some benefit to ourselves either in soul or body. We bless Him in this act, rather than expect Him to bless us. We

speaking good of His name in it, by setting out the memorials of what *He has* done, and not supplicate Him to bless us.

I believe that, if the word of God were very simply attended to in this matter, this blessed institution would be relieved of much which now religiously encumbers it; and the supper would give to faith no uncertain sound. *Supplication about sin* would be silenced, as utterly discordant with the voice of the Lord's supper. *Seeking for blessing* would not be thought of. We have got the blessing; we have got Christ; and we celebrate what we have got. Other things would be laid aside, and the celebration would be an act of worship, giving the Lord the honour due to His name in this period of His absence till He come again, when He will gather fresh honour from the lips and praises of His ransomed ones!

And it is this service of praise and worship that ought to gather us to His presence every eighth, or resurrection day. Other things *may* be there given to us; such as a word of exhortation, or teaching, or the voice and spirit of prayer, and a more abundant spirit of thanksgiving; but we should go there to *give* the Lord His praise, such as this supper (which publishes through the riches of His grace the remission of our sins) does give Him. This is entering His presence becomingly; entering it with praises because He has *already* blessed us, and not with supplication for a blessing; entering it in the spirit of conscious victory over our enemies; tearing asunder all bonds, and silencing every tongue that would charge or condemn us. It would be entering His house in a way worthy of that house, where mercy has rejoiced against judgment; where the sword of the destroying angel has gloriously been stayed; where, therefore, the spirit of the worshipper sings as he enters, "In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me up upon a rock. And now shall mine head be lifted up

above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in His tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will *sing*, yea, I will *sing praises* unto the Lord" (Psalm xxvii).

May His courts, His temple, be thus entered now: for the bread and the cup are *there*—and the *vail* is gone! The memorials of the *ransom* have displaced that of *sin*; and at this altar, it is only the sacrifice of praise we offer (Hebrews xiii. 15). J. G. B.

WHAT sort of people are we to expect to find in the assembly of God? By *nature* bad, ignorant, self-willed, trying,—flesh and blood surely, yet *saved* by grace. Christ their life, and being sealed with the Spirit, so knowing redemption, forgiveness of sins, and peace with God, as to be able to feed on Christ, as the dead Lamb of God. Are they a people who are conscious of union with a heavenly, glorified Christ—"holding the head;" a people who, if not practically dead to sin, ought not to be there? We could not say *this*; yet we know there could be no allowance of sin—no manifested evil in the midst. Would one or two acting in the flesh prevent me, or hinder my being there? Certainly not; there is to be all exercise of patience and forbearance, and I expect the assembly would have power with patience and long-suffering to deal with such. *But because it is the Lord's supper* I am there in love to Him,—*not as a duty*, but in power of love and of the Spirit. *Sinless* perfection I look not for, as I find those professing it have sin of the highest character, in a more subtle form—pride, self-will, yea, real *independency*. Failure, weakness, sinfulness, I expect to arise; it is to be judged; and sin manifested and persisted in would be intolerable to those who realise the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power. Two or three gathered thus take the ground of the Church of God in its *integrity* before Him. Such is the provision for weak, dependent faith (Matt. xviii.) in a day of ruin and utter failure. Woe be to those who disturb God's people in what He has pro-

vided for them ; saying, this is not the Lord's supper ; "stand by, I am holier than thou." Holiness becometh His house for ever ; as for me, faith says, "Less than the least of all saints." What guard must be kept against *low* sins and *high* sins ; pride and self-sufficiency, as well as lust and levity ! May the Lord keep us very little in our own eyes ; very humble indeed and lowly, yet realising His presence, where no flesh can glory—tasting His love which constraineth us. Blessed Lord Jesus, it is Thyself we need. G. A.

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### FAILURE.—*Rev.* iii. 19, 20.

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EVERYTHING placed in the hands of man has failed, from Adam downwards ; but this failure does not touch the source of divine grace—God's goodness. Failure and the evil of man have been made the opportunity by God of showing out His grace in a fuller and richer way. He judges the failure, and then presents the Object of hope. When Adam sinned, "the Seed of the woman" was promised. When the law was broken, and Israel failed, prophetic testimony came in, and the promises of the Messiah. *Promise* is that on which faith can rest when everything else fails.

Declension and unfaithfulness in the *body* give occasion for brighter manifestations of grace in individuals, who thereby are brought into the enjoyment of more close and blessed communion with God Himself. See Elijah, Moses, &c. Moses, because of the golden calf, had to leave the camp and go outside ; but in doing this, he got into a place of greater nearness to God. "The Lord talked to Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend."

The energy of the Holy Ghost was so manifest in the Church at the beginning of the gospel dispensation, that man was nothing, God everything ; but before the epistles to the Churches were given, things had sadly changed. In the place where righteousness should have

been, behold, there was iniquity. It is therefore necessary that judgment should begin at the house of God.

The Lord takes notice of every circumstance or shade of difference in the Church, and of individuals in it. His love is not a careless love. God is not indifferent about the character of the saint here: this is impossible to love. A parent (if he loved his child) would not be satisfied with knowing that he would be sure eventually of the inheritance. He would anxiously train him up, watching every development of his mind and faculties,—ordering and regulating everything so as best to fit him for his future career.

How much more, then, does our Father act towards His children in this way in love. There is wonderful comfort in seeing it to be the spring of all God's dealings with us; but, at the same time, it should act strongly on our consciences.

Every individual saint is set in the place of direct conflict with Satan, and although it is quite certain that he "shall be bruised under our feet shortly," yet the certainty of Christ's final victory with the Church should not lessen our sense of the power of the enemy in the meantime. Indeed, it is so great, that constant watchfulness is necessary on our part; without it we shall be giving Satan the vantage, and he will not fail to direct his power against us—yea, take advantage of our very prayers. *Watch*, therefore, and pray. The flesh, by which he works, is still present; and we need also to mortify (put to death) our members which are upon the earth. Have we not often been astonished when we (or individual saints) grievously fall? but is it not a sure consequence of our failing in some way to watch against the flesh?

It is therefore really not at all surprising such should be the result; and I believe that habitual unfaithfulness in judging the flesh in little things is the secret of our falling. But who is sufficient for these things? There can be but one answer—"My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

It has ever been in times of *general* failure that the promises of God have been most graciously brought out, and His *faithful ones* have had increased communion in being thrown thereby more entirely upon Himself. If, through any measure of faithfulness, God's people find themselves in trial and exercise of soul because of corporate general declension, that is just the very time they should look for more intimate disclosures of the grace of God, and of His love to their hearts; giving them not only a clear and firm apprehension of the promises of God, but also a fuller knowledge of everything in Christ suitable to be drawn out by their need. He that is faithful may ever count upon this.

It is very sad to see the mass, whether in Israel, the Church, or in any other relation, always failing; nevertheless, the faithful ones in the midst of the failure find a fuller and deeper discovery of the grace of God than when all is going on well. This is most blessed.

Let us, therefore, "Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die" (Rev. iii. 2). "Take ye heed, watch and pray; . . . and what I say unto you, I say unto all, *watch*" (Mark xiii. 33-37). "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. . . . Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Eph. vi. 10, 18).

W. J.

One sight of what my Lord hath let me see is worth a world of worlds.

I am burdened with the love of Christ; but oh, how sweet and lovely is that burden! I am so in love with His love, that if His love were not in heaven, unwilling should I be to go there. I wonder what He meaneth to put such a slave at the board-head, at His own elbow, but I dare not refuse to be loved.—S. *Rutherford*.

## RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

## VI.

“SONS” of God. Such is the dignity bestowed on all believers on the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle John, as we have remarked in a previous paper, dwells on the favour of our being “*children*” of God, whereas the apostle Paul treats of both. This is in keeping with the ministry of these writers. As John’s gospel is full of the revelation of the Father, so his first epistle, as we have already pointed out, treats of the fruits of the divine nature, which should be, and *as* they should be, displayed in all those who partake of it, viz., those born of God. Yet he does not treat of the subject in a dry, didactic way, as one laying down a law, for he presents to us a Person, whose walk through this world was the perfect expression of it. “We show unto you the Eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us” (1 John i. 2).

“God is light” and “God is love.” These two short sentences, penned by the evangelist and apostle John, briefly sum up the characteristics of the divine nature. Hence, when fully displayed in a man, they will be manifested in obedience, righteousness, and love. But where could be found one who would furnish the sacred writer with a perfect example of it? An example of one who manifested hatred of his brother the apostle finds in Adam’s firstborn. For an example of One in whom brotherly love was perfectly shown forth, he had to run through four thousand years of the world’s history, and then could point to it as displayed only by Him who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary (1 John iii. 12, 16). How great the contrast, though easily stated. In the one case, life was taken by force; in the other, it was willingly laid down. Cain in hatred slew his brother Abel; the Lord in His love laid down His life for us.

But more than this comes out; for the ruined con-

dition of Adam's race by the fall is clearly displayed, and the virulent poison of sin is seen to have rapidly developed itself. The first man of Adam's race who had a brother, slew that brother; and to no one born in sin could John point as perfectly illustrating in his ways on earth true brotherly love. Such facts speak volumes to those who give heed to them, and sound the death-knell to all pretension that the natural man has in him at the bottom that which is really good. So to Him who is the Second Man, the Last Adam, the Beginning of the Creation of God, John turns; for in Him true love was perfectly displayed by His dying for us on the cross. "Hereby we have known love, because He has laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John iii. 16). Let us mark the apostle's language: "We have known," he wrote. This is more expressive to us than "perceive we." We have known love, for it has been perfectly displayed, and that in a way which never can be equalled, and never can be repeated. There is but one Only-begotten Son of God, and He dieth no more (Rom. vi. 9).

But we are *sons* as well as children. So as all the nearness to God, which the birth-tie expresses, is ours who are His children, all that is connected with the blessedness of His sons is ours too, who are saints of God. And as the characteristics of the divine nature, and how they should be manifested in us who are God's children, the Word, as we have seen, sets before us; so, on the other hand, to certain features of the walk of saints attention is directed, as proofs that such are thereby to be known as sons of God. In the one case, we learn what we should be because we are children; in the other, we show that we are sons by that which we do. In illustration of this last remark, the following passages may be cited:—"Love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be *sons* (not *children*) of the Highest: for He is kind

unto the unthankful and to the evil" (Luke vi. 35). Again the Lord speaks, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the *sons* of God" (Matt. v. 9). And St. Paul writes, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are *sons* of God" (Rom. viii. 14).

In further confirmation of the way this term "son" is used, and as helping, it may be, the reader the better to seize the import of it, we would remark that the Jews, whilst by natural descent they were Abraham's children, are called, as having a recognised position on earth in connection with that patriarch, "sons of the stock of Abraham" (Acts xiii. 26). So also are they always really styled in the New Testament, "sons of Israel" (never "children of Israel"). "Sons," too, "of the kingdom" are they designated (Matt. viii. 12). By natural descent they were looked at as having a right to the kingdom on earth, though really only the godly remnant of them will receive it when the Lord comes in power (Dan. vii. 27). Christians, on the other hand, are called "sons" of Abraham, but never children of Abraham. We *are* his sons who are justified by faith, he being the father of all them that believe, for "they which are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham" (Gal. iii. 7). We *are not* his children as offspring of his stock—*i.e.*, by natural descent.

Other instances of the use of this term, but in awful contrast to what has just been stated, may here be noticed. Scripture writes of those who refuse the gospel of God's grace as "sons of disobedience" (Eph. v. 6). They were, in common with all of us, "by nature children of wrath" (Eph. ii. 3). They are known by their rejection of the Gospel as "sons of disobedience," having refused to obey it. Judas Iscariot and Antichrist are respectively termed the "son of perdition" (John xvii. 12; 2 Thess. ii. 3). The tares are designated as "sons of the wicked one" (Matt. xiii. 38). Bar-jesus, the sorcerer, was addressed as "son of the devil" (Acts xiii. 10); and the Lord termed the proselytes of the hypocritical Pharisees

sons of hell—or, rather, “of Gehenna” (Matt. xxiii. 15). Each and all of these openly evidence by their ways what they are, and whither they are going.

Again, speaking in this figurative manner, we meet with the term, “sons of the bride-chamber” (Matt. ix. 15; Mark ii. 19; Luke v. 34), as being professedly and openly connected with it; and Christians are called “sons of light, and sons of day: not of night, nor of darkness” (1 Thess. v. 5). Then saints, in the parable of the tares, are designated as “sons of the kingdom” (Matt. xiii. 38), for they will certainly inherit it; whilst mere men of the world are called “sons of this world” (Luke xvi. 8), being in their generation “wiser than the sons of light.”

Instances enough, it is hoped, have been adduced in illustration of the bearing of this term, which, it will be seen, has reference to the position of those thus described. Let us now turn, in connection with the subject, to that which more immediately concerns us who can really rejoice in the privilege of being sons of God. That such a class should be found on earth, Hosea (i. 10) foretold, and though writing of Israelites, uses the term “sons,” which, St. Paul teaches us, makes the passage applicable to those who had been Gentiles: “And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called sons of the living God” (Rom. ix. 26). In proof of God’s grace to Israel, the apostle quotes Hosea ii. 23; as showing God would bless Gentiles, he quotes Hosea i. 10.

On this truth, viz., that believers are God’s sons, the Apostle Paul, we have before remarked, at times dwells, distinguishing it from the blessing of relationship as a child, as well as from the condition of a slave—a condition similar to which those under age were found. In Romans, in a passage already referred to (viii. 14-16), we read about the former; in Galatians iv. 7, we are instructed about the latter,—“Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son,

then an heir through God."\* Now this privilege, we thus learn, is common to all God's saints in the present time; and though foretold centuries before the Lord's first advent, it was only consciously known after His incarnation. A passage in 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18 may here be quoted illustrative of the development of revelation in connection with this line of teaching: "Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you." So far is the teaching of the prophecy (Jer. xxxi. 9), and of Old Testament revelation. The apostle now adds, "And ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Whose sons and daughters will such be? The sons and daughters of Jehovah, Israel's God, the self-existing One, who showed that He was the true God when He executed judgment on the idols of Egypt. The sons and daughters, too, of God Almighty, the God of the patriarchs, and who revealed Himself as the Almighty to Abraham when as yet he had no son.

But here we must make a distinction. It is one thing to show by our ways that we are God's sons and daughters, and to be allowed because of them consciously to enjoy in our heart the sense of that privilege; it is another thing to become His sons. How is this brought about? Scripture on this point is plain. "Ye are all sons of God" (so the apostle wrote) "through faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26). We become God's children as born again by the Word (1 Peter i. 23); we become God's sons through faith in Christ Jesus. Any word of God may quicken a soul. In all ages of man's history has God had children. Faith, however, in the Lord Jesus Christ is needed for any in the present time to become God's sons. So, only since the ascension has the privilege been known of being God's sons. "Through faith in

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\* So we should read the passage.

Christ Jesus," writes the apostle. Now the Lord is never called Christ Jesus till after the ascension.

Sons of God! The apostle, writing to the Galatians, calls their attention to this, as he points out the difference between an heir under age and one grown up. The former differs nothing from a slave, being under tutors and governors, till the time appointed of the father. Old Testament saints were always, and indeed all saints till after the cross were, really, in that condition, which may be termed nonage. Now, saints are sons as well as children, being viewed as grown up—come of age, as it were—and so no longer infants; and this is true of all real Christians, as Scripture would view a Christian, whatever the stage of Christian growth, whether little children, young men, or fathers. For of little children, John writes (1 John ii. 13, 27), that they knew the Father, and had received the Holy Ghost. Now it should be remembered, we do not become sons by receiving the gift of the Spirit; we are sons through faith in Christ Jesus. "And because ye (*i.e.*, Galatians) are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our (not your) hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6).

The importance of this to meet Galatian error becomes manifest. They conceived that they needed more than they had got, and that they would secure it by being circumcised and keeping the law. The apostle demonstrates that they were grown up children already. To put themselves under law would be to get into a state of nonage, out of which those Christians, who like Paul had once been in it, had been delivered by the death of Christ on the cross for them (Gal. iv. 4, 5). The Galatian saints were not only children but sons. To have told them simply that they were children would not have helped them; to teach them that they were already sons met the snare set for their feet. They enjoyed what those under law did not and could not, the privileges of sons. Hence was made transparent the folly of being

circumcised and keeping the law to obtain full Christian blessing.

The privileges, we have said, of sons. What are they? To one connected with this relationship the Lord referred in Matt. xvii. 25-27—"What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own sons, or of strangers? Peter saith, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the sons" (for of such He speaks) "free. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money; that take, and give unto them, for Me and thee." The Lord here associates Peter with Himself in the relationship of son to the One to whom the kingdom belonged, intimating that which would be subsequently taught as true of all believers now, that they are sons of God, and therefore free.

On another occasion did the Lord touch on this theme, when, surrounded by publicans and sinners, He uttered the parable of the prodigal son, and told His hearers what the son thought to say to his father: "Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." Full well did the prodigal know the difference between a servant and a son. A child he was by birth, but the position of a son in the house was a different matter. To be re-instated\* in that he did not expect, nor was he

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\* A word on the form of this parable may be helpful. The occasion which called it forth is stated in the opening of the chapter (Luke xv.). "Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." The prodigal, then, was the publican and sinner, who was an Israelite in common with the Pharisee, and therefore had shared in all the privileges belonging to Israel. Hence he could say, "am *no more* worthy to be called thy son"—language which could not suit a Gentile who had never enjoyed the privileges of Israel.

thinking of asking it. But could he be anything but as a son in that house? That, he owned, was for his father to settle. A son's place he clearly did not deserve; yet he was to have no other. His father settled the question, and rightly so. And he let his son hear of it, as he called his servants to rejoice with him, saying, "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." All of grace, surely; all of grace to us it is, certainly. Like the prodigal, we do not deserve a son's place, but the Father is pleased to give us nothing less; for nothing less will satisfy His heart.

This brings us to notice another privilege connected with our subject—that of adoption. God will not rest till we are displayed before all in the position of sons. To Israel as God's first-born belongs the adoption (Rom. ix. 4). For any, however, to share in that, they must be descended from Jacob. But a better blessing by far is ours, though similar in character, for we are "predestinated unto adoption by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will" (Ephes. i. 5). We shall be before God, holy and without blame. But more than that is the desire of our God for us; He would have us before Him in the position of sons, and He acquaints us with it as part of that to which we are called, and of which now we are to know the hope (Ephes. i. 18). Hence the Holy Ghost is given to us as the Spirit of adoption (Rom. viii. 15), whilst we await adoption, the redemption of our body (23); for God's purpose in this stops not short of blessing for our whole person. For this, then, we wait; and for it creation, which now groans under the weight and sorrow caused by sin, also waits, even for the manifestation of the sons of God (19).

What a day that will be! Till then, in the words of the hymn, we may say—

"All creation  
Travails, groans, and bids Thee come."

He will come (Rev. xxii. 20). Meanwhile, we are

furnished by the Son Himself with a revelation of the Father, and are taught of the privileges which belong to those who have a place in the Father's heart, a home in the Father's house, and a portion in what belongs to the Father, as God's heirs and joint-heirs with Christ. For we are free; we are sons in the house; we shall have a son's place before all for ever.

Here the sketch of our subject, relationship with God, naturally ends; but the blessing and the joy of it will surely for us only deepen throughout eternity. C. E. S.

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### “LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED.”

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IT is exceedingly beautiful to notice the pains-taking love of the blessed Lord with those whom Scripture calls “His own” (John xiii. 1), to relieve their hearts of all sorrow and trouble. And the gospel by John brings this out, and sets it before us in an exceptional manner. One cannot help being struck with the way in which the Spirit of God has grouped together, in this gospel, some of the various sources from whence the trouble arose for Him. It is no mere hap-hazard work, but divine order—the skill of the divine unfolders of the beauties, glories, and perfections of the Son of God. And as we look at them, and linger over them, what can we do but bow our heads, and allow our hearts to express themselves in adoring worship?

Let us, then, turn to a few passages on this subject. In chapter xi. 33, 34 we read,—“When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit, and was *troubled*, and said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto Him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept.”

Blessed Saviour! How little our hearts have ever understood that groan; that *trouble* which pressed Thy spirit, and those tears! Well may we say, as often we have sung,—

The depth of all Thy suffering  
No heart can e'er conceive.

It was not merely sympathy with Martha and her sister Mary in their heart-breaking sorrow, though assuredly that was there. It was a much deeper thing than that which wrung the groan from the burdened and troubled spirit of that ever-adorable Saviour. He felt the awful power of death, and bore it on His spirit before God; felt it as the misery of man, and the yoke from which man could not deliver himself. It was the weight of death. He saw the terrible power of sin and Satan over the bodies of men, and "He groaned in the spirit, and was *troubled*."

How blessed to hear that same Jesus saying to John, in Rev. i. 17, 18: "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." Yes, He who proclaimed Himself to Martha as "the resurrection and the life" had since then been in death, and God had taken Him out in life; and now He can say to John, "I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death." But none the less was the *trouble* His, ere He felt that greater trouble which alone could be His; when He bore the terrible judgment of God, and then lay in the same condition as Lazarus, in death. But we must not dwell longer on this.

Chapter xii. 27, 28,—“Now is My soul *troubled*; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name.” Here again do we behold the Saviour in trouble; not now as He witnesses the power of Satan in death, but as the awful judgment of God appears before His soul, and as He contemplates that death in all its terrible reality, and which He Himself was to suffer. He had just said,—The corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die, or abide alone. Death must take place before the fruit could appear and the harvest be gathered. This was His own revelation.

Oh, how real all this was to Him! Yet He submits,

and says, "Father, glorify Thy name." Yes! whatever the cost, He would glorify His Father. He had said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God" (Ps. xl. 7, 8), and soon He was to say, "*I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do*" (John xvii. 4). Full well He knew what it would cost Him ere He could say, "It is finished." The darkness and distance—the hiding of God's face,—and the depths of suffering, unfathomable by us, into which He must go under the judgment of God,—and death itself,—all, all were known to Him, and present before His mind. Well might He exclaim, "Now is my soul *troubled*." But what about ourselves? We can but adore that perfect devotedness to God, and that matchless love to us, and render Him the thanksgiving and worship of our hearts.

Chapter xiii 21,—“When Jesus had thus said, He was *troubled* in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, That one of you shall betray Me.” Once more do we behold Him in trouble; alas! from one who ought to have been a comforter. He could say, “Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against Me” (Ps. xli. 9). Alas! alas! what is man? He sells his best friend for thirty pieces of silver, and betrays Him with a kiss. Oh, the depravity of the human heart.

Thus, then, we behold the Saviour in trouble in these three chapters. First, as He witnesses the power of Satan over the bodies of men, seen in death; secondly, when He looks forward to His own death, and anticipates the terrible judgment of God against sin; thirdly, as He tells them of the heartless cruelty of the traitor, Judas, who had been His companion. Then, in chapter xiv., it is just as though He turned round and said to His disciples, “Now I have had all the trouble, don't you have any; let not your heart be *troubled*.”

But, then, He was leaving them, some reader may

say. True, He was! But He was seeking to carry their hearts with Him to the place He was about to enter. His promise, too, was given them, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (verse 3). Hence there was no cause for trouble and sorrow; for if they had Him no longer *here* in bodily presence, their faith would still enable them to follow Him in spirit *there*, while His promise to return and take them there would brighten "the little while" between His departure and return.

Moreover, while He was gone He left them peace. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be *troubled*, neither let it be afraid" (verse 27). The world gives away, and no longer possesses what it has given. But such is not the way He gives. No! He brings His own into the enjoyment of His own peace, to enjoy it with Himself. Space will not permit our entering into the various things in that chapter, given to comfort us while our Lord is absent; we can only say, may each beloved child of God be led to peruse it for himself, and enjoy it in His presence.

In conclusion, let me ask, Is there anyone like Jesus? Can anyone comfort us as He can? Is He not worthy of all our praise? Has He not felt all the *trouble* when here, as "the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," whether from God, man, or Satan, and felt it that we might only have the joy? Surely He has! Then let us "consider Him," and the trouble that He endured, with the consciousness in our hearts that He is beyond it all, at home now in the Father's house and presence; waiting there as the Man of patience, but soon to fulfil His parting promise, and come for us; then He will assuredly be the Man of joy. Meanwhile, let us seek to give Him worthy praise while we live here for Him, as those who are in the enjoyment of that word,—*"Let not your heart be troubled."*

W. E.

## LUKE VI.

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AS Son of Man "He went through the corn-fields; and His disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands." The Pharisees come out against them, and attempt to use the Mosaic law of the Sabbath in condemnation of this liberty: "Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath-days?" But they are confronted, first, by what David did when he ate the shewbread, and then driven back before the declaration, "That the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath." According to Psalm viii., Jesus is in manhood prerogative still—the One of whom David prophesied and sang, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands," &c.; and this *dominion* He exercises over every forfeited institution *under* the heavens, because His personal glory is declared by God to be set *above* the heavens.

As in chapter v., He would have led the nation into the bride-chamber if they would acknowledge Him as Bridegroom, so now would He lead them into their forfeited rest with Jehovah, by the restoration of a Sabbath in the land of Canaan, if they would but embrace Him in the grace of His humiliation as Son of Man conjointly with His glory as Lord of the Sabbath.

But they could not, and again on another Sabbath they bring an accusation, because He had said to the man with a withered hand, "Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose, and stood forth." Jesus makes this the occasion of raising, and determining, the greater matter "of good and evil" in connection with the Sabbath, could they but see these contradictions to the original seventh day of God's rest in creation, or their own in Canaan on the day of their espousal to Jehovah, when He planted them there and rejoiced over them. Jesus tries them yet again, if so be they may not merely be confronted by "the word of God"

from His lips, but condemned by their own consciences, as to their ruined state and condition as sinners, and of His own power and grace, come not to destroy life, but to save it.

He walks in the majesty of His own "dominion" over these works on the Sabbath day, and vindicates Himself and His disciples as to the right and wrong—or good and evil—in the corn-fields; as well as upon the question of saving life or destroying life, as proved before them all, by His looking round about upon them, and saying to the man, "Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other." But alas! they do not put themselves under this Jehovah-Lord for present blessing; on the contrary, the unseen enemy of God and man is busier than ever in his malignity, so that "they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus."

They had guiltily refused (as seen in chap. v.) their place with the Bridegroom as sharers in His joy, and now they refuse a place with this Son of Man as "Lord of the Sabbath," when passing through the land in the grace and power that were competent and willing to save their lives, and establish them in "the rest of God."

We may add upon this, that these were the two essential elements of "the kingdom of God," whether then or hereafter—viz., their *joy* with the Bridegroom, and their *rest* with Jehovah. Each was presented to the Jews, in the person of their Messiah, and both refused—"they were filled with madness" was the result—and there they lie! in the stern rejection of Christ; yet further to do and accomplish the works of their father, the devil. Is all lost for which the Lord came, because Israel will not be gathered? we may ask. Is all gone, now that the Bridegroom, and the Lord of the Sabbath, in effectual grace and saving power, have been refused? Nay, but a very important difference takes place hereupon, in the further ministry of "the word of God" and "the kingdom of God;" for

these two can never be separated, whatever the combined enmity of Satan and Israel, or the whole world, may decide to do. Our Lord withdraws Himself, not as having failed, or being discouraged; but as the obedient Servant of God and dependent Man, He commits Himself and His ways to Him that sent Him.

“And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and He continued all night in prayer to God.” This shows us what He thought at this moment of the heavens and the earth—of man and of God—of Himself and the adversary who was, in character, as the wild beast of the field and the boar of the wood. But this night of prayer with God only led to the light of the morning and other activities on the part of the Son of Man, as the one and only unfailing link between the present and the future. “And when it was *day*, He called unto Him His disciples, and of them He chose twelve, whom also He named apostles.” Nor is it without significance that Simon, the “fisher of men,” should receive a new, or added name of Peter, which is, being interpreted, “a stone.” The prophecy of Isaiah in the synagogue of Nazareth led forth Jesus under that commission “of the acceptable year of the Lord.” Testimony to “the word of God,” and the coming “kingdom” in His own person, were more in connection with the ship on the sea, and all that passed through the paths of the sea. Another starting point of increased testimony is this mountain, with its night of prayer and its new day of service.

Jesus and the twelve came down from this mountain into the plain; and as these new visitors—viz, the Messiah with His twelve apostles—stand once more upon the level of men, where they lie in their ruin and sin, a great multitude flock around them. “People out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, came to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases, and they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.”

So He proves Himself anew to be more than equal to all the consequences, whether of the fall of Adam, or the power of Satan over the bodies of men. Besides this, may we not see Him at the mountain as the Man of faith and of prayer (in addition to His already gotten titles as the obedient Servant and the dependent One), and in this new character that night winning from above further instruction for the digged ear, and further authority from God? The glory on high and the exigencies below are alike in question; and He who can alone settle such matters between God and men has taken them in hand, and will work them out by other means, if such be the Father's will and counsel. Accordingly, He takes a further position in grace towards the oppressed and the undone: "And the whole multitude sought to touch Him; for there went virtue out of Him, and healed them all." Such was Jesus in their midst now, as the Servant of their necessities, and the One who gave forth the virtue that was in Himself to the confidence or touch of any in this great multitude who would use Him.

Besides this, He brings the authority which He received at the mountain-top down into the plain; and as the Great Prophet whom God had promised to raise up to them, like unto Moses, He proclaims in this character the blessings of the kingdom which He had brought with Him for Himself and His elect.

"And He lifted up His eyes on His disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God; blessed are ye that hunger," &c. He comes forth as the Great Prophet from the mount to lead His disciples outside the present expectations of Israel and the nations of the world as to prosperity in the earth as it is, and opens out a new path of blessedness to them in association with Himself in the prospect of His rejection. Morally, therefore, the perfection which marked Himself, as the Man of faith and the Man of prayer, was to give its character to His disciples in this new path before God and men, which He had just

described ; but it was the only way into the kingdom of God *now*, and He had accepted it. The promises of God which are *now* scattered over the pathway to the kingdom, are of another nature to those connected with Israel's history, whether past in Canaan, or future as to the millennium.

To the poor and the hungry, to those who weep *now*, and to such as are hated of men, to any who bear the reproach and whose names are cast out as evil, are the promises and blessings made good. All these trials and sufferings would come upon them for "the Son of Man's sake ;" and these things would but cast them upon Him, in present and unfailing sympathy, and lead into the glory of the kingdom of God by and by, when it would be no longer presented to faith and prayer in the form of testimony by "the word" preached, but would be established by the Son of Man coming a second time, with the clouds of heaven. Israel and men below had not as yet refused the recovering power of Jehovah brought into their midst, in the way of grace and healing, by their promised Messiah. They were on their trial ; for last of all, Jehovah sent unto them His Son, saying, They will reverence My Son!

Outwardly and actually, they had not seized Him and cast Him out, though as the Prophet from God, and knowing His path by reading their hearts and seeing their enmity, He accepts it from God alone, and leads His disciples into it, and pronounces the beatitudes anew, as connected with His coming rejection. Nor is this all ; for He as surely makes them the sharers of His joys, and bids them "rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold your reward is great in heaven, for in the like manner did their fathers to the prophets." As in former times the blessings were to be published from Mount Gerizim, and the curses from Mount Ebal, so here the Great Prophet adds : "Woe unto you that are rich, woe unto you that are full," &c. Beyond, however, the blessings and the woes which, in His prophetic character, He uttered to

the twelve apostles of this new mission, He also takes His place as the Great "Teacher come from God" with other instructions more suited to the mind of heaven, now that the Son of Man is come to walk with men upon the earth. As speaking with authority He adds, "But I say unto you which hear, love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you," &c. Beyond rewards in the kingdom of God comes the object so dear to the heart of Christ, which He declares to them, "And ye shall be sons of the Highest; for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil." Nor does He merely supply the motive—and such an one too—but His delight is to identify these disciples, as the elect of God, with His own satisfaction, and adds, "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."

As the Great Prophet and the Great Teacher, His doctrine and instructions are complete; and as the Great Exemplar, how perfect in everything, both in His walk and ways; for He goes before them as One greater than the law and the prophets, and elevates their own conduct and morals towards each other and towards all men according to the pattern of His own standard. Touching what is human, He teaches them His own new doctrine, "Give to every man that asketh thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again." Likewise, "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." Where these relations to one another, or to a brother, or to Himself as Lord and Master, are defective or evil, He also takes the place of the corrector of abuses, and cleanses them away out of the kingdom: "The disciple is not above his master; but every one that is perfect shall be as his Master."

Relatively, as to their own eyes and hands He demands "Why beholdest thou the mote, that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in

thine own eye? Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" He condemns these unseemly actings of a fallen and wicked nature, and as their detector and reprover, rebukes the offender as "Thou hypocrite!" By parables, too, He forewarns them, saying, "Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?" So also He teaches them, by the good tree and the corrupt tree, to judge a good man by the good treasure of his heart, and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart, "for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh."

Finally, as the Lord in their midst, He helps them to discover any and all disloyalty to Himself, saying, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Upon hearing His sayings, and doing them, hangs the parable of the house which a man built, and laid the foundation on a rock, which neither the flood, nor the stream, could hurt; but Jesus adds, "He that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."

He has thus carried them along through the blessings, and the woes, and the rejoicings of the kingdom of God; He has also delivered to them its decrees, and given them His own example as its Lord and their Master; He has looked at their eyes, and hands, and hearts, in relation to each other; He has taught them by the trees and the thorns, as to gathering figs and grapes, and brought all to an issue by the parable of the two houses and their builders, with the respective ruin or stability as founded upon a rock. Dispensationally, He has thus connected His apostles and their testimony with Himself and this new phase of His accepted rejection by the Pharisees, and scribes, and rulers of the people of Israel, which would surely and actually come about in its own season. J. E. B.

## "THE SON OF GOD."

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Son of God, before creation  
 Had its deep foundations laid,  
 Or the ocean, or the mountain,  
 Or the stars were seen or made—  
 God in Thee was then delighting,  
 Happy Thou His love to share ;  
 One in essence, one in purpose,  
 With Him—like Him—every-  
 where.

Son of God, Thine eye looked  
 onward,  
 Saw creation fully made ;  
 Man, God's image, in the garden,  
 Choicest spot, by Thee arrayed ;  
 Saw him work his own destruction,  
 Outcast, ruined, in disgrace,  
 Weary, wand'ring, toiling, dying,  
 'Fore his God no standing place.

Son of God, in man delighting,  
 What but pity moved Thee then?  
 Earth had charms which heaven  
 had not, [by sin.  
 E'en though cursed, and stained  
 Thou the Lamb, by God appointed  
 All the sin to bear away,  
 Introduce millennial blessing,  
 God's full glory to display.

All His counsels rested on Thee ;  
 All His heart to Thee was  
 known ;

Thou didst leave the home, the  
 glory,  
 Helpless infant to become.  
 Oh what marvel ! in a manger,  
 By the virgin given birth,  
 Object of the angels' wonder,  
 Lay the God of heaven and  
 earth.

Son of God, by man rejected,  
 Envied, hated for Thy love,  
 Calv'ry lay athwart Thy pathway,  
 Back to heavenly courts above ;  
 Devils' rage and powers of dark-  
 ness,  
 Leagued with man, were all in  
 vain ;  
 Thou did'st do God's will, and  
 dying,  
 By Thy blood hast cleansed our  
 sin.

Son of God in resurrection,  
 First-born from the dead art  
 Thou ;  
 Thine is victory, Thine is conquest,  
 Crowns of glory deck Thy brow :  
 Thine the trophies of redemption,  
 Thine are sinners saved from  
 hell,  
 Sons of God brought home to glory  
 In the Father's house to dwell.  
 E. P. W.

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O how long wait I, to hear our waiting Lord Jesus  
 sing again, and triumph and rejoice, and divide the  
 spoil !

No pen, no words, no engine can express to you  
 the loveliness of my only, only Lord Jesus.—*S. Ruther-  
 ford.*

Our *thinking* may have vital consequences. It  
 may be the taking in spiritual food or spiritual  
 poison. Hence the weighty Scripture saying : "As a  
 man thinketh in his heart (or mind) so is he" (Prov.  
 xxiii. 7 ; Phil. iv. 8).—*Dr. Guthrie.*

## LETTERS OF INTEREST.

## THE WALK AND THE WORK.

R——, 1860.

IT was a great joy to me, to see from your last to —, that you continue to set your face steadily toward a glorified Christ. I am not at all surprised at the struggles you have with yourself in so doing; it is the inevitable condition of advance in the footsteps of Jesus. We must leave the flesh behind; it will not and cannot walk in that road, and so we must just reckon ourselves dead, and mortify our members.

In 1 Corinthians ix. 27, we find Paul engaged in this conflict, well knowing that only by *self-restraint in all things* could he be victorious. And just as one who ran in the games, or who fought in the amphitheatre, to obtain a corruptible crown, inured himself to toil and hardship that he might win, even so must it be with us. I find it myself every day; every day do I see that flesh, and my flesh, is evil and only evil, and the only power of victory is in making no compromise whatever with it, but inwardly seeking thorough consecration to God and His Christ. There is no blare or bluster in such a case; it is a death or life struggle, and so Jesus puts it in Luke xiv. We must count the cost, and if we do, we shall know that *only by hating our life in this world* can we join the noble band who are seeking to follow a rejected and dishonoured Lord. Oh, what holy enthusiasm, quiet and deep, yet fervent, should possess us as followers of a crucified, but now glorified Christ! Those who came to David in his exile were entirely for him, and had left all to be with him and to share his fortunes. "Thine are we, O David; and thine, thou son of Jesse: peace be unto thee, and peace be to thy helpers; for thy God helpeth thee." Thus spake Amasai by the Spirit. And that other band had "faces like lions, and swift as roes on the mountains." Alas! where is this enthusiasm? We see it in Paul, and to it he

encourages his son Titus, though in the midst of everything that was in wreck around. May we, dearest —, covet the same spirit, and hold our ground whereto we have attained, losing nothing, but ever making advance. The whole thing must go on *inside before God*. Outward victory is always in proportion to the inward; or if, indeed, the inward does not keep pace, there will be a fall.

What led me to this train of musing was partly the reading of the 6th of Nehemiah. I am doing "a great work." Oh, how his soul put value on the glory of building a wall in Jerusalem. It was the consciousness of having *God's work in hand*, and unmingled delight in it, that saved him from the snares. God saved him through his attachment to Zion. "They shall prosper that love her." I find that diligence in the things of God is a great preventive of temptation; and having the work, in some one form or another, in my heart, whatever my hands are about, is very helpful. For instance, in bed before rising it may be. If I am concerned that the precious name of Jesus be glorified this day in me, and that whatever may occur, instead of bringing out flesh, that it may bring out Jesus and the sweet and sweetening savour of His grace, what a help it will be. And how thankful, at the end of the day, if in anything we have been made a comfort and a blessing, shall we indeed be.

We are brought to know God and His dear Son thus intimately for ourselves, in order that we, being in relationship with Him, may be the channels of the blessedness that is in Him to those who are yet in the far country, and who are, as yet, strangers to it altogether.

My chief concern for you all is that, in your individual ways, Christ may be manifest one towards another. It is far more difficult to manifest uniformly the tenderness and unselfishness of Jesus in our relationships than anywhere else, but all godliness and power begin there.

J. R.

A STILL wider circle of ministry is opening to Jesus, into which He passes not so much as the Messiah in the midst of His own people, as the Son of Man amongst men, and to gather fruit from the centurion's faith, which had been refused Him from the vine of Israel and her fig trees. Nor is this enough to say, for in this chapter (vii.) He is speaking and acting in the character, and according to the style of, "Wisdom" in Proverbs viii., and seeking to be justified of her children. Accordingly, "Wisdom cries, and understanding puts forth her voice. She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths. She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors: unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man."

It is as *this* Wisdom, which has entered in and spoken to the sons of men, that the centurion owns Him, and beseeches Him to come and heal his servant which was ready to die. There is no other recommendation needed, either for Wisdom itself, or this child of Wisdom, or the centurion's servant. He is come into the habitable parts of the earth, as a Man to find His "delights with the children of men," and willingly enters upon these intimacies as they open themselves out before His face. This centurion, as the man set under authority, having soldiers under him, to whom he says Go, and he goeth; Come, and he cometh, accords to Jesus a supreme place of power over everything under the heavens, from whence He came forth—"set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was."

After this manner the centurion comes out to justify Wisdom; "and when Jesus heard these things, He marvelled at him, and turned Him about, and said unto the people that followed Him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel;" for the centurion had sent his own friends to say, "Lord,

trouble not Thyself ; for I am not worthy that Thou shouldest enter under my roof : wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto Thee : but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed." And so it fell out ; for "they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick."

On the next day, Jesus would go forth in the further exercise of His title of "Wisdom," and enter into one of the cities called Nain ; "and many of His disciples went with Him, and much people," to verify a yet higher character of His, as in Proverbs viii., that "whoso findeth Me findeth life." "Now, when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." Perfect in His compassion to the bereft, He said to her, "Weep not ;" and perfect in the exercise of His power over life and death, He said, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak." Perfect in grace, too, "He delivered him to his mother."

These ways, and these delights of Wisdom amongst the sons of men, whether by the way, or at the entering in of the city, or at the going out by its gates, call forth the acknowledgment from the people "that a great Prophet is risen up among us, and that God hath visited His people." Indeed, this new starting point at Capernaum makes this chapter a justifying chapter, in all respects, between Wisdom and her elect children, if one may so speak. The centurion justified Him, by according Him the authority, as "standing in the top of high places," by which He had only need to speak the word of command. The widow and her son justify Him at the gate of the city of Nain, upon the matter of the bier and them that bare it, by finding Him as the power of life. And now, John the Baptist, who had in his service as the forerunner been the witness and justifier of Him that should come after him, is in like manner to be justified by Wisdom, both as a prophet, and the greatest

of them too, and as the greatest of those born of women besides.

Nor would John "be offended" in the ways which Wisdom might take, but follow Him or prepare the way before Him, and make straight His paths, whether the Eternal Mind would make them to open out into the royalties of the kingdom of God, according to ancient prophecies, or turn them about into the dark mystery of a prison and death for the messenger, or of the cross and resurrection to the right hand for the Bridegroom. "And all the people that heard Him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John;" but "the men of this generation," who are out of tune with Wisdom and its messenger, are set aside and reprov'd, as rejecting "the counsel of God" against themselves. Alas! the men of that generation are the men of this period too—those who will not repent or mourn as to their consciences, because of holiness and sin on the one hand; nor respond in gladness of heart to the entering in of Wisdom by their gates into the city.

The men of that generation and of this say, of John the Baptist and his austerity, or God's severity, "He hath a devil, why hear ye him?" or of the Son of Man and His sociability with publicans and sinners, "Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber;" never in keeping with the goodness of God in heaven, and ever out of tune with the messenger whom He sends, and most of all when He is in their midst, to eat and drink with them, and to find His delights with the sons of men.

Upon this footing, "one of the Pharisees desired Him that He would eat with him; and He went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat;" but they were not company one for the other. "And, behold, a woman in *the city*, which was a sinner, when she knew it, brought an alabaster-box of ointment, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with her tears, and did wipe them with

the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment." It was "this woman that was a sinner" (like Peter in the ship) who brought Him His dainty meat; so that Jesus by His words, and she by act and deed, reprov'd the Pharisee, and changed the entire character of the house into what suited Wisdom and its daughter, who had come to justify Him in it, against the self-righteous Simon.

Jesus attempts to gain the Pharisee into the circle of these delights, not only by the sweet savour of these ointments, which did their own violence to Simon's house; but by helping him to judge his own heart, by the love that was everywhere around but there! Simon could receive Jesus, and be at home with Him as a prophet, for in this character He must take no part with a woman that was a sinner.

But Jesus had come to find His delights, and eat His ripe fruits, with publicans and sinners, and to feast His own heart by forgivenesses. So He utters His parable of the creditor and two debtors, and the five hundred pence and the fifty, that He may taste the joy of forgiving sins, and be in proper character as the Bringer-forth of water for the feet, and oil for the head, and the kiss of grateful affection, on the footing of this woman. Wisdom justifies her before them all on account of her love, and dismisses her with the assurance of forgiveness, and peace and salvation. They are equally at home, in all these interchanges of faith and love, in perfect peace, and satisfaction. "And they that sat at meat with Him began to say, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" Wisdom has described its own circle, and left its own patterns behind for those who come after, and tread in Wisdom's ways.

Whilst familiar with Him, "in the habitable parts of the earth," and in scenes like these, whether in the house, or the city, or the gate, may it be with worshipping hearts, as those who bear in mind of whom it is said, in Proverbs viii., "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old:

when He prepared the heavens, I was there ; when He gave to the sea His decree, then I was by Him, as One brought up with Him ; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him."

Surely, it must be with unshod feet that we touch Him, or handle Him and see, or in closer intimacies lay our heads upon His breast, in the conscious liberty and freedom of a love that His heart can delight in.

J. E. B.

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## NAZARITESHIP AND SERVANTSHIP.

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Two things deserve notice. The Lord said of His disciples, "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, so have I also sent them into the world ;" and, when those whom He had sent forth returned, He said, "Come ye into a desert place apart, and rest awhile."

We need to remember, that having now life in Christ, we belong to, yea, we are, *new creation* ; and it is the privilege of faith to regard our old affinity with the world severed, and from the date of our conversion to recognise that we are messengers of Christ, just as truly *sent into* the world by Him as He was of His Father. Our *qualification* for this He declares to be, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world ;" and our *security* is, "*I pray*, not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

Now, what the world was to Christ *in His life* it should be to us. What was it, then, to Him ? First, it was the scene of His Nazarite *separation unto God*, where He with whom the world had not one particle of sympathy, being the Second Adam, and from heaven, could yet walk in calm, unhindered meekness and dignity, and in the supremacy of divine strength, above every obstacle which the hatred of man or the malice of Satan presented ; before His Father in the full display of immaculate holiness, though "found in

fashion as a man," and before the world in the expression of absolute grace, thus displaying God both as Light and Love. So that, though surrounded with everything which was opposed, there was not an act, a word, a thought, a look, or gesture that was not in perfect accord with the heart of His Father, coming up before Him as the varied notes of a more harmonious and excellent melody than heaven's orchestra had ever yielded.

Second, it was the *sphere of His service*. He of whom it was written in the volume of the book says, "I come to do *Thy will*, O God;" and in the midst of His unwearying service He declared, when, though sitting by the well-side and with the food before Him which the disciples had brought, He cared neither to eat nor drink because of the elevation of His spirit in the joy of His service,—“I have meat to eat ye know not of; My meat is to *do the will* of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.” And later in His service He could testify, “He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him.” And when He said, “Not My will, but Thine,” we may not suppose there was any diversity between that will and His own, but that though they were identically the same, He would yet yield such perfect service—be so wholly subject—that the will of His Father should be the motive and spring of all those “words” and “works” which had been entrusted to Him as the sent One of God. For to be perfectly obedient as a Servant, He must surrender absolutely His own will and do that of another in entire self-abnegation; and having so done, He could say, “I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished *the work* Thou gavest Me to do.”

And so blessedly perfect was our divine Master in His Nazariteship and Servantship, that from the opened heavens came forth again and again the blessed testimony that here upon this earth, upon which all Heaven looked down, was there walking

among men the beloved Son of God in whom He was ever well pleased.

The world, then, should be just this to you and me : it affords us what heaven can never yield—a scene in which we may display for “a little while” our *Nazarite* character as set apart unto God, and our *servant* character as redeemed ones “bought with a price,” that we should not live unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again! It would be well for us, whenever we feel the world to be too much for us, were we to ask ourselves how have we been maintaining this testimony in it?

We are encouraged with the cheering word of our great Captain, “Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.” Are we puffed up with success or cast down because of failure? He oftentimes calls us “into a desert place apart to rest awhile.” Yea, that we may afresh sit at His feet, which is an indispensable thing not only for communion, but to fit us for even the smallest acceptable service. Only there is there real growth; only there do we gather up strength to follow Him; only there do we drink into His spirit, learning from Him. Happy thus to experience the tenderness of His care, and the gracious providings of His thoughtfulness and love.

But we should remember that resting in the desert is not fruitful service in the vineyard. The Lord, it is true, has called us to both, but the former is out of consideration for our weakness—the latter is what His glory claims. And how often it happens that we are “out of sorts” with the world, and long to escape from it, when the right thing would be to be “out of sorts” with ourselves, because of our own failure in it. The Apostle John declares, “We are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness;” and while we receive this as the unerring and emphatic sentence of God in His word, we must not forget that, in His infinite wisdom, all that characterises the world, and all that transpires in it, has been over-ruled of God to

fit and adapt it most perfectly to be the scene of His people's conflict for the trial of their faith, and the sphere of their labours for His name's sake.

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## OLD TESTAMENT LESSONS.

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### HEBRON.

“Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.”—*Num.* xiii. 22.

IN this chapter we have the account of Moses sending from the wilderness 12 spies, to search out the character of the land of promise and the kind of people who dwelt in it. Israel was now close upon its border, and, apparently, the time to occupy it was near. What was it like? What facilities for, or hindrances to, their taking possession would they find in the land itself?

The spies make a 40 days' search (40 is the number of perfected probation; thus our Lord was tempted 40 days and nights); but the only place they visited within its borders, from Zin to Rehob, that is mentioned by name, is Hebron, with its valley, thereafter called Eshcol. The brief account of their journey is broken by the little parenthesis that heads this paper—an interruption in the narrative which has doubtless a valuable lesson for us in the mind of the Spirit. What is it?

The facts are many which gather round the terms of this short sentence: let us collect these from the other portions of Scripture which record them, and then we shall be able to learn the lesson.

“Hebron.”—Hebron is first introduced to us in Gen. xiii. 18 as one of Abram's dwelling-places, where he built an altar unto Jehovah. Thus it is distinguished by godly worship. In Gen. xviii. (“Mamre in Hebron”—xiii. 18), it is distinguished by marvellous communion between God and Abraham, followed by a scene of intercessory prayer, which God fully owns.

In our chapter (Num. xiii.), Hebron is the place where the spies find and take specimen-fruits of Canaan's produce—grapes, figs, and pomegranates—the first being shown by one cluster of such growth, that it was borne between two on a staff. No other such cluster is anywhere recorded; it is the richest production of the vine known.

“Was built.”—Then it was not a hill and valley only, but also an established town or city. A district—the plains of Mamre—were included in it, and a residential property that had been duly constructed and ordered by the hand of man.

“Seven years.”—This is an absolute statement of a fact not elsewhere recorded. A year is the complete period during which the successive seasons (Gen. viii. 22) are all carried on. Seven of these periods elapsed between the building of Hebron and Zoan respectively, and seven is the number of perfection.

“Before.”—This is an important word,—that the city Hebron was constructed antecedently to that of Zoan. Why, we shall see.

“Zoan.”—This was also a district, and a town in it. It was where the counsellors of Pharaoh were gathered, and where, too, they became “fools,” and their counsel “brutish” (Isa. xix. 11-13; xxx. 4). It was where, further, God wrought His “marvels” and His “wonders” (Psalm lxxviii. 12, 43).

“In Egypt.”—Hebron was in Canaan; Zoan, in the land of Pharaoh. Other accessory items we need not now take up; but, collecting these together, we have this fact, that Hebron, the place of the richest fruits of Canaan, was established the perfection of time prior to the building of the town where Pharaoh gathered his princes and counsellors, where God shewed His signs, and where those counsellors became fools.

Why has the Holy Ghost recorded this priority of the building of Hebron? It is in illustration of the grace in God's counsels respecting us from eternity, “written for our learning, that we through patience and

comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Our God has omitted nothing by which He could assure our hearts.

Examine separately the moral value of the facts we have collected. The contrast between Egypt and Canaan is well known; Egypt under Pharaoh being, within certain limits, a figure of the world in its subjection to Satan, its god; Canaan, a figure of heavenly places known to faith. Princes and counsellors are found gathered at Zoan; the wise men of the world come together both for consultation and for display. There Jehovah showed His wonders, if possibly these intelligent leaders might own Him. But, no. Rejecting God's evidences, they stultified themselves. How often has man, in the course of history, repeated this. Yet men still rely on man; it is a common proverb, *Vox populi, vox Dei*—i.e., the voice of the mass is the voice of God. What a delusion! Led by chief priests and elders, the mass cried, "Crucify Him." It was in that way that "the princes of this world crucified the Lord of glory." What a wisdom was theirs that they did not know what they were doing! Had they known it, we are told, they would not have done it. Surely, "the foolishness of God is wiser than men."

On the other hand, Hebron tells us of a place of blessing in Canaan, the richest blessing that fruits may represent, in resurrection. For Canaan is to Egypt, not only across the Red Sea, but also beyond Jordan. It is the expression of a sphere which, while separated from "this present evil world," has also its own characteristic joys and privileges, after death (passage of Red Sea) and resurrection (passage of Jordan) are made known. And the highest blessings are in the type found at Hebron. Who shall say what grapes, figs, and pomegranates each foreshew? Whatever they may be, Hebron is the place for them.

Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt. The ordering and establishment of the sphere of our richest blessings in Christ was all accomplished,

the perfection of time prior to the existence and building of the sphere where man's collective wisdom gathered together.

Give this its simple value. In His blessed counsels, God set up in Christ a range of spiritual blessings long before man even existed, still less had he gathered at Zoan. "Or ever the earth was," these counsels had been settled in heaven. Travel back to Gen. i., and "the beginning," as to the shore of time, and what lies out beyond in eternity as a boundless sea? A few Scriptures reveal all we know, and these are the statements of the counsels referred to—purposes of God in Christ, who ultimately shall be the manifested Head of the creation of God, the last Adam. Adam in Eden was only a provisional thing in the vast ways of God. Too quickly, despite flood and Babel warnings, man built his Zoan, and scoffed at and mocked the signs of God. But could anything at man's hand, suicidal though his wisdom was, frustrate the purposes of the eternal Blessor? Impossible. Satan might tempt and captivate, but Satan and flesh are utterly outwitted and defeated when the only Wise brings forth what His heart has reserved in store.

Pass beyond "in the beginning;" find, if not the landmarks exactly, yet the sea-marks in that vast expanse, a verse here, and a verse there, written to tell us God's heart, and consider what may be a few grapes of the superb cluster grown of God before the foundation of the world. Collect all that is revealed of the past of eternity.

God was.—"From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God" (Ps. xc. 2; xciii. 2).

Christ was.—"Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah v. 2).

Love between God and Christ was.—"Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (John xvii. 24)

Glory around God and Christ was.—"The glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (John xvii. 5).

The love in the glory begat mercy.—“The mercy of Jehovah is from everlasting to everlasting” (Ps. ciii. 17).

(In Proverbs viii. are other details, if Wisdom be accepted as a personification of Christ.)

Surely it was out of love and mercy in glory that Christ was foreordained a Lamb before the foundation of the world (1 Peter i. 19, 20).

God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. i. 4); and gave us grace in Christ Jesus before the world began (2 Tim. i. 9); and He promised eternal life before the world began (Titus i. 2).

There was also a “hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory” (1 Cor. 2-7). And in Eph. iii. 10, 11, we find the Church is to make known to principalities and powers “the manifold wisdom of God according to His eternal purpose, which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

It is worthy of notice, that the blessings so revealed are all connected with the saints of the present time: grapes for us designed in detail long before the provisional man was created—a cluster of infinite richness, grown in a far higher Hebron, the perfection of time prior to man’s wilful Zoan, that refused the testimony of God. What an uncovering of the heart of God it is, here to see how He had anticipated man’s need of atonement, and also had treasured up proofs of *the* love that God essentially is. And this display of divinity in such purposes is *all for us*.

Has faith fed on this divine store? Remember, the grapes grew in the valley; giants lived on the hill top. Then eat the grapes where God provides them, *i.e.*, in lowliness and humility, not in pride of heart. What hast thou that thou didst not receive? And assuredly, if so eaten, they will give strength to mount the hill, and successfully fight any Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, who would debar us from possessing the full inheritance.

What an immoveable joy it is, in the midst of all that

changes here, to know that "Hebron" was built seven years before "Zoan." "The counsel of Jehovah standeth for ever" (Psalm xxxiii. 11). Man and his fickleness surround us, and we know not what a day may bring forth. "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless, the counsel of Jehovah, that shall stand" (Prov. 19-21). And God has written out His purposes in Christ towards us, and showed us how they were eternally settled before we, or the earth, existed. Nothing that can spring in time can touch or alter the full accomplishment of these, His eternal intentions. God's own law, which was 430 years after the covenanted promises, could not disannul them. Nor can anything of man and of the adversary together, interfere with the completion of all that our gracious God has prepared for them that love Him. "Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt." Rough waves and stormy winds will not shake the Hebron of our God. Zoan and Anakim alike must all give way, but Hebron becomes the possession of one who claimed it in faith, and was as strong, even for war, at 85 as at 40, the secret of whose strength is,—"If so be Jehovah be with me." Dauntless Caleb; that, and that alone, is your infinite ability!

What hearts are wearing his noble escutcheon to-day? "If so be Jehovah be with me." "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts."

It will be found that the most simply dependent soul is the one that most enjoys the grapes of Hebron.

Finally, as to Hebron; the city itself—not the suburbs—was given to the High priest for residence. This recalls Abram's altar, and revives the connection with worship that first belonged to Hebron. Presently, the failure of the priesthood brings in the kingdom, and David began to reign in Hebron. Royalty and worship are thus linked with the locality. It will not now be long before the Priest and King, with His joint-heirs, shall reign gloriously. Wise men scoff, intelligence scorns, when His speedy coming is referred to; but

“Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.”  
 “If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise.”  
 No jot or tittle of the counsels of blessing, figured in Hebron’s grapes, can possibly fail. Better far be a fool in the eyes of this world, than miss the revelation in glory with the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven.

Hebron? or Zoan? Which has your vote and interest now? That built by God from eternity, or man’s clever erection in time? The divine and immutable, or the human, handsome bubble? The unseen and eternal, or the seen and temporal?

## HEBRON,

and the blood of the Lamb, as chosen in Him, with grace in Christ Jesus and eternal life, and Wisdom unto our glory, which is shortly to be revealed.

OR

## ZOAN,

and princes of this world that come to nought; counsellors so blind that they reject God’s signs and wonders; Pharaoh and hosts so skilful, their own chariot wheels betray them, and all are drowned, for He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

May He who built Hebron show to His saints how the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins, *that He might deliver us out of this present evil world*, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. E. C. P.

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IT alters the character of Christianity to make it a system of commandments. “Give me an express text,” says one, “and I will bow to it.” Now, this is an unholy and bad principle. If a child knew the will of its father, and yet demanded some express command before it would obey, that would be a bad child. This is a very common evil of the day, to require a specific command. If I have the Holy Spirit, I must do what I know to be the mind of God—of course checked by the written word—but wherever I have the knowledge of God’s mind, it is binding on me.—*Fragment.*

## "CONTINUALLY."

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"I WAS daily His delight" (Prov. viii. 30.), tells us of Jehovah's thoughts of Him who, in 1 Cor. i., is called the Wisdom of God; and "My delights were with the sons of men" (verse 31), reminds us of His love, which the apostle Paul tells us "passeth knowledge."

And these wondrous and precious truths existing, as they did, from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was, we see in a fresh light, as it were, and in increased blessedness, in that scene of surpassing moral beauty given us in Matt. iii. 16, 17, when the Son of His love takes His place in lowly grace in Jordan to be baptized of John, and the Father's voice is heard from heaven, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I have found My delight."

What joy it affords the heart to read such words as these. No wonder the angels, "a multitude of the heavenly host," raised that note of praise on that memorable morning, when "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," and that motive bond of love between the Father and the Son was announced on earth,—“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure (or delight) in men!”

Wonderful, indeed, the grace expressed in those simple and yet soul-stirring words, "The Father sent the Son;" and wonderful too, beyond all human thought, the grace that led "the Only-begotten of the Father" to tabernacle among men, knowing as He did what was in man, and all that it would cost Him to redeem men, and all the bitterness of that pathway from the manger to the cross,—that path uncheered by earthly smiles, that led only to the cross.

"O love beyond all measure,  
Wherewith Thou didst embrace  
The victims of the pressure  
Of sin and its disgrace."

But, between these wondrous counsels before the world was, and the eternal foundation of their ultimate

fulfilment accomplished in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension to the right hand of God of the Son of His love, God has been pleased in His grace to us, and surely we may say, in the delight of His own heart, to portray, in type and shadow, in the sanctuary where He would dwell among His redeemed people (Exod. xxv. 8), the beauties and perfections of His beloved Son, in His life, death, and His atoning work.

On the golden table, before Jehovah, were the twelve loaves with pure frankincense on each row for a memorial before Him *continually* (Ex. xxv. 30; Lev. xxiv. 8). Every morning and every evening a lamb was offered on the brazen altar, with the accompanying meat offering, the tenth-deal of fine flour mingled with oil, a *continued* burnt offering before the Lord (Ex. xxix. 42). Every morning when Aaron dressed the lamps, and every evening when he lighted them, did he by the command of the Lord burn sweet incense on the golden altar, a perpetual (continual) incense before the Lord (Ex. xxx. 8).

All this surely spoke of what He was in whom the Father was well pleased, His perfect, spotless humanity—conceived of the Holy Ghost—all the infinite preciousness of the details of His life down here; the merits of Christ typified by the incense “beaten very small,” put before “the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee” (Ex. xxx. 36); and His devotedness unto death for the glory of the Father, continually before God.

And not only this, but on the shoulders and on the heart of the High priest, on the precious stones in the breast-plate of judgment, were the names of the children of Israel—not in order according to merit, but according to their birth—before the Lord *continually* (Ex. xxviii. 29, 30); as well as the golden mitre on the lace of blue on his forehead, always (continually), “that they may be accepted before the Lord” (ver. 38); telling us how the objects of His love and ceaseless care were sustained and upheld by Him in the presence of God.

“In service unremitting,  
Within the veil He doth prevail,  
Each soul for worship fitting.”

It needs but the prayerful meditation of these blessed truths, pondering them in the heart, to call forth “the sacrifice of praise to God *continually*; that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.” W. R. H.

R.

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## “I'M NEARING HOME!”

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*Alive and remaining until He comes.*

BRIGHT Morning Star, beloved Lord,  
How blest the promise of Thy word;  
For in the Father's house on high  
There shine the mansions of the sky.

How “many” they! but richer grace  
Has there prepared for us “a place;”  
And Thou to fill that glorious home,  
Thyself for all Thy saints wilt come!

Our longing hearts with deep desire  
To that bright scene do oft aspire;  
But far more deeply do we long  
To view Thyself Thy saints among!

To see Thee in Thy home of light,  
When faith itself is lost in sight,  
And hear Thy loving, tender voice—  
This, this shall make our hearts rejoice!

Oh! come then, blessèd Lord, Oh! come,  
But wait for Thee, our glorious Lord;  
And with Thyself for ever rest,  
Who through Thyself art ever blest.

Already are our hearts above,  
We breathe God's atmosphere of love,  
But wait for Thee, our glorious Lord;  
O Saviour, come, fulfil Thy word.

We plead with an impassioned voice,  
“Lord Jesus, come:” can we rejoice  
In sunless day and wintry night,  
Who know Thyself our Sun, our Light?

Yet while the shadows chase the day,  
Bright Morning Star, Thy cheering ray  
Lights up the soul and fills the eye  
With all its lovely radiance!

And yet again it starts the word,  
“Lord Jesus, come,” our hearts' Adored;  
We wait, we watch, we long for Thee,  
Oh! crown our hearts' expectancy!

To view with rapture Thy blest face  
Shall find its title in Thy grace;  
To see Thee as Thou art above  
Shall be the glory-crown of love!

*Departing to be with Him which is far better.*

But if to tarry thus for Thee  
Be not Thy holy will for me,  
Oh! make me long to leave earth's scenes  
With whatsoever intervenes.

For much more bright, blest Lord, 'twill be  
To be in Paradise with Thee;  
Of ev'ry care and pain divest,  
In peaceful foretaste of Thy rest.

The gladness of that happy goal  
Shall then felicitate the soul,  
And glories soon to be our part  
Shall spread a landscape to the heart!

'Tis good to wait till Thou shalt come,  
But better far to wait at home;  
'Tis truly bless'd to serve Thee here,  
But better to be with Thee there.

I could not leave the earth too soon,  
If I but hear Thy word, “Well done;”  
Too soon I could not hence depart  
To rest my head upon Thy heart!

E'en here Thou sayest I am Thine,  
E'en here is “my Beloved” mine;  
Thy precious, perfect, tender love  
All other love is *far* above!

That perfect love has cast out fear,  
It fills the space which faith doth clear;  
And since that Thou art always nigh,  
No cause there is, “no need to sigh.”

Thyself, my precious Saviour, Lord,  
Hast given a soul-sustaining word;  
Thou lov'st Thy saints “*unto the end*,”  
Nor can'st forsake, but must befriend.

How shall I justify Thy ways,  
When on Thy peerless face I gaze?  
Yea, even now I'm bound to tell,  
My Saviour, Thou dost *all* things well!

Then sing I will this joyous strain,  
For well I know “to die is gain;”  
And should I wait till Thou shalt come,  
My song's the same, “*I'm nearing home!*”

## HIS PRECIOUS WAYS.

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IT has just struck me that we may continually observe all absence in the Lord to merely please His disciples. He never did that: nay, I am sure that He passed by many little opportunities of gratifying them, as we speak, or of introducing Himself to their favour. He did not seek to please, and yet He bound them deeply and intimately to Himself.

This was very blessed: and the same thing in any one is always a symptom of moral power.

“If we seek to please, we shall scarcely fail to please.” That is true, I doubt not; but nothing can be morally lower. It makes a fellow-creature supreme; and we deal with him as though his favour was life to us, which God’s is, but His only.

But to bind one in full confidence to us—to draw the heart—to have ourselves in the esteem and affection of others, without ever in one single instance having that as our object—this is morally great, for nothing can account for this, but that constant course of love which by necessity of its own virtue, tells others that their real interests, and prosperity, and blessing are in deed and in truth the purpose and desire of our hearts.

And this was the Lord. Nothing that He did told them that He sought to *please* them, but everything that He did told them that He sought to *bless* them.

And again I say—I believe that He passed by many little opportunities of gratifying them, or of introducing Himself to their favour. And yet He met them graciously and tenderly on many occasions which *we* might have resented. And both of these, the one as well as the other, came from those springs and sources of moral perfection which took their rise in Him. For if vanity had no part in Him, to put Him to an effort to please, malice had no part in Him to make Him quick to resent. He could not be flattered into graciousness, nor provoked into unkindness. Look at Luke xxii. 24-30. They had just betrayed nature, striving,

through pride, about the highest place. He corrects this; but He does not hold that object long before Him, but allows another to command His heart and His thoughts respecting them—"Yē are they which have continued with Me in My temptations."

Was that exactly the moment for remembering this fact? Was it just the time for looking at them so steadily in so favourable a light? No, not for *nature* to do so; but for Jesus it was just the time. And He is our example, that we should follow His steps, and partake of His mind. And after the pattern of this little occasion, we have to remember *that it is not the PRESENT act that has to decide our thoughts and hearts respecting each other*. It may have much of the vile-ness or working of nature in it, as this strife had, but it may be, as this strife was, the act of those in whom much of the preciousness of the Spirit dwells, and the precious should be remembered for the commanding of our thoughts *often*, even in the very presence of the vile.

Strange this may appear. Yes, and the ways of Divine unselfish love are strange. Here is our pilgrim part, and the part of a stranger in a scene of multiform selfishness like this. 'It may not be well to be always understood. Joseph spoke roughly to his brethren in a moment of their sorrow. But Joseph was not to be the servant of the present moment, but of their good. He was seeking to *bless* them, not to *please* them. Jesus told Thomas in a moment of repentance that there was a character of still higher blessing to which he did not belong. But Jesus was true to truth, true to us all, true to Thomas himself, when he might have been flattered into softness. Like Joseph, He was serving Thomas, and not the moment or occasion.

O the perfectness of it all! O the unspottedness of the path of His spirit within, as of His feet abroad! O the beauty of all which LOVE does or says! We shall understand it all by-and-by, and have pages opened to us which now we have no eyes to read. Through selfishness, we mistake the doings of love,

and expect gratifications when we find ourselves passed by; and are sent away with the material of some solid, lasting benefit, when we hoped for a mere present, pleasurable excitement.

O for more of that love that is "in deed and in truth," which EYES the solid good of others, and can sacrifice their favour towards ourselves to their own blessing.

J. G. B.

## SERVICE.

NOW, as to work for the Lord. The simple enquiry, and recorded as the first utterance of Paul to our Lord, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" is the duty and expression of everyone distinctly awakened to the claim Christ has on him. This enquiry cannot be too earnestly instituted, or the reply to it too rigidly attended to. The enquiry is the offspring of a soul sensible that the Lord has entire and full claim on him, without the knowledge which authorizes it. The soul feels, "I am taken out of the world and I am given to Christ, and hence I look to Him for my place and occupation *in future* in it." If we are given to Christ "out of the world," it is evident that it is He alone who has a right to determine our way and course *in the world*.

I could not say, if I believe that I am really given to Him "out of the world," that I have any right to *re-occupy* any place or engagement which I had previously held in the world. True, He does not require or permit me to infringe on any legal lord under whom I was held before I was given to Him, but, excepting where the rights of others would be compromised because of my being given to Christ, I am Christ's bondsman; and necessarily, if I am, both from duty and inclination my enquiry ought to be, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The more I own and realize the relationship which now exists through

grace between us, the more simply and continuously will this be my whole-hearted cry to Him.

Now, if it is, I shall of course accede to and attend to whatever He may intimate to me, and this only—that is, the heart true to Him, and devotedly making this request, will *wait* on Him for guidance and counsel, and would find no real satisfaction in being anywhere or doing anything which was not according to His mind. Our place and our occupation here would be only determined by the pleasure of Him whose we are and whom we serve, and any departure from the tie or rule of this relationship would sensibly interfere with the mutual satisfaction therein known; there would be a break in upon and a disturbance of the true order of life and the blessings connected with it. Nothing so simple, and nothing so important in our walk down here! I belong to Christ, and I find it my happiness and His pleasure to do nothing but as He desires and instructs me; *I live where He likes* and *I do what He likes*. If we did this, there would be no mistakes one side or the other.

But we *do* make mistakes on both sides,—on one side at one time, and on another side at another time. At one time we *plan out work* for ourselves, and at another we do none at all. Now, the first is the most difficult to deal with, simply because the counterfeit deceives one; and hence, while it is comparatively easy to convict the idle and slothful, it is not easy to convince the Martha that she is unwisely occupied. The work seems so right and necessary, that it appears almost impossible that there could be any plan in it. Nothing so deceives or leads astray as the conscience working at a distance from Christ. For instance, if I feel in my conscience that I ought to be Christ's servant (true enough, I am His bondsman), but if I am not near Him, if I am not in His confidence, and I begin to do something to satisfy my conscience, there is no doubt I am doing it legally, and not simply unto Him; it is to make *myself* easy and satisfied. When

this is the case, I do not consult what He would like me to do, but I do what *I* think best to be done. It is not His pleasure guides me, it is my own mind as to what is suitable and proper. It may be quite necessary, as Martha's service was; but Martha was thinking of the services which were incumbent on her to render, and was not governed by the pleasure of Christ.

Here it is where we so often fail; undertaking to serve where it is in a degree creditable to ourselves, or incumbent on us. We say we *ought* to do this, and forthwith we undertake it, and we get disappointed (if we are true-hearted), because we have not the acknowledgment of His pleasure. How can He acknowledge what we have undertaken and done to satisfy our own conscience, and to please ourselves therein? It is evident that when I am occupied with services, however useful and necessary, which I have undertaken of myself, feeling they devolved upon me, that I must lose the sense of His presence. Sitting at His feet, Mary-like, is lost and neglected. There is no growth of soul in Christ—self is in the service from beginning to end.

It is most blessed to work for Christ—it is fruit-bearing; but if my work engrosses me more than Christ, then it is a damage to me, and I am not working for Him. "Without Me ye can do nothing." If I am really working for Christ, I am getting from Christ and growing up unto Him. Sitting at His feet is the natural posture of my soul. Whenever you find anyone serving without sitting at His feet, you may be assured they are Martha-like. When any are sitting at His feet, hearing His word, they will not be behind in true and pleasing service.

If you begin with serving (as many do now-a-days), you will never sit at His feet; whereas, if you begin with sitting, you will soon serve, wisely, well, and acceptably. The serving quiets the conscience, and the sitting is overlooked and neglected. The enemy gains an advantage; for it is at the sitting the con-

science is more enlightened, and the pleasure and mind of the Master are better known; and hence there is damage done, and loss sustained by the soul, when service pre-occupies one to the exclusion of sitting at His feet, or where it is *most* prominent.

I never met with anyone making service prominent who knew what it was to sit at His feet, but, thank God, I know indefatigable workers who enjoy sitting at His feet above any service; and it is clear that they who sit most at His feet must be most competent to serve and most in His confidence, which, after all, is the clue to all efficient service.

J. N. D.

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AN EXTRACT.—*Psalm cx.*

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JESUS was David's Son because He was God Incarnate. To sit on God's right hand was in connection with that human nature He assumed, because in that nature He was Lord and God; and so David gave to the Christ a title which as man did not belong to Him, and he prophesied of Him what did not belong to man. His words, like those of Daniel, ascribe to the Messiah a nearness to God which has never been said of any created being. They foretell that fact, which our Lord predicted of Himself (Matt. xxvi. 64; Mark xiv. 62; Luke xxii. 69), which has ever been believed by all who ever believed on Jesus—that Jesus is as no other is or can be, in that special nearness of glory which is called the right hand of God. Of Him alone it is said, "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee" (Psalm ii.). Others have been and are adopted sons; He alone is a Son by nature. Of Him alone is the word used which expresses the special relation of nature. Of others whom God *made* His sons He said, "I will be his Father, and he shall be My son" (1 Chron. xvii. 13). To Him alone who is Son by nature, He saith, "This day have I begotten Thee."

## LETTERS OF INTEREST.

## NO CROSS, NO CROWN.

My dear Sister,—I was glad to get a little word from you, and trust your care of your dear sister may have its blessing and its answer in her full restoration to you.

It must be a great comfort to you to render your help in this day of her need. I am thinking of taking my dear child to England next week, and we may be from home about two months. But we cannot tell;—“our times are in *Thy* hand,” may we say with all ready subjection of heart; and yet it is not *easy*, if the will and the purpose be crossed. But it is *good*. The exercise of the spirit in the school of God is good. Faith *approves* where nature *resents*.

I have been seeing the “conquerors” in the Apocalypse; *all* are conquerors there, and their victories lead to the kingdom. As on the journey they were *overcoming*, so at the end they sit on *thrones*. In all the churches you see the saints as conquerors (ch. ii, iii). Another company are looked at in the same character in ch. xii. 11; and, again, another company in xv. 2. Jesus Himself recognizes His own conqueror-character (ch. iii. 21.) And so, the inheritor of all things for ever is the same (ch. xxi. 7.)

“No cross, no crown,” as the word is; no victory, no throne, is the impression left on the soul by this apprehension of the book of the Apocalypse.

But then, dear sister, the path we travel to the *Father's house* is not the same. We *believe*; and as trusting in Jesus, as receiving the good word of grace, as receiving the Son, as believing the message from the Father's bosom to us, we reach the Father's house. John's gospel shows us this. As *believers* we reach the *house*, as *conquerors* we reach the *throne*.

All is beautiful in its place and in its season; and the Spirit of God, in Scripture, distinguishes these things

for us, that we may be *comforted* and yet *kept watchful and vigorous*.

Look at Ps. xxiii., and then at Ps. xxiv. The one conducts the soul, by a sweet, gracious, path, to "the *house* of the Lord;" the other by a stronger, more vigorous journey, as it were, to "the *hill* of the Lord," or place of government.

But, dear sister, I can only point out such things. How little, would I own, do I know of the vigour of conflict, or the blessedness of conquest.

The Lord bless you. My love in Him to dear ———. Accept our cordial, united love; and be sure a visit to Dublin from you would always be grateful to us.

The Lord direct and keep you; and believe me, ever your affectionate brother,

2, *Pembroke St., Dublin, Aug. 13.*

J. G. B.

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#### THE LORD'S SUPPER.

We sat down, five of us, at the breaking of bread, here in the school-room, yesterday. We felt the occasion good and healthful. I desired to encourage them to hold on by the Lord's supper as the proper object for the Lord's day, though naturally, under the circumstances of such a place as this, one may be tempted to give it up for the preaching of the gospel. I read, therefore, Luke xxii. 7-20. I sought to teach them that in that Scripture, the passover of the Jews and the supper of the Lord were exhibited successively,—but that the latter had now and for ever displaced the former, the former being but a foreshadowing of the great Sacrifice that was to put away sin, and sins; the latter being the *celebration* of the accomplished fact. I then read part of 1 Cor. xi., to shew that the Lord's supper was set as an abiding institution in the house of God till the Lord Jesus come again; that as the Lord Himself, in Luke xxii., had displaced the passover by the supper, the Holy Ghost now, in the Apostle, would not displace it, but make the supper

a set and abiding thing all through this age of the Lord's absence. I then concluded with this, that we are not to allow anything now to displace the supper. It has displaced the passover, but it will not allow itself to be displaced by anything. It is the proper service of the house of God. The Lord's supper is the thing for the Lord's day; and if we abandon the supper for a sermon, or for a large congregation, with its singing, and its other activities and attractions, we have apostatized so far—deserted the house of God in its divinely appointed order and service. And what sermon should be so sweet to us as the service of that ordinance, which tells so clearly and so loudly, with such a rich harmony of sounds, of the forgiveness of sins, and of acceptance of our persons, and of our waiting for the Lord in His coming glory? Oh! be alive to it, dear brother! But I need not say this *to you*; only, being here, and having this for my theme yesterday, I have taken it upon my pen this morning in writing to you. The Lord be with your spirit and guide your steps.—Ever yours, &c., J. G. B.

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 HEBREWS.

R——, 1860.

IT is a good thing to be exercised before God in the practical knowledge of good and evil. We must come to know it, and to know that all the good is in Christ and all the evil in ourselves. And when we judge the evil in His presence, we are separated from it, and thus it is that we are made partakers of His holiness. It is this exercise, night and day, in self judgment, that gives truth and depth to the divine life in us. Christ strikes His roots deeper and deeper in us,—or, perhaps better, the new man strikes its roots deeper and deeper in Christ, and finds its nourishment and fresh springs only in Him.

*We have the evil*; not, indeed, as that in which we are before God, but as that which is in us. *Dead* to it, indeed, if we are in His presence in Christ, but always

is it ready to start into life in ever such insidious ways! Hence the need of constant watchfulness, that we may detect with God what is of flesh and judge it with Him, and in the sweet confidence of His love and approval and help; and that so it may not live or appear in us, or before men, but *Christ only* be seen.

I was much struck with the last verse of Hebrews v., where it says that solid food (*i.e.*, the full unfolding of Christ) belongs to those who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern *good and evil*—not truth and error—but good and evil in the daily path of godliness, so that *that* is the true door of entrance into the glories of Christ (compare 2 Peter i. 1-8). A. wishes me to add a line on the 12th of Hebrews, of which I was speaking, and where a little more accuracy in rendering will give the force. The “also” in the 1st verse ought to be connected with the “running:” “Seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let US *also* run with patience the race that is set before us;” that is, let US run as did the great cloud of witnesses in chapter xi., in the power of this precious principle of faith. “Witnesses” do not mean spectators, but “attestators,”—those who bear witness,—and what they bore, or bear witness to, is the preciousness of faith, which, in the realization of things unseen, enables its possessors to walk away from all the motives that govern flesh, in the power of a life which is fed by communion with God (xi. 6). The Hebrews were beginning to decline from this, and so in the rest of the chapter he first puts Jesus—who Himself ran this race, and on this principle—before them, and then opens up the whole vista of glory to which “we have come,” explaining between, how God uses all trials and difficulties of the path as so many occasions of exercising the heart, that it may detect flesh,—for temptation brings it out,—and then judge it, and so be with Him in holiness and joy.

The Lord give us both, and all, to be more set on present conformity to Christ, through surpassing joy in what He is; then these exercises will not discourage, but rather fill with thanksgiving, and root deeper in grace, and waft us with wind and tide to our desired haven.

J. R.

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A WORD FOR TO-DAY.

I tried to rally them like an old general, by assuring them, whether they knew it or not, that the young men of to-day have a finer opportunity than ever, for the *last* bright confession of Christ before all is over and at an end, if they were only up to the occasion; and that to give in *now* (that motives for waxing stronger and stronger are more powerful from the fact of the Lord's "coming, and our gathering together to Him" being so near the horizon of faith and hope) must be unusual baseness? Was He not worth as much to the soul *now*, as when they first knew Him? Has He paled and gone down before the heart, through any *over* estimate of His value?

It is but poor encouragement to any who are laboring in the Gospel, to find that a "first love" or that young life, when once brought into activity towards God, through Christ, in the Church, begins to beat slower and feebler in all that marks and constitutes the "testimony of our Lord,"—when each should be steadier, and fuller, and stronger on His behalf, in a truer confession of the Christ "who loved us, and gave Himself for us."

May God give to all, and especially the young men, to learn the worthlessness of "all that is in the world,"—*not* by being ensnared and overcome by it, but in maintaining the secret of our strength for Christ, in true Nazarite separation. Pity that our Sampsons should have their eyes put out, and be so reduced as to make sport for the Philistines! They are worth far more than this, if they will only learn the value that attaches to them, by redemption on the

Cross, or in the heavens above, by resurrection, life, and glory !

These young brethren are very much on my heart, especially those living in the metropolis, where they are surrounded by all the clap-trap of popular writers and sensational speakers,—to say nothing of what each carries in his own breast. They are as unpractised in the ways of the devil, and the flesh too, as the poor moth which falls at last into the very flame round which it sported awhile, as though the fire had no power to hurt or destroy.

Besides the great big world, there are the respective schools of Kingsley for "muscular Christianity," and the more refined subtleties of Maurice, where "human intelligence" is marked up high ! In these days, the three things which are so much in the ascendant, viz., the mind, the heart, and the human will, must needs be brought to the Cross—the true testing-place of what man is—to be there exposed in their dreadful outbreak towards God in the rejection and crucifixion of Christ. But such preaching and teaching as this goes all against the grain !

Here is the question which divides all Christendom—will it be for Christ or for Antichrist ? All is staked upon this issue.

The Lord help us to make this simple and plain for those who are younger than we are ; do think of them, and say a word to any—it will be in season, I am very sure. Tell them of Jonathan, whose soul was knit to God's anointed, and who could read his proper place as *second to David* in the kingdom, but who missed it, because he would not break away from the *failing* though established order of things in that day, and was *second with Saul*, alas ! when he fell on Mount Gilboa, under the swords of the Philistines.

What a double word of warning for the present dispensation. Let us take heed each for himself ; "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

J. E. B.

## THE OPPOSITION OF AMALEK.

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THE journey of Israel out of Egypt till they reach the mount of God, in Exodus xviii., is finely marked. They sing the song of redemption in ch. xv. They soon begin to be exercised. They are disappointed in the circumstances of the wilderness into the which they have come, and they murmur. The God of grace, the God of their fathers, is with them, to correct them and to rebuke, but still to lead them on ; He is grieved, but He does not desert them. The glory is disturbed in its cloudy resting-place, but still guides and accompanies them, and bread and water are supplied—the bread of heaven and the water of the rock.

But just before they reach Horeb, the mount of God, Amalek comes forth. He withstands their progress, and in doing so he offers an affront to the majesty of Jehovah, for the tokens of Jehovah's presence were at that wondrous moment with the camp. The cloud was over them ; the mystic river flowing from the mystic rock was following them ; but in the very face of such magnificent tokens of the divine presence as these, Amalek dares to come forth and withstand Israel !

This was infidel, anti-Christian boldness indeed. Pharaoh in Egypt had been obstinate, refusing the divine blessing again and again, and hardening his heart under one plague after another. But Amalek affronts the majesty of the Lord in infidel, daring pride. However, he is set aside, and the next stage takes the camp to the mount of God, or the place of the kingdom (in principle), where the two families meet, the Gentile Zipporah and her sons, and the ransomed tribes.

Is not this a parable as well as a history, and has it not a voice in our ears ?

J. G. B.

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If the heart is full of Christ, evil looks like evil, but if not, it looks like pleasure.—J. N. D.

## THE RETURNING ONE.

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Oh! come, Lord Jesus, come; we wait and look for Thee,  
 We long Thy beauty to behold, Thy face to see;  
 And oh! what joy divine, to hear Thy voice resound,  
 That calls us up to be with Thee, where joys abound.

Then to Thy likeness changed, perfection we attain—  
 For we shall like Thee be when Thou shalt come again;  
 This hope, exceeding bright, doth cheer us on the way;  
 Oh! may it be our souls' delight, from day to day.

To share Thy glory, Lord; to worship at Thy feet,  
 And sing the riches of that grace, which made us meet  
 To be with Thee for aye, Thy beauties then to see,  
 And magnify the wondrous work, that set us free.

Thy word now guides our feet, along the pilgrim way;  
 Thus walking closely by Thy side, we shall not stray;  
 What joy for evermore, Thy triumphs to proclaim,  
 In blessing, glory, honour, praise, to Thy blest name!

J. R.

A.

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“GROANINGS WHICH CANNOT BE UTTERED.”—“A true groan to *God*, however deep the misery, however prostrate the spirit, however unconscious that we are heard, is always received above as the intercession of the Spirit, and answered according to the perfectness of God's purpose concerning us in Christ. Therefore the charge is, “Ye have not cried *unto Me*, when ye have howled upon your beds:” and there is no consequence of sin which is beyond the reach of this groaning to God, nothing indeed but the self-will which will not groan to Him at all. This is a blessed thought! such is our intercourse with God in joy and in sorrow; and I doubt not that in us poor, but blessed creatures, the truest, the most blessed (what will shine most when all things shine before God) are these groans to Him.”  
 —J. N. D.

“BE STRONG AND OF A GOOD COURAGE.”—“The most difficult path, that which leads to the sharpest conflict, is but the road to victory and repose, causing us to increase in the knowledge of God. It is the road in which we are in communion with God, with Him who is the source of all joy; it is the earnest and the foretaste of eternal and infinite happiness. The shoals that are met with in our Christian voyage may perhaps be safely crossed at high tide; but at low tide skilful pilotage is needed to avoid them, and to float always in the full current of the grace of God in the channel it has made for itself. But there is a sure and stedfast Pilot; and we are safe if we are content to follow Him. God has given us what we need for this. Perhaps we must be satisfied with *a very little boat*: the unerring Pilot will be in it.”—J. N. D.

“SCRIPTURE never speaks of Christ as the *new Man*. It was, of course, a new thing for Christ to enter this world in human form, in the likeness of sinful flesh, in the body that God had prepared Him, to take upon Him the form of a servant, to add humanity to His own divine nature, &c. If the humanity thus taken up had been that of Adam in innocency, there was nothing new there. God created Adam in His own image and likeness, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. All came direct from God. Adam was of the earth, earthy; the Second Man was from heaven—but *He* who thus came in flesh was Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the Father. In Him God was manifested in flesh—a new manifestation of One who was from all eternity, ‘the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.’ New, positionally, as Son of Man, but unchanged in Himself. ‘What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up *where He was BEFORE?*’ ‘Before Abraham was, I AM.’ He came as the Revealer of the invisible God, whom no man had seen or could see. If it be said that Christ became the New Man in resurrection, where and what was He previous to the cross?”—*Extract.*

## PURE WORDS AND SURE TESTIMONIES.

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“The words of the Lord are pure words.” “Thy testimonies are very sure.”—*Psalms* xii. 6; xciii. 5.

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IT was through the activity of faith amongst saints of old attaching itself to CHRIST, not to man, that the canon of Scripture was formed. We have but to instance the speculations so rife in our own day upon the Gospel of John to show how, whilst doubts as to certain books of Scripture, or parts of such, may pass for honest and sincere, there are whole books whose testimony shines with a brilliancy that lays bare the thoughts and intents of the heart, so that we scarcely stop to inquire *why* any persons living in an ostensibly Christian atmosphere endeavour to deprive them of that reverence which is their due.

John's gospel, for example, assigns to God, to Christ and to man their true respective place: God in His holy majesty, who will by no means clear the guilty, yet revealed in love, and that to the world in its alienation from Himself; Christ as Son of God, the one channel of grace and truth, who has revealed the Father; man sunk in darkness as the result of sin, helpless in his misery, though his pride conceal it. True it is that the Spirit must work, to open the eyes of the blind (*John* ix. 39-41); nevertheless, history has its voice. God has not allowed the deep—we feel sure, oft painful—exercise in early days as to what was Holy Scripture, without intending a lesson from it to ourselves; He will not suffer His word to be made light of, having magnified it above all His Name (*Ps.* cxxxviii. 2).

It may be that, in promulgating the truths enshrined in the common English Bible, we meet with sceptics who turn their ear away, esteeming themselves more “sagacious,” more “critical,” than those through whom we have received the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures (compare *John* xvii. 20 with *2 Tim.* ii. 2). Again, we

may have to deal with Papists, who allege that ours is an incomplete Bible, that no interpretation on the Protestant side deserves confidence, because we do not acknowledge some books considered by them to form an integral part of divine truth. In either case, we may urge not merely the facts upon which, historically, the Protestant Bible rests, but the grounds of those facts. If such avow that conviction forbids their taking the same view that we do of the past, because they are at issue with the judgment of early Christians (upon which for other matters they will insist), or are unwilling to depart from an "infallible authority" of the sixteenth or of the nineteenth century, our duty is to cast them back upon those "innermost parts" upon which GOD can effectually operate when His human instruments fail (Prov. xviii. 8): there we must leave them. Or we may reverse the process; because it is not for us to say where intellect ends and conscience begins, if so be that man is left without excuse. Let us trust that they may be comparatively few whose destiny shall be that of "whosoever loveth and maketh a lie;" let us say, with Richard Baxter, "O the wisdom and goodness of our blessed Lord! He hath created the understanding with a natural bias and inclination to truth as its object, and to the prime truth as its prime object."

Souls that have heartily believed in the testimonies of Scripture, and with mature understanding have taken the written word (Ps. cxix. 3) as their sole guide, need not the significant warnings of the better sort of the world's sages to steer their course through the maze of the nineteenth century. One apostle, of whom Rome makes much account, bids believers desire the "sincere milk of the word" (1 Peter ii. 2), bestowing withal a special admonition upon leaders, who should administer "strong meat" (compare Hebrews v. 12), besides imparting instruction to all in respect of their bearing towards one another (1 Peter v. 5): these injunctions have been equally despised. Another

apostle has commended such leaders to God and the word of His grace (Acts xx. 32), not to the bondage of any human system. A third "pillar" has written thus: "He that knoweth God knoweth us; he that is not of God knoweth not us. Hereby we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (1 John iv. 6). Is, reader, the blood upon your ear? (Lev. viii. 24)? Are you mindful of and heeding alone "apostles' doctrine" (Acts ii. 42)? Ask yourself this in the light of whatever religious teaching gains your attention.

Moreover, it behoves us not to neglect the warning that apostles of our Lord and Saviour have administered against "the oppositions of science falsely so called" (1 Tim. vi. 20). Those conversant with "scientific" or "higher" criticism, German, Dutch, or English, can speak as to its soul-corrupting pretensions, which have no better support than conjectures, and should possess as little value for one's soul as any form of tradition. Some Christians, finding themselves in this other atmosphere, need reassuring as to the solid foundations upon which their souls rest. Many are the false prophets that have gone forth into the world, but "they are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them" (1 John i. 5). Whom shall we trust as intellectual leaders? Those that are concerned for the glory of Christ? or those that make light of His claims, while, in many cases, positively professing to submit to His sway over heart and mind (2 Cor. x. 5)? Be assured that on the personal glory of the Saviour all must depend, and that in the measure in which our guides in the things of God do honour to the Son must be the degree of our confidence in them. We live in a day when MAN, in the Church or out of it, is exalted, to the necessary, though perhaps unconscious, lowering of our estimate of Him, whether in regard of blessing or responsibility. What think ye of Christ? Let not your soul, reader, be diverted into any such enquiry as, What think ye of His Church, His Body, of which

you are a member? That would be taking hold of the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, at the wrong *end*. We speak not now of its double edge.

What do you conceive to be the course you should adopt when reading God's Word, and having recourse to it at times of exercise of doubt and difficulty, if your heart and mind is to be guarded by it (Phil. iv. 7)? According to 2 Tim. iii. 16 (compare Gal. iii. 8), inspiration attaches to the writing itself, to "all Scripture." Moreover, it is never really a question of the degree of inspiration. Some Christians of repute have been willing to believe that portions of Scripture, even whole books, were the fruit of merely "religious inspiration." The so-called *Hagiographa* (holy writing) of the Old Testament, including the Psalms, have by them been treated as products of such modified direction by the Spirit. But it is certain, from authoritative citations in the New Testament, that the Davidic Psalms have a prophetic character: see in particular Acts i. 16, ii. 25-31. We the rather remark upon this because some, already assured that Scripture is invested with a divine and not merely ecclesiastical authority, are at times exercised as to the character of such inspiration. Is it "plenary," or is inspiration alone that of the *matter*? Early ecclesiastical writers contented themselves with recognising the voice of the Holy Spirit in Scripture, and, influenced by later Jewish sentiment, distinguished between positive and religious inspiration in respect of details. Their example has been followed by both leading Roman Catholic writers and many Protestants, such as Grotius, who, it is to be acknowledged, was a true lover of Scripture. Indeed, it was not until the seventeenth century that there was any adequate sense of what the Bible itself means by inspiration. From Germany came what is called "the theory of *verbal* inspiration." And yet Paul teaches nothing else (1 Cor. ii. 13)! The common sentiment of theological circles at the present day regards the inspira-

tion of Scripture as extending only to the doctrine, heedless of the plain statement of that apostle. It is but one step in advance of those who discard the doctrine, and adhere alone to the morality of Christianity. Belief in verbal inspiration appears also to be now almost confined to English-speaking Protestants, and to a minority of such. Sad it is to see how divine communications are thus minimised, souls being gradually detached from GOD by those concerned to maintain His truth against every subtle attack of the enemy. Let us take warning from 2 Peter iii. 16. While 2 Tim. ii. 15 relates to the "Word" in its wider aspect, the passage in Peter speaks of its several parts. The authority of the written Word must lie in the language with which its precepts are enforced, and this cannot be separated from its supremacy.

We would here warn the reader against a widespread and, in its various forms, leavening idea that what is of capital importance is not Scripture, but Truth. So says the Romanist, so the Rationalist, so too some who highly prize "recovered" truth. The Romanist, for example, says not so much that he has Scripture no less than the Protestant, but that he has "the truth." In whatever form this insidious notion appears, it is a perversion of such Scriptures as John xvii. 17, which do not speak of religious, but of positive and direct inspiration: that is, not of religious inspiration, or the teaching of men respectively authorised, learned, or gifted, which is more or less professedly based, whatever its developments, upon Scripture, but of the inspired statements themselves, which to comparison of spiritual things with spiritual yield the only sure and safe interpretation. May the Word in all its range, and not this or that "word" of ministry, govern as well the expression as the formation of our reader's spiritual sentiment! All sound doctrine is derivable from apostolic language (2 Tim. i. 13); at the same time, neglect not that solemn warning, "The *letter* killeth, the Spirit giveth life," referring to new dispen-

sational light upon those divine communications made to God's ancient people, which for long constituted the BIBLE of the apostolic age (2 Cor. iii. 6; compare Rom. vii. 6). If, however, precision be attainable apart from the words of Scripture, texts specially related to one another cannot, when collected, speak with a sure voice, nor even indicate by their general tenor what is "the mind of Christ." It is, of course, granted that a pure recension of the original is always necessary, because that alone is inspired, but Scripture in its common shape, as experience has ever shewn, does supply a positive or approximate form of sound words, whatever the doctrine to which we would give expression, if we do but know how rightly to divide the Word, and not confine ourselves to solitary contexts (compare 2 Peter i. 20).

We have further to consider the position in which study of Scripture in the vulgar tongue places Christians acquainted with it alone. "Must not all these depend upon the honesty and faithfulness of the interpreters?" asks an English controversialist of the seventeenth century. Now, it so happens that the difficulty here made was—quite unintentionally—removed by the very same writer. "I have known," he says, "some faithful servants of the Most High God not only ignorant of the Greek and Hebrew, but even some of them could not read their own vulgar language, who, being pressed by their adversaries with some citations out of the English translation (of 1611), have boldly affirmed the Spirit of God never said so, and that it was certainly wrong; which when I on this account seriously examined, I really found to be errors and corruptions of the translators." The grace of God meets the deficiency and requirements of all His people. The reader will observe that the cases alluded to actually carry us behind the condition of culture in our own day, so as more than to answer the above enquiry. From this has many times sprung an objection urged by those

making it their business either to detract from Scripture, or to treat it as secondary to what is traditional or oral ministry. But the more enlightened of the rank and file in the Church of Rome, in English-speaking communities, are well aware not only that the Vulgate, which their chiefs have been pleased to clothe with the character of inspiration, is only a translation, but also that our "Authorised Version," if they are fairly acquainted with it, conforms in the main to the sense impressed upon the Hebrew and Greek by the Latin Bible. Of Rationalism we need not further speak: it is but the counterpart of Romanism in its denial of truth to the mass.

But will it be said, by friends or foes, that the Authorised Version is the *Church of England* Bible? Thankful are we for the services of divines such as Andrews, Overall, and Barlow, or Parker and Cranmer who preceded them, but these men were only contributors to that which is a truly *catholic* work, one that connects our own era with the apostolic age. Where else, indeed, could we find such a happy blending of strict translation with aids to interpretation, breathing the best sentiment of the Church of God which are embedded in, or suggested by, the text of every page?

Finally, does Scripture, when correctly translated from a pure text, still require the strict interpretation of the *Church*, before the ordinary reader can rightly avail himself of its treasures? It is most surely the duty of the workman, if not the ordinary reader, "rightly to divide the word of truth" (2 Tim. ii. 15). The Lord has bestowed gifts for edification: let us not despise them. But it is not men who cast a veil over the written Word, or postpone it to their oral teaching, that can help us. Our God employs His own chosen instruments, to whom capacity is imparted of unfolding these oracles. Within a recent period the Scriptural idea of *ministry* has been revived amongst Christians of this and other lands, accompanied by an increase of

intelligence as to truth in all its scope. The common organizations of Christendom may seek to repress it, religious leaders may allow it no place in their thoughts, but the Spirit of God is ever present to sustain those who cleave to His word. That most of those who, Catholic or Protestant, pretend to be invested with apostolic authority are unable to appreciate divine, as distinct from what we must call ecclesiastical ministry, should occasion no surprise. But let us keep that ministry in its right place.

May we value the Bible aright, so as to use and profit by every part of it, and become always more independent of the sophistry at work on every hand. The testimonies of God are assured to us in Canonical Scripture, which is the whole truth, and nothing else. We live in a day of something more than declension, when men are giving up that which is Divine and allows the carnal mind no recognition, yielding to their fancy, ever bad and beyond control. Let us cherish and echo, day by day, these Scriptures of the psalmist: "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things." "THY *testimonies* are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them. The opening [R. V.] of THY *words* giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (cxix. 18, 129, 130). E. E. W.

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"Trust in the Lord, who is above all, to whom nothing is unknown, whom nothing escapes, whose faithfulness is unchangeable, without whom not a sparrow falls to the ground, Who, after all, orders everything, whatever man's plans are, Who is our Father. Trust in Him is the resource and peace-giving feeling of the righteous. This, in its nature, gives a perfect walk and calmness at all times; because circumstances do not govern the feelings, and the soul has no motive to lead it but the will of God, and can have boldness to do it when called on, through confidence in Him."—J. N. D.

## THE LORD'S RESURRECTION DAY.

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"THEN were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord" (John xx. 20). Thus the words of the Master were fulfilled, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you" (John xvi. 22).

"I will see you again." How this spoke of the desire of His heart. Of course, when that should be accomplished, they would, as they did, see Him. The effect of seeing Him, one who was present, John the apostle, has put on record. But His words intimated His purpose to see them. What grace on His part. Risen to die no more, His life of humiliation for ever terminated, beyond the reach of human power; all suffering, reproach, and ignominy behind; no more to be seen by the world till He comes in a cloud with power and great glory; He would not, however, dissociate Himself from His people upon earth.

Familiar though we are with the history of that resurrection day, as given us in the gospel narrative, most of us will be sensible of the feeble apprehension we have of the greatness of the grace then and thus displayed; that risen from the dead, no longer to make earth His place of sojourn, He should yet be found in the company of men and women who had conversed with Him, and had eaten and drunk with Him, whilst He tabernacled amongst them before His crucifixion. Great, indeed, was the grace on His part to tabernacle here as the Word made flesh. During that time, however, people would seek Him out, and join His company wherever He might be. Now it was different, for He was no longer a man on this side of death, and whose place of sojourn, as a man, was naturally upon earth. None now could know where to find Him. If, then, He and they were to be together in any place, He must come to them. All depended, then, on His willingness to be in their

company. His willingness! Yes. But what gracious condescension on His part, ministering thereby joy to the hearts of His sorrowing disciples, whilst, surely we may say it, rejoicing Himself to be with them again.

How this was brought about the different evangelists have told us. His resurrection morning had dawned on earth. The tomb, in which His body had been laid, was found by the women, who visited it early that day, bereft of its occupant. The clothes were all there in which the body had been enwrapped by the loving care of Joseph and Nicodemus, and the napkin that was about His head was wrapped together in a place by itself. No trace of haste, or of disorder, could be discovered, as if the tomb had been rifled of its contents. But the body was not there. Peter and John, who had come with haste at the announcement of Mary Magdalene, had entered the tomb, and had returned to their own home; but Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping, for she knew not that He who was to annul death, and him that had the power of it, was alive again to die no more.

She had stood by the cross, and had witnessed His death (John xix. 25); she had watched His entombment effected by the two counsellors, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus (Mark xv. 47); she had visited the tomb in the evening, when the Sabbath was past (Matt. xxviii. 1). On each of these occasions, Mary the mother of Joses was with her. On the resurrection morning, it would seem, she went by herself to the sepulchre very early, while it was yet dark. Returning to it after running for Peter and John, she remained there alone, and wept. "And as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre." Alone, as she had doubtless thought herself, she found she was not alone, and learnt that the spot which had such an attraction for her, that she could not leave it till she learnt where the body had been laid, had an interest for others besides the disciples. For heavenly beings, two angels, were there; not stooping down to

look into the tomb, as she was, but actually in it, and sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

Accosting her with the words, "Woman, why weepest thou?" it was manifest that they took note of her sorrow; not as sharing it with her, but as desirous to draw her out. Her ready answer told them the cause of it. She wanted the body of the One she had loved. With that question, which drew forth her answer, they had done their work. They said nothing more, much though they could have said, aware surely of the Lord's presence, who stood behind His weeping disciple. They knew, what she did not, that He was risen. In His presence, however, it was not, it would seem, for them to declare it. He would do that, and so minister to her, the weeping one, joy of which none should ever deprive her. So He now spoke to her, when she had turned herself back, and had seen Him standing, and said, "Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him, Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away" (John xx. 15). Who would she take away? She names no one, supposing the gardener must know of whom she spoke. She would take Him away. She had loved Him when living; she desired the body when dead. Her love was thus told out—not to a stranger, as she thought, but to the object of it. He knew it, of course; yet He would draw forth the confession of it from her heart and lips. And then He uttered but one word, and that probably in her vernacular tongue—a word she had often heard from Him—Mary. That was enough. She saw, she knew, that He was risen from the dead. Had she found Him? No; He had found her. He had come to the tomb to which she had returned, to make Himself known to her. Her risen Lord came to her that her sorrow should be turned into joy.

Now, whilst Mary was weeping at the tomb, the

other women went on their way into the city at the bidding of the angel, to tell the disciples that He was risen from the dead (Matt. xxviii. 7); for the Lord, Mark tells us (xvi. 9), appeared first to Mary Magdalene, and that, as we have seen, was at the tomb, which the others had recently left in obedience to the angel. They were, therefore, in the path of obedience. The Lord was risen. They had learnt that, and believed it. But where was He? On that point the angel was silent. In Galilee, He did say, they should see Him. But Galilee was at a distance from Jerusalem. Days must pass ere they could meet Him there. They knew not of any place where they could meet with Him that day. But He knew where they were; and ere they re-entered the city He met them, and made Himself known to them. He met them. Mary's sorrow was turned into joy at the tomb. Their joy was full, surely, when He met them on the way between the garden and the city—joy indeed to them; a delight too, surely, to Him to meet them, and to charge them with a message to His brethren, announcing His desire for them to see Him in Galilee.

A third appearance of the Lord on that same day, mentioned in the briefest way in Luke xxiv. 34 and 1 Cor. xv. 5, is nevertheless of great interest to us all. "He hath appeared to Simon," we read in Luke. "He was seen of Cephas," wrote Paul. To Simon, the one who had denied Him thrice, and that after a distinct warning about it on the part of the Lord, to him did the Saviour appear before He was seen of the twelve (1 Cor. xv. 5). The last one, as man would have thought, to have been specially favoured that day, was the first of the apostles to whom the favour was shown. He, who had so grievously failed, had the privilege of a personal and private interview with Him. Mary Magdalene and Peter are the only ones to whom He appeared when they were alone. To Mary, at the grave; to Peter, we know not where: nor does it concern us to know that. His appearance

to Peter is what concerns us. Where it took place matters nothing. Mary's devotion to the Lord, and her interest in that tomb, had been abundantly displayed ; but of Peter what could be said? If any one deserved the favour accorded her, certainly Mary did. Peter had openly denied Him ; yet he, too, was specially favoured. The Lord appeared to him. Peter could not have sought Him out ; he could not have known where he might meet with Him, short of seeing Him in Galilee. In the High Priest's house, probably their last meeting, the Lord had turned and looked on him, and he went out and wept bitterly. We can understand it. His conscience condemned him ; his heart reproached him. Now, the risen One sought him out. He would meet with him first in private, ere seeing him in the presence of the rest. What must that interview have been to Peter, brought about, as it was, by the Lord, who thus assured him, and would teach us, that death and resurrection had made no change in His love, and in His grace to His own, even should they have fallen as Peter had done. Who now can say, He will not be gracious to such an one as I am, remembering that He appeared to Simon?

He appeared, and disappeared. In no place in which He had appeared did He stay to await recognition by others. He did not remain at the tomb, nor did He sit by the wayside, nor did He wait till Peter called John and others to see Him. He came and He went as He pleased. These visits told their tale of His acquaintance with the whereabouts of His disciples, of His joy to meet with them, and of His desire to remove all sadness from their hearts, as without any warning or expectation He was seen of them, and talked with them, and convinced them all that it was really Himself, now risen from the dead.

The resurrection day was passing ; the sun was declining, when Cleopas and his companions were on their way to Emmaus, talking together, and reasoning

of all that had happened as regards the crucifixion, and most likely, too, of the report the women brought from the sepulchre of the vision of angels which they had seen, who said that the Lord was alive. Yet that evidently had given the travellers no comfort. Now, whilst engaged in conversation, Jesus Himself drew near, approaching them apparently from behind. He joined them, not they Him. He spoke to them, thus breaking the silence which they probably would never have done. He would draw them out, that He might pour into their hearts the wine of joy, and set at rest all uncertainty in their minds whether or not He was really alive again. "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?" or, as some would read the last clause, "and they stood still, looking sad;" the evangelist thus picturing for his readers the scene, viz., the astonishment manifested by these travellers at the question of the stranger, coupled with the feeling of the heart unmistakeably expressed in the countenance. Engaged in earnest conversation in that which deeply interested them, their faces betrayed the real sorrow that was within. Who could permanently remove it? A break in the cloud, a passing gleam of sunshine, a momentary revival of hope, that would not have met their need, nor satisfied His heart who had now joined them. A joy which no man should take from them He had foretold, as the portion of His people consequent on His resurrection. Now He would minister to those sad ones of that joy. He Himself would do it. The risen Saviour would remove for ever from their heart that sorrow, which like a dark cloud had enveloped them. He joined them. He spoke to them. He ministered the word to them. He opened their hearts to understand the Scriptures. He established their faith as to all that had happened, the resurrection included, on the written word of God. He then opened their eyes to understand that the stranger was the Lord Himself. He was risen; they

knew it when He broke the bread for them. Then He vanished out of their sight.

They were now at Emmaus, between seven and eight miles from Jerusalem; but they rose up the same hour, and returned to the city, to communicate to the rest what had happened. But where was the risen Lord? Who could say? Entering the room at Jerusalem in which the disciples were assembled with closed doors for fear of the Jews, He was not there, nor had any of the males of the company seen Him save Peter. Greeted with the exclamation, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon," they confirmed the truth, for they too had seen Him. But where was He now? far off, or near? Who could tell? They began their story, but apparently did not finish it. What prevented it? Lack of interest in their hearers? Surely not, though they did not believe these two (Mark xvi. 13). But while they were speaking, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them (Luke xxiv. 36). For the fifth time that day, the Lord appeared. As on each of the previous occasions, so now, He took those He favoured by surprise. Nobody knew He was near; nobody knew where to find Him. He, however, knew where to find them. But was it really Himself? He dispelled all doubt. His hands and His feet betokened it was the crucified One; His eating before them shewed He was corporally present. What a blessed moment for them! What a blessed thought for us! It is the risen Lord of whom we read all this. What He was, that He is, though now we have to speak of Him as ascended as well. There is no change in Him. He delighted surely to minister joy that day to His sorrowing disciples, and to cheer them by His presence, as risen from the dead. He acts in a similar way still. Then it was by His appearance in person, now it is by His presence in spirit, till that day shall dawn, that morning without clouds, when He shall come for His own, to take them to be with Himself for ever.

Into the subject of the mission entrusted to the disciples by the Lord, the carrying out of which is related in the Acts of the Apostles, we cannot here enter. The events of the day, and the order in which they occurred, are what at present concern us. On these five different occasions did the Lord appear. Mary Magdalene, the other women, Peter, Cleopas and his companion, had each their tale to tell of special favour vouchsafed them. Now the day closed, and in a fitting way, with the last, this fifth appearance to the whole company in the room in Jerusalem, in which, doubtless, all the above-mentioned were found assembled with the others. Where disciples were to be found that day, occupied in heart with Him, or needing a special manifestation of divine grace, there was He, ministering to each as each needed, unasked, unsought by any one of them. Often had the women ministered to Him of their substance; now, He ministered to them, needing no longer anything from them. And this service He continues, not to those who saw Him when risen, but to us, if gathered simply to His name, who never knew Him in the days of His humiliation. In the midst of such He has promised to be, till He comes into the air for His saints. How this speaks, if our dull ears and stupid hearts can take it in, of unchanging interest in His people, of His readiness to encourage them, whilst still in this scene, from which He in person has been cast out by the world.

C. E. S.

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“Sorrows and trials are not only like the sand and grit that polish a stone, but through them I taste and learn what Christ is to me.”—G. V. W.

Jesus Christ *yesterday*, in the accomplishment of redemption; *to-day*, a living Christ for communion; and *for ever*, in the unspeakable joy and glory of His own immediate presence, God says is “THE SAME” (compare Acts i. 11; Heb. xiii. 8).

## OLD TESTAMENT LESSONS.

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GILGAL.—*Joshua* v. 2-8.

THE children of Israel had been delivered from the yoke of Pharaoh in Egypt, and now also had been brought across the Jordan. They have entered the territory on the west of the river which God had sworn to their fathers that He would give them. In memorial of this entrance and its manner, they had taken out twelve stones from the river bed by God's directions, and pitched them in their lodging-place that night; an indisputable evidence that "on dry land" they had been carried into the country of the Lord's inheritance.

Thus there were two facts, about which no possible doubt could arise in any of their minds,—

First, *They were out of Egypt*;

Second, *They were in Canaan*;

and by divine intervention and power.

To-day, there are two great corresponding truths for the people of God. They are, first, "delivered from the power of darkness," and, second, are translated "into the kingdom of His dear Son." These are equally by divine intervention and power—God's acts.

It would be an interesting inquiry, how far the certainty of Israel in its blessings finds correspondence in the hearts of God's children now as to theirs. If the free expressions of many may be taken as a guide, the anomalous result of such an enquiry would be, that such certainty is the small exception among even earnest and pious souls.

But, using the language of the figure, if souls are not consciously across the Jordan, how can they take up the character of Gilgal? Marked as Gilgal is by circumcision—thence its very name—and Israel had not circumcised in the wilderness, we can only get the

value of Gilgal as in faith we own and take our place in "the heavenlies," as distinguished from the world and its darkness. We believe in the forgiveness of our sins, having God's word for it. Why do we not just as simply believe that we are "translated into the kingdom of His dear Son"?

What could we think of an Israelite who, after all had crossed Jordan, should be found in any measure of doubt as to his own whereabouts? It is not possible to imagine one of them acting as still under a "taskmaster," and seeking a diminution of his "tale of bricks." Yet, it must be owned, that too often really godly people now, as little apprehend the blessed and precious grace that has put them "in Christ Jesus," as well as delivered them "out of this present evil world." Doubtless it is largely owing to this, that Gilgal is but feebly known.

Jordan has been so largely regarded as a figure of death, and the Canaan beyond it as heaven *hereafter*, that it was hardly to be expected Gilgal in Canaan should be viewed as instruction for us on this side death. But when we *have* left the earth—entered Canaan on that view—are we to begin arduous conflict in heaven? Will there be anything like "seven nations greater and mightier than thou," up above, to dispute possession with us, or resist our entrance? Again, shall we carry the flesh into heaven, and there have to cut it off, *i.e.*, circumcise? Such and other questions can have but the one answer: No. While on looking into the New Testament, we find armour of God provided for our use now,—not to fight selves with, mark, but "to stand against the wiles of the devil," "against spiritual wickedness in high (heavenly) places." Eph. i. 3 tells us, God "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." We have these now, and also now the conflict with "powers" that would deprive us, if possible, of our inheritance. How often, alas, are God's people deprived, not of His absolute gift—that cannot be—

but of the present enjoyment which that gift should ensure. Can there be a stronger proof of the devil's "wiles" and "fiery darts," plotted and well-aimed to-day, than the bare fact that the spiritual blessings lie so little apprehended; Canaan is mistaken for heaven itself by and by; Jordan for death of the body; and grapes, figs, and pomegranates, old corn, milk and honey, &c., are figures of well-nigh unknown value, and which it is supposed will be better left alone till faith is turned to sight?

It follows of necessity, where privileges are so little enjoyed, that duties like those of Gilgal are as little observed. What loss this involves,—loss to souls here, and loss "to the praise of His glory," instead of its accomplishment.

Turn, then, to the simple view of Egypt as the world under a rebel ruler; the passover, Christ (1 Cor. v. 7); the Red Sea, deliverance from Egypt, &c.; Jordan, introduction to a heavenly sphere of blessing (the chief character of the Red Sea being *death*, and that of Jordan *resurrection*, though both may be seen in each); and then the provisions made in Canaan will become precious instruction for the present time, to those who by grace know the Passover, and God's way of deliverance for them through death and resurrection with Christ.

The very first appointment for Israel when they have entered Canaan is to circumcise. Circumcision was "the seal of the righteousness of the faith" of Abraham (Rom. iv. 11), and was enjoined on all his seed. Gal. iii. 7 tells us that believers to-day are the children of faithful Abraham,—not, of course, naturally, but spiritually. That, therefore, which the natural seed was bound to observe, becomes for faith a spiritual obligation, and Scripture so speaks of it. In itself, cutting off the very flesh of the person, it became the mark, the indelible mark, of the race that bore it. Their great head, and the founder of their nation, believed God, and it was counted to Him for

righteousness. Separated from his natural kindred (Acts vii. 4) by the activity of faith in God's word, righteousness was imputed to him for it, and then sealed by circumcision. The flesh of his own person was judged and cut off by a definite act once for all, which left its permanent mark for life.

Thus, in a still higher, the highest way, we read of the circumcision of Christ (Col. ii. 11), which was "without hands" (not the mere rite made by hands which He underwent as a true Israelite—Luke ii. 21), and which was, before God, the grand act of "putting off the body of the flesh," in accepting its judgment upon Himself in death. No "hands" did that. "By wicked hands" He was "crucified and slain" (Acts ii. 23), but no wicked killing of His body on their part could form the moral worth of His own free acceptance of God's judgment of the flesh; that sprang of Himself alone; and therein lay the true circumcision for us.

What a blessing Col. ii. assures to us, that we "are circumcised" . . . not "by," but "*in* the circumcision of Christ." Here is the true Gilgal, and that ours. The children of faithful Abraham find righteousness upon faith; and the cutting off of the flesh, the true judgment of self, was accomplished at the cross too, as they are intended to learn next. The Holy One of God submitted to the "sharp knife," and there can be no repetition of that terrible judgment. Its full weight was borne, never to be carried again, for "He liveth unto God," after having borne it.

What, then, is the particular force of the act of circumcision as seen at Gilgal, if death from out of Egypt is the chief truth of the Red Sea?

Circumcision is the individual application of that death (as bearing on the flesh), in the power of resurrection life, to one's own person; the acceptance once for all of that characteristic of the cross as one's own now and for ever. So the moral brand of it abides, a permanent, personal scar that faith gladly

owns, and the power of which, though negative in kind, gives a new stamp to the soul's course, that becomes deeper and more manifest continually.

In the history, Gilgal was the camping-place of the nation; they set out thence to fight, and returned there after victory. There stood the memorial stones, and the name, Gilgal, was itself a record that the first result of their receiving the inheritance was the cutting off of the flesh, whereby the reproach of Egypt (the stigma of having been under Pharaoh's yoke as man unjudged), was rolled away.

What a privileged place was theirs as a merely earthly people. What a place of privilege it is for us, in a far higher way, to be before God in the heavenlies in Christ, having entered in simple faith, through death and resurrection, with a divinely appointed memorial of the Person and of the work that brought us there; glad to own it all, Lord's day by Lord's day; setting out thence afresh in renewed communion with Him, and returning again, and ever while here, to recall His worthiness who glorified God for us, and *so* brought us into heavenly and eternal blessing, and at the same time to own the judgment of death upon ourselves, so that all our confidence as we travel on must be in the Lord alone.

Have souls adequately dwelt upon the real scope of this Gilgal privilege and claim? Has not the remembrance of the Lord in death for us been too much limited to the blessed truth of atonement and Red Sea deliverance, to the neglect in some measure of the combined truth of resurrection with Him into richest heavenly blessing?

And, if so, has not a solemn result ensued, that an enfeebled sense of life and of heavenly calling has found hearts too ready to omit that judgment of self which the full joy of known blessing would have cheerfully and thankfully made?

What is the true key to the worldliness of a saint? Is it not that the truth of the memorial stones is so

dimly seen, and that therefore he fails to own and treat himself as crucified to the world?

The Lord give His own, in these closing days and Laodicean conditions, to get closer to Himself and to all His wonderful provisions for them, that they may enjoy His fulness, and be lifted into a fidelity of life that shall be to praise, and honour, and glory, at His appearing.

E. C. P.

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## LOOKING ONWARD.

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WE stand upon life's pathway  
 Reflecting on His grace,  
 And though the road be'trying,  
 We gaze upon His face !  
 He stays us with His promise,  
 He cheers us with His smile,  
 He bids us follow closely,—  
 'Tis but " a little while."

How good ; He never leaves us  
 To sink beneath our load,  
 But takes us on His shoulders  
 And bears us all the road ;  
 We soon shall be for ever  
 Where care will be unknown,  
 At home with Thee, Lord Jesus,  
 That place where Thou hast gone !

We wait for that blest moment,  
 ('Tis coming on apace),  
 Thine own shall then surround Thee,  
 The trophies of Thy grace,  
 To sing through endless ages  
 Our songs of rapturous praise,  
 Extolling all the goodness  
 And wisdom of Thy ways !

J. P.

## GOLD DIGGING.

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“The whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good.”—*Gen.* ii. 11, 12.

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WE meet with the above Scripture in God's description of the river which took its rise in the garden of Eden in the days of man's innocence, and which went forth from thence to fructify the earth. But man's innocence is gone for ever, and with it has gone the garden which the Lord God planted, and into which He put the man after He had created him. Men may puzzle themselves about these things, but it will prove to no profit. Did they succeed in finding Eden, they would not find an innocent man in it; and did they find the land of Havilah, they would probably discover that its gold is *not* good, at all events morally.

Besides the gold of Havilah, Scripture speaks of the gold of Parvaim (2 Chron. iii. 6), the gold of Ophir (Job xxviii. 16), and the gold of Sheba (Ps. lxxii. 15), and for six thousand years it has stood as the world's highest standard of value. But God has plainly told us that the love of money is the root of every evil; other roots of evil there may be, but the love of money is that characteristically. Well, then, if the gold of Havilah is not good for fallen man, let us know, some reader may say, what there is which is *better*. God has left us in no doubt about that. He has a higher standard of value, and a true one. Man is a sinner, the earth is cursed, the world corrupt; but God has had a standard of value from everlasting to everlasting, and He has not failed to set Him before us in one of the earliest written books of Scripture. Before God was pleased to exercise the faith of Job, he was probably the wealthiest man upon earth, but though he lived many centuries before God sent His Son into the world, and therefore may not have known all that his own language implied, yet he *did* know that

wisdom was better, yea, of more value than riches. "It cannot be gotten for gold. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it; and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold. No mention shall be made of coral or of pearls; for the price of Wisdom is above rubies: the topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold" (Job. xxviii. 15-19). If we read carefully the eighth of Proverbs, we cannot fail to see that Wisdom personifies the Lord Jesus Christ, "Who of God is made unto us Wisdom"—"The Wisdom of God" (1 Cor. xxiv. 30).

May we not, then, venture to say that for us "the whole land of Havilah where there is gold" is the Word of God, and "the gold of that land *is* good"—for it is Christ Himself, whose price is above riches. Reader, are you already a gold-digger—that is, one who has a reverential love for every word of God, one who digs in it as for hid treasure? *If so*, in all labour there is profit, and may the Lord give thee prosperity. *If not*, let me invite you to the gold-fields, "the whole land of Havilah where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good."

If a gold-digger heard of a station where the earth was unusually auriferous, and which had been little worked, how quickly would he direct his steps thither! Now, of all the gold-fields of the word of God I know of none more auriferous, none that would better pay for working, and none more little worked than *the book of Revelation*, a book with which God has connected an especial blessing (ch. i. 3).

Let us, then, thrust in pick and spade, and stir the golden soil of the first chapter, for we shall surely find some precious nuggets there. From its first line, it is full of Christ throughout. Notice first, THE GLORY OF HIS PERSON AS A MAN (verse 5), subdivided into what He *was* in His life on earth, God's "faithful Witness;" what He *is* in resurrection, "the first-born from among the dead;" and what He *will be* in mani-

fested glory by and by, "the Prince of the kings of the earth." These things express His glory as a man—for each one is true of Him only. How blessed it is to know that God has had *one* Man who has walked this sin-stained earth as His "faithful Witness;" how blessed to know that out of the eater (Death) has come forth meat—Christ Himself, born from among the dead, for it was not possible that He should be holden of the pains of death. How blessed to know that there is already a Man in heaven upon whose vesture and upon whose thigh shall be a Name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. Reader, can you say Amen to this, can you rejoice with me in the language of the hymn,—

Then let Him come in glory,  
Who comes His saints to raise,  
To perfect all the story  
Of wonder, love, and praise!?

Next we may find, on again stirring the soil, THE GRACE OF HIS WORK AS A SAVIOUR (ver. 5, 6), subdivided into three heads. (1) "Unto Him that *loved us*."—Yes, my reader, that is the source of every bit of blessing to us. You can trace your blessing so far as that, but you can never trace it beyond. "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting" (Ps. ciii. 17). With an everlasting love has He loved us, and therefore with loving kindness has He drawn us (Jer. xxxi. 3), and accordingly He has saved us with an everlasting salvation (Is. xlv. 17). *If FROM everlasting you have not been loved, TO everlasting you will not be saved.* I can no more trace its beginning than its ending; it eternally *is!*

(2) "And washed us from our sins in His own blood." Who is the washer? Christ! What are we washed from? Our sins! What are we washed in or by? His own blood! Yes, my reader, nothing less wonderful than this, that He hath washed us, from nothing less than all our sins, and by or in nothing less than His own blood! How blessed to have all this on the testi-

mony of the Spirit of God, by that apostle who had leaned upon His breast, listened to His dying words, visited His empty sepulchre, discerned Him on the shore of resurrection, and viewed Him ascend up into glory!

(3) "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father: to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Yes, my reader, this also is part of the wondrous work He does for every one that believeth. He has anointed us and crowned us, as kings and as priests to God and His Father! Was ever such a Lover as He who has loved us? Was ever such a Saviour as He who has saved us? Was ever such a king-maker and priest-maker as He who has made us, even us, to be kings and priests to God and His Father?

Let us put in spade again, and we shall find very near the surface this further thing, the MANIFESTATION OF HIS MAJESTY AS A JUDGE. "Behold He cometh with clouds: and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so. Amen" (ver. 7). Why is Scripture so full of Christ? I will tell you; it is because it comes from God, and reveals what is in the heart of God, and that heart is full of Christ, and *must express itself*, for even of Him we may reverently say, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." So, sometimes it is Christ as a living, sorrowing Man on earth; sometimes as a suffering, dying Saviour, and sometimes as a returning Judge; but of Christ, *Christ*, CHRIST, the heart of God and the word of God are alike full. And *you cannot sever Christ from God*. Were God without Christ He would be without wisdom, for He is "the Wisdom of God;" without power, for He is "the Power of God;" without a voice, for He is "the Word of God;" without righteous vindication, for "all judgment is committed unto Him;" without creatorial glory, for He "created all things by Jesus Christ;" without displayed

glory, for He is "the effulgence of His glory;" without moral glory, for He was "the exact expression of His substance," or moral nature (Heb. i. 3). Oh! reader, are you of one mind with God as to His Son? Is He indeed your Saviour? *If not*, oh! may this seventh verse sound an alarm in your ears,—Behold, "He cometh, He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness" (Ps. xcvi. 13). All the wicked *dead* shall be judged at the "great white throne" (Rev. xx. 11, 12); but should the Lord come while you are living, you will be among those who will come under His judgment of the *quick* at His appearing (2 Tim. iv. 1), when all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.

Lastly, we may find, HIS ESSENTIAL EXISTENCE, HIS ETERNAL NATURE, AND HIS COMING—THE ALMIGHTY. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, *which is*"—here is His essential existence; "*which was*"—this is the eternity of His being; and "*which is to come*, the Almighty"—this tells us of Him who, once here in humiliation, and shame, and suffering, and weakness, is returning, and returning as "ALMIGHTY." As the prophet Isaiah foretold, and as shall assuredly come to pass—"His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace." Is that, my reader, the desire of your heart? Do you long to see Christ worthily honoured and glorified, not only before God in the presence of all heavenly intelligences, but before men in a renewed earth? This, God will bring to pass, for the whole earth shall be full of His glory (Ps. lii. 19; Is. vi. 3). "For now shall He be great unto the ends of the earth" (Micah v. 4).

Here, then, are a few of the precious nuggets of gold that are to be found in the first chapter of Revelation. Oh! my reader, are they yours by an appropriating faith? The Spirit of God has put them there, and points us to their precious value and their lustrous

beauty, and FAITH appropriates them. Their value is incalculable, their beauty indescribable, their interest inexhaustible, their attractiveness imperishable; and why? Because from first to last they are CHRIST, and Christ is all this, and ten thousand times ten thousand more than my poor pen can portray, for *every saved soul!* May the aspiration of the heart of every reader of "Words in Season" be that of the inspired apostle in Phil. iii. 10, "THAT I MAY KNOW HIM"!

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## KNOWING AND BEING KNOWN.

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He *knoweth* thy walking through this great wilderness (Deut. ii. 7).

He *knoweth* the way I take (Job xxiii. 10).

They that *know* Thy name will put their trust in Thee (Ps. ix. 10).

He *knoweth* our frame (Ps. ciii. 14).

He *knoweth* them that trust in Him (Na. i. 7).

Your Father *knoweth* what things ye have need of (Matt. vi. 8).

Not *knowing* the things that shall befall me (Acts xx. 22).

We *know* that all things work together for good to them that love God (Rom. viii. 28).

Now I *know* in part, but then shall I *know* even as also I am known (1 Cor. xiii. 12).

To *know* the love of Christ which passeth knowledge (Ephes. iii. 19).

I *know* whom I have believed (2 Tim. i. 12).

That I may *know* Him (Phil. iii. 10).

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"There is nothing so petty as the human heart, but nothing on which God, by His grace, can compose such lovely and transcendent music, because man is the subject of redemption through Christ."—J. N. D.

## LETTERS OF INTEREST.

———, 1863.

DEAR ———, The Lord often suffers affliction to come just to see how we will behave in it, whether we will turn to our own resources or to His heart. O that we knew His love, and tender interest in us. But we shall, when once we get home, and see Him as He is. We don't half, or one thousandth part, credit the grace that is in God. He never asks anything from us; He is a *giver*, joys in giving—finds everything He seeks in us, if He finds us *receivers*. What He gives has this divine virtue—it blesses us, and always returns to Himself. We are blessed in receiving it, in enjoying it, and in returning it. O let us make our necessity and feebleness a plea for a nearer neighbourhood to Him.

J. R.

———, 1859.

DEAREST MRS. ———, I write a line just to put before you how lovely and blessed a thing grace is. But you will say, you know that. Blessed be God you do, and we all do; and yet we don't! It is but dim, far-off glances that we get of it, and then we relapse into the twilight of our (shall I say?) distance from God. I can only know grace in Jesus—in Him as the Son of the Father—hastening down from His blessed abode to snatch me from the hell I was hastening to, and in which I well deserved to be now;—one mass of corruption, senseless, and stupid before all His loveliness, giving myself up hopelessly to be the prey of sin and Satan. But He saw me; oh, how far off; oh, how nigh to expiring—how revolting to myself and everyone but His love! He saw and hastened to me, broke off my chains, bound up my wounds, put a cordial to my fainting lips, and washed me in His precious blood—made me His own (Ezekiel xvi.); then decked in costly array, and watched over me till

restored and well. What then? Am I to forget all that, now that He puts me by His side at table, and become vain through His goodness? Am I ever to forget the heavenly grace that *could reach me*, and did reach me, and to sit there as if sovereign grace had not put me there? Alas! alas! why has He put me there? To know and enjoy Him, and to abide in His love; not to be my own object, occupied with self, either good or bad, but to find in Him fulness of joy.

My best wish for you and for myself is that we may know more and more the sweetness of being debtors to grace. Happy debtors, to such a loving Saviour. We want never to take the eye off Himself; and this we need not do; He never did off His Father.

J. R.

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## DEATH AND LIFE.

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ONE has said, speaking of the manner of Stephen's death in Acts vii., he was alive in death; a fine commentary upon that happy moment in the history of the Church, and a true commentary too. Jesus, I may say, *died* in death, that we might *live* in death. He met death in all its horrors, made sin for us, suffering death as judgment, and the pouring out of righteous wrath on sin; but we can speak of life in death, and though He was under the hand of murderers, the region of life and of glory was seen beyond and above it, and is seen as the home of our spirits also.

This is to be alive in death—"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." It is that victorious life we receive from the risen Lord. By death He destroyed Him that had the power of death, and the life He imparts to us is life in victory; not life to be tested as it was in Adam (Gen. ii. 17), but life that has been already in the battle, and has won the day (as we speak). The display of this in Himself was sweet to Christ; the

acknowledgment of it as in Him by faith was sweet also. In John xi. we see the first—that He delighted in the opportunity of displaying victorious life; He waited, therefore, till the sickness of Lazarus had ended in death, that He might then shine as the resurrection and the life; and in Matt. xvi. 17, He lets us know with what delight He had listened to Peter's confession, which owned Him as the Son of the living God, the One who was about to break the gates of brass in pieces, and to give His saints victory over hell and the power of death. J. G. B.

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PRAYER.—*Phil.* iv. 6, 7.

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- “ Lord, what a change within us one short hour  
 Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make,  
 What heavy burdens from our bosoms take,  
 What parched ground refresh as with a shower!  
 We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;  
 We rise, and all, the distant and the near,  
 Stands forth in sunny outline brave and clear!  
 We kneel—how weak; we rise—how full of power.  
 Why therefore should we do ourselves this wrong,  
 Or others, that we are not always strong,  
 That we are ever overborne with care,  
 That we should ever weak or heartless be,  
 Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,  
 And joy, and strength, and courage, are with Thee?”
- “ A garden so well watered before morn  
 Is hotly up, that not the smart sun's blaze,  
 Down-beating with unmitigated rays,  
 Nor arid winds from scorching places borne,  
 Shall quite prevail to make it bare and shorn  
 Of its green beauty; shall not quite prevail  
 That all its morning freshness shall exhale,  
 Till evening and the evening dews return!  
 A blessing such as this our hearts might reap,  
 The freshness of the garden they might share,

Through the long day a heavenly freshness keep,  
 If, knowing how the day and the day's glare  
 Must beat upon them, we would largely steep  
 And water them betimes with dew's of prayer.

“When hearts are full of yearning tenderness  
 For the loved absent, whom we cannot reach  
 By deed or token, gesture or kind speech,  
 The spirit's true affection to express ;  
 When hearts are full of innermost distress,  
 And we are doomed to stand inactive by,  
 Watching the soul's or body's agony,  
 Which human effort helps not to make less—  
 Then, like a cup capacious, to contain  
 The overflowings of the heart, is prayer ;  
 The longing of the soul is satisfied,  
 The keenest darts of anguish blunted are ;  
 And though we cannot cease to yearn or grieve,  
 Yet we have learned in patience to abide.

“If we with earnest effort could succeed  
 To make our life one long connected prayer,  
 As lives of some perhaps have been, and are ;  
 If never leaving Thee, we had no need  
 Our wandering spirits back again to lead  
 Into Thy presence, but continued there,  
 Like angels standing on the highest stair  
 Of the sapphire throne ; this were to pray indeed.  
 But if distractions manifold prevail,  
 And if in this we must confess we fail,  
 Grant us to keep at least a prompt desire,  
 Continual readiness for prayer and praise ;  
 An altar heaped, and waiting to take fire  
 With the least spark, and leap into a blaze.”

*R. C. Trench, Archbishop of Dublin.*

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A WORD FOR PREACHERS.—A little boy, on Saturday night, said at the end of his prayer, “O God, let the minister say something to-morrow that I can understand.”

## SAMUEL; A TYPE AND AN EXAMPLE.

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THE Old Testament Scriptures set before us few more interesting or more striking characters than Samuel. Scarcely was he less distinguished than Moses or than David, and in some respects much more so than either. He stood for God in a very dark and evil day in Israel's history, and sustained the hearts of God's people when of the associations between Him and them little seemed left.

We but begin his history, before we discern how truly he was a type of Christ. The peculiar circumstances of his birth and introduction to the house of God on earth; his being asked of (as his name implied) and devoted to God by his saintly mother; his own plastic compliance with the will of his parents and of God; his devotedness to the interests and the service of Jehovah in His tabernacle, and his abiding there until the kernel of the shell was gone; his unblemished character; his fidelity, austerity, self-abnegation, assiduous labours, and sagacious administration of the national affairs for a lifetime: each of these things may be clearly seen, and each gives testimony that Hannah had asked, as her song suggests, not so much what her own heart craved, as what the heart of Jehovah would supply to meet the exigencies of His barren people. But under the theocracy, or direct government of God in Israel, he ended in his own person the line of the Judges, who exercised as such one of the functions of the subsequent royalty. He judged Israel all the days of his life. In him, it may be said, the theocracy was closed, and by him the monarchy was founded. But, moreover, we see him, singularly enough, personally connected with each of the specific offices of Christ Himself, who, as the Anti-type of Samuel, shall be the true and final Judge of His people. These specific offices are those of Priest, Prophet, and King. Each has failed in man; each shall be perfectly displayed by Christ.

I. Samuel was connected with the fall of the *priesthood* in Eli and his sons. The idolatries of the people and the wickedness of the priestly line provoked the wrath of God, "so that He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which He placed among men ; and delivered His strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy's hand." "He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent that He had pitched among men. He refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim ; but chose the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion, which He loved" (Psa. lxxviii. 60, 61, 67, 68). The priest had hitherto been the mouth-piece of God to His people ; the mouth-piece of His people to God. This was thenceforth lost, and a new means of communication was opened in the person of Samuel, which began in his tender age, when as but a fledgling from his mother's wing he heard in the precincts of the sanctuary, and at the dead of night, the still, small voice that from thenceforth he knew to be the voice of God, not for himself alone, but for the nation to whom, by reason equally of his retirement in the tabernacle, and his insignificance on account of his years, he was then unknown.

How the sovereignty of God shone forth in this new epoch of Israel's history ! *A little child* was God's instrument ; one who belonged, probably, to neither the priestly nor the royal tribe, but who possessed that which Israel lacked, *an ear open to the voice of Jehovah*. Even though he knew not as yet the voice of Him who spake with him, yet that voice was reverently heard, and aroused him to give heed to its call. "Speak ; for Thy servant heareth," thus became the standing testimony of the one ear in Israel divinely opened, and through grace kept open, for God and for His people. "And all Israel, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, knew that Samuel was established a prophet of the Lord."

II. Thus began the line of *the prophets*. Individuals there had been before, as Abraham (Gen. xx. 7),

Moses (Deut. xviii. 15), and Aaron (Exod. vii. 1) ; but now arose a successive order, as it is said, "Samuel and those that follow after ;" and in his day the name "Prophet" seems to have begun to replace the more ancient, if not more dignified, title of "Seer," as also in his day "the sons of the prophets" are first heard of. An unbroken line of prophets appears to have thenceforth continued as the voice of God amongst His people for seven centuries, till the days of Malachi.

III. We need not dwell on the fact that Samuel was also the one who inaugurated *monarchy* in Israel. Personally conscious that their demand for a *king* (seeing that they possessed the incomparable distinction of being under direct divine government) was the sign of a deep moral declension, he nevertheless remembered probably his mother's remarkable prophetic words, "He shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed ;" and he probably remembered, too, the confirmation of this in the words of the unnamed prophet, the man of God, who had said, the Lord God of Israel saith, "I will raise me up a faithful priest, . . . and he shall walk before mine Anointed for ever." In these testimonies he had doubtless discerned that God had disclosed very distinctly that He would have the kingdom established in Israel, and it might be that *His* time was come. Thus he seems to have sternly repressed those feelings which would naturally arise in his heart as he saw himself and his authority in Israel virtually superseded ; and, as ever from his childhood, he turned an open ear to Israel's God, whose word was that he must take the *same attitude* towards Israel herself. Thus was he to listen to all their demand, and respond by unfolding all that would befall the people when God should give them "a king in His anger," to be afterwards taken "away in His wrath."

In the next chapter (1 Sam. ix. 15) we read, Jehovah "told Samuel in his ear," just the day before, of the coming of Saul, that he might anoint him as

the king He granted them. We are told that this word is significant (in verse 15), being really "the Lord *uncovered* his ear," as though He had moved aside the unshorn locks of the aged Nazarite prophet, to make communication alone into that ear which had been from his early days in Shiloh opened to Jehovah's voice. Surely may we say, that what *especially* characterised the prophet was a mouth opened to cry to Jehovah for His people, and an ear open to His voice. Thus the aged prophet gave himself up to the declared will of God, and Saul and David successively were anointed by him to rule and judge the people.

IV. But there is yet another character in which he is typically connected with Christ: that of *mediator*. This comes out most clearly in 1 Sam. vii. Twenty sorrowful years of alienation from Jehovah had passed, and Israel, we read, lamented after the Lord. It was a time of brokenness of spirit, which Samuel would thankfully seize in which to act for God. Thus, says he, "If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods," etc.; and they did so. At Mizpeh, therefore (the place of *watchfulness*), gathered he all Israel together, and he prayed for them. Moreover, the water poured on the ground, the fasting and the confession, all come in to emphasise that brokenness of spirit which Samuel had been the first to discern; and he thus stood for God in dealing with His people. But we further find that he stood for the people with God; for when trembling overtook the people because of the threatened attack of the Philistines, he takes "a sucking-lamb, and offered it for a burnt-offering wholly to the Lord: and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel; and the Lord heard him." Thus he wrought for God with the people, and wrought for the people with God; a priestly mediator between Jehovah and His nation.

But Israel being thus occupied, seemed to afford a favourable opportunity for the Philistines to make a sudden attack upon them. They came upon Israel,

unprepared for the assault, with a mighty shock, as Samuel was offering up the "sucking-lamb." What contrast could be more striking, than the fierce assault of these idolatrous enemies of Israel on the one hand, and on the other the aged mediator, presenting to God the value of Christ in His eyes, calling upon Him "for Israel," His people? On one side, there was a fierce nation with weapons of war; on the other, a "sucking-lamb," and the shrill cry of the mediator reaching the ear of Jehovah. But the answer was instantaneous; while yet the burnt-offering was yielding its savour, and the cry was going up to God, "the Lord thundered with a great thunder," and the Philistines were discomfited and smitten before Israel from Mizpeh to Bethcar, where Samuel erected Ebenezer—"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us"—the spot where the Philistines had achieved that terrible conquest of Israel in Eli's day, in which the ark of God fell a prey into their hands, and the priesthood was swept away for the time being. It was God's magnificent testimony to the value, in His eyes, of mediatorship on the ground of sacrifice.

V. In the close of this chapter (vii.) we have Samuel's assiduous industry. Year by year, he trod the path of duty as the path of faith. Going forth from his own house, his first object was Bethel, the house of God; for us, surely, this speaks of the circle of the Lord's interests on earth. Thence to Gilgal, where the reproach of Egypt had been rolled away; for us, the denial of the flesh in the power of the Spirit. From thence he went to Mizpeh (watching); for, practically, watchfulness can never be dispensed with, even to the very end of the path of faith. It ends in his return thence to Ramah (high place), where he dwelt; answering, in our case, to the heavenly places, or heavenlies, where we are already seated in Christ. There Samuel abode, and there he built an altar unto the Lord. Where he worshipped, there he dwelt. *Is it so with us?* We worship within the holiest, but

do we dwell there? Do we make Samuel's mystic circle our own? going forth to make Christ's interests our first and paramount object on earth, but never neglecting that practical self-judgment and denial of the flesh which Gilgal enforces, and that watchfulness which Mizpeh teaches, whilst diligently making our way home to the holiest, the heavenly places, where as seated in Christ we are privileged to abide for ever, and to worship at, and feed of, that "altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle."

Freely may we admit that we have not to fill Samuel's position as judge, or prophet, or mediator; but serving the interests of Christ on earth, as he served Jehovah in Israel, we may profitably take the mystic journey to Bethel and to Gilgal, to Mizpeh and back to Ramah, gathering up the instruction of each; above all, worshipping where we dwell, and dwelling where we worship.

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## BRIEF REMARKS ON THE LORD'S HIGH PRIESTHOOD.

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IT is in the epistle to the Hebrews that we read of the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Called, as those saints were, to go forth unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach, turning thereby their back both on Jerusalem as inseparably connected with the hopes of the earthly people, and on the temple with its ritual and priesthood—both of divine appointment—one can understand the special need there was for the instruction furnished in this letter to those of God's ancient people who had become as Christians, partakers of a heavenly calling.

The Lord Jesus was therein ministered to them. The truth of His person who is both God and man was unfolded in chapters i. and ii., and what was advanced was established in a way to meet them, viz., by quotations from the Old Testament writings. For a Jew this was especially needful. He possessed a written

revelation in words taught of the Holy Ghost. It was important, therefore, that truth as to the person of the Christ should be confirmed by the writings which the nation owned were of God. But besides possessing a written revelation, the Jews could speak of Moses and of Aaron as servants raised up by God in the distant past; and they had also a ritual of divine appointment, and could speak of the house at Jerusalem, which had been filled with the cloud of glory, the token of the divine presence. But now a fresh revelation had been vouchsafed, and He had appeared of whom Moses and the prophets had written, Jesus, the Son of God. It was of all importance, then, we can each see, to minister the Lord Jesus Christ to the Hebrew saints in the way in which the writer of the epistle has done it, first telling about His person, then showing how He surpasses both Moses and Aaron—this latter line of teaching necessarily developing truth as to His priesthood, and that which is connected with it, viz., His sacrifice, and the sanctuary in which His priestly work could alone be performed. For without His priestly service, as constantly exercised, no saint could now get through the wilderness. And had not propitiation been made by Him, no one of the children of men could enter into the presence of God, to be at home there.

Now, His priesthood has a peculiarity which marks it out as unique. It is, and ever will be, Melchisedechian in *order*, whilst at present it is Aaronic in *character*. He is a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec (Ps. cx. 4); that is, He was preceded by no one in His office, and He will be succeeded by no one. He is Priest *for ever*. Of the Melchisedechian character of priesthood we read in Gen. xiv. 18-20; for Melchisedec, priest of the Most High God, blessed Abraham, victorious over all his enemies, and blessed the Most High God also. No prayers were offered up in intercession for Abraham, that he might triumph over his enemies. He blessed Abraham, the victorious

one. As yet, then, such a character of priestly service will not suit God's people on earth ; so they need the Aaronic *character* of priesthood to be in exercise on their behalf.

This is developed, likewise, in the Pentateuch, and especially in Lev. i.—xvi., and in Numb. xvi.—xx. ; xxvii. 19-22. In the former portion, it is developed especially in connection with the service of the sanctuary ; in the latter, it is exhibited in connection with the need of the people in the wilderness, and in the land.

Turning first to the latter, we learn the value of the High Priest's intercession for the people. Aaron stood with the burning censer in his hand "between the dead and the living, and the plague was stayed" (Numb. xvi. 46-50). Next is unfolded (xvii.) by whom God will be approached as Priest, signified by the rod, which "brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds ;" for He, of whom Aaron as High Priest was a type, would be victorious over death. Then for the water of separation to be prepared (xix.), as well as for the water to come forth from the rock, priesthood was required (xx.), for, taking in his hand the rod which budded, Moses must go to the rock. And lastly, for the direction of the host in warfare in the land the priest was needed (xxvii. 19-22) ; whilst, side by side with all that, the exercise of the Aaronic priestly service in connection with the altar and the sanctuary was imperatively, and daily called for.

Both these classes of Aaronic priestly service the Lord, we learn in Hebrews, has been willing to discharge. But here again there is a peculiarity about His service, which it is of the greatest moment to notice, bearing as it does on distinctive Christian teaching. His priestly service in relation to His sacrifice is finished, and He has sat down for a continuance on the right hand of God (Heb. x. 12). His priestly service in connection with the need of His

people in the wilderness is still in active and constant exercise, "seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (vii. 25). How different was it with Aaron and Eleazar, who daily ministered in the sanctuary. Now, the reason for this God has declared: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices, which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect: for then would they not have ceased to be offered? *because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins*" (x. 1, 2).

This difference noted, the reader will readily understand why the sacred writer, after introducing the Lord as High Priest for this double character of service (Heb. ii. 17, 18), dwells on that which our High Priest *at present* does (iv.—vii.), before setting forth that which He has done once, and for ever (ix.—x.). High Priest to make propitiation for the sins of the people, He also, having been made like unto His brethren, ever lives to make intercession for them, as able to succour the tempted (ii. 18), able to sympathise with our infirmities (iv. 15), and able to save to the uttermost those who come unto God by Him (vii. 25). Such is the ability, willingness, and present service of our great High Priest, who has "passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God."

But here questions might arise, and the Word plainly meets them,—*How* and *when* did He become High Priest? and *where* could He exercise His priestly service?

As to the first question, *How* did He become High Priest? Heb. v. 4-6 tells us: "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, to-day have I begotten Thee. As He saith also in another place, Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec."

As to the *when*, Heb. viii. 4 is clear: "For if He were on earth, He should not be a Priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law."\* Death had to intervene for Him to enter on His priesthood. Now this is in perfect keeping with the principle of the Mosaic ritual, in which the priest, in an ordinary way, had no place till the offerer had first brought the sacrifice, and had killed it. With the dealing with the blood at the brazen altar, priestly service in connection with sacrifice under the law began. But that obviously necessitated the death of the sacrificial victim first. After that, all the service at the altar was carried on by the priest, or priests; the offerer, as a rule, preparing the victim for the altar (Lev. i. ; iii. ; iv.). The only exceptions to this rule were on the occasions of a bird being brought to God's altar (Lev. i. 15 ; v. 8), and on the day of atonement. On these occasions the priest killed the victims. And one can understand this. In the case of the bird, the nature of the victim, and the manner of dealing with it, called, it would seem, for this order of procedure. On the day of atonement, the High Priest acted as representative of those on whose behalf atonement was required (Heb. ix. 7).

We come next to the third question, *Where* could He exercise His priestly service? The answer of Scripture is, In the heavenly sanctuary; for we read: "But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place" (or the holy of holies), "having found an eternal

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\* The original is most decided on this point, as any consulting the *Revised Version*, or that made by *Mr. J. N. Darby*, will see at a glance. In the R. V. it reads—"Now if He were on earth, He would not be a Priest at all, seeing there are those who offer the gifts according to the law." In the version of *Mr. J. N. D.* it runs—"If then, indeed, He were upon earth, He would not even be a Priest, there being those who offer the gifts according to the law."

redemption." Where this holy place is, another verse makes plain: "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." (Heb. ix. 11, 12, 24.) And this is confirmed by another verse in the same epistle, which tells us (viii. 2) that Christ is "a minister of the sanctuary" (or the holy places), "and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man." For in order that propitiation for sins should be made, it was necessary that the blood of the sin offering should be shed, that a High Priest should be appointed, and that a sanctuary should exist, into which the High Priest could enter by blood to effect it. Now on earth the Lord was not a High Priest, and so into the earthly sanctuary He never could enter; but made High Priest after death, He has entered the sanctuary on high by His own blood. Here again we mark what is peculiar to, and only true of Him. All others were High Priests in life, He only after death; all others officiated in the sanctuary made with hands, He only in the one not made with hands; all others entered in by the blood of bulls and of goats, *i. e.*, that characterised their entrance, He alone has entered into the holiest as High Priest by His own blood.

But was this after His ascension? To Scripture again must we turn for an answer, for that only can with certainty instruct us on such points. Its teaching, we may say, and its statements are conclusive on the matter. "He was raised for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25). Atonement, then, was completed ere He rose. The veil of the temple, too, was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the graves were opened, after He died, and, it would seem, before His body was removed from the cross (Matt. xxvii. 51, 52; Mark xv. 37, 38). It is inconceivable that all that took place ere atonement was accomplished.\*

\* Luke, it is true, differs here from Matthew and Mark in mentioning the rending of the veil before he tells us of the Lord's death; but it

Then as to Scripture statement, we read in Heb. x. 12, 13: "But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for a continuance sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool." And again (Heb. i. 3): "When He had by Himself purged sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Ere, then, He sat down, atonement was accomplished. Now His sitting at God's right hand, and from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool, are connected in the Word (Acts ii. 33-35; Heb. i. 13) with His ascension. But did the ascension take place ere He entered as High Priest the heavenly sanctuary, to make propitiation for the sins of the people? We must unhesitatingly answer, No. All that was over ere He ascended, if Heb. x. 12, 13; i. 3 are to teach us. He did not sit down till He had by Himself purged sins. Hence the answer to the question is clear. He made propitiation in the heavenly sanctuary as the High Priest after death, but before ascension. There is no difficulty in this, if we simply take the Word as our guide; for the reader may remember that the great subject of the epistle to the Hebrews is "the High Priest of our confession." Hence the sacred writer does not dwell even on the Lord's resurrection, though it is noticed (xiii. 20), nor does he refer to the forty days on earth between that and His ascension, but passes imperceptibly, one might almost say, from His entrance on the office of High Priest to effect propitiation, to His present priestly service of intercession on high, having sat down for a continuance on the right hand of God. The proper treatment of the subject necessitated this, and if the statements in the Word quoted above, and the chief subject of the epistle are kept in the reader's remembrance, all this will be plain.

C. E. S.

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will be observed that he groups together the miraculous signs attending the Lord's death, conformable to a moral, not to the chronological order of events,

## OLD TESTAMENT LESSONS.

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GILGAL.—*Joshua* v. 2-9.

WHAT result must inevitably follow when Israel abode at Gilgal, and duly returned there after conquest? No Amalek could even appear against them; and Amalek is not so much as named in *Joshua*. For Amalek appears to be the expression of the enemy's power through the flesh.

But if we pass into the book of *Judges*, the story of the tribes in the first chapter stands in strong contrast to the narrative in *Joshua*; for one by one, we are told, each proved unable to take full possession of its allotment, and extirpate the Canaanites.

It is another instance of the failure of man to accomplish what he knew was the mind of God. And how came it so? The first verse of chap. ii. discloses the cause. *Israel had left Gilgal*. We are not told why, or how; but when the angel of the Lord would speak to them, he had to leave Gilgal and go to *Bochim* to find them.

The result of leaving Gilgal is as sure as is the result of abiding there. It is so for us, also, in the moral application of the truths Gilgal presents. If, and as, we abide in the joy of what its stones testify, so that self-judgment rules our life, we cannot fail of success; but if, and as, we allow ourselves any coolness of heart towards Him who carried us in resurrection triumph into eternal blessings, so that self in some measure is not judged,—members not mortified,—we too shall find our path darkened and the adversary successful. A most solemn lesson is this, warning us to maintain in full every principle we profess. It is not for us to inquire even if we shall, or may, relax our observance of anything God has shewn to us. Such a temptation is likely to be made, and it is Satan's usual way of ensnaring, as in *Gen. iii.* Inflexible consistency, turning neither to the right hand nor

to the left, is our only safety, and God's honour. Is it objected sometimes that such a course is unbrotherly, and the upholding of a principle stringently is dogmatic? Remember, weak hearts who would rather abide east of Jordon, and enjoy well-watered plains, can always find an unpleasant term or two with which to brand that which they are giving up with an unhappy look, albeit it is, after all, of God. No compromise with error is of God. Bochim is the place of the weepers, and departure from Gilgal will assuredly beget many a tear.

Mark further, in chap. iii., how Amalek returns to the scene (ver. 13); and in that connection, we are told, Israel's enemies possessed the city of palm trees, *i.e.*, Jericho. The first city Israel took is the one they lose first. The fresh energy of Gilgal upon them (the true and full judgment of themselves) God could, and did, display His own special power in the conquest of Jericho; and now, Gilgal deserted, they lose the place the possession of which was the witness of their early obedience and of God's fidelity.

Nor does God restore them as a nation to Gilgal; they do not return there from Bochim. Is Gilgal, then, no more of value? The truth of it remains in full force, but in the history we shall find that individuals only get its power. Thus, when God raised up Ehud to deliver Israel from Moab, Ehud takes a present to Moab's king; and when he had sent away those who bore it, he turned alone "from the quarries that were by Gilgal" to accomplish his own errand. Only in this one passage (verses 19 and 26) is the Hebrew term rendered "quarries." It is quite possible that "ordered stones" is intended by it, and that it is a reference to the twelve stones of memorial set up there. If so, then not only does Ehud start alone from Gilgal, but from the memorial stones also. And Ehud is successful in his mission; he kills the king of Moab, and delivers Israel.

In the acknowledged hopeless ruin of the Church's

testimony, is there any value left in the original appointments of God? God will not restore the Church to its first estate, but it remains for individuals to be personally faithful to all that was given to the Church at the beginning. If the judgment of self practically has long since ceased to characterise the saints of God as a whole, it still abides the truth for us now as incumbent as ever. Incumbent! Is it not a joy to be nothing, and God everything? Surely the Lord is looking for individual fidelity now,—indeed, no other fidelity can be found; it must be personal if it exist at all. But who are the persons? Not the wise or the wealthy, but the lowliest and feeblest of God's saints may walk in the most real dependence on God, mortifying their members that are upon the earth. But the truth of this incident for us is, we must each in a personal way accept the cross as the power of death to self, whether others will do so or will not. Truly to start from Gilgal is to secure success. God's one way to success for us now is that we put no confidence in anything of our own, but that we judge all of self with death—having the sentence of death written in ourselves, not as a doctrine only, but as a fact of our own practice—and then the excellency of the power of God can, and will, display itself.

Follow the further references of the Word to Gilgal in the history of it as it is given to us.

In 1 Sam. vii. 16, we find Samuel himself going to Gilgal. This has been in an earlier paper noticed in its own connection. It will be enough now, therefore, to say it is an individual who goes, not Israel; the nation is not found there until God commences a new condition for it under a king, but when it is thus started afresh, it will be taken to Gilgal. 1 Sam. xi. 15 gives this. The entire nation is brought face to face with the memory of their original introduction into the land, maintained by the stones, while the name recalls the circumcision. Thus the double claim is renewed upon them at the establishment of the king-

dom. Will they now go in the power of Gilgal, and abide faithful to God's claim by it?

In ch. xiii. 7-14, we have the mournful proof of what the nation is again in this respect, as seen in its adopted head, Saul. The claims of God, who had given them every promised blessing, and also the moral power of circumcision, are not heeded by him, and he stands before us at Gilgal locally, but unable to wait till Samuel came (ch. x. 8); he must offer a burnt offering against his own knowledge and conscience—"force" himself—and so by disobedience he loses God's favour, and ultimately the kingdom.

There is another warning also that we find here. How often do souls seek, by some plausible means of an apparently upright kind, to veil from themselves the real nature of an error which they are about to commit? A burnt offering was right enough in itself, but the fat of rams could be no delight to God if brought at the expense of obeying His voice. How many a religious form has been used to cover a dark exercise of man's will. Conscience has been awakened about some sectarian connection or position, and instead of listening to its voice, and judging such a connection by the Word, and breaking it, truly earnest souls have gone into fuller activity of religious usefulness, or of even preaching the gospel, so as to pacify, if it might be, the inner voice that claimed more separation to God.

In ch. xv., Saul is found again disobeying the clear instruction given him to destroy the Amalekites utterly. When he has owned his sin in this, Samuel calls for the Amalekite king, Agag, and (ver. 33) "hewed Agag in pieces before Jehovah in Gilgal." Verily, Samuel in a marked way affirmed the value of Gilgal by this act. We have noted before that Amalek expresses the power of the enemy by the flesh. Can Amalek's chief and Gilgal abide together? It is not possible. Agag is hewed to pieces so surely as he is brought there.

The fairest of flesh as well as the more repulsive,

the important in nature's eyes and the valuable, all must give way, all be judged, as utterly unfit for God. It cannot glorify Him, and must be brought to an end. Yet the constant effort of man, and of converted people too, is to go on, in greater or less measure, with the flesh in its better looking aspects and ways. Leaven may be discerned and refused, but why reject honey?

Surely the *king* of the Amalekites may be allowed some consideration. No more than his subjects, or than his flocks and herds. God respecteth no man's person. We are not to bring in distinctions which God has not made, nor may we fail to observe the distinctions which God has made. If He utterly sever between flesh and spirit, judging the former with death, our privilege is to see that death accomplished in the cross of Christ, and ourselves crucified with Him (Red Sea) and risen with Him (Jordan), so that in the full joy and power of new life in Him we can, and shall, *accept* our circumcision (Gilgal), and henceforth *walk* in newness of life, mortifying our members which are upon the earth. Victory, and the richer enjoyment of fresh unfoldings of Christ, will follow. The more simply we apply to ourselves our own judgment in His death, the more clearly will His preciousness discover itself to us, and the more thoroughly will His joy fill our hearts.

What a portion we have in Him! Is not the neglect of Gilgal one cause that that portion is so little known?

E. C. P.

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I *was* an atom, in perhaps the two hundred and fiftieth generation from Adam; six milleniums nearer the great white throne than was the hour of shutting out from Eden. I *am* now part of the company fitted for and espoused to Christ; the Bride, the wife-expectant, of the Lamb; sin and its torrents of woe saved from! a loving Saviour my portion and my home! sin and death judged; righteousness and life eternal gloried in!—G. V. W.

CHRIST OUR OBJECT.—*Phil.* iii.

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All "loss for Christ;" for how compare  
 Aught with those heavenly things so fair,  
 Or with His precious grace?  
 He is the Object for the heart,  
 And what like this can strength impart,  
 While gazing on His face?

Though little ye may apprehend,  
 Forget the past; press to the end,  
 The prize is full in view:  
 Walk ye in love and patient be;  
 Though eye to eye we may not see,  
 Christ will our sight renew.

We shall be like the Lord ere long,  
 And join in that eternal song,  
 And sing redeeming love;  
 We shall have bodies like His own,  
 And there behold Him on His throne,  
 And reign with Him above.

J. P.

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 I JOHN IV. 7-21.
 

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Two points here,—first, possession of eternal life, and second, forgiveness and acceptance before God. We have both, and both *in Christ*. He is the eternal life, dwelling in them that believe; their sins are forgiven, and they have acceptance with God. These are sometimes confused. Eternal life is wrought *within us*: the work of redemption is done *for us*. Many are not clear as to the work done for them, because they do not know the work done in them.

In divine things, as we would in human, we must judge of what He is by what He has done, and not by what my thoughts or feelings are about it. The first person you meet with will tell you that God hates sin; and knowing his sin, he cannot believe that God

loves him. Now God wants us to know what He is and has done, in order that we may love Him and be happy with Himself—not only in heaven (there, of course), but *down here!* There is not a lad but what would be a happier lad if he knew that God loved him; it would make everyone happier, even in going through this world.

Now God will doubtless exercise the conscience, for it is needful; but how blessed is what is said here, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us." There is not a man that would like all that he is and has done to be published to his fellow man, but how much less to God. Man has a conscience. God took care when man fell he should take a conscience with him out of Eden.

"Perfect love casts out fear." Now how can I say I know that God loves me? We have afterwards to be brought to see that we are not *lovely*. God sometimes uses the law for this. It says we are to love God with all our heart. Who has done that? It says, Love thy neighbour as thyself. Who has done that? Which of us, if our neighbour's house is on fire, or in some other way he has lost his property, is as sorry as if it were his own? Law tells me what I ought to be; grace comes to tell me what God has done for me, when I could do nothing. If I have some one who owes me £1000, I may righteously claim my money; but what a difference between me as insisting upon my own, and another, a third party, coming forward to pay it. Both recognize the debt, but how different the way of acting. If I owe the money, and can't pay, it is all over with me; but if another has paid the money, instead of being all over with me, it is all over with the debt that was against me. What does the prodigal say? "Make me as one of thy *hired servants*." He had not met his father; but when he did meet him, his father was on his neck, and he never said it: he knew his father's mind towards him, and he was happy, and it was the father's joy to have him back with himself.

It is not the forgiving anything, but his having him back according to his own holiness and character.

To come back, how can I be sure God loves me? Well, here is the answer—"In this was manifested the love of God towards us"—here is something He has done for me; He has sent His Son that I should live through Him. I being dead, He has sent His Son that I might live. Receiving Christ, I receive life. Herein I know love; not that I have loved Him, but He has loved me; He has made a propitiation, and put my sins for ever away, like the man who has paid my debt. And what is so blessed, is that God has thought about me from the very moment of my rescue right up to the day of judgment; there is not a bit of the way He has not provided for. He says to me, a sinner—I am above your sin, and have put it away. Job says, How can a man be just with God? If I should wash myself with snow-water, to His eye I should be as just come out of a ditch. I cannot answer Him one in a thousand! I don't wait until a day of judgment to know what I am before God. I learn in this day of grace that the very sins He would have then to judge, He has put away by Himself. He has so loved me, that He has entirely and for ever put away all that which He would then have had to bring under judgment. The burden is gone. It was no light thing, let us remember, even to Him; the very thought of it in the garden caused Him to sweat great drops of blood! I have, then, got eternal life, and His work has put away my sins for ever.

"The manifestation of His love *towards* us." Now, if this work has not been done, it never will be. Christ cannot die over again. Well, when does all the joy of this come into my soul? Why, when I believe it! He says, "Though your sins were as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;" or, as in another place—"Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

Well, the second portion of our subject is the present favour of our God, enjoying His love as a

present thing. See ver. 12.—“No man hath seen God at any time.” Oh! but he adds, “He dwelleth *in us*.” While we are speaking here in infirmity, He is the perfect One in the presence of God for us, and has sent the Holy Ghost to dwell in us. He that believeth in the Son of God hath the witness in himself. He would have us know the blessed relationship we are in to God, crying, “Abba, Father;” and all responsibility, duty, and affection results from the relationship consciously known in which He has set me. You are not all my servants. Would I not be mad to expect you to act as such? But suppose you all were, I should then rightly expect it. So with a child. What sort of a child can that be to parents whom he does not know? The knowledge of the relationship gives us to exercise the affections and responsibilities that belong to it. He has made us His sons in Christ, and this that we may know and enjoy the sense of this blessed relationship, and be happy in it. There is a beautiful figure in the Old Testament: the leper was first to be washed, then sprinkled with blood, then *anointed with oil*. The Holy Ghost could not dwell in us, but because we are *white as snow*. His love is perfected in us. He has given us His Spirit.

Then the third point. But before that, I turn to one verse as practical—the fifteenth. Here not hypocrites, of course, but whoever really does, as a true Christian, confess Jesus Son of God, God dwelleth in him. It is by the Holy Ghost; He says it. This comforts the Christian who is simple and true. Again, how does it affect one making high sounding profession, but with a soul away from God, thoroughly inconsistent? I would say to such, don't you know that God dwelleth *in you*? Why, you have spent the whole day, and never thought a bit about God. Would you treat the Queen so, if she were your guest? No! Would you so treat any person who was your guest? Yet, so have you treated God.

The third point is in ver. 17: Because as Christ is,

so are we in this world. And, mark you, "that we may have boldness in the *day of judgment*." Many a soul can be happy in the thought of the cross; but if you say, How about the day of judgment? is he happy then? Oh! that is a different thing! Honest souls, no doubt, truly in earnest; but not seeing that as He is, so are we in this world; that when that day of judgment comes, He who has been my propitiation is my life and my righteousness; and in resurrection, I am to have a body like His. Even now, as He is, so am I in this world. When true Christians stand before the judgment-seat, they will be like Him, *as He is*.

Now, what can I have to fear, if I am like Him? See Phil. iii.—Bodies fashioned like unto His body of glory; or, as in Corinthians, "made the righteousness of God *in Him*." God wants us to know, beloved, how He has stepped in to make known to a poor, sinful soul, that He has Himself so wrought for us and with us that we may be perfectly fit for His presence, and perfectly happy in it, both now and in the day of judgment; for, as we read in John xiv. 20, "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." A person who has thoroughly taken his place before God is more clear upon the day of judgment than anything else, for he knows that in that day he will be in the glory with Christ. Mark, too, we can only be honest in the confession of sins before God, when we know they are all forgiven; only then can we be truly without guile!

J. N. D.

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Whatever you do in any matter of the assembly of God, do it as having the heart and mind of Christ, as well as being one spirit with Him.—G. V. W.

"Depend upon it all truth, the more it is known and acted on, the more will it lead into the isolated place."—*Extract*.

## CYRUS, THE HEATHEN MONARCH.

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THE undeniable fulfilment of divine predictions made long previously, often arrests attention, and gives a peculiar interest to the word of God. We meet with an obvious instance of this in Isaiah xlv. in respect to Cyrus the Persian. In the last verse of chap. xlv. we read, "That saith of Cyrus, he is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid." God thus declares what He would accomplish by means of this remarkable man. For all will surely admit how remarkable a man he was; more remarkable in one respect than any other mere man, even in this, that 100 years before he was born God had, as we have just seen, spoken of him and of what he would do in the most distinct manner, declaring what his name should be, and what should come to pass by his means; moreover, He actually addresses him in this chap. xlv., calls him by name, declares that He has surnamed him Cyrus, though Cyrus knew Him not, and then patiently instructs him about Himself in a way exactly suitable towards one who had up to that time been a worshipper of false gods.

This wonderful address begins by the words, "Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him," &c.; words which the Spirit of God caused Isaiah the prophet to record 100 years before the child was born. Yet he got the name which Jehovah had ordained for him, and he did all that for which He had raised him up. The prophecy, we cannot doubt, was brought before the heathen monarch—God's very words addressed to him a century before his birth—and hence, when he was about 65 years of age, he addressed himself to the task God had allotted to him. But whether he profited or not by the gracious way in

which God, the God of Israel, had spoken of Himself to him, the divine history does not declare.

If we refer to the closing verses of 2 Chron. xxxvi., which are repeated in the opening verses of Ezra, we learn that in the first year of the reign of this Persian conqueror, who held the children of Israel in captivity, "the Lord stirred up" his spirit to make proclamation throughout all his kingdom of liberty to the captives, and the restoration to them of silver, and gold, and precious things, and all the vessels of the temple, that they might restore it to its ancient glory. "All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred." Thus did Cyrus fulfil the behest of Jehovah. But our business is rather with the painstaking way in which Cyrus was instructed by Him as to Himself. It shows us how God makes Himself known to one who may have heard of Him by the hearing of the ear, but of whom He says, "Thou hast not known Me."

The first element in this is, "I am Jehovah;" and we need only observe, that the Spirit of God by the prophet uses the word Jehovah no less than sixteen times in this chapter to shew its importance in His eyes. Again, we may remark upon the expression, "*There is none else,*" which occurs eight times in the chapter. We cannot fail to gather from this that God would have Cyrus to learn the truth of the One God (in contrast with a plurality of idols), who was emphatically the Jehovah of that people whom Cyrus held as his captives, and must now restore, "not for price nor reward," at the demand of Him whose chosen people they had never ceased to be.

The second lesson we find in God's making Himself known as the Sovereign Creator of all things. "I form the light, and create darkness. I have made the earth, and created man upon it. The Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth, and made it" (verses 7, 12, 18). In this threefold way does He impress the truth that creation had an

intelligent creator, and that Creator was Himself, the God of Israel, who had called Cyrus by his name.

Yet a third lesson appears in the warning (ver. 9, 10) which He gives to those who reason with and about Him to their own destruction: "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands? Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begettest thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth?" How evidently does God here indicate what He knew to be the tendency of men's minds! How wisely does He expose the folly of their reasonings! Does He reason in answer to their reasoning? Only so far as to expose it. Man is but a potsherd in the presence of his Maker; let him confine his reasonings to his fellow-potsherds! Man is a product of divine wisdom and goodness. What must be said when the clay arraigns the fashioner thereof, or the finished work denies that he who wrought it into its use and beauty possessed hands? or, still more strikingly, what will you say to the fool who takes his parents to task for having begotten such a thing as he? If consummate folly could go further than this, it would be for puny man to arraign his Maker, and to strive with Him only to his own certain destruction.

In the fourth lesson, we get to the more blessed ground of a Saviour-God and an everlasting salvation revealed! This God of Israel is "*the Saviour*;" and when we know Him by faith, we are "saved in the Lord with an *everlasting salvation*" (verses 15, 17). They who hear His voice, who know His name, who by faith rest upon Him as the Saviour who bare our sins in His own body on the tree, are saved with nothing short of an everlasting salvation. "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself," said the prophet, for in that day God was hid behind the vail of the temple; but when our Lord Jesus Christ died on the

cross, this could be said no longer. On the contrary, God is fully revealed, and, above all, as a Saviour-God who has saved us who believe, with an everlasting salvation. Blessed for ever be His name for such wonderful grace to guilty and lost sinners!

In the fifth lesson, the Lord graciously encourages those who turn to Him. He will never mock the seeking soul. "I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye Me in vain." None can say He besought them to come to Him, and then refused the blessing they sought from Him. He waits to be gracious, and He welcomes with open arms the one who draws near to seek His face. May every anxious-hearted sinner who seeks salvation be encouraged to approach Him with the confidence of a child-like faith in what He in His word declares concerning Himself. They shall *not* seek Him in vain.

In the sixth lesson, the Lord announces the boundings of His grace, even without limitation. "Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." Because He is God, and He *alone* is God, He will be unboundedly gracious; to the uttermost ends of the earth shall the blessing go forth, and the blessing shall be salvation! How full of richest grace is the word, "Look unto Me and be ye saved." The *look of faith* shall save; God's word is pledged to it. Only look; and looking, ye shall live.

But there is yet a seventh and closing lesson, a word of solemn warning. The God who is a Saviour is a God of righteousness. He must maintain His attributes; He must vindicate His glory; He must be true to His own character. Thus He speaks in the most solemn strain,—“I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.” We know how the Apostle Paul has taken up this Scripture in Philip-pians ii., and in equally solemn terms has declared

that God has given His blessed Son "a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Oh! dear reader, remember that God's oath has not yet been fulfilled; but if God is God, that oath will come to pass; and unless you bow the knee to Jesus in the obedience of faith as redeemed by His blood, you *must* bow to Him in the day of His power unto your eternal perdition.

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What proves there is a God proves that of ourselves we cannot know or conceive an idea of Him; that is, that there must be cause for what exists. There is a God, for nothing can exist without a cause; but that is not God. I am sure there is a God, for I am sure that what exists cannot exist without a cause; but what cannot exist without a cause is not God. It is, after all, saying that we are finite. *I must believe that He is.* The impossibility of thus conceiving existence without a cause (which proves there is a God) is the impossibility of conceiving Him who is that cause, and who exists without one.—J. N. D.

"GOD IS LIGHT."—There is nothing more dangerous than to use the Word when it has not touched my conscience. I put myself into Satan's hands if I go beyond what I have from God, what is in possession of my soul, and use it in ministry or privately. There is nothing more dangerous than the handling of the Word apart from the guidance of the Spirit. To talk with saints on the things of God beyond what I hold in communion is most pernicious. There would be a great deal not said, that is said, were we watchful as to this, and the Word not so used in an unclean way. I know of nothing that more separates from God than truth spoken out of communion with God; there is uncommon danger in it.—J. N. D.

## RELATIONSHIP TO GOD.

WHEN our relationship to God becomes the subject, how *commanding* it is, at least if it be a real thing with us. We may be anxious, or more calmly enquiring, or, having found, be joyful; but, however such affections may vary, they are *commanding*.

Look at David, happy in God when conveying the Ark home; what an object in the thoughts of others it made him! Look at him again when under conviction, at Ornan's threshing-floor, how full of humiliation and yet of self-sacrifice he was.

Look at the congregation of Israel, happy in God, in the day of David's coronation, how large-hearted they were; and so the princes of Israel in the day of the dedication of the house of God (1 Chron. xii. and 2 Chron. xxix).

Look at Peter in the hour of his convicting, how careless whether the boat sank or swam.

And so Zaccheus, interested in enquiring after Jesus, how heedless of the crowd he was; and, when happy with Jesus, how heedless of their injurious speeches he was.

And thus with the Eunuch, when an enquirer, he was not moved by the strange and sudden appearance of a stranger; and when he was satisfied, he was not moved by the still more sudden and strange disappearing of his companion.

When the Galatians apprehended Jesus at the first, see what manner of blessedness was theirs (ch. iv); and when the Hebrews were illuminated, what unstinted joy, leading to self-sacrifice, was theirs (Heb. x.).

These instances illustrate what I have suggested,—when the Lord really becomes the Object, how commanding a relation to our hearts He fills, and others become secondary.

## SEVENTH DAY OBSERVANCE.

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*Review of "History of the Sabbath and First Day of the Week," by J. A. Andrews, Battle Creek, Michigan.*

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THERE is a lack of accuracy in the book, and an edifice is sought to be reared on assumption destitute of proof.

I. As to accuracy.

1st. See page 11, where the author tells us God created the heavens and the earth on the *first day of time*. Scripture tells us, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. i. 1). When we come to the days, the earth is stated to be already in existence (2), and *heaven* was not made till the *second day*, nor earth till the *third*.

2nd. On the same page it is stated, "The earth thus called into existence was *without form* and void." But God tells us (Isa. xlv. 18) He did not create it *a waste*, or *in vain*—the same word as is translated in Gen. i. 2 *without form*.

3rd. On page 12 we are told, "Light had been created on the first day of the week." But light is never said to be *created*; God tells us, He *forms* it (Isa. xlv. 7).

4th. On page 62, "The top of the ark was called the mercy-seat, because all those who had broken the law contained in the ark beneath the mercy-seat, could find pardon by the sprinkling of the blood of atonement upon it." But how does this agree with Heb. ix. 15? "And for this cause He is the Mediator of the new covenant, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the *first covenant*," &c. And Acts xiii. 39 states, "By Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

5th. Page 159, "The new covenant or testament dates from the death of the Redeemer. In accordance

with the prediction of Jeremiah, it began with the Hebrews alone, and was confined exclusively to them until the expiration of the seventieth week. Then the Gentiles were admitted to a full participation with the Hebrews in its blessings, being no longer aliens and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints," etc. But the new covenant has not yet been made with Israel and Judah, though the blood on which it will rest has been shed, and the blessings connected with it—knowledge of God and forgiveness of sins—saints enjoy now.

Hence with these examples before us, we must not accept the writer's statements about Scripture without verification of them.

## II. As to assumption.

No one who receives God's Word will deny that God rested on the seventh day, and hallowed it. But did He enjoin the Sabbath observance on all mankind from that time? What proof is there of it? On this Gen. ii. is confessedly silent; on it all Scripture is silent, whilst its teaching is opposed to the assumption.

The Sabbath was for Israel (Exod. xx. 8-11; Deut. v. 12-15), its rest to be shared in by those with them. See also Exod. xxxi. 13-16; Levit. xix. 3, 30; xxiii. 3; Neh. ix. 14; x. 31; xiii. 15-22; Ezek. xx. 12, 13, 16, 20, 21, 24; xxii. 8, 26. It was God's sign between Himself and Israel. How zealous was Nehemiah for the Sabbath (xiii. 15-22); and concerning it he had to deal with Jews and Gentiles. The former he charged with profaning it (18); the latter he dealt with in another way (21), without a hint that its observance was binding upon all. If the assumption of the book is true, what an opportunity he lost.

Then as to its institution for any to observe, we have no trace earlier than Exod. xvi. 'Tis true, *weeks* seem to have been known to Noah; but the changes of the moon may have suggested that to man, for aught we know. Scripture does not settle the point; aught else must be mere conjecture. In Exod. xvi.,

where we first meet with it to be observed by Israel, it comes in as if it were something quite new; and not a word is there of reproof because they had not previously kept it. (See Exod. xvi. 23-29.)

Here, too, we first meet with the term *Sabbath*. "To-morrow" (I quote the Revised Version here, which makes it plainer) "is a solemn rest, a holy Sabbath unto the Lord." Again (ver. 25), "To-day is a Sabbath unto the Lord." Having now introduced the subject, the lawgiver proceeds (in ver. 26) to say, "On the seventh day, which is *the* Sabbath." Now, no language could be more suited for the introduction of something quite new to his hearers than that of Moses here,—"*a* holy Sabbath," "*a* Sabbath unto the Lord," then "*the* Sabbath." And that it was not till in the wilderness that Israel first knew of it, or were put under an obligation to keep it, Ezek. xx. 7-13 is proof. God there condemns them for idolatry practised in Egypt, but dates their pollution of the Sabbath from the wilderness. And it is clear that they did not keep the Sabbath in Egypt; for the prophet writes: "I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness; and I gave them My statutes, and shewed them My judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. Moreover *also*, I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." Now the law was given in the wilderness, and there also was the observance of the Sabbath first given them, as a sign between Jehovah and Israel. But how could it be a sign between Him and them, if it has been given to the whole human race?

If the Old Testament does not tell us that the observance of the Sabbath was made incumbent on the human race, does the New supply this deficiency?

No. If we turn to Acts xv., where the question was settled whether converts from Gentiles were to be circumcised, and to keep the law of Moses, whilst the

council agreed they were all free from that, the letter sent out announced that injunctions laid on men after the flood, being unrepealed, must be observed; and then they add, "From which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well." Now here certainly was an opportunity for pressing the observance of the Sabbath on them. But it was not done; for it was a sign between God and Israel, and had not been made an ordinance for all men to observe.

But the writer thinks that Mark ii. 27 teaches that the Sabbath was made for Adam. It teaches nothing of the kind. To say no more, a reference to Adam in Eden (for God rested *ere* the fall took place) would have been beside the question. The disciples had been hungry, and had supplied their want on the Sabbath day. Adam in the garden could not have been in that condition. Man's lawful wants were to be supplied on that day, the Lord teaches. But that supposes a condition of things quite different to what was in Paradise. It is all a chimera, supposing any reference to Adam; and the attempt to illustrate the fact, as the writer calls it (p. 122), from 1 Cor. xi. 9, is too foolish almost to notice. 1 Cor. xi. 9 distinguishes the *man* from the *woman*. To make the reference of any avail, the observance of the Sabbath, we must hold, was made to *Adam*, not to *Eve*—to the *man*, in contrast to the *woman*.

The writer also forgets the distinction between what Bishop Butler, I think, calls *moral* and *positive* precepts, else he would write differently. There could be no *a priori* reason why a Sabbath should be observed at all. God rested; that is the reason; hence He gave the Sabbath to Israel. There are *moral* reasons for injunctions against idolatry or lawlessness, which make the abstinence from them proper for all God's creatures. How different with a positive precept like the Sabbath. So, unless it is enjoined on people, we could not rightly say they are bound to observe it.

C. E. S.

## OLD TESTAMENT LESSONS.

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PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA.—*Exod.* xiv. 15-31.

PASSAGE OF THE JORDAN.—*Joshua* iii. 14-17.

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THERE is an interval of forty years between these two incidents in the history of Israel, though the original intention did not include such a period. In *Exod.* iii. 8, we find deliverance out of Egypt, and bringing "unto a good land and a large," &c., stated together, as successive without a hint of any delay; and again in *Exod.* vi. 7, 8, the two are similarly presented, as if nothing was to intervene between them. Further, when the Red Sea has been passed, and the people sing in triumph (*Exod.* xv.), they also count at once upon their entrance into Canaan as the next and connected stage of their experience.

It was Israel's own unbelief and murmurings that produced God's estrangement from them (not "breach of promise"—*Num.* xiv. 34) for the period of their wilderness journey. Not that God forsook them altogether, but He was restrained towards them, and delayed the accomplishment of His purpose to give them the land of Canaan.

Yet it would seem that the lapse of these forty years has led many to regard the close of them—Jordan—as a type of the death of the body, and Canaan a type of heaven itself after we have quitted the present scene.

A closer notice of the features of the history will shew that this view is a mistake of considerable importance, as it cuts off from the soul its present enjoyment of the rich blessings in Christ, which are found and known in power only as the Jordan has been crossed, and so the sphere entered where these blessings truly are.

The fact to Israel was, they were to be delivered out and to be brought in. So the thoughts of God

towards His people now are to deliver them from judgment and its fear, from sin and its power, from Satan and his taskwork, but also thereupon to introduce them into new relationships to Himself—as children and joint-heirs—priests and worshippers—receiving now a kingdom that cannot be shaken—feeding them now with Christ risen, as foreshadowed by the “old corn” of Canaan, and by its grapes and other fruits, the food of Israel after passing over Jordan.

The story of the wilderness has, at the same time, its own value,—“That He might humble thee, and that He might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end.” It tells a vivid tale of human life and weakness, when and where faith falls short of the heavenly blessings, which nevertheless are its own. But the Christian’s real portion is at once to take up all that is given to him in Christ. He will grow in apprehension and in grace all along his path; but the fulness of Christ is opened up for him as soon as he rests in the Saviour, to take, and enjoy, and live by.

Accordingly the Red Sea—deliverance out of Egypt by judgment of death—will show to us details in its narrative widely varied from those given to us in the passage of the Jordan.

#### AT THE RED SEA.

Israel is hotly pursued by enemies.

Moses’ rod of power is stretched out over the sea, and the wind causes the sea to go back all that night.

The receding of the water in front of them leaves a wall of water on either side.

Their marching order of five abreast (Exod. xiii. 18, margin) requires a narrow passage only for them to pass between these “walls.”

#### AT THE JORDAN.

No foe is in the whole district.

The priests carry the Ark to the water’s edge; and as soon as their feet touch the water, that from above flows back, and that below fails.

No water is near them as they cross.

To leave 2,000 cubits between the people and the Ark would make a wide, open stretch of dry land for them to pass.

They go through in the night.

The pillar of fire and of cloud is behind Israel for protection.

They leave no memorial in the sea, neither take one out from its bed.

The enemies are all drowned.

They sing a song of redemption by power, owning Jah, El, and Elohim (*i.e.*, God in majesty, victory, and creation) as their LORD.

Thus at the Red Sea, power controls the water—judgment as at the flood—dividing it so that the people go through between walls of it by night, protected by the cloud. But at Jordan, the presence of Christ—the Ark—disperses all water from the place, and in open day the people enter the land of promise; and instead of a song for deliverance, they record their entering in by twelve stones out of Jordan erected in their first lodging-place.

The counterpart of this is clearly seen in the declared grace of God to His saints to-day, given to them not as the result of special attainment, or at life's close, but made theirs at once upon faith. He who believes, however the foe may have followed, and however rightly God's judgment may have threatened, is carried through judgment—water—in his Substitute; the power of the foe is broken; and whatever night his soul may have known, he is sheltered and led by power divine, until he is enabled to sing to Him who delivered him from the power of darkness, delivered him from the judgment of his guilt, and delivered him from the power of evil within him as well—all by the cross and death of the Lord Jesus. True blessing indeed, yet of a negative kind, well figured in Israel at the Red Sea.

But does this, grand and stupendous as it is, complete the grace provided for a guilty sinner? No. Go to Jordan, and there a distinct figure of the Person of

They go over in the day.

No mention is made of the pillar. If there, its place would be in front; but the Ark led the way.

They raise a memorial in the river bed, and take out another and set up in Gilgal.

No enemy follows.

There is no song; for though introduced into the place of special blessings, they have yet to take possession of them by the sword and conquest.

the Lord Jesus Christ—the Ark—is in the foreground. Judgment—water—is seen removed, rather than imminent upon the soul; and in the broad daylight of God fully revealed, the believer is translated into the kingdom of His dear Son. Grace upon grace is given him, blessing added upon blessing. He partakes the divine nature, being born again; he is a child of God, a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of God's household, taken into the fellowship of the Father and of the Son, to find ever-deepening joy and delight in all that grapes, figs, pomegranates, old corn can tell, as picturing the fulness of Him who now delights to supply His blood-bought ones with all that He Himself is.

A clear distinction may thus be seen between the truths of the Red Sea and those of the Jordan, while both are the present portion of the believer. Dead with Christ, and risen with Him; saved out from the world, and brought to God in the holiest of all; every source of joy from flesh and sense not only judged, but superseded, and superseded by that which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man. "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit;" and they are revealed for us now, revealed that faith may go in and possess them, and live by them. We are carried in to the heavenly places in Christ—Canaan—where all is found, from the moment of our conversion. Such is the way of the love of God. He provides for us an entirely new moral sphere, filled with delights that have first delighted Himself, and has called us to share them, as found in Christ, now;—delights whose enjoyment must grow upon us as we taste them, for they are perfect, and infinite, and eternal.

In Egypt, men stooped down to get their food; for leeks (Num. xi. 5), melons, cucumbers, garlick, and onions grew in or upon the very ground, while fish, also, were below the surface. In Canaan, the supplies of food are found not on the ground, but in the first

heavens, as it were, the air,—wheat, barley, oil-olive, grapes, figs, pomegranates, milk and honey.

What do saints feed their souls upon? Do they stoop for their provisions? Do they live in Egypt or in Canaan? Do they at all despise the pleasant land? Israel "could not enter in because of unbelief; let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."

E. C. P.

PSALM CIV. 34.

"My meditation of Him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord."

I journey through a desert drear and wild,  
 Yet in my heart by such sweet thoughts beguiled  
 Of Him on whom I lean, my Strength, my Stay,  
 I can forget the sorrows of the way.

Thoughts of *His love*—the root of ev'ry grace  
 Which finds in this poor heart a resting-place,  
 The sunshine of my soul than day more bright,  
 And my calm pillow of repose by night.

Thoughts of *His sojourn* in this vale of tears;  
 The tale of love unfolded in those years  
 Of sinless suffering and patient grace,  
 I love again, and yet again, to trace.

Thoughts of *His glory*. On the cross I gaze,  
 While on me fall its sad, yet healing rays—  
 Beacon of hope, which, lifted up on high,  
 Illumes with heavenly light the tear-dimm'd eye.

Thoughts of *His coming*: for that joyful day,  
 In patient hope, I watch, and wait, and pray;  
 The day draws nigh, the midnight shadows flee,  
 Oh! what a sunrise will that advent be!

Thus while I journey on my Lord to meet,  
 My thoughts and meditations are so sweet  
 Of Him on whom I lean, my Strength, my Stay,  
 I can forget the sorrows of the way.

ANON.

## NOTES OF A LECTURE ON CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD BY J. E. BATTEN.

EXOD. xxviii. 1-6 ; HEB. viii. 1-6.

I DESIRE to speak of Christ's Priesthood connected with Him as God's great High Priest who has passed through the heavens. I turn to chap. viii., which *sums* up what the previous chapters contain. "We have"—words of the greatest importance in a day of uncertainty like this—a great comfort, truly, to say, "We *have* such an High Priest." Mark, too, the word "such"—that is, "Set at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." The throne has a prominent place in Hebrews. Reconciliation is settled there, and is seen when Christ is set. Is He set there? Then the throne's claim has nought to say to me. What was it outraged the throne? Sin—my enmity. He has slain the enmity ; our sins are put away.

I turn to chap. i. If anyone says, "I am troubled by my sins," the answer is, "When He had by Himself purged our sins." As Rebecca meddled with the birthright, so many believers meddle with God about their sins, and complicate the matter, whereas all they have to do with them is the fact that they committed them ; for this is all their portion in the work of Christ.

Verse 3. "When He *had*," &c. If you ask how I know, it is not by looking into myself. I look to the right hand of the Majesty on high. Someone once said to me, "I have had a love-token *to-day from* on high ;" and I replied, "I *ever* have one *there*."

Now as to the *glory* of the priest. I read Exod. xxviii. to show how God delighted to anticipate the garments of glory and beauty. What a sight for Israel! The Shecinah but reflected the names of Israel set in finest gold and precious stones. The glorious robes but typified Christ in His Person, therefore garments were put *on* Aaron. But my Priest is the brightness of God's glory. What distinguishes

Christ is that He *is* the brightness *in Himself*. How could I put a garment of glory *on* Him? What a glorious High Priest we have!

Chap. iv. 14. Now, He enters on Priesthood by passing through the heavens, and we can say, "We *have* such an High Priest." How it puts aside pretensions to priesthood! But I pass that by; my object is to show the *Person*, not the *counterfeit*. The Queen's robes give glory to her person, but Christ gives glory to all around Himself; therefore let us hold fast our profession (*i.e.*, "*we have*"). Like Saul, one is arrested by the glory of the Person, yet by faith one can say, "He *is* the brightness," &c. It is on His own sacrifice that His Priesthood is founded—on His own blood (ch. ix. 11, 14).

I have shewn *who* He is—that He has *passed* through the heavens; now I look at *what* He carries in, "not without blood." Here you get the Blood's two characters and applications;—one about me, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son," &c.; but, secondly, there is what the blood opens, "Having boldness to enter," &c. It is shed *sinnerwards* to me, but it is carried in *Godwards* "by a new and living way." Are you afraid to follow? *I* would be afraid to go in without it. It would be impertinent of me to deny my Priest. Mine is boldness that won't take a boldness—a liberty that won't take a liberty.

Before passing on, let me ask, What are His *living* services? He *has* got in. What are the functions of the great High Priest?

1st. He is in God's presence for us. There I can breathe.

2nd. He lives there to make intercession for us. His intercession is as perfect as His sacrifice.

3rd. He is able to save to the uttermost (ch. vii. 26). Such an High Priest *became* us. Someone said lately to me, "Well, I never followed Him in yet;" and I replied, "It is high time, then, you did." He came to *earth* to put away *sins*; He went to *heaven* to be

occupied with our *infirmities*—"touched with the feeling of our infirmities." The time of need is met. Do we realise this?

4th. If I merely give a needy one a shilling, it is kindness, but not sympathy; but Christ not only *succours*, but *sympathises* too. So, too, the good Samaritan; but Christ transcends all parables. It may be asked, "What do you come to the throne of grace for?" I answer, "To obtain and to find"—to obtain mercy, and find help—*and NOT about my sins*. What was the value of the burnt-offering? The whole went up a sweet savour to God. His fourth function, then, is sympathy and succour.

5th. He *maintains* us in the nearness to God in which the Sacrifice set us. Who was it maintained the names on his breast? Aaron. "Ye are complete in Him"—like Aaron with the breastplate on. But also in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily—and ye are complete in Him.

6th. He *sustains* us, too, in this time of need (ch. iii.). The heavenly calling; He maintains us according to this—"Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling."

7th. He *obtains* from the throne of grace. He obtained eternal redemption—is author of eternal salvation—we get the eternal inheritance—He offered Himself "through the eternal Spirit."

Don't shut yourself up to your own little circle, then, in the presence of such an epistle, but offer up the sacrifice of praise. The time of need is met by the sympathy of the Priest.

Chap. ii. 10. "It became Him," &c. "Through sufferings"—why? To get us out of them. It became GOD to do it. Ver. 14. He *has* destroyed (annulled) the devil, him that had the power of death; He *is* the Captain of our salvation; therefore, consider our High Priest.

Well, I could say much more, but we have reached the glory. On Lord's-day morning we meditate upon

His *dying* love, but here it is His *living* love that we consider. "The High Priest of our profession is passed through the heavens."

Once, down at Southampton, a man came in late to the reading, and apologised, saying, "Excuse my working clothes; I hadn't time to change; I'm a slave to my profession." Afterwards I said to him, "What is your profession?" He replied, "An engineer." "And who is the person you own as head?" I asked. "Brunell," he answered. "Ah," said I, "the High Priest of my profession is passed through the heavens, but you are a slave to yours; so I beat you as to the *Person*, but you beat me as to *practice*."

Our High Priest has put us all right as regards God—all right as regards the devil; *therefore* He takes us to the glory. "It became Him in bringing many sons to glory."

J. F.

"A MAN CAN RECEIVE NOTHING UNLESS IT BE GIVEN HIM FROM HEAVEN."—How does nature grow? The secret is in one word—*receiving*. The flowers grow by receiving. Place them where they can receive no sunlight or moisture, and they droop and die. As the sun rises in the morning, they turn to him their expanded bosoms, that his warm beams may fall there; they spread out leaves to take in more rain; they fold themselves in restful quiet at night, that dewdrops may settle on their buds and stems. After this manner man grows. The *body* grows up from childhood by receiving, and even in mature strength it builds up a ceaseless waste by the same process. The *soul or intellect* grows by receiving. It receives knowledge, allows itself to be cultured, acquires, but never creates. The *spirit* also receives grace, wisdom, truth, the life of God. Is your "expectation" from Him? Do you "*dwell* in the secret place of the Most High"? Do you "*abide* under the shadow of the Almighty"?—*Wm. Guest, F.G.S.*

PRACTICAL NOTES ON VARIOUS  
SCRIPTURES.

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“*Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*”  
—(Matt. vi. 21.)

THE science of making and keeping money is almost brought to perfection in this day, and it is a special danger to us, for our life and business is in the world. Now, is money on earth or Christ in heaven your treasure? It should be no question: where is the heart? *It goes with the treasure.* You can very easily understand a half-hearted Christian. His treasure—what is most prized—is partly in heaven and partly on earth, hence the divided heart. Christians, and not angels, are the Lord’s treasure (Matt xiii. 44). See to it that Christ *alone* is your treasure.

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“*The marriage of the Lamb is come.*”—(Rev. xix. 7.)

O Lord, “Thou hast kept the good wine until now.” On earth, we *know* the blood of the Lamb as the divine ground of everlasting security from judgment (Exod. xii). In heaven, we shall *triumph* as conquerors through that precious blood (Rev. xii). But our God has reserved for us yet deeper blessing, for the Lamb Himself, whose blood was shed on the altar, will be our Husband through eternal ages. Every sight of the Lamb, every sound of His voice, will awaken the remembrance of His love on earth—of His weary path, too, as the Man of sorrows. The scenes of Gethsemane, of Nain, of Sychar, of Bethany, of Olives, and of *the cross* will be interpreted by our eternal Lover and Husband. The marriage will be the crowning-joy of the Lamb and of His bride! Other saints who will be guests at the accompanying feast, and angels who will be on-lookers, will not grudge Him or us that moment of supreme delight—a moment which shall never fade from the heart and

memory of heaven—*where* in its calm, and beneath its cloudless sky, the marriage is celebrated.

Lord, haste that day—that cloudless day !  
That prospect bright unfailing.

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“*By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*”—(Heb. x. 14.)

Luther, and the reformers generally, only dimly apprehended the grand and emancipating truth of “perfected for ever,” the very instant a soul believes on Jesus. In spiritual energy they flung open the vestibule—justification by faith—and the conscience of Europe was set free. Now, tens of thousands are rejoicing in mighty delivering truth. A purged conscience and *present and abiding* perfection for God are felt for, and groped after, by the thousands who annually assemble at conferences here and there. Heb. x. 14 contains God’s answer to the need. The father and the babe, the sheep and lambs, the teacher and taught are all equally perfected for ever. There are no degrees in the justification or perfection of any for God. By “one offering” it has been done. Neither the throne on which Christ sits, nor the crown of glory on His thorn-pierced brow, can add one whit of value or lustre to the cross. By *it* you are perfected for ever, and by *it* you will be set in everlasting glory. “Clean every whit” and “perfected for ever” are true of every believer in heaven and earth, irrespective of the strength or weakness of his faith, and apart from every question as to his walk, state, or experience.

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“*Builded*” and “*Repaired.*”—(Neh. iii.)

This interesting chapter introduces us into a busy hive in Jerusalem. The nobles of Tekoah were either too lazy or too proud, or perhaps both, to work; they were the drones of the busy scene (verse 5). Certain remnants of Judah had returned from a seventy years’ exile in Babylon, and gathered “as one man to

Jerusalem." The men and women of that day and generation were strong in faith; governed by one intense purpose; earnest in the prosecution of the work—which was to build and repair Jerusalem. They could handle the trowel, or draw the sword, or worship at the altar, as occasion required. "Shoulder to shoulder" in service was their practical motto. There was work for all, and they did it. They did not speak much; their eyes, hearts, and hands were thoroughly in the work, and so they went about it with a will. There was the utter absence of strife or jealousy in that most interesting human hive. The work was done *earnestly* (verse 20), *thoroughly* (verse 14), *unitedly* (verses 12, 32). All classes and both sexes were fully employed,—the high priest and priests (verse 1), goldsmiths (verse 8), merchants (verse 32), rulers (verse 12), sons (verse 10), daughters (verse 12), Levites (verse 17), and the common people (verses 7-22). The building and repairing commenced at home (verses 10, 23, 28, 30). There was abundant work for all,—"another piece" for any who liked to do it (verses 21, 27). The whole was a "work of faith and labour of love." One volunteer is worth 100 pressed men. All were hearty, willing, able volunteers whose record is written in Nehemiah (chap iii). Now let us witness a similar scene in the power of the Holy Ghost! Why not? The ancient power of the Church (the Holy Ghost) remains. O for the love, zeal, and devotedness of Pentecostal days! Lord grant it, for Thy Name's sake!

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"The Living God."—(1 Tim. iv. 10.)

"The *Living God*" was the source and strength of the apostle in his work and suffering. No power of evil can prevail against the one whose "hope"—not trust, as in the text—is set on "the Living God." Here is an answer to every personal, family, or Church trouble. Here is strength for weakness. Why fear or dread a *seemingly* coming storm? Let but Jehovah

speak, and instantly the wild, proud waves roll back humbled and broken. Ah! we are only slowly waking up to the blessed, real fact that "the *Living God*," in that very character, is our strength and resource all along the way, till we see Christ's face in glory.

W. S.

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## A HOSPITAL NIGHT SCENE.

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"THERE never was such affliction as mine," said a poor sufferer, restlessly tossing in her bed in one of the wards of our hospital. "I don't think there ever was such racking pain!"

"*Once*," was faintly uttered from the next bed.

The first speaker paused for a moment, and then in a still more impatient tone resumed her complaint:—"Nobody knows what I pass through. Nobody ever suffered more pain!"

"*One*," was again whispered from the same direction.

"I take it you mean yourself, poor soul! but"—

"Oh, not myself; not me," exclaimed the other, as if some wrong had been offered, not to herself, but to another. She spoke with such earnestness, that her restless companion lay still for several seconds, and gazed intently on her face. It was a young face, scarcely more than 19, and not very long ago it was round and ruddy; but the cheeks were now wan and sunken, and the parched lips were drawn back from the mouth as if in pain. Yet there dwelt an extraordinary sweetness in the clear blue eyes, and a refinement on the placid brow, such as can only be imparted by a heart-acquaintance with Him who is "full of grace and truth."

"Oh, not myself; not me!" she repeated deprecatingly. There was a short pause; and then the following words, uttered in the same low key, solemnly broke the midnight silence of the place.

"And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand;

and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon Him, and took the reed, and smote Him on the head. . . . And when they were come to a place called Golgotha, they gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall. And they crucified Him . . . and they that passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads. . . . And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'

The voice ceased, and for several minutes not a syllable was spoken. The night nurse rose from her chair by the fire, and mechanically handed a cup of barley water, flavoured with lemon juice and sugar, to the lips of both sufferers.

"Thank you, nurse," said the last speaker. "They gave Him gall for His meat, and in His thirst they gave Him vinegar to drink!"

"She is talking about Jesus Christ," said the other woman, already beginning to toss restlessly from side to side. "But," she added, "talking about His sufferings can't mend ours—at least not mine."

"But it lightens hers," said the nurse. "I wonder how?" "Hush!" And the gentle voice again took the strain—"Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed."

"Healed! that's a blessed word; I wish I was healed."

Lucy Fletcher did not leave the hospital "a helpless cripple," as the doctors predicted. She left it for the presence of her Saviour in heaven.

Barbara was restored to health, and obtained a situation in a well-ordered Christian family. She never forgot the night scene in the infirmary; and she is now one of those who, in the face of many difficulties from within, and some trials without, steadily endeavour to live nearer and nearer to Christ.

JANE CREWDSON.

## LUKE VIII.

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THIS chapter tells us of yet further changes in the Lord's ministry, and of widening circles for its exercise, as "the Sower going forth to sow His seed." And it came to pass, "that He went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with Him."

Another feature connected with this new starting-point is, that "certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities," amongst whom was Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, "and many others, which ministered to Him of their substance." So near to us has He come, that He seeks in every possible way to win our hearts by His own, and make Himself as ready to receive out of our substance, as He has been willing to disclose His own fulness and grace. And this is the blessed lesson He loves to teach us, in all His sayings and doings, from first to last.

We have noticed differences and variations here and there, as regards the ministry of Jesus, according to the ways of God with His people: for instance, as Jehovah, He brought a vine out of Egypt, and planted it as narrated in Isaiah v., sending servants to gather the fruit thereof, and last of all His Son; but with what result we have seen. It is at this crisis, so to say, that an entirely new action comes into view; no longer a question of gathering fruit, as the produce of the vine, no, nor yet of the fig-tree, when Jesus came to it and found nothing but leaves; but Christ beginning all anew, and entering the field as a Sower, and bringing the good seed with Him. What was all this but a declaration that Israel, under the highest and most careful cultivation, had brought forth nothing but wild grapes, and that the time was come for man, as in a state of nature, to be set aside? A Sower had come, instead of the reaper, and had brought the seed with Him, instead of a basket to gather figs.

Moreover, this action was a change from external care bestowed upon a vine, to what was internal and moral; for the good seed was to be sown in good ground, viz., "They, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."

This transition from what was outward and ceremonial under the law of Moses, and which consisted in the observance of days, and weeks, and months, and years, as suited to a people in the flesh, was vital. "The word of God" would no longer be connected with external rites and ordinances, or with a nation outwardly separated off to Jehovah by succession and genealogy; but fruit is now to be brought to perfection by beginning at the heart, and making the ground itself good.

Moreover, some seed fell by the wayside; and "the devil" (active in his enmity against this new sowing of seed, as he had been formerly towards the planting) "cometh, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved." Nevertheless, "the seed is the word of God," brought by the Sower into this new connection with the heart of man, as into good ground, and brings forth fruit to God, though those on the wayside, and they on the rock, and that which fell among thorns in time of temptation fall away, or are choked with the pleasures of this life.

There is another action, which is of great moral significance and beauty, when taken up with the Sower, as applying equally to the Lord and ourselves: "No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but putteth it in a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light."

Having thus taken the place of a Sower in the field on behalf of God and men, and likewise as the Light upon the candlestick, for all who enter into the house, against the darkness and Satan, they come and tell

Jesus "that His mother and His brethren stand without, desiring to see Him." And here we get a final action, which seems to set all His associations upon another footing; for "He answered and said unto them, My mother and My brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it." This is the new rule of the kingdom, which makes "the word of God," and those who keep it, the bond of identity and relationship, for He does not know His own kindred according to the flesh.

In perfect keeping with this rule as to persons, is the change which Jesus adopts as to the circumstances which surround Him. "Now it came to pass on a certain day, that He went into a ship with His disciples; and He said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth." The Light has been brought in, and put upon the candlestick, if those in the house choose to accept it, and walk by it; the Sower has been in the land, and sown the good seed, if they will open their hearts and consciences to receive it, that it may take root; and now He leaves them for the ship, that He may "pass over unto the other side." Like as He said of this action, "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how." But when the fruit is brought forth, He will come again "with His sickle and reap, because the harvest is ready."

In this interval (while the light is shining, and the good seed is growing), Jesus and His disciples are upon the sea, where all is contrary to their mission. "As they sailed, He *fell asleep* (like the one that sowed): and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy." This shows us the altered character of their service. "And they came to Him, and awoke Him, saying, Master, Master, we perish! Then He arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the

water: and they ceased, and there was a calm. And He said unto them, Where is your faith?" The mother and the brethren after the flesh have been superseded by those "who do the will of God," the land is refused for the "ship in the sea," adverse circumstances and the storm of wind are accepted, yea, and "life in jeopardy every hour," as the Apostle of the Gentiles tells us, after the rejection and death of his Lord and Master had been fully witnessed by the resurrection.

But all this contradiction of sinners, and this adversity of circumstances, ought not to have concealed from faith, at such a moment too, the veiled glory of this Jesus-Jehovah! Isaiah had recalled the faith of Israel, by his magnificent prophecy, to the acknowledgment of the forgotten and all but "unknown God." "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure?" etc., said the prophet of that day. And surely Jesus, asleep in the ship, tossed in the hollow of the stormy sea, displays His Lordship over the waters, as the One who had originally "measured" them, if they can but penetrate His veiled humanity, as in grace He made one of their company. If they cannot assure their hearts of their safety, on this account, they may awake Him by their guilty fears, and He will give them an outward proof by His power that "God manifest in the flesh" is in the ship, by the calm He commands.

Amidst these new elements and mysteries of our service as Christians, with a rejected Lord, who can fail to read his own heart? not to say, as the disciples did, "We perish," but to charge our souls, in the deepening confidence of who He is that can sleep in the storm and be undisturbed, that we cultivate our own hearts by His, and say one to another, the circumstances that serve our Lord's purposes and objects are the very ones that *best suit us*.

Isaiah had further said, "Who hath directed the

Spirit of the Lord, or being His counsellor hath taught Him? With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him knowledge, and shewed to Him the way of understanding? Behold, thê nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance." And it is according to these patterns, and this dignity, that He quits the sea and the ship.

"And when He went forth to land, there met Him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before Him, and said, What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God Most High? I beseech Thee, torment me not." Led by the Spirit of the Lord as His counsellor, Jesus comes into this country of the Gadarenes, to act in His supremacy and sovereign title over the nations as the veiled Son of God, before whom they are as the drop of a bucket. In the exercise of His Lordship He had passed through the troubled sea; and now, in thê same title He purges the dry land, and drives out of His sight the legion of unclean devils and the unclean swine from off the holy country, which they had defiled.

Put to such a moral test as this, viz., the unclean devils in legion, and the herd of swine in their midst, or Jesus-Jehovah in the land, without either—"the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes besought Him to depart from them." Again is He refused, and "the acceptable year of the Lord also," and He went up into the ship, and returned back again; so "the devils enter in and dwell there," and the last state is worse than the first.

Legion; "the man out of whom the devils were departed, besought Him that he might be with Him;" but Jesus sent him away back to his own house, as a witness against them, and to shew "how great things God had done to him." So this willing missionary published the glad tidings "throughout the whole city."

The time of John the Baptist's "shewing unto Israel," and the time of the Messiah's shewing Himself to the nation, throughout the villages and cities and towns of the country, gave, alas, the double proof that they would neither mourn nor dance. What remains, but that they should carry out openly their enmity, and He pass into other services, which would lead Him upon other glories?

Still, Jesus lingers over them in patient grace, and in the person of Jairus, and the woman with an issue of blood, finds gleaning grapes, "two or three in the top of the uppermost boughs" which are to His mind, and whom He satisfies to the full. The woman's touch of faith and the answer given to it, by the virtue that went out of Him, put her beyond her own resources, and the skill of the physicians on whom she had spent all her living, to learn the blessed secret of what "went out" from Him whom she had touched, and by which she was made whole and set in peace.

Jairus, "the ruler of the synagogue," comes out to find One greater than even the temple, and to learn "life from the dead" in testimony against the nation's refusal of its Lord in that character. A messenger from the ruler's house says to him, "Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master;" but Jesus answered him, "Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole." And they laughed Him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. So He put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, "Maid, I say unto thee, arise." And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and He commanded to give her meat. In this scene it is we get the nation's own state and condition, in the presence of the Lord that healeth her! Is Israel ready to abandon the synagogue and the message from the ruler's house, as Jairus did, and be raised out of its place of helplessness and death, by the loving hand of Him who waits, and shews Himself to her? Or will the nation, by its refusal of the Messiah, be judicially made to learn its heavy

and long estrangement, yet in hope of a future day ; “ for if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead ? ”

Jairus reproves Israel, as one “ born out of due time ” having forestalled the national blessing, as Paul did on his own behalf afterwards, as one of the “ remnant according to the election of grace. ” In the coming dispensation of “ the kingdom of God, ” the reception of Israel nationally under the new covenant of blessing will be as “ life from the dead ”—postponed till then because of their refusal to acknowledge (as Jairus did, in his living daughter) the power and grace brought to them in the person of their Messiah, and which waited equally on their faith. “ They laughed Him to scorn. ” His trial of Israel, and this testimony to the kingdom, by Himself and the twelve apostles, sustained as it was by the daily exercise of a power which healed the multitudes of their sicknesses, and cast out devils from those who werè possessed by them, was as common in their midst as the sun by day, though unavailing as to their relations with God, which depended on their faith and reception of Himself.

J. E. B.

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RELATIONSHIP.—“ Here we have that blessed truth which is at the root of all these thoughts and purposes of God, but you *never get this without His personal pre-eminence* ; you will never find His personal glory compromised, as another has said, ‘ He never speaks to His disciples of our Father ; ’ but He has brought us into His place as man. . . . However Christ may bring us unto the same place with Himself, He abides the object of homage and honour, even as the Father. *If we elevate ourselves to an equality with Christ, immediately we set ourselves above Him, and it is ever the case thus with the flesh.* ”—*Collected Writings, vol. xxviii., pp. 61 and 430.*

## LETTERS OF INTEREST.

—, 1864.

DEAR —, I trust you are happy in soul too, as one who has found herself so bad, that she would most certainly be for ever lost, if Christ did not save her altogether Himself, and keep her every moment to the end. O, it is sweet to know that it is just that sort of magnificent grace which we need that has apprehended us, and that will be glorified in our salvation. Dearest —, it is *grace* we want to learn to spell out every day and in every thing:

Yesterday we had a blessed time. In the evening quite a river of grace, making glad the hearts of the poor of the flock. O! it was sweet! and all of grace in the giving. Romans fifth,—God's love to sinners, and to *none others*. It is not His love to Christians that is shed abroad, but a love *He hath to sinners* before ever they become Christians; and then in the end of the chapter, the glorious deliverance which this love works out for the poor slaves of sin and Satan, exposed to death and condemnation. It goes down to their sins, and comes up with them clean out of all the results of sin, and lands them in righteousness and life in Christ Jesus. It rejoices in over-riding the very aboundings of sin; and it is carrying us on its proud wave to life eternal *with* Jesus, our precious Saviour, whose blood *won* all for us. O! praise Him now, and live on Him!

J. R.

—, 1864.

DEAREST —, How independent of circumstances we are when it is sunshine within! How Jesus and His love casts its gladness on every scene! how it delivers us from ourselves, and makes us glad to take refuge from ourselves in the heaven of His love. Surely that is one lesson which we have not learnt, and which God is teaching us, even to cease to trust in *ourselves*, and to trust with joyous assurance in that

blessed One made ours, the God-Man, Jesus, our everlasting Lover! His love has been very precious to me lately, more so than ever, and I wish everyone would come and see how sweet it is.

We don't half imagine what love there is in Christ. And not to the *good*; that is the comfort. Over whom is there joy in heaven? Over the repenting, *i.e.*, over those smitten to the heart at their own badness in the presence of God's goodness. Whom does the Shepherd seek? *The lost*. And who are the lost? Those who acknowledge it. Not the ninety and nine; they were good pharisees, who were "not blind;"—but the lost are those like the poor prodigal, who have ruined themselves and are at the point of perishing—who are bankrupt in credit, in character, in goodness, in everything; whose case is truly deplorable and desperate, and whom no one would give twopence for. Ah! these are the very ones that the heart of God draws to. *These suit God*, for He is the God of MERCY. These are precious in the eyes of God; for He desires to magnify the riches of His GRACE, and such are just the ones in whom to show it.

Read the end of 1 Corinthians i., and see this. It is base things, and things that are not, that God has chosen, that no flesh should glory in His presence. And HE has given us life—and that, too, in *Christ*; and *He* has made *Christ* to be eyes to us, and righteousness too, and everything. Why? That no boasting may ever reach His ears from our lips, but in that blessed One—who is all to us, and all to us of Him. Either I am *boasting* in Jesus, or in self; or if not boasting in self, miserable because I can't.

Oh, let us all get into the dust before God, that we have so little valued that blessed One and His love. And let us, too, lift up our heads, for that is His end in staining the pride of our glory, even that we may have a true, never-failing subject of glory—even Jesus and His love.

He is coming soon; let us go forth to *meet Him*.

How much He loves ; how dear we are to Christ ! Would that we believed it. We don't half believe it. Let us go to Him and drink, and out of our belly will flow rivers of living water. We get to the end of everything but Christ. His love, grace, patience, sympathy, joy, *never* fail. J. R.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ROM. XII. 1  
AND EPHES. V. 1, 2 ?

—, 1869.

MY DEAR —, I thank you for your note as to the problem. I will write sufficient, I believe, to show you the solution, though a good deal might be stated, the truth is so important. In Romans you do not get the Church, or union with the Christ in glory ; it is the bondsman (translated servant), not the *new man*, Christ in, as in Ephesians. In Romans xii. 1 ; they are besought by the compassions of God to yield (same as chap. vi. 13) their bodies—their *intelligent* service (see Mr. D.'s translation, which is so exactly correct. The end of ch. viii., as I daresay you know, runs into xii., so that ix.—xi. is parenthetical), having intelligence of God's wonderful grace, redemption—of the believer's death and resurrection with Christ—though not ascension or heavenly glory. The exhortation to yield the body as a living sacrifice follows.

But Eph. v. 1, 2 carries you much further, and is much deeper and far more difficult (see J. N. D. again). We, as new men, having Christ our life in glory, and *united to Him there*, as seated there, we are called to walk as He walked, to be *imitators* of God as dear children, and walk in love even as the Christ loved us. The Lord is presented here as in Leviticus, the burnt-offering and meat offering, for it is a sweet smelling savour. He does in His perfection give Himself up to death and suffering at all cost to Himself (yet not the sin offering here), and as meat offering His perfect humanity delivering Himself up for us. We are to walk thus, which necessarily would go far beyond

Rom. xii., while including it; and *living out grace*, walk towards God and in service to men or saints like Christ's, in entire self-renunciation and devotedness, which is the principle and character of His mind and of the heavenly kingdom.

You speak truly in saying "one desires to know most of the practical power." Well, I think the path above opens up while it demands that; our secret is not *dying*, but *living*. It is not occupation with ourselves, even to die daily, mortify, &c., but it is occupation with the living Lord of glory, the Head in heaven, which will give us the power of having the sentence of death in ourselves, and seeing death stamped on all the scene around, where He was rejected, His love slighted, and men, moreover, spat upon and crucified Him.

I have of late got more, also, to see of the *Father's love* to us; it makes my heart at times to leap with joy—to be lightened up to see and enter into the astounding grace, love, care, long-suffering mercy of God the Father. . . . G. A.

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#### GENESIS L. 14-21.

Joseph's brethren could say there never was such a man as Joseph—so noble, such a saviour (preserver) he had been to them all. They could extol his work and his worth; *but when trial came, they shewed they had never known his heart!* (ver. 15). They expected hatred and requital! *Joseph wept over them!* What a picture! The children of God, for the most part, know Christ's work and measure of peace, they can extol Him, but they know not His full heart of love to them, and in the hour of trial they fail because of this. The father being dead, the brethren are more immediately brought before Joseph. So in the Anti-type; sorrow and trial removing props, cast us more entirely into His presence, but we are not at *our ease* there. His precious love, deep sympathy, &c., are not known, and He has never been properly appreciated.

What a lesson it is! We go out to try and amuse and occupy our minds; but that is not Christ Himself, or His unfathomable and unchangeable love.

G. A.

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### THE FIREMAN'S DAUGHTER; SITTING STILL.

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IT was a large school, the pupils were assembled and busily engaged at their work, when there was a sudden alarm of fire. As usual, a terrible panic immediately ensued. In wild confusion, and with shrieks and cries, everyone darted to the doors of the schoolroom, forming there a mass so dense as to render escape absolutely impossible to many. In the struggle to get out, several of the children were seriously injured, and one young lady, a teacher, rushed to an open window, and jumped out of it!

Throughout this scene of confusion, one girl maintained her self-composure, and remained seated on the bench, where she had been when the alarm commenced, without once moving. The colour had, indeed, forsaken her face; her lips quivered, and some tears rolled slowly down her cheeks; but not one cry, not one word escaped; and there she sat, silent and motionless as a marble statue, till all danger was declared to be over.

After order had been restored, and her companions had been brought back to their places, except those who were too much injured or too much frightened to resume their duties for that day, the question was asked her how it happened that she had been so composed as to sit still when everybody else was in such a fearful state of alarm. Her reply was, "My father is a fireman, and he has told me that if ever there was an alarm of fire in the school I must just sit still. *I thought of his words, and did as he desired me, and this was what made me stay quiet.*"

"Be still, and know that I am God."—*Psalm* xlvi. 10.

“Whoso hearkeneth unto Me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.”—*Proverbs* i. 33.

“For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, in returning and rest shall ye be saved: in quietness and confidence shall be your strength; and *ye would not*. But ye said, No; for *we will* flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift. . . . And therefore will the Lord wait, that He may be gracious unto you; and therefore will He be exalted, that He may have mercy upon you; for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for Him.”—*Isaiah* xxx. 15, 16, 18.

Cannot we learn a lesson from this little girl, and profit by the reason she gave for her quietness in the midst of the turmoil and confusion? She *thought* of her father's words, and she *did* as he told her; and it was this subjection and obedience that *caused her to sit in quietness*.

Self-will is a dreadful thing, a thwarted will is unrest and constant suffering, but a broken will is rest. How solemn are the two “*therefores*” in verse 16 of *Isaiah* xxx.; but, nevertheless, how full of love and mercy the two in verse 18! How like God! He waits to be gracious. We may, on account of our foolishness, be obliged to learn something of what the will is. It is a terrible thing to say “*we will*” and “*we will not*” (*Jer.* vi. 16, 17) to God; but He can make our own backslidings to correct us, and teach us the folly of leaning on an arm of flesh, of hewing out broken cisterns that can hold no water, or of trusting in the shadow of Egypt; and while the heart bowing to His will, even though it be with tearful eyes and quivering lips, is saying, “What have I to do any more with idols?” the Lord is saying, “I have heard and observed him.” (*Hos.* xiv. 8—compare *Jer.* xxxi. 18-20). The chastened one says, “I am like a green fir tree” (compare *P.s.* lii. 8); and Jehovah adds, “From Me is thy fruit found.” All praise be to His name for ever!

W. R. H.

## AMEN AND AMEN.

“ Let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and amen.”—  
*Psalms lxxii. 3.*

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“ This world is a wilderness wide,”  
 When Christ as our Treasure is known ;  
 How bright with His beauty 'twill shine  
 When He shall sit down on His throne !

All sorrow and death He'll dismiss,  
 The heavens and the earth shall approach,  
 All nature partake in the bliss,  
 The serpent no longer encroach !

The groan of creation shall cease,  
 The sword in its scabbard shall rest ;  
 His people exalted in peace,  
 All nations in Him shall be blest !

Thy glory shall fill the earth, Lord,  
 As sunlight illumines the sky ;  
 All creatures shall bow at Thy word  
 As truly on earth as on high !

Exult then, ye saints, when ye think  
 Of glory on earth and in heaven ;  
 Salvation, and blessing, and praise  
 To Thee, our Lord Jesus, be given !

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“ Lead on, Almighty Lord,  
 Lead on to victory :  
 Encouraged by Thy blessed word,  
 With joy we follow Thee.

Till of the prize possessed,  
 We hear of war no more ;  
 And, O sweet thought, for ever rest  
 On yonder peaceful shore !”