

WORDS IN SEASON.

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

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CORRECTION.

Page 62, line 9, delete "on the third day."

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OUR NEW YEAR'S PROSPECT.

WE'RE going to see the Lord,
To gaze upon His face,
We're going to shine, in light divine—
The glory of His grace!

We're going to be with Him,
His Body, Bride, His own;
We're going to be, eternally,
With Him upon His throne.

We're going like Him to be,
To walk with Him in white;
We're going to share His glory there
In heaven's unsullied light.

We're going to worship God,
The Father of our Lord;
To praise on high what brought us nigh
Through the Eternal Word.

We're going to endless joy,
The glory all be His;
In heavenly light, where all is bright,
Our everlasting bliss!

We're going to rest for aye,
In His eternal love;
We're going to bring, and ceaseless sing,
Glory to Christ above.

I BEG you to think much of the younger brethren, those less confirmed in the faith, and to surround them with your care and your affection; it is just they who have need of it. I have several upon my heart, but I leave it to your charity to think of them. God adds His blessing when one acts in charity. He Himself is in the power of His blessing, and the feeblest hearts are established.—J. N. D.

A

DEATH AND RESURRECTION THE PATH- WAY TO GLORY.—*Luke ix.*

THE Lord Jesus once more sends forth His disciples to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick, and gave them power and authority over all devils," &c. ; but connecting them with His own rejection, by the words, "whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them." These are solemn tokens of the coming rupture between Himself and the nation ; and the more so, because there could be no question that "the power and authority" were with Jesus and the twelve, which could, and did, not only lift the people up out of their diseases, and drive away the legion of devils into the sea, but could as easily introduce the positive blessings of the kingdom, if they would welcome Him into it.

The disciples departed, "and went through the towns, preaching the glad tidings and healing everywhere ;" and now Herod, the Tetrarch (the man in whose hands the adverse power and authority lay), heard of all that was done, and he was perplexed ; and Herod said, "John have I beheaded ; but who is this of whom I hear such things ? And he desired to see Him." The tempter had brought power and authority and the glory of the world before the eye of Jesus, when upon the high mountain ; "And the devil said to Him, All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them," &c., but only to be refused when offered as a temptation.

Power and authority came now in another form from the tempter, and are seen in Herod as antagonistic to the setting up of the kingdom of God in its outward and prophetic Daniel form, whether introduced in testimony by John, whom the Tetrarch beheaded, or presented in the person of its King, who is a perplexity to Herod.

One more character remains for Jesus to take up,

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as the Jehovah of other days, in which He led them out from Egypt, and the cruel bondage of Pharoah, into the wilderness, on their way to Canaan, and gave them bread from heaven to eat. And this comes about after the twelve apostles were returned, and had "told Him all that they had done." And a remarkable, yea, touching, scene it is! "He took them, and went aside privately into a desert place; and when the people knew of it, they followed Him, and He received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them all." Jesus is with them in patient grace and testimony till the day begins to wear away, and then He comes forth in power to serve them in other ways; for "the twelve come to Him, and say to Him, Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the towns and country round, and lodge, and get victuals, for we are here in a desert place." In this matter the twelve are at fault, as not counting upon the sufficiency of Christ for the circumstances in the midst of which He was. Nor is this all, for they personally fail to use the power and authority which He had transferred to them, and in which they had just been acting in casting out devils and healing diseases. He gives them the opportunity which this occasion presents, of being identified with Himself in the exercise of this power and authority, and says, "*Give ye* them to eat;" but they fail to use it, and looking to themselves, alas, they said, "*We have* no more but five loaves and two fishes, except we should go and buy meat for all this people; for they were about five thousand men." The apostles, thus commissioned and thus endowed, could as well have fed them as Himself, for in truth it was but one and the same thing; but they broke down, and lost the opportunity of winning this fresh glory for the kingdom of God and its King.

How often do we offend in the same way, as to the value and use in power of the name of Jesus before

the Father ! Still, if the disciples fail in His presence to "give them bread to eat," He takes this into His own hands, and bids them do all that remains, which is more natural and human, and within their reach. "And He took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to the heavens" (that had opened themselves at the outset, to look down upon Him), "He blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude." The twelve baskets full of fragments that remained to them after they had all eaten, and were filled, must take the place of the twelve apostles, who had failed, and bear their own convicting evidence to the power and authority of Him who was with them in the desert place, and fed them to the full. The tempter may take his own course with the kingdoms of the world and their glory, for Christ has refused them at his hands. He will take all this, and more too, presently, by "the voice from the excellent glory," when He goes up to the mount, and receives from God the Father honour and glory. Herod, too, may take his course (led by the devil), and use the power and authority in antagonism against the messenger, and the Lord whose ways John came to prepare. The obedient Servant, the dependent Son of Man, Jesus the Son of God, must now take His own place outside, and present the kingdom and Himself in another form and in other connections with the mind and will of His Father. He must take counsel with God upon these antagonisms, for a crisis has come upon the world. Where will He go? and what will He do with His faulty apostles? where will He leave *them* ?

"And it came to pass as He was alone praying, His disciples were with Him ; and He asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am?" For this ignorance of Himself was the root of their recent failure, and He has something to say to them about it, to get it settled, as He alone could settle it. So first, He puts them at their ease, by asking what the

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people say of Him ; and they “ answering, said, John the Baptist ; but some say Elias ; and others, that one of the old prophets is risen again.” It is not till after this, that He makes the question a personal one, and asks, “ But whom say ye that I am ? And Peter answering, said, The Christ of God. And He straitly charged them that they should tell no man that thing.”

As the praying One, we may recall that at the beginning of His mission, in Jordan, with His fore-runner John, “ it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptised, and praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended on Him.” Afterwards, “ He withdrew Himself into the wilderness, and prayed,” when so much the more went there *a fame* abroad of Him, and great multitudes came together to hear. Again, before the appointment and mission of the twelve, “ He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God ; and when it was day, He called them.”

So here, when Satan and Herod by the opposing power against Him, and the authority by which He spake and acted, necessitated another position, “ He was alone praying ;” and He comes forth with His disciples, saying, “ The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.” He will not ask when alone for “ twelve legions of angels,” nor command His servants to fight, that He should not be delivered to the Jews, but accepts the pathway of rejection from the powers and authorities that rule, that by death and resurrection He might connect the kingdom of God and Himself with a new centre in the heavens, where Satan and man have neither place nor title. With this position, which takes the double character of the rejected One of the earth, but the accepted One of the heavens, He desires to identify His disciples, saying, “ If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up

his cross daily, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it ; but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it."

If the Lord accepts at this crisis a new position for Himself (to be perfected the third day, by means "of the fox" and Herod's sword), He must open a corresponding path for His disciples, and those who come out to associate themselves with Him upon Peter's confession of Christ, and upon the Lord's own exposition of the path He takes for Himself, and the steps He treads, by which to reach His higher glory. The power and authority in His hands have been challenged by the tempter, and refused in the cities, and villages, and towns of Israel, and the whole world ; and now as the praying One, He commits the testimony, and Himself, and His own, into the hands of God the Father, that the heavens may justify Him by His ascension into them as the Son of Man, and establish His title and rights to the kingdom another day, in manifested power and glory.

In view of this day, Jesus puts the question as to the world, and His own disputed title to it, still further, saying, "For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me, and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels ;" adding, "What is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?" All these things, and more yet, are the subjects of this wonderful and momentous chapter, and lead now to "the mount of transfiguration," upon which the destinies of heaven and earth are to be openly determined, according to the counsels of the Father, "and the voice from the excellent glory, which said, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye Him." The nation and the world into which He came were not either ready or willing that Jesus should open out His power and glory before their eyes, in the day of His humiliation, as the Son of

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David according to the flesh. And therefore any further manifestation is withdrawn till a future day, when they shall say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord."

Nevertheless, Jesus has another word to say to the disciples, who have confessed Him in the day of His humiliation, and another scene to show them. But not till after eight days, a period of time when the eighth day power, known only in resurrection, shall be brought into this creation, and applied in seventh day circumstances of ruin for the recovery of the nation under its Messiah—Jehovah. The promises and covenants to Abraham and the fathers, as well as "the sure mercies" of David, can only be made yea and amen to Israel in resurrection. And what is resurrection but life from the dead at the end of the Sabbath, or the seventh day, "as it began to dawn upon the first day of the week," or the eighth day in prophetic language and computation? In their present association with the Lord as the rejected One, they would, or might, in faithfulness to Him, lose their life for His sake, as the new way of "saving it;" but He says (in view of this path of service with Himself), "I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of *death*, till they see the kingdom of God." Here let us remark again, how the Spirit in this treatise loves to present our Lord in the character of "the praying One" from first to last, whether it be at His opening service in Jordan, or as reaching in title His highest glory upon this earth, on the mount, where He was transfigured.

"And it came to pass, about an eight days after these sayings, He took Peter, and John, and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And, *as* He prayed" (in the very act), "the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening." And is it not morally after this same pattern still, with those who have "a part" with Him, that the humble one is the obedient one; and the

obedient servant, the dependent one ; and the dependent man, the praying one ; and the praying one, the transfigured one ; and the transfigured one (morally, both as to countenance and raiment), the accepted and the accredited one, by the voice of love from the top of the mount, that says "hear" such an one? "And behold there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." What new subject is this, between the heavens and the earth, and why is "His decease" the object of this visit? The angel of the Lord and the glory of the Lord appeared, and shone round about the young Child in the manger at Bethlehem just now. The multitude of the heavenly host were praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure toward men"! The celebration of His *birth*, and introduction into the midst of men, was *then* the absorbing and commanding theme ; why *now* His decease, by the two men who appear in glory to talk with Him, as to its accomplishment in Jerusalem? Which of these two companies is true—where one contradicts the other—and is it His birth, or is it His decease, which is to bring glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good pleasure to men? Was Simeon right, when by the Spirit he came into the temple, and celebrated the virtues of the young Child in his arms, as "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel?" or are the two men right, who come out from the heavens to talk with Jesus of the closing up of His life in death? And how can His decease open up some unknown path beyond, that may lead men to glory, and to God, and to peace, and to His good pleasure? What answer can be given to questions like these? There is but one reply, and it is this, that all is right, as it always has been, on the part of God to mankind ; not one good thing has failed of all that He has

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purposed and promised. The counterpart to this is equally true, that all is wrong where man is, as it always has been, from the garden of Eden to the cross and Golgotha. The order of God in creation was broken in upon by Satan, as the liar and murderer, from the beginning, and it repented God that He had made man upon the earth, and He destroyed the world by the deluge. In the world, since the flood, God has introduced government and given forth the law by Moses, as a trial, and for a test, that the truth of man's state and condition might be evidenced between his own conscience and God. Another ministry was introduced by the prophets, to see whether man was reclaimable, after having violated the law of God by the mediator Moses, and become a worshipper of Baal; and Elijah was the representative prophet, who vindicated the rights of God against idolatry. These were the two men who appeared in glory, and talked with Jesus about His decease, because the testimony, whether by the law of Moses, or by the prophets, as in Elijah's ministry, had failed to recover the people to God.

The last testimony from above was by John the Baptist, and the Messiah come in the likeness of men, to win them out of the hands of the devil, as we have seen in this gospel. But even from the lips of Him who spake as never man spake, the final proof came out, that no reclaiming testimony would avail, and that man was not to be recovered by these means. God sent a fiery law into their midst by Moses, demanding obedience, but by the law was the knowledge of sin. God "hewed them by the prophets" for their disobedience, but to no purpose, though Elijah "had power to shut up the heavens for three years and six months, that it rained not." Last of all God sent His Son, with a ministry of unwearied grace, to see if man's heart could be reached by the love of Him, whom man could not and would not love; "but for His love, they were His enemies."

These three ministries bring out their respective evidences : first, by Moses, that man could not help himself ; secondly, by Elijah, that man would not be helped by God ; and lastly, by the Lord, that man refused to be loved, though the Son of the Father had come down to him, and pursued him with love. Man, in his own nature, was found to be ruined by the fall ; how could such a need as this be met, and by whom, and how, is the question at issue. And they talk together, "and spake of His decease, which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." The divine secret and remedy for this refusal by men of the gracious testimony of the Messiah and the twelve, and of all previous testimony by Moses and the prophets, is the decease. He must "die for the nation," and lay the foundations of "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good pleasure in man" upon another footing, by the surer and deeper work of redemption by His own blood. He must suffer, "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God."

No, it is not the birth of the child, though given out from the heavens by the celebration of the multitude of the angelic hosts, and accompanied by the glory of God to Bethlehem, as the undoubted expression of the good pleasure towards men from on high, that can unite the creature to the Creator. It is not by hymns and songs of praise, struck ever so nobly, and sounding ever so grandly, that the earth can be made responsive to the heavens, or mankind brought into unison with the Holy One who dwells therein, though the unspeakable gift of God in the Child born, and the Son given, be the occasion. How can a man that is a sinner, with a guilty conscience, be vocal ? or how can a creation, groaning under the bondage of corruption, be responsive to the voice of its Creator ? No ; the voices of the heavenly hosts, as they usher in the mystery of God manifest in the flesh, may win the shepherds keeping

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II

their flocks by night, but Herod is troubled at the tidings of this illustrious Stranger, and all Jerusalem with him. The cross, in its own due time, is but the endorsement on the world's part of Herod's earlier enmity and trouble at the tidings of the birth of the young Child; and in this eventful interval between the manger and the cross, the Lord grew up and became intimate with all around Him, only to learn what they concealed. Else, why is it recorded of Him, in His daily ministries to do them good, "But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man"? Nothing less than a power that can reach this deep-seated enmity of the human heart, this alienation of nature in mind and will from God, nothing less than ways and means by which all this can be met and put aside in grace, and man in his wretchedness redeemed out of this moral corruption and state, are the grave matters in counsel and deliberation at the mount. What is the answer from the top? Like as in the Apocalypse, upon the opening of the seventh seal, "there was silence in heaven about the space of half-an-hour," when the seven angels stood before God, and another came with a golden censer and much incense to the altar, and offered it with the prayers of all saints, and waited for His answer from God before the golden altar, so now, the two men who appeared in glory, and talked with Jesus, have got the secret from the Shekinah and speak of His decease as the pre-determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

But besides the natural enmity of flesh and blood, and the world's concealed rebellion under the leadership of the devil, till the hour for its outbreak came about, there were three men of another stamp to the other two who appeared in glory, and whom Jesus had associated with Himself, to "see the kingdom of God, and the Son of Man coming" in royalty into it, before they should taste of death. These three were

a sample of the best that even Jesus could do for human nature, in men gathered into the closest intimacy with Himself, and under the direct example and influence of His own personal ways and words. Nor would love like His leave them behind when He was about to be accredited from the excellent glory, and the voice from the cloud, as having won by righteous title the highest place on the earth. He had refused long ago the power and the glory of the kingdoms of the world, when shewn to Him by the tempter in a moment of time, but now to take them from the Father's hand for ever, as the only heir and Lord, and to receive the honour and majesty which were bestowed on this mountain as His rightful due.

These three men had failed, when in the desert place with the rest of the disciples, to use the power and authority, when He said, "Give *ye* them to eat;" yet He would not leave them behind, when the time was come that He should be owned in His full dignities as the Son of Man, as the Son of Abraham, and the Son of David, the possessor of all covenanted and promised blessing from God for the earth. "But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep." And now we have not to witness the enmity and wickedness of scribes, and Pharisees, and the rulers of the nation below, but the weakness and incompetency of human nature to be associated with Jesus, in the showing out to them of the kingdom and His majesty. The higher He carries flesh and blood up with Himself into the scenes of His transfiguration, the more does our nature, when at its very best (as in these three men), drop off by its own moral incapacity from companionship with such an One, till "they are heavy with sleep." Can He take them higher? Nay; in love for them, He has already taken them too high, for at this point they are manifestly beyond the range of a nature such as theirs. Another great lack is discovered *now*, viz., not only what the enmity of wicked flesh needed,

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that its hatred might be slain, but what willing, yet weak flesh required, for deliverance out of its felt incompetency to follow on.

Nothing less than *redemption* will serve God or sinners in His grace and government of the world, and nothing less can avail for Jesus and His disciples. Fire from the golden altar is the answer of God in judgment by the apocalyptic vision; blood, by the death of the transfigured One, is the voice in the cloud, and taken up by the two men in glory, who are outside the effects of sin and the fall, and can talk with Jesus of His decease! The one vast turning point and leverage for God, on behalf of a guilty world, and for the casting out of Satan into the lake of fire, is the death of Christ. By the resurrection of the Son of God with power, His poor and weak disciples (in whom the spirit was willing) are made new creatures in Christ, and partakers of another nature, as born of God, in which they can neither sleep nor deny Him! "And when they were awake, they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him."

And now again the weakness and inaptitude of human nature at this height, and carried into this intimacy with Christ, into the kingdom and the majesty, betrays itself in other forms. Incapable when asleep, or incompetent when awake, "Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles, one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias, not knowing what he said." What a rebuke to our nature, if it speaks in circumstances where it cannot be at home, is this comment upon the lips of Peter; nor need we linger further at the mount, to learn the inaptitude of flesh and blood, provided we read its sentence in "the decease," and carry it away with us. It may, however, be remarked, that tabernacles are surely *out of place* with the kingdom and kingly days of *rest*, nor would the men in glory be reduced to them

again. Surely the Son of Man is come to make another path for Himself than buildings after this pattern! As for Moses, he had long ago left mount Sinai, and its ministry of condemnation, for the mountain of Nebo and the top of Pisgah, where the Lord shewed him all the promised land, from Gilead unto the utmost sea, and the south, and the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. And the Lord said, I have caused thee to see the land with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.

In this day of the Messiah's glory, it seems as though Moses does not taste of death, nor is he detained in the unknown place where the Lord hid him. But as though these were mere stepping-stones for his faith, he skips upon the mountain tops, leaping over all the intervening ways of Jehovah with his historical people, to take his place and part as a man in glory, to talk of the decease, by which Jesus could alone confirm the inheritance to the twelve tribes of Israel.

Elijah, too, had quitted Mount Horeb, and his ministrations of righteousness and death, accompanied by fire from heaven to consume the adversaries, to learn and accept the destructive power of God in the light of His patient grace and long-suffering. The prophet is instructed in these lessons by the chariot of fire and horses of fire which wait upon him, and is likewise taught by the whirlwind of Horeb, that "the still small voice" of that day can add to the reproof, by causing the whirlwind and Elijah to make a further acquaintance in his ascent by it into the heavens. In proper season, he also comes across the unknown and out of sight, which God keeps in His own control, and appears as a man in glory to talk with Jesus—not of vengeance and days of iniquity below, but of the decease, by which an effectual work in redemption should be accomplished at Jerusalem!

How well, yea, how perfectly, does "the glory of God" teach us the secret of His grace reigning

through righteousness, unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord, if on our part we can only cease from our own ideas and activities in building tabernacles, in the felt and acknowledged incompetency of flesh and blood when under the highest influences to suggest a thought to Jesus in keeping with His mind. "While Peter thus spake, there came a cloud and overshadowed them ; and they feared as they entered into the cloud." Long ago, they had been as a people, coming up out of Egypt, baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and since that time they had been baptised in Jordan by John, unto their Messiah and the opened heavens, and the voice which marked Him out as the anointed One of Israel. At the mount of transfiguration the cloud has preceded them, and waits for their Messiah, not now to give Him forth to them by His birth, but to anoint Him for His work in death, and to make them witnesses of the power and authority which He received from God the Father, as entitled to the kingdom and its dominion.

"My beloved Son ; hear ye Him !" Accepted in the Beloved, we are loved by the Father, as He loves His own Son.

"And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen." We may well ask, after reading these words, "Jesus was found *alone*," What has become of the kingdom that had been thus foreshadowed on the mount ? and where is all the personal and official glory gone, that was beyond the brightness of the sun ? and where the honour and power that He received from God the Father, by which to establish the kingdom, and enter triumphantly into the city of the great King, and take His place there, as heir to the throne and royalty of David ? Dispensationally He forgoes His own personal rights and titles as the King, and postpones His relations to the kingdom of God and its estab-

lishment in Jerusalem to another era. The people and their rulers are not willing in the day of His humiliation, and He will wait for the outpouring of the Spirit upon them, as the witness of their redemption by His own blood, and the token that He who descended has ascended up to where He was before, that He might make "the mercies" covenanted by Jehovah "sure" in their accomplishment to Israel and the Gentiles, by His own resurrection. He might have travelled higher than the mount could have carried Him, and gone back with the two men in glory, and higher still, retreated upon His own glory, which no one could share with Him. But He would not go back to the Father alone and discouraged; how could He, on the other hand, reign in the midst of the world as He found it and proved it from His birth to His cross, except He prayed for twelve legions of angels, and took it by force, as the violent Man? Nay, He refuses to go back with the two men who appeared in glory; nor will He at this time journey with dyed garments from Bozrah, to tread down in His anger, and trample in His fury, as though the day of vengeance were in His heart.

These are not His ways for to-day, but He accepts His rejection at their hands, and will buy them back by His decease, and through His title by redemption bring them under the new covenant, and take away their stony heart, and put a right spirit within them, that they may be willing in the coming day of His power and great glory. Moreover, by His own death and resurrection He will pass through the heavens, made a High-priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedek, that by mediation and priesthood He may unite the tribes of Israel with a covenant Jehovah in permanent blessing, as it is written, "And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel."

THE BLESSED HOPE.

17

Outward blessing is connected with the presence of Christ in the midst of His earthly people, and the establishment of His kingdom, whereas our blessedness begins during His absence from the earth, as identified by the voice as one with the Beloved in His new position as rejected from the earth, and accepted by the Father in the house where the Son is now gone.

J. E. B.

 "THAT BLESSED HOPE."

"And soon the happy day shall come,
 When we shall reach our destined home,
And see Him face to face ;
 Then with our Saviour, Lord, and Friend,
 The one unbroken day we'll spend,
 In singing still His grace."

WHAT a prospect ! What a future ! What a hope ! The very One who in the beginning was the Word, God manifest in the flesh ! The One by Whom all things were created ! The One full of grace and truth ! The One in Whom all fulness dwells ! The One who upholds all things by the word of His power ! The One who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God ! To think that this very One we shall see face to face ! Well may we look for that moment to arrive when we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Oh ! blessed Lord, enlarge our scanty thought that we may enter into it. May we ever be looking forward to that day when Thou shalt see of the travail of Thy soul and be satisfied. With this before us, surely we should indeed be "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before," pressing "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." What we see in that dear saint of God with his eye on the Object in the glory, surely should produce the cry, "Lord, I also want to apprehend *that* for which Thou hast apprehended me." In this

day of evil, when men are doing that which seemeth right in their own eyes, how we need to know what the mind of the Lord is, and for this we must be in a position suitable for Him to communicate it to us. We must be in His company. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him." He who delighted in His Father's will, and who was ever in His bosom, does He not want us to be delighting in His will? Does He not want us to be occupied with Himself, giving Him in all things the pre-eminence? "For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you." Oh, may we in this "little while" acknowledge His rightful claim over us as Lord, and recognise, too, that we are simply here to do His will. May this hope of ours develope in our hearts a deeper love for Him, a longing for His return; then our lamps will burn brightly, and we shall be like unto men that wait for their Lord, and we shall recognise, too, more and more, that we are pilgrims and strangers in a foreign land. "For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." To Him be all praise and adoration, both now and throughout eternity. Amen. J. H. I.

PROPITIATION is presenting to a holy God what the righteousness and holiness of that God necessarily claims, while infinite love has provided the spotless Sacrifice.—J. N. D.

NARRATIVE OF THE LORD'S BURIAL AND RESURRECTION.

IT was a solemn hour when "Jesus, having again cried with a loud voice, yielded up His spirit." The rent veil, the earthquake, the rent rocks, the opened tombs, were loud announcements from God that the mighty victory was won, that heaven was opened, the holiest entered, and the great sacrifice accepted! "And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned."

The body must needs be removed from the cross. Where were His apostles? and His brethren, where were they? Had all forsaken Him? There were yet two disciples, who, though they had feared to confess Him while He lived, now come boldly forward to render the last sad tribute of affection to His lifeless body. Joseph of Arimathea asked leave of Pilate to take Him away. It was readily granted. He went, therefore, and bought fine linen. And Nicodemus, the same who came to Jesus by night, came, bringing a mixture of spices, about a hundred pounds weight. "They took therefore the body of Jesus, and bound it up in linen cloths with the spices, as is the custom of the Jews to prepare for burial." Many women were there who had followed Him from Galilee, and who had viewed from afar the whole scene of the crucifixion, among whom was Salome, the wife of Zebedee, and Mary, the mother of James and Joses, and Mary Magdalene. The two latter drew near, and sitting opposite the sepulchre, saw how His body was laid. As the Sabbath drew on, a stone was hastily rolled to the door of the sepulchre; and they departed, and remained quiet on the Sabbath, according to the commandment.

Thus Joseph and Nicodemus divided between them the honour which ought to have been shared by others; but none lent a helping hand.

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“Late on the Sabbath, as it was the dusk of the next day after the Sabbath” (our Saturday evening), “came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary” (of Cleophas) “to view the tomb” (Matt. xxviii. 1). They returned home, and, joined by Salome, “bought aromatic spices, that they might come and anoint Him” (Mark xvi. 1). In the dead of the night, or early morning, the Roman soldiers still keeping guard at the tomb, “there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descending out of heaven came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. His look was as lightning, and his clothing white as snow; and for fear of him the guards trembled, and became as dead men” (Matt. xxviii. 2-4). Little sleep would Mary Magdalene have that night. Alarmed and solemnized, and probably impatient for daybreak, she at length wandered alone to the sepulchre. It was yet dark when she entered the lonely garden; all was still; the terrified guards had fled. Startled at finding the stone rolled away from the empty tomb, she ran to tell Peter and John. They hastened to the spot, and found it even so, as she had said. There lay the undisturbed linen cloths, just as they had been placed; the handkerchief that was about His head folded up separately. Peter went in to the sepulchre; John followed. The Lord had more than once told His disciples that He must suffer, and on the third day be raised again. These words possibly might have been recalled to remembrance as John looked upon the empty grave-clothes. “He saw and believed.” Not from the holy writings had he learned that thus it must be: “He *saw* and believed; for as yet they knew not the Scripture that He must rise again from the dead” (Ps. ii., xvi.). The One who loved him was alive again, and by divine power had communicated the blessed truth to his soul. He left the abode of death, and returned home. He had the high pre-eminence of being the first of the apostles to believe in the resurrection from

THE LORD'S BURIAL AND RESURRECTION. 21

among the dead, and this before the Lord had shewed Himself alive to Mary. Not having yet seen the risen Lord, of John it might be said, as of believers now, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

Mary, seeking His dead body, lingered at the hallowed spot, and again looking into the sepulchre as she wept, saw two angels sitting there. They enquired the cause of her sorrow. It was soon told. So intently was she absorbed with the one Object of her affection, that she manifested no alarm at the appearance of the heavenly visitors. Turning back, the gardener, as she supposed Him to be, said to her, "Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" Tell me, she answered, where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away. "Jesus saith unto her, Mary." At the sound of that well-known voice, familiarly calling her by name, she recognised her Lord and Master—it was Himself. Her ready obedience was as beautiful as her affection. At His bidding, she hastens to carry the joyful message to His "brethren;" but, like her Lord, had to taste the sorrow of rejected testimony: "And they, when they had heard that He was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not" (Mark xvi. 11).

Up to the time of her first departure from the sepulchre, all must have taken place a little before sunrise. By this time another company of women were on their way to the sepulchre, bringing the aromatic spices and ointments, that they might come and anoint Him. It was very early in the morning, at the rising of the sun (Mark xvi. 1, 2). "There was Joanna," the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, "who had been healed of wicked spirits" (Luke viii. 3; xxiv. 10); Salome, the wife of Zebedee; and the other Mary, mother of James and Joses; and other women that were with them. "And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" No men were with them.

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“And when they looked they saw that the stone was rolled away, for it was very great” (Mark xvi. 4). But the angel who had rolled away that stone, whose look was as lightning, and before whom the guards trembled and became as dead men, was no longer sitting upon it. He was not seen thus by Mary Magdalene, when she entered the garden. “Entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment, and said unto the women, Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus the crucified [One]; He is not here, for He is arisen as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay; and go quickly and tell His disciples that He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him.”

Matthew passes over without notice the visit of Mary to the garden; the break between verses 4 and 5 of chapter xxviii. is very perceptible. John supplies the parenthesis; the thread of the interrupted narrative is resumed at verse 5. With fear and great joy the women ran to bring the disciples word. As they went, the Lord met them; they held Him by the feet and worshipped Him. If the words of the women seemed to the apostles and others as idle tales, the Lord could speak to them in another and more striking way. A strange company of unearthly witnesses visited Jerusalem that day, in confirmation of the great truth of resurrection from among the dead: “Many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.” Would the disciples still doubt? Some did.

The Lord's heart yearned over Peter. His mission was still to bind up the broken-hearted, and to comfort those that mourned. Peter was restored. The Lord walked miles with two sorrowing disciples, as they walked and were sad, on their way to Emmaus; He opened their eyes, and they knew Him. He shewed Himself suddenly in the midst of the eleven, and those

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that were with them, as they sat at meat (Thomas was unhappily absent). They were troubled at His presence, but He soon dispelled their fears. He shewed them His hands and His feet. Eight days elapsed, and again He shewed Himself to the disciples, Thomas being present. He was convinced, and confessed Him as his Lord and his God.

They seemed to have forgotten His words, "Tell My brethren that they go into Galilee; there shall they see Me." It might have been a fortnight or more after this message to the women, that some of His disciples had returned to their old occupation at the Sea of Tiberias. Why were they loitering thus on their way to the mountain where He had promised to meet them? That meeting had not yet taken place, for "this was now the *third* time that He shewed Himself alive to His disciples."

If it was in Galilee that He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, they must have arrived tardily at the appointed spot. Thomas was not the only indifferent one. In patient grace He awaited the arrival of the last straggler before shewing Himself in their midst. No wonder that when they saw Him "some doubted," others worshipped. How different will be the next great gathering of His redeemed ones: "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied."

After this He was seen of James, and lastly of all the apostles. This last interview was possibly the longest and most important of all. The apostles were at home and at ease in His presence. They received His commandments, and spake freely together of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. He led them out as far as to Bethany, and in parting words of blessing was received up into glory.

Ten times had He shewed Himself alive after His passion. In each case His appearing was sudden and unlooked for, without intimation or warning. He *appointed* a meeting in Galilee, but neither the day

nor the hour was named. We wait to see Him again, according to His promise. May we not infer that, without any premonition, He will at some unexpected moment call us up to meet Himself in the air? We ask not for signs; enough that He who loves us has said, "Surely, I come quickly. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments."

J. M.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.

DUBLIN, *July*, 1868.

LUKE xii. 32.

THIS chapter opens by saying, that the time is coming when everything will be made manifest.

Do you, therefore, be clear out for God.

The Lord calls the man who lays up treasure in this world a *fool*,—what a number of fools there are in this world!

How far do our hearts like everything being brought to the light? If we shrink from this, it is a proof that we are not clear in our conscience—our conscience has not brought whatever it is into the light yet.

I am *bound to believe* that "by one offering" Christ hath "*perfected for ever* them that are sanctified."

Faith is giving credit to divine testimony.

We must know that Christ, who is to be the Judge, is first the Saviour.

I am going to give you a kingdom (He says.)

Now, give up everything for Christ.

He gives what is the true proper hope of the saints: the coming of Christ to receive them to Himself. The hope is not death, but to be clothed upon.

We are to have the loins girded, and to be watching—this is not taking our rest.

The condition of my soul should be that every affection of my heart should be controlled by the Word of God, and I myself watching.

He is coming to receive us to Himself—not like

sending to the train to meet a friend, He is coming *Himself* to fetch us TO HIMSELF.

This Hope is not prophecy—prophecy is concerning events which will happen upon *earth*. Christ is coming to take us to *heaven*.

The time is coming when He will make us sit down, enjoying ourselves—and not only that, but He will minister to us.

He took upon Him the form of a servant.

Is He going to give up being a man?—*never*. Christ is always pre-eminent in service as well as in everything else.

We shall be “*at home*” in the Father’s house.

Faith finds its place where Christ is, and has its treasure *there*.

If Christ had been crucified in this city yesterday, could we go out and be “hail fellow well met” with those who crucified Him; and if it was last year, or a hundred, or eighteen hundred, years ago, what difference?

“Go ye out to meet Him.” Have you gone out to meet Him? Is your soul waiting for Him?

Christ brings out the extreme of wickedness in man’s heart. Take the most amiable man, and tell him his amiability is no good, and he will be furious. All the coming out of evil never baffles the power of God.

I joy with Christ till He comes.

I joy with Christ when He comes.

Are you content to have no more to say?

Are you allowing the world or anything else to come into your heart, so as to hide the joy of meeting the Lord?

J. N. D.

REDEMPTION at the beginning, and Canaan at the end; the wilderness comes in between the two. Through the wilderness we have God with us, and for us, not imputing anything to us, but exercising our hearts to do us good at our latter end.—J. N. D.

LETTER OF INTEREST.

READING, OCT., 1888.

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—All will surely admit great failure at times in the past in dealing with erring ones—putting out too often, I dare say, when the Word would have directed to a less severe dealing. See, for instance, Rom. xvi. 17 ; 2 Thess. iii. 6 ; Titus iii. 10.

As you, however, admit that the severest form of discipline may be called for, witness the case at Corinth, I need not dwell on the passages referred to, but come to the real point, quoting your words about it, that other assemblies would endorse the action of Corinth, “because the Word of God, which gave force and validity to the action at Corinth, was equally clear and binding elsewhere.” Having stated that, you proceed to deprecate, as contrary to Scripture, “the practice of refusing whole assemblies of God’s people, although admittedly pure in doctrine and life, simply because they are free to receive individuals, if uncorrupted, coming to them, in a more or less direct way, from some assembly where is leaven.”

Now, my dear brother, if the Word of God, as you have admitted, when enjoining dealing in extreme discipline *locally*, is equally clear and binding *elsewhere*, with what consistency could we receive people who remain in close association with evil, which admittedly calls for putting away? Such certainly are not obeying God’s Word, which you acknowledge is binding upon all. Are we, then, to sanction their acts? You can scarcely be aware of the position you would take ; sanctioning, by receiving them, their refusal to put away the wicked one from their midst, where, to use your own words, “there is leaven ;” and, of course, you mean by leaven what the apostle thus characterises in 1 Cor. v. 7.

Where in all you write, one is led to ask, is there room for saints clearing themselves—proving them-

selves to be clear (2 Cor. vii. 11)? Where is there room for showing obedience in all things (2 Cor. ii. 9)? Where the recognition of the Scripture principle, that he that biddeth God speed to one who brings not the doctrine of Christ, becomes a partaker of his evil deeds (2 John 10)? Are these light matters—things of secondary concern?

Again, to revert to the case at Corinth. "Put away from among yourselves the wicked person" was God's command by the apostle to them all. The offender was put away, and in that way, and that way only, did they, and could they, approve themselves to be clear in that matter, and obedient in all things. Had they refused so to act, or had any among them refused obedience to the apostle's directions, would such have been clear? You will say, I am supposing what did not happen. True; but I am entitled to do that, as the result of what they did is definitely stated. Would any who continued breaking bread with the offender have proved themselves clear whilst doing that? Assuredly not. But I may go further, and surely assume that in any *local* assembly with which you might be connected, if punishment of putting away had been scripturally applied by "the many" (2 Cor. ii. 6), you would deprecate most earnestly any there continuing in fellowship with the offender; and, if that was persisted in, would regard them as partakers of his evil deeds. All would admit that such a course on their part would be one of independence.

Can we have one measure for discipline in the assembly viewed locally, and another for the assembly viewed in its general character? Scripture gives no hint of that. It is one assembly to which all professing Christians belong, as it is but one assembly to which all in any locality belong. People very much forget this. The recognition of it, however, would condemn that for which you plead. And remembering that all professing Christians on earth, members of the different local assemblies, form together one

assembly (1 Tim. iii.), it is plain that what has been rightly condemned in one part of the House must be held condemned throughout it. What was condemned at Corinth would have been recognised as condemned elsewhere. The very terms which describe the one assembly of God upon earth forbid the license (pardon me for saying it) and the looseness for which you plead.

I have long felt that the truth of the one assembly upon earth has been very much overlooked, and hence has come of late years a great deal of trouble and confusion. Did the assemblies for which you plead remember that all comprising them are part of God's House—God's assembly—in common with all other professing Christians upon earth, how could they suppose that evil, scripturally condemned in one part of God's House, may be allowed unchallenged in another?

One other remark, and I will close. I can quite understand how the failure of brethren in carrying out Scripture discipline has made a deep impression on you; but the failure in carrying it out is no proof of the impracticability of carrying out the injunctions of the Word in such matters. Our failure in connection with it leaves untouched the responsibility to obey the Word about it.—Believe me, dear brother, ever yours in Christ,

C. E. S.

I HAVE read of a period, when several were gathered together in such sorrow of heart that for a long time they could not utter a single word; but the floor of the meeting-room was wet with their tears! If the Lord would grant us such meetings again, it would be our wisdom to frequent such houses of tears. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy" (Ps. cxxvi. 5). I would willingly take a long journey to join these afflicted ones, but I would not go a step with the object of receiving from the hands of most excellent men power to overturn all to-day, and re-construct to-morrow.—J. N. D., 1840.

JANUARY, 1889.

THE COMING.

SEE those clouds with glory beaming,
All across the azure sky,
Christ the Lord claims His redeemed,
And His shout proclaims Him nigh.

Hark, a voice ! th' archangel's mission,
Saints awaked are upward led ;
'Tis the trump of Him who raised
Jesus, Firstborn from the dead.

This the moment long-expected,
Full of rapture and surprise,
Changed into Thy glorious likeness,
Jesus, Lord, to Thee they rise.

Oh ! that meeting, and that greeting,
All His own brought home to God,
Glory, rest, eternal sunshine
With the One in whom they're blest.

These, the fruit of toil and passion,
Ran the race and reached the goal,
All their crowns are laid before Him,
And His presence fills each soul.

" Unto Him that loved and washed us
From our sins in His own blood,"
Joy untold, and full of glory,
Fills the scene where Christ is Lord.

Thine and mine, the Lord of glory,
To His Father now presents,
With exceeding joy, and faultless,
Those for whom the Son was sent.

And the place for them prepared,
Who can tell the length and breadth,
God's own love alone the measure,
Christ alone the height and depth.

H. P.

CHRISTIAN DOGMA ESSENTIAL TO VITAL RELIGION.

CHRISTIAN history contains the statements of Christian facts ; but Christian dogma is the spiritual significance of those facts. The one is the vase, the other is the flower which grows in it. The one is the trunk and the branches of the tree, the other the life they hold. When I say, "Born of the Virgin Mary," I am in the region of history ; but when I say, "The Word was made flesh," "And in Him was no sin," I am in the region of dogma. When I say, "Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified," I am again in the sphere of history ; but when I say, with St. Paul, "He died for our sins, according to the Scriptures," I have gone into a higher, a more spiritual sphere—I am in that of dogma. When I say, "Rose again the third day," I affirm an historical truth ; but when I confess, "He rose again for our justification," I affirm a Christian dogma. Christian faith embraces both these elements. It is an intellectual assent to the facts of Christ's history, and it is the consciousness and confession of their spiritual significance as interpreted by Christ, and His Spirit in His apostles, and through them, and by the same Spirit, to our own souls.—*R. A. Davies, Ventnor.*

PRACTICAL failure there will be, but never say we *must* fail, though we do fail. It is not "*when* any man sin," but "*if* any man sin, there is an Advocate." I believe that the advocacy of the Lord Jesus is little thought of as it ought to be. Not the sacrifice for sin ; that question is settled for ever when we believe. We have never to go to Him as our Advocate as to personal acceptance. It is when the accepted one sins, and there is not one single blot, one practical failure, but it has all been in the light, His eye has detected it.—G. V. W.

TWO HOURS OF WHICH GOD SPEAKS.

AFTER the Lord Jesus had wrought the notable miracle of the impotent man's healing at the pool of Bethesda, He had a memorable interview with the Jews, who persecuted Him, and sought to slay Him, accusing Him of having broken the Sabbath. It became the occasion for the Lord to give utterance to one of the most striking, most solemn, and most blessed discourses that ever fell from His gracious lips. Man's enmity and God's surpassing grace here met during the Lord's life, as they did afterwards more fully and efficaciously in His death upon the cross (see John v. 16-29).

The solemn character of this address is undeniably evident in the use of the words, "Verily, verily," only used by the Lord on extreme occasions, and only by the apostle John recorded in this double form.

The first "Verily, verily" introduces His relations to the Father, and in the course of unfolding these, He says, "The Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them." *There* is truth about the Father. Then He adds, "Even so the Son quickeneth whom He will." *There* is truth about the Son—the divine sovereignty exercised by Him *even* as by the Father. Then as to approaching judgment: "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Will any lay hold of this as giving opportunity for harbouring any unworthy thought, any thought derogatory to the Son? The Word precludes it, for it is immediately added, "That all should honour the Son, *even* as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him." How jealously does the Spirit of God in the Word yield honour and glory to the person of the blessed Lord; and if we are "one spirit with the Lord," we shall sedulously seek, in our feeble measure, to do the same thing.

Therein, then, is the solemn and impressive intro-

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duction to what our precious Saviour now unfolds as to the simplicity and the grace of that salvation which He was down here in this world as well to unfold as to effect.

The second "Verily, verily" announces the *divine*, and may we not also say, the *infinite* and *eternal*, importance of what He now declares in the very presence of ruined, lost sinners? nay, not of such only, but in the very presence of those who with Satanic maliciousness sought to destroy Him! "Verily, verily, *I say unto you.*" Do not let us overlook here the significance of the "I" and the "you." Think of Him, dear reader, in all His majesty! If we desired to impress a listener with the supremacy, the majesty, the glory which is essentially His, as estimated by His operations, we should surely speak of Him as the uncreated *Creator* of all created things, and the unchallenged *Judge* of all intelligent beings. These are the two things which in the most absolute terms are by the Spirit of God vested in the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. i. 16; John v. 22-27). Let us thank God that His Word settles this for us so conclusively, and thus glorifies before our hearts the blessed One who has become, and will for ever continue to be, our living and loving Saviour, the One who saves to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. He, then, was the "I," and the "you" were those I have spoken of, embracing not only the impenitent and the indifferent, but the malignant and truculent, whose rage and whose enmity were as causeless as they were cruel.

And what had the One who spake as never man spake—what had He to say to them? Hear ye Him as He addresses this sanguinary company: "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." How emphatically does He here honour the Father, for as He subsequently said (xii. 49), bringing the

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two things together, "The Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." How self-retiringly does He subordinate Himself to His Father; He had been sent of Him, and He calls for faith towards the One whose Missioner He was, and the gracious words which dropped from His lips, and which He thus calls "My word," had been afore prepared of the Father for Him to utter. But as He elsewhere says (x. 27), "My sheep hear My voice." The *words* were from the Father; the *voice* was His!

But before we speak further of this, note the blessed results which, in their threefold character, follow wheresoever these things are found:—"Hath everlasting life," "Shall not come into condemnation," "Is passed from death unto life." Death and judgment are for ever abolished, for ever distanced, whilst life, everlasting life, is for ever possessed; not proposed merely, or promised only, but possessed, positively and inalienably. This possession, for so we love to regard it, is the free and sovereign gift of God. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life." Responsively do our hearts exclaim, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." He has given us His Son, that we might live through Him; the heart adoringly owns His grace. We get everlasting life. This also is His grace, the gift of His grace. We magnify Him who has so magnificently wrought for the glory of His Son and the salvation of those given unto Him. We are for ever blest, and our hearts are for ever tuned to His worship and His praise!

We must not fail to notice how *personal* it is; "he," not "those" or "they"; and though He was addressing a company, not "you" here, but "he," as if to pin it personally on the soul. Notice also that it is a *present* thing: "hath" and "is," not may, or may hope for, but now, and once for all, "*hath* everlasting life;" "*is* passed from death unto life." It is

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in the singular number and present tense, banishing absolutely all contingency and all uncertainty. Notice also that it is just as *permanent* as it is *personal* and *present*; the life given and possessed is *everlasting* life! as eternal as the being of God!

The third "Verily, verily" brings us to the first of the two hours of which the Lord so strikingly speaks in this Scripture—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." This is clearly the present period, that hour which "now is," and it expresses what is now going on. Men and women dead in their sins are hearing "the voice of the Son of God." It is His *voice* that is now being heard by His sheep. Nothing is more characteristic than the voice, and in no two persons is it perfectly identical; probably all who have ever breathed have had voices differing from each other, in every instance.

In Eastern countries the sheep know their shepherd's voice better—with greater certainty, that is—than his own children probably would. The Lord takes occasion by this to point out a characteristic of spiritual life, may we not say of divine instinct? The present hour, that which "now is," is marked by the voice of the Son of God, that quickening voice which His lambs and His sheep cannot fail to hear and to respond to. Thus, being spiritually dead, they are quickened to hear His voice—that of the Son of God—they live before Him; thenceforth they hear, and they know, and they follow the voice of the Shepherd. "They know His voice, and a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." How blessed is the hour during which "the voice of the Son of God" is being heard! East, and west, and north, and south, we may surely say, every declining sun adds to the record of the innumerable company of the lambs and the sheep whom the great Shepherd's voice has

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reached, the company of the redeemed, who are henceforth able to say and joyfully to sing,—

“We love the Shepherd’s voice ;
His watchful eyes shall keep
Our pilgrim-souls among
The thousands of God’s sheep ;
He feeds His flock, He calls their names,
And gently leads the tender lambs.”

But another, quite another, “hour is coming.” “Marvel not at this,” says the Lord Jesus, “for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment.” This hour is entirely and only future.

As the former hour related to life, and a period of grace, so does this hour relate to resurrection and judgment. In each case is there the hearing of the Lord’s *voice*, but how very differently ; in the former, quickening as the Son of God those spiritually *dead* to newness of life in Christ Jesus ; in the latter, as the Son of Man quickening from *the grave* the bodies of saints and sinners, the one to resurrection of life, when the Lord comes to receive His own unto Himself, and the other to resurrection of judgment, when after His thousand years’ reign over the earth, and after delivering up the kingdom to the Father, He shall sit upon the great, white throne, and consign the wicked dead to everlasting perdition.

Thus these hours are long-protracted, though defined, periods ; the first has already extended over more than 1800 years, from Pentecost to 1889 ; the second will extend from the Lord’s return, throughout the millenium, until the heavens and the earth flee away from the face of the Lord Jesus, and no place is found for them—embracing the judgment-seat of Christ, the days of the kingdom, and the session of the great, white throne. Wondrous *hours* surely are these of which the Lord spoke, pregnant with solemn

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import for every one of us, big with mercy *or* with judgment, the one *or* the other. But no judgment falls upon him that heareth the voice of the Son of God, and believeth on Him that sent Him !

May the Lord give us to know that through grace we have heard and are hearing His voice now, and shall soon hear His assembling shout, which will call us to His own most blessed presence, to go no more out for ever !

THE COSTLINESS AND BLESSED SELF-HIDING OF THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

THE source of the glory which will be displayed is more blessed than the manifestation of it. It is blessed to be manifested in favour. Why? Because the favour of the person is precious to me. In John xvii. 23, the Lord prays "that the world may know that Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me," while the Lord has obtained all the glory for us ; yet when He comes to give His Bride her glory, He does not say it is a proof that He has loved her, but, in the blessed self-hiding of love, He says it is the Father's love. This is exceedingly blessed and beautiful. The Lord gives witness before the world, not that He loves her, for that was shewn in the necessity of her sinfulness (there is nothing more precious than the love between the Church and Himself), but to the world He exhibits the Church as loved by the Father, which gives it honour, not in connection with sin and shame.

We see the same principle in Luke xv. However touching that love may be between the ruined sinner and the Father, which causes Him to fall on his neck and kiss him, yet before the servants He takes him home in honour, with the best robe on, and the ring on his hand. We have to know the depths of the love of Christ in meeting the sinner. This brings out the costliness of the love ; but there is something

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besides this: when He loves the Church before the world, it is the Father's giving her glory and taking delight in her. The love of Christ is perfectly blessed and touching, and considerate towards us; there the heart's affections learn to delight in Him. J. N. D.

 FRAGMENT ON EXODUS XXIX.

WE stand in all Christ was to the Father, when He said, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I might take it again"—divine acceptableness in Him. Whatever there was of sweetness and excellency in Christ is upon us. Not the blood of the sin-offering, as put upon the ear, hand, and foot of the leper, for there, putting away defilement is in question; here, consecration, the value of Christ's blood consecrating us to God. There must be nothing in our thoughts, acts, or ways inconsistent with that blood; the blood and the oil were to be sprinkled on the *garments*. The death of Christ, and the power of the Holy Ghost, should mark that which appears before the world; the world should be able to see that we are devoted to the Lord. The Holy Ghost is not the seal of the new birth, but of the work of Christ; they are not sprinkled when washed, but after the blood has been applied; hands filled with Christ in His life and death.—*Present Testimony*.

"LORD Jesus, make Thyself to me
 A living, bright reality;
 More present to faith's vision keen
 Than any outward object seen;
 More dear, more intimately nigh,
 Than e'en the dearest earthly tie."

'COMPASSED with infirmities' is not, as ——— supposes, applied to Christ, but to the Jewish priest, who is such *while he is*. Christ was not a priest, at any rate, *till He had left His humiliation*.—J. N. D.

B

GOD AND HIS TRUTH RESISTED.

REFERRING to I Cor. x. 6, 11, 12, Israel blessed with having such a God, failed markedly! The Church for whom this history was written, admonished to take heed, displays before our eyes a pitiable sight, scattered abroad as sheep without a shepherd! If we turn to Isaiah xxx., could we get a truer picture of the state of things at the present day? Are there not great conferences, where philosophy is sounded forth; great philanthropic movements, where counsel is taken one of another, but not of the Lord? (ver. 1). Is there not a linking up the world with them, to give them popularity? (ver. 2). Where is the single eye in it all? On the contrary, the turmoil, bustle, excitement, and activity of the flesh. Where is the obedient one to be found? God says, all this "shall help in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I cried concerning this, *Their strength is to sit still*" (ver. 7). Ah, the obedient one is found apart from it all! Have our hearts got really into His sanctuary, and so realised from *there* the awfulness of things around? "In Thy light we shall see light." And truly, if it be so, this very sitting still, this separation, will expose the corruption, and manifest it to the single eye.

In verse 8 the word is, "Go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the latter day, that this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord" (ver. 9). Is it not true to-day? Where is the authority of the Word regarded? Contrast this with Malachi iii. 16, 17: "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name." It is ever so, for they will not *hear the truth*; the natural consequence must follow, the perversion of it (ver. 10). "Prophecy not

unto us right things ; speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits." "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine ; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears ; and they shall turn away *their ears from the truth*, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. iv. 3, 4). Have we taken heed to those things that were written for our admonition ? It is well for us to trace this course of departure.

Verse 11. "Get ye out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. x. 12). Is not every letter of it fulfilled this day ? Where is the Lord ? "Behold, I stand at the door and knock" (Rev. iii. 20). *Outside!* Where is the faithful one ? Outside with Him, bearing His reproach ; but, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." It means the sentence of death in oneself.

Verse 12. "Wherefore thus saith the *Holy One* of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression," &c. What is it, but having need of nothing, increased in goods, exaltation of self, *despising* His Word indeed, doing that which is right in their own eyes ? If "the light in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness !" Thou "knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. iii. 17). There must be the spueing forth of this Christ-dishonouring thing, God's judgment must fall, and the cry is, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Is it not blessed, as we turn to the grace of our God, and refreshing too. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock."

Verse 15. "In returning and rest shall ye be saved : in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Are not the denominations by their practice saying, "We will not have

Thee to reign over us ;” “Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us” (ver. 11)? but His word is, “Come out of her, My people.”

Verse 18. “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.”

Verse 21. “And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.” May God in this day of evil open ears to hear and hearts to receive this word. But the cry heard on every hand is, But we shall lose the companionship of our dear friends by walking in such a narrow path! We shall not be doing good to those around us! We shall be practically useless! “Their *strength* is to sit still.” “*To obey* is better than sacrifice.” Has not the Lord indeed ceased to be before them? May our God deepen in each of our hearts an intense desire to walk as children of obedience in subjection to Christ as Lord. And those of us who have gone outside denominations unto Him, should gladly accept the practical effect of it, and that is, we should bear His reproach. We shall be the despised few ; we see this in Mal. iii. 16, 17, “They thought upon *His* name.” We find them again in Luke ii. 25-38. They had Him amongst them when all around knew Him not, and could find no place for Him. We find Him with them in the upper room, and to them, and them only, was His mind conveyed. They found their strength was to sit still, and let His voice be heard, saying, “This is the way, walk ye in it.” “I am the Way!” May our hearts be encouraged as we think of Him, for He Himself shall feed His flock like a shepherd. So from Himself we get the nourishment, guidance, strength, all wisdom, all we want!

Ah! how precious to the subject-one, the blessedness of His presence! All in Him. “For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily ;” all the riches, “the unsearchable riches” of Christ, are

ours, and He fills everything. If we think of *death*, we see Him there ; of *sin*, we only know what sin is when we see Christ "made sin ;" of *God*, it is only in Christ we can know God ; of *man*, it is only in Christ we can see man raised to the height of his blessing ; of *peace*, it is through Christ we know the peace of God ; of *life*, Christ is our life ; of *glory*, thanks be to God, it is glory together with Him ! He is the Head of His Body, the Church, which is "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 23). And by the power of the Holy Ghost our souls are brought into the joy of this fulness. And are we to respond to the cry now sounding abroad on every hand, "Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us" ? Are we to let go our *All* ? May God touch our hearts with the sense of the blessedness He has brought us into, holding fast that which we have. Let us hearken to the voice of our God, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils ;" and again, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, . . . and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths" (Isa. ii. 3) ; and yet again (ver. 5), "Come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord." Then, indeed, will there be separation of heart ; nor can we expect any but a *separated* people, or a *separated* servant, to be instructed in the *present* mind of God. "He made known His *ways* unto Moses ; His *acts* unto the children of Israel." "If thou take the precious from the vile, then *thou shalt be as My mouth*." I trust we shall be more distinctly of that *separated* and *satisfied* company, to whom He does reveal His *present* mind.

We must remember that His desire concerning us is, that we should "follow, serve, and wait for Him," and to be so, necessarily means that we go along through this scene with a *rejected* Christ ; otherwise, we shall practically be linked up with those who reject *His Lordship*.

Soon He is coming to reign, and then we shall

reign with Him. Till He come, may we refresh His heart by thinking upon, and considering, and extolling *His Name*, and, in word and deed, following Him who is our Leader, and hearkening to His voice, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." J. H. I.

THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL IN THE SOUTH SEAS.

IT is to the Rev. Wyatt Gill, the veteran missionary, who has spent nearly half a century in the South Seas, that we owe the following account.

Nasiline, a chief with whom he was intimate for many years, was both a worker and a sufferer for Christ, a man whom he and his colleagues deliberately counted worthy to stand beside some of the brightest examples of Christian heroism that have ever adorned the Church of God. And yet this man, consistent, nobly truthful, devoted and self-sacrificing, had grown to manhood as a heathen and a cannibal! Mr. Gill told us with graphic power, how Nasiline, in one of their walks, took him to a secluded bay, where part of the skeleton of a wrecked ship was still lodged, gaunt and weather-worn; and told him, with deepest self-abasement and gratitude, of one of the exploits of his heathen days, thus brought to mind—how he had planned to lure this ship ashore, and then, with his people, had seized, and killed, and *eaten* the fourteen white men who composed her crew!

Maretu, the next one mentioned, who was for thirty years Mr. Gill's much loved and valued assistant in the mission work at Raratonga, had also spent his boyhood and youth in the darkest savagery of heathenism. On one occasion, going with his father and a few others on a raid undertaken solely to gratify their cannibal propensities, they had surprised and murdered a whole family, and spent the night, as was their custom and their glory, sleeping among the

THE GOSPEL IN THE SOUTH SEAS. 43

bodies of their victims. Morning roused them to the important task of cutting up and dividing their prey, and it was then discovered that the head of one of the little children was already gone. Maretu had hidden it away stealthily for his private eating.

Yet of this man Mr. Gill testified that, in thirty years of constant intercourse, he could not point to a flaw in his Christian character, and never heard one even alleged by others. His force of character, his winning tact, and the spotless holiness of his life, made him an untold power for good among his countrymen; and in any tribal difficulty, or any jealousy among the native churches, the missionaries always felt that the matter was safe in Maretu's willing hands. His saintly life was closed by a saintly death of peace and dignity. Lying in a house near the little church, he prayed that he might live till Sunday morning, to hear once more the sound of the hymns he had loved so long. His desire was granted, and then, lifting up his hands, he blessed his sorrowing people, praying that the Spirit of the living God might ever dwell among them, and so "fell asleep" in Jesus.

Tauraki, the third instance named, belonged to a younger generation, and was baptised in infancy; his father, Elikana, being an eminent deacon and evangelist in the native church. Gifted by nature as well as grace, a good English scholar, married to a Christian wife, and happily settled as catechist and schoolmaster among his own people, a peaceful and happy life seemed to lie before the young Tauraki. But he had heard the call of Christ, and could not but "leave all and follow Him." When it was proposed, a few years ago, to open a new mission among the fierce tribes of New Guinea, Tauraki was one of the first to volunteer. The missionary, who loved him as his own son, was fain to disaude him, or at least to point out plainly all the dangers he would run; but it is no strange thing among these South Sea Islanders to

face death for Christ, and Tauraki could not be deterred. He went with his wife, and did good service among the Motumotuan, near Fort Moresby, gaining great influence among these "wild, rowdy natives." Then, only last year, a blood feud arose between them and the Moriavians; and Tauraki, going up country on a peaceable errand, with five of his converts and his wife and adopted child, was surrounded by a party of the latter tribe. His plea that he was a foreigner, and a stranger to their feuds, was admitted by the savages, who gave him leave to depart, but refused to spare the Motumotuan, because, though innocent, they belonged to the hostile tribe. Tauraki's noble rejoinder was, "They are my children; if you kill them, you must kill me first;" and the next moment they all fell beneath a hail of arrows. The five Motumotuan were all despatched, and the three others left insensible; but when Tauraki recovered consciousness, he found the child dead also. Drawing the arrows from his wife's wounds and his own, he again fainted, and they were found thus by some boys of the party, who had been fishing at a distance during the attack. The lads put them into the canoe, and paddled it back to Motumotu, where the devoted pair were tenderly nursed by a Norwegian gentleman, who had settled there for the purpose of opening up trade, and his English wife. The wife survived, and was placed in safety with the mission in Hall Sound, but the heroic young evangelist lies in a martyr grave among his "children" in the faith.

Words can add nothing to the weight of lives like these. If any should object that they are exceptional instances, we need only ask, "*Are such common among ourselves?*" And we may also boldly state the indisputable fact, that in hundreds of these southern isles, once sunk in grossest darkness, the standard of both religion and morality is higher far than prevails in Christian England at the present day.

“DOE THE NEXTE THYNGE.”

FROM an old English dwelling,
Down by the sea,
There came in the twilight
A message to me ;
Its quaint Saxon legend,
Deeply engraven,
Hath, as it seems to me,
Teaching for heaven ;
And on thro' the hours
The quiet words ring,
Like an old inspiration,
“Doe the nexte thyng.”

Many a questioning,
Many a fear,
Many a doubt
Hath its guiding here ;
Moment by moment,
Let down from heaven,
Time, opportunity,
Guidance are given ;
Fear not to-morrow,
Child of the King,
Trust it with Jesus,
“Doe the nexte thyng.”

Oh ! He would have thee
Daily more free,
Knowing the might
Of thy royal degree :
Even in waiting,
Glad for His call,
Tranquil in chastening,
Trusting thro' all ;
Comings and goings
No turmoil need bring,
With Him is thy future—
“Doe the nexte thyng.”

Do it immediately,
Do it with prayer,
Do it reliantly,
Casting all care ;
Do it with reverence,
Tracing His hand,
Who placed it before thee
With earnest command ;
Stayed on Omnipotence,
Safe 'neath His wing,
Leave all resultings,
“Doe the nexte thyng.”

Looking to Jesus,
Ever serener,
Working or suffering,
Be thy demeanour !
In the shade of His presence,
The rest of His calm,
The light of His countenance,
Live out thy psalm ;
Strong in His faithfulness,
Praise Him and sing,
Then, as He beckons thee,
“Doe the nexte thyng.”—

Extract.

THE SCEPTICISM OF THE DAY: WHAT IT IS, AND HOW TO MEET IT.

ARE you sitting at the feet, say, of *Matthew Arnold*, who is sure there is something outside the universe which "makes for righteousness;" but if you ask him, Is it more than a *thing*? replies, "I do not know"? A learned friend of mine, who in his early life was a great admirer of this gentleman, at length said, "Matthew Arnold is a boat without a bottom." Or is *Herbert Spencer* your oracle? He, too, is persuaded that the universe had some mysterious, inscrutable source, and that to stand in awe of this unfathomable mystery is the sublimest of all worship—the only religion. "It is nothing of the kind," says *Frederic Harrison*, another of your eminent Agnostics. "I can't worship a mystery—nobody can. As well bid me worship the equator, or worship a gas." Excellently said, Mr. Harrison. But what have you to give us? "Well, I don't pretend to give you a religion; I haven't one myself. But to live for humanity—to aim at realising the ideal of a perfect and beautiful Humanity—may not that fill the noblest ambition of man? Is it not the very thing which religion professes to seek?" No, sir, it is not, and I am bold to tell you that your own deepest instincts belie your teaching. Will any thinking man say that the present life, though it were to reach its utmost perfection and beauty, is the all of his deepest cravings—that anything here below, or conceivably here, exhausts the deepest yearnings of his nature? If not, why mock us by telling us that for man there is nothing above him and nothing beyond him? "Miserable comforters are ye all."

Now, what is Archdeacon Farrar's view of the atonement? It is simply this, that somehow—no one knows how—men are saved through the life and death of Jesus Christ. But in His death there was no vicarious, substitutionary offering for sins; it was no

atoning sacrifice. He will have nothing to do with such phrases as "satisfaction," "substitution," "imputation," in the matter. That "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin," he will not deny, because it is in the Book; but in the shedding of that precious blood he sees no expiatory, atoning sacrifice, although it is written, "It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul."

It is nothing else than rank Unitarianism on this subject. For myself, I know one belonging to that body who would regard this as below what the New Testament teaches about the death of Christ.

And while I am speaking of Archdeacon Farrar, I must lift my voice against another example of his minimising and paring away the sharp features of Gospel truth. I refer to his teaching about the future state of the finally impenitent. I call the Scripture testimony on this subject a feature of "Gospel truth," for I hold every warning of the New Testament against the rejection of Christ to be big with mercy, and the Gospel itself in its negative form—"that whosoever believeth on Him may not perish." But Archdeacon Farrar is not prepared to say that the loss of any impenitent soul will be final. He will not say it will not. But he clings to an eternal hope. No matter how nakedly, how repeatedly, in what variety of form and figure, the finality of the future state, alike of the lost as of the saved, is expressed; the thing itself is repugnant to our moral instincts, incompatible with the goodness of God!

Very well; if you think so, reject the Book, or so much of it as is revolting to your moral instincts; but don't distort its statements to force them to conform to your moral instincts. Before venturing to draw aside the veil that hides the unknown future, would it not be well to go again to the Book from which you draw your instructions—where He speaks, whose the future is, and who knows better than you what is befitting His character, and on this subject

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say, once more, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth"? And would it not be wise to listen on this subject to the profoundest divine of your own church? "*We do not know the whole case,*" says that most reverential thinker, Bishop Butler—words which, on such a subject, deserve to be written in letters of gold. Benevolence is not the whole of God's nature, for, if it were, sin had never been permitted to enter His dominions and deface His works. What designs He may have in this mysterious feature of His government, who can tell? And if our poor plummet cannot reach these depths, is it safe to go *outside the Book* in quest of an "eternal hope"?

I should not have said so much in this strain were it not that all our churches are honeycombed with this mischievous tendency to minimise all those features of the Gospel which the natural man cannot receive.—*Dr. Brown, Aberdeen.*

EXTRACTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF
J. N. D.

The italics are the Compiler's.

ROMANS.

"IN verse 21 of chapter iii. we come to the remedy, the great revelation of the Gospel. . . . God is approached at a mercy-seat; that is, blood shedding on the throne of judgment, according to the holiness and righteousness of God."—Collected Writings, Vol. xxiii., p. 515.

"It proclaims the work of the Lord, which answers to the mercy-seat, with the atoning blood of Jehovah's lot sprinkled on and before it, thus laying a righteous ground both to justify the forbearance of God in dealing with the saints of old or their sins in past times, and to display now that God is just, while He justifies him that believes in Jesus."—Vol. xxiii., p. 502.

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“Chapter v. 1-11 gives the glorious conclusion and consequences of Christ’s dying for our sins and rising again: peace, present favour, hope of glory, our *complete actual place before God*. . . . The whole question of our actual guilt has been settled, but *our state has not been touched*.—Vol. xxiii., p. 517.

“Chapters iii. 20 to v. 11, inclusive, treat, then, the question of sins; chapters v. 12, to the end of viii., that of sin, and our *condition* through the disobedience of Adam and the obedience of Christ.”—Vol. xxiii., pp. 517, 518.

“Adam’s disobedience involved those connected with him in the *condition* of being sinners; the obedience of One, Christ, constituted those associated with Him righteous, put them in *that state and condition before God*.”—Vol. xxvi., p. 222.

“This shews the completeness of this part (chap. i. 18 to v. 11) of the epistle as to its proper subject, and how the Gospel refers, first, to guilt and clearing from it—our justification from that guilt; not to our *state*, or nature, though the fruits of the old man constitute that guilt. It shews, too, how *a full, free Gospel can be preached without touching on our nature and state by that*, though a solid, settled condition of soul cannot exist without the experience and deliverance of the subsequent part of the epistle.”—Vol. xxvi., p. 208.

“This state of deliverance by death and resurrection is then unfolded in chapter viii. The man is in Christ; no condemnation is therefore possible. Such is the result. He is in the place into which Christ’s perfect work has brought him, *in that state in Him*.”—Vol. xxiii., p. 521.

EPHESIANS.

“Justification, that is to say, *the grace that enables a sinner to stand before God*, is not brought out in the epistle to the Ephesians.”—Vol. xxvii., p. 382.

Ephesians ii. “Now Christ having done this, Jews and Gentiles, without the differences which death had

abolished, are found together in the risen and ascended Christ, sitting together in Him in a new *condition* common to both, a *condition* described by that of Christ Himself.”—Synopsis, Vol. iv., p. 398.

“We must remember that neither Colossians nor Ephesians suppose us to be *actually* seated in, or in possession of heavenly places, we are at best, as in Eph. ii., there in Christ.”—Notes and Comments, part iv., p. 360.

THE ESSENCE OF THE GOSPEL.

THE Gospel of the grace of God does not consist in pressing the duty defined by the words, “Give your heart to Christ,” although that is often unwisely pressed upon inquirers after salvation as if it were the Gospel. The very essence of the Gospel is contained in the words, “Having liberty to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and, having a High-priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith.”

“Give your heart to Christ” is rather law than Gospel. It is most proper that it should be done, for God Himself demands it; but merely urging the doing of it is far short of the Gospel. The true Gospel is, Accept the free gift of salvation from sin and wrath, by receiving Jesus Himself, and all He purchased with “His own blood,” and your heart will be His in a moment, being given to Him, not as a matter of law, but of love; for if you have the love of His heart poured into yours by His blessed Spirit, you will feel under the constraining influence of a spontaneous spiritual impulse to give Him in return your heart, and all that you possess. It is right to give Him your heart, but unless you first receive His, you will never give Him yours.—*Wm. Reid.*

THE BELIEVER'S CALLING.

IT is a high calling (Phil. iii. 14).

It is a holy calling (2 Tim. i. 9).

It is a heavenly calling (Heb. iii. 1).

It is God who hath called us (2 Tim. i. 9).

It is not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace (2 Tim. i. 9; Rom. viii. 28).

It is in and by Christ Jesus (Phil. iii. 14; 1 Pet. v. 10).

It is a calling independent of all worldly honours and distinctions (1 Cor. i. 26-28).

We are called to be saints (Rom. i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 2; 1 Thess. iv. 7).

We are called to following now in Christ's steps (1 Pet. ii. 21).

We are called to exhibit now all love, and forgiveness, and Christian graces (Eph. iv. 1-3; 1 Pet. iii. 8, 9).

We are called unto liberty (Gal. v. 13).

We are called to glory and virtue (2 Pet. i. 3).

We are called to be with Christ (Rev. xvii. 14).

We are called unto the fellowship of Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. i. 9).

We are called into God's marvellous light (1 Pet. ii. 9).

We are called unto eternal life (1 Tim. vi. 12).

We are called to an eternal inheritance (Heb. ix. 15).

We are called to the *obtaining of the glory* of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. ii. 14; Rom. viii. 30).

God hath called us unto His kingdom and glory (1 Thess. ii. 12; 1 Pet. v. 10).

The believer prays to be counted worthy of this calling (2 Thess. i. 11).

He prays to know what is the hope of this calling; that he may realise it (Eph. i. 18).

He presses toward the mark for the prize of it (Phil. iii. 14).

We should seek to walk worthy of this calling wherewith we are called (Eph. iv. 1; 1 Thess. ii. 12).

We should give all diligence to make our calling and election sure (2 Pet. i. 10).

And we should remember that we are called in *one hope* of our calling, the Lord's return to receive us to Himself (Eph. iv. 4).

"*Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it*" (1 Thess. v. 24).

PURCHASE AND REDEMPTION.

REDEMPTION, we are to understand, as set forth in Holy Writ, is deliverance from a condition, and may be effected in various ways. Hence it differs from purchase, which implies a change of ownership. A slave purchased changes his master ; one redeemed changes his condition. If the special subject is the one redeemed, his change of condition is before the mind. If the subject be how he was redeemed, the price paid, the power exercised, according as his redemption was effected by price or power, will be present to the writer's thoughts. If the former is more particularly treated of, his redemption is especially brought into view ; if the latter, the redeemer will occupy a marked place in the mental vision. As regards God's people, whether earthly or heavenly, they are both purchased and redeemed. In Exod. xv. 13, 16, both are stated of Israel ; in 1 Cor. vi. 20, and Eph. i. 7, we have authority for the statements in connection with Christians.

But purchase may be predicated of people not redeemed, and can be affirmed of all men (Matt. xiii. 44), though all have not been redeemed (2 Pet. ii. 1). As purchased, however, responsibility to serve the Lord attaches to all who have heard of Him, though love to the One who has bought them may not thereby be engendered. A slave purchased of an old master would be bound to serve his new master, whether the purchase took place with his consent or not. It is the ownership which determines to whom

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the service should be rendered. But who would remain indifferent to the one who has redeemed him? Purchase attests the rights of the buyer; redemption reminds us of the love and compassion of the redeemer.—*Bible Witness and Review*, Vol. iii., p. 4, C. E. S.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER.—No man can get fully the real evidence of the Bible, unless he views it as a whole given of God. This is its value; and if God gives me His whole view of man, from the creation to the eternal state, is that not instructive, the most instructive possible of all knowledge? And thus, like a dissected map as to its completeness, the place of each part, the perfectness of each part in its place, is self-demonstrated for him who knows the map, and what the map is. Mr. — might as well complain of the piece that contained Russia, because it was not the map of, and over in, Massachusetts, as reason on the suitableness of Esther because it was not moral instruction for a Christian, or did not help a preacher to make a sermon. Esther is God's providential care of Israel scattered among the heathen, when He could not own them at all outwardly or publicly, hence His name does not appear in the book. It is His unseen hand that does it in a providential way. There is such a total ignorance in all these infidel writers of the purpose of the Author of the Bible, that they do not understand the scope of a single passage. How should they? It is as if some wise housemaid should clean out a powerful voltaic battery because there were dirty wire and plates and useless water in it.—J. N. D.

“LORD, when Thou shewest Thyself, let me love Thee; when my mountain stands firm, let me praise Thee; when Thou withdrawest Thyself, let me follow Thee; when Thy countenance is hid, let me still believe that Thou lovest me.”

LETTER OF INTEREST.

I ASK you if the two prayers in Ephesians, and that in Colossians, do not comprise the whole revelation of "the mystery of God's will," as unfolded in the first two chapters? Do they not comprehend and declare the *whole* unity in which the Holy Ghost operates and dwells, according to the Godhead counsels? Connected with this "glorious power" of God in setting the Son as *Man in glory* at the right hand, follows—"and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is *His Body*, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. i.). Is not the vast comprehensive unity what (as I have suggested) God, as "the Father of glory," has now come forth *to create*, "according to the good pleasure of His will, which He purposed in Himself" before the foundation of the world? These glories of the person of the Son, and of Christ AS Christ, bring their fulness into any and every Headship, whether of *the new creation* of God, or *the mystery of Christ and the Church*. And I may ask in what other unity can the Spirit act in unity, if it be not in the infinitude of all God's thoughts and counsels for His own eternal glory in the person of *His Son*?

We shall reduce "the unity of the Spirit" to some favourite ideas of our own (and perhaps about the Head and the Body) if we do not pass through the second prayer—that Christ may dwell, &c.; able to comprehend with *all saints*, &c.; filled with all the *fulness of God*! I remember saying to — that the unity of the Spirit embraced *all* that was revealed in the epistle, and that we should best understand its scope by finding out, as Paul did, the necessity for a "doxology" at the close of chapter iii., for letting the heart loose in its outburst of adoration and praise to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. You know my dread of limitation in the "mystery of God;" and, *therefore*, in the unity of the Spirit, who operates and co-operates in union with the Father and the Son in

carrying out the counsels of the Trinity in their unity and oneness, like John xvii. I only add, that I fail to discover in Paul's writings "the unity of *the Body*," on which you say "we have been clear and strong."

In conclusion, I must ask you to reconsider the *part* of this unity which you say has been defective, viz., "My feeling is (and I trust I take it to heart), that we have not presented constantly and clearly Christ's side of the mystery, I mean, Him as Head." * *Can* you speak of Christ's side, when the whole mystery on both sides is Christ Himself? Can we speak of *a side* of the unity, when the Body and the Head comprise the unity, and are necessary the one to the other to complete this mystery of Christ?

Another said, many years ago, "I am bound to take every position in which the grace of Christ has set me, and my weakness is because I do not. The position is the verification of Christ's *power*, and in taking it I am acknowledging Him, even though thereby my own condition be more openly disclosed. Thus the position in itself affords me strength to value and to keep it." J. E. B.

RAHAB'S pledge was in the midst of the scene of judgment, but it was appointed by the executors of judgment, as in Exod. xii. the sword was borne by the hand of Him who ordained the blood on the lintel. No security can surpass that. We are in the world, the place of judgment, and Jesus on high; *nevertheless, His safety is ours*; "As He is, so are we in this world."—J. G. B.

MY soul, What's lighter than a feather? Wind. Than wind? The fire. And what than fire? The mind. What's lighter than the mind? A thought. Than thought? This bubble world. What than this bubble? Nought.—*Francis Quarles*.

* Are you not violating a unity in thus separating the Head from the Body?

SOME time since a young soldier received from Sig. Cappellini, in Rome, a Bible, when his term of service in the army had expired. He returned to his native place, and there diligently read the Word of God, not only himself, but also to his friends and neighbours. The seed thus sown sank deep down into the hearts of many. A short time back Mr. Piggott (Wesleyan Methodist), going into the neighbourhood, was entreated to go and preach to these searchers of the Scriptures. Two hundred eager listeners greeted his coming, and drank in his words as the thirsty ground absorbs the rain. All these had been prepared for his coming, as it were, through the reading and spread of the truth by that one Bible, and its prayerful and diligent use by the young soldier.

IF my heart is breaking, what matters it, if I have Christ? He loves a broken heart. His heart cares for me as no mother cares for her child. Every throb of your heart is known to Him, and He beautifully knows how to show you how *all-able* He is to give you rest and peace that passeth all understanding. And if you are broken down bit by bit, it is only to fit you for the place He has prepared for you.—G. V. W.

THE Lord Jesus, amid all the glory of God, has a heart large enough to think of coming to meet even me. "There is a poor thing, stumbling through his duties, often going wrong; I shall go and fetch him, and make him a partaker of all I have." It is His love, not mine. Having loved us before the foundation of the world, His love changes not because of what we are. He, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.—G. V. W.

FEBRUARY, 1889.

PRECIOUS THINGS IN CHRIST.

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

1. When Thou, on Calvary, didst say, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me," the wrath of God due to me, a rebel creature, was borne by Thyself.

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

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

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

Thy rising from among the dead is my justification.

3. And not only so, beauty and loveableness, as before God and Thy Father, are mine in Thee. Graced in Thee, the beloved, Thou the glorified Head sitting in the eternal glory on high, I a "member in particular" of that body of which Thou art the ascended Head!

Thy glory, ascended, is my acceptance.

4. Anchor and forerunner fixed within the veil, who makes intercession for me, the eternal lover of my soul, my spirit, and my body; Thou hast made me a son of God. Thou first-born among many brethren! Thou guardest me through the wilderness, even from the time Thou didst bring me out from the world, until the time when Thou shalt have come again and received me, even *me*, to Thyself, my Saviour, out of the world, through this life unto and into glory and Thy Father's house.

Thou in Thy life above art my guard and my guide
(Heb. xiii. 20, 21).

G. V. W.

THE WORD OF GOD OUT OF PLACE,
AND THE WORD OF GOD IN ITS
RIGHT PLACE.

AN aged believer was dying ; he had long sought to serve the Lord, and had often helped and comforted others by ministering the Word to them. And now in his weakness Satan sought to worry him by *Scripture out of place*. The old man's confidence was for the moment shaken, and he was sore distressed. His daughter said, "Dear father, you forget that word, 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.'" "No, my dear," he replied, "I don't forget it, but it is to them 'who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,' and I fear I have not always so walked." Now here was a plain instance of a soul made sad, whom the Lord would not have made sad, by a word of Scripture out of place, and therefore misapplied. For I think I need hardly remind my readers, that the words, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," have no business there. They occur rightly enough in verse 4, but by putting them after "There is therefore now no condemnation," &c., they make that glorious statement conditional, and therefore no longer grace.

It is, alas! too true that we do not always walk after the Spirit, but follow the dictates of our own sinful nature—shame on us that it should be so ; but bring in the words, "who walk not," &c. there, and you make "no condemnation" to depend on our walk ; and if this be the case, "Who then can be saved?" For we must remember that "condemnation" is not a state into which the believer may slip, and out of which he may be extricated by repentance and restoration ; "condemnation" in Scripture is always a final condition, which God never reverses,

and therefore, it does not say no *more* condemnation, but *no* condemnation. It is future and final.

John iii. 18 is no exception to this rule, for there it should be *judged*. In fact, in every place save two (in John viii. 10, 11) this is the case.

And now let me give an instance to illustrate "Scripture in its proper place." A young lady, who was a Christian, had been induced to accept an invitation to a ball. She was in the act of dressing for the occasion, when suddenly she stopped, as if arrested by an unseen hand. A shaft from God's quiver had pierced between the joints of the harness, and had come with such irresistible power, that she ceased her dressing. Romans viii. 4 was the word that had lodged in her heart, and she reasoned thus with herself: "'Not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;' am I being led by the Spirit of God in thus preparing for a worldly amusement? Could I ask God's blessing on it?"

The victory was won, the Word had produced its effect. Hastily she threw off her gay dress, and resolved not to go, thus happily delivered from a terrible snare of the enemy by taking heed thereto according to the Word of God. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John v. 4). Thanks be to God, He that trod the way before us, and who could say, "By the words of Thy lips have I kept Me from the path of the destroyer," is now on high, ever appearing in the presence of God for us, and is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him (Heb. vii. 25).

"How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee," which some one has aptly described as the *best* thing, hidden in the *best* place, for the *best* of purposes.

W. R. H.

R.

ALWAYS, WHOLLY THINE!

“Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory.” “And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them.”—*John xvii. 22, 24.*

GLORY, in the highest, glory
Unto Him who died ;
Thou of endless praise art worthy,
Saviour glorified !

We shall see Thee and be with Thee,
In Thy likeness shine ;
Thou wilt have us in the glory,
Always, wholly Thine !

DISCIPLESHIP TO A REJECTED LORD.

“AND it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met Him” (Luke ix. 37). Thus has the Lord turned His back upon the brightness and glory of the mount of transfiguration, and the honour and majesty of the King and the kingdom, as well as upon the promises, and covenants, and prophecies of blessing connected with its establishment, and His own personal reign upon the earth. He and the three disciples have come down from the hill, and all have dispersed and gone their several ways who were in conference together, and Jesus has accepted His decease, and come down to tread the path in which it is to be wrought out. He abandons Mount Tabor, to begin again His work and ministry in the world as it is. And the first thing He finds is the failure of the disciples to use the power and authority He had given them, the little while He had been away with the three. They could not cast out the devil from the young man into whom he had entered. In every sense “Jesus is left alone” by the disciples ; not denied, in weakness of their nature, when in the face of danger and death, as

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yet ; nor deserted, on account of rejection and contempt by the heads of the nation ; but through their want of faith in Him and His sufficiency, in the presence of Satan and his power, to cast out the evil spirit. "I besought Thy disciples to do so, and they could not," is the father's complaint. "Jesus answering, said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and suffer you? Bring thy son hither," are the words which tell that Jesus is upon the earth again, and on the devil's ground in the exercise of a power that has already defeated him at the high mountain, and said, "Get thee behind Me, Satan." And in this title He acts here ; for "Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father ; and they were all amazed at the mighty power of God" (vers. 42, 43).

The coming in of Christ by birth into the world ; His disputation with the doctors when only twelve years old ; His growing up in wisdom, and nurture, and in favour with God and man ; His going about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him, might have brought in relief, and it did. Yea, and He could as a Teacher have produced reform ; also as the devoted Servant of God He might have repaired many a breach. But when Jesus, in the midst of men, became the test of what the hearts and minds of the multitudes and the rulers were before God and towards Himself as the sent One, it was plain enough day after day that neither relief, nor repair, nor reform (which is all that men can do or attempt) would establish the relations between men and Himself below, or bring them back to allegiance with God.

Still, He acts in grace and power in the midst of men (though He has accepted His decease as the only recovery from the ruin), and the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and to the poor the Gospel is preached. But while they wondered every man at all

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things which Jesus did, "He said unto His disciples, Let these sayings sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men."

The world has broken with Him, and is about to do so openly, and He now breaks with the world. He has only to deepen His works amongst men, by reaching the death and the grave, which would shew Him the path of life beyond, and to which they led, that He might ~~ascend on the third day to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.~~ But they understood not His saying, and they *feared* to ask Him of that saying. His teaching and His doctrine take necessarily another character, suited to His own altered position, as the rejected One of the earth. Accordingly, "there arose a reasoning among the disciples, which of them should be greatest;" and this He reproveth and corrects by identifying Himself with the child whom He took, and set by Him, making it the occasion for enunciating this new principle, that "he that is least among you all, the same shall be great" (ver. 48).

His sayings and doings in relation to the kingdom of God, and the hopes of the disciples in reference to Himself, must all be changed and turned about, so as to be brought into moral correspondence with His present rejection and His approaching death; and henceforth we shall see that He and they take the lowest place on the earth, as this little child, as the new pathway to the highest place in heaven. He becomes the pattern and leader of His own into this subjection to the work of God, in a world where Satan is allowed to hold his seat and wield his power for a short time. And this chapter ix. concludes with instructions to the disciples and others who desire to follow Him, that would make them like their Master in a walk and ways outside the world and all its objects. Indeed, they were aware of the change, which had been accepted by the Lord Himself, as about to "be delivered into the hands of men," a

saying which they did not understand, and concerning which "they were afraid to ask Him."

He who was the greatest just now, and who was accredited in the place of majesty and honour upon the mount, has declined to open out the kingdom from thence, in the midst of Israel after the flesh, and the generations of men as they were born into the world. He changes mountains, and changes dispensationally His own outward relations towards God and the world, and between Jehovah and Israel, because of their unbelief and refusal of the acceptable year of the Lord, and sends forth the seventy, that they may gather out a people who can understand the plan of His rejection, and follow Him to Calvary and His decease instead.

The doctrine and sayings which Jesus delivered, and which He desired should sink deep into the ears of His disciples, agreed with the difference of place just described, as from one mountain to another, or from the transfiguration mount to the Mount of Olives. Therefore Jesus said unto them, "Whosoever shall receive this little child in My name receiveth Me ; and whosoever shall receive Me receiveth Him that sent Me ; for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great." John has not yet caught the spirit of his Master, and is out of tune with this change of place and change of mountains, and says, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us." But this rule of mere flesh and blood, "he followeth not *with us*," cannot stand in the presence of the Teacher, and must be substituted in the mind of John by His correction, "Forbid him not, for he that is not against us is for us." It is precious to the heart that knows something of the value of the Name of Jesus, to witness its vindication by Him who bears its honour and glory, against the narrowness of our natural hearts, which would make "with *us*" the standard and the test instead.

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This is the more out of place here, because the man whom the disciples forbade was really casting out devils in the name of Jesus, which they had failed in, when the father complained to Jesus, saying, I brought my child "to Thy disciples to cast out the devil, and they could not." Is it still difficult, at opportunities like this, to rejoice that the faith and confidence of another in the Name of Jesus has done what we may have failed in, on account of the glory brought to that Name? If there be a reserve about this in our hearts, we are not far off from John and his companions.

But stranger teachings and newer doctrines fall from the lips of Jesus consequent upon His rejection and its acceptance; for how can it be otherwise, when He accepts in place of the throne of David a cross in the royal city? "And it came to pass, when the time was come that He should be received up, He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" (ver. 51).

Thus in spirit has Jesus reached to the further point of "received up" in glory; and here we get in His own path the confirmation of His own doctrine; for He who was in the lowest place here is now in the highest place yonder, and He that was least is become the greatest. "He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow," &c. But the disciples James and John find themselves in untrodden paths, and know not how to walk with Him who is laying them down for His own feet, and theirs too in due season. "And messengers went before His face, and entered into a village of the Samaritans to make ready for Him, and they did not receive Him. And when James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to

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come down from heaven, and destroy them, even as Elias did?" They forgot what took place when they were with Jesus on the mount, in the glory and honour of the kingdom, and when He accepted His own rejection and decease, "to be accomplished in Jerusalem," rather than order, in His authority as a King, "the fire to come down from heaven, which should devour the adversaries" and establish the kingdom.

These two "who were with Him" would rather have "reception" in the cities and towns, and messengers to run before and "make ready" for Him, as the King on His way to the throne and His coronation, than as leading them in the path of unseen, but far higher glories in the heavens, to which the cross and His decease would safely conduct Him. "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. And they went to another village." There is no other road open for those who come out to Him on the way, but what His rejection out of the earth and His being received up into heaven lead to; and accordingly He replies to the man who said to Him, "Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest," "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" (ver. 58).

These are the present terms of discipleship with the Master, and of journeying with Him who is on His way "to be received up" as the accepted One of the heavens. In His turn, Jesus said to another, "Follow Me;" but he said, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." His rejection is to Himself total and absolute, and the ties that once bound us are mutually severed; so "Jesus said to him, Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." And another also said, "Lord, I will follow Thee, but let me first go and bid them

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farewell that are at home, at my house." And how natural, many may say, was this request, for so it was, and is; but nature cannot be allowed a voice in rejection with Christ, because it is beyond the intelligence of flesh and blood and its kindred, whether lying dead or at home in the house. Its civilities and our own affections pertain to another sphere, and are but cleverly concealed webs that entangle the unwary, and always take us into old associations.

"And Jesus said to him, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God;" for it must be bad and irregular ploughing while the hand is put to it. And why should the man who ploughs do violence to the law of the field, or look back even, unless he had another object elsewhere which was dearer to him than the one he is avowedly occupied with?

These are the present conditions of the kingdom of God, and the only way to reach it (seeing He has postponed the high road of the mount of transfiguration) is by following the rejected King by the deeper path of Calvary and the decease of the cross, that as risen ones with Christ, and seated together in heavenly places in Him as our Head, we may be made acquainted with Him in the higher glories. He rebukes John and James (for they should have learnt their lesson better than the others) because they thought of clearing away the villages, and cities, and towns which were not ready to receive the Lord, by "commanding fire to come down" and make a way by "consuming them." But the accepted path of Jesus is to travel by His own death and "being received up" into the heavens, that He might by that title redeem the people, and as the risen and exalted One pour down the Spirit upon them, and thus make them willing to hail Him in the coming day of His power. Nor is there any other way by which to hold the kingdom of God, in prospect of its manifestation upon earth and in the glory, but by the cross and into

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the heavens with Christ, till He comes out a second time, with His kings and priests in His own image and likeness, to establish the kingdom in righteousness and truth with the tribes of Israel in the land of Canaan, in the sight of all the nations !

We may surely say, how plain and simple to him that hath understanding are these sayings of our Master and Lord, by which He seeks to unite us with Himself in all that was before Him, and which He has now reached by the cross of Calvary, and by ascension to the right hand of God.

What a new starting point for Him in the day of His espousals, when He comes forth as a Bridegroom out of His chamber, rejoicing as a strong man to run a race. The alienations and estrangements of the people, and the bill of divorcement, all set aside and cancelled, to give place to the marriage of the Lamb in the heavenlies. And as to the earthly places, the Lord in that day rejoicing over Jerusalem as a young man rejoices over his bride when thy land shall be married.

In the meanwhile, the Lord grant that His sayings may "sink deep into our hearts" as to present association with Himself, who had "not where to lay His head," that His instructions by the plough, and those who are at home in my house, and the burial of our father, may be accepted ; so that these may not be the objects which rule and detain our thoughts and feelings, or detach us from Christ as excuses. Rather may they be the daily proofs that we have come down from the mount of transfiguration with Jesus (not even knowing Him any longer after the flesh or its sociabilities), and have accepted "decease," to bear about in our body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal body.

J. E. B.

ARE YOU AN "ALMOST" OR AN "ALTOGETHER" CHRISTIAN?

VERY few scenes in sacred writ are more striking and more familiar to New Testament readers than that in which Paul stands bound before King Agrippa and Festus, the Governor, or Procurator of Judea, in the city of Cesarea. Stretching forth his hand, this blessed servant of God answers for himself, repelling the accusations brought against him by the perfidious Jews who sought his life. He appeals to facts known to his accusers: his manner of life; his observance of the law and of the traditions of the Pharisees; his value for the promise of God; his zeal in the service of the chief priests—all these things were undeniable.

Why, then, had he become obnoxious, utterly obnoxious to them, a "pestilent fellow"? He proceeds to tell of the Lord's intervention; that wonderful arrest of his iron hand, when pursuing his mad career as a persecutor; the heavenly glory which had smitten him and his companions to the earth, and that mighty voice which he only heard! its wonderful effect upon him in setting him upon his feet, and making him "a minister and a witness" of the things which he had seen and should see; the equally wonderful commission which he received from the glorified Christ as His apostle unto the Gentiles. All this is most graphically told in the words which the Holy Ghost gave unto him in that hour. Simply but sublimely does he set forth the divine action of which he had been the subject, adding, "Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision; but shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (Acts xxvi. 19, 20).

"For these causes," he affirms, the Jews caught him and went about to kill him. But when he had fallen

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into their hands, he became "the prisoner of Jesus Christ" for the Gentiles (Eph. iii. 1). Five times over in his epistles does he speak of himself as a prisoner; but not a prisoner of the Jews, but of the Lord. Happily for him and for us, yea, for the saints of God everywhere up to this time, his tongue and his pen remained unfettered, and thus he could speak of himself as "Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ *for you Gentiles.*" As such he is now on his defence. "Having therefore obtained help of God," he says, "I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come. That Christ should suffer," &c. (Acts xxvi. 22, 23). Thus does he bind together the testimony of the holy men of old with the Person and work of the Lord Jesus, as the witness of whom he stood before the King and the Governor.

"And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." And then he appeals to Agrippa, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, *Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.*"

Oh! unhappy man; the prototype of thousands upon thousands, yea, millions upon millions, who since his day have felt as he felt, and might have adopted his language, did their mouths express what was passing in their breasts, but who have, alas, sunk into an eternal hell! They have sat and listened to the servants of God telling of the Person of Christ, telling of His wondrous work, and the efficacy of His blood in all its priceless value for their souls, washing away for ever from God's sight the sins of every one that believeth. Their attention has been arrested, their minds stirred, their consciences troubled, an

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impression of much depth apparently made upon them ; but it has after all only reached an *almost* ! What was the answer of this blessed servant of God, as he uplifted his manacled hands ? “ I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.” It was enough ; the Spirit of God spake by him these blessed words, expressive of the abounding grace of God. It was more than enough for the courtly listeners ; for the King and the Governor rose up, and the hearing was closed.

But now for your case, dear reader. Do I not rightly believe that you, also, are an *Almofter*, and, more than this, that you know very well you ought to be an *Altogether* Christian ? You were baptized, probably, when an infant of days, and thus it was acknowledged that the death of Christ could alone avail you before God ; you were brought up, probably, at a mother’s knee, and taught to lisp the name of Jesus ; you went to Sunday school, perhaps, and had lesson upon lesson in the Bible—the book of all books—and heard again and again of the life and miracles, and teachings and sufferings of the Lord Jesus, for sinners such as you. You have many a time since, it may be, heard the most searching appeals to your conscience and heart by men of God who have preached the Gospel to you. Many a little tract, or book, or leaflet has reached your eye, appealing to you to turn to the Lord, and receive Him as your Saviour ; and where are you found to-day ? After all the foregoing goodness on the part of God, giving you lesson upon lesson, warning upon warning, appeal upon appeal, you are yet—at this eleventh hour—only an *Almofter*, and not a bit an *Altogether* Christian !

But did you ever consider, my reader, that *almost* only aggravates the situation ? How painful, almost to get a situation, but to miss it ; how vexing, almost to catch a train, but to be left on the platform ; how

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sad, almost to escape drowning, but to be engulfed in the waters. But oh! how above all things terrible, to be almost a Christian, and yet in the lake of fire for eternity! It has been said, the floor of hell is paved with good intentions; may it not be also said, it will be trodden by millions of almost Christians! Oh! be warned, then, against being an Almoster, for *to be only almost saved is to be certainly lost!*

 “ALMOST.”

“Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.”—*Acts xxvi. 28.*

ALMOST! did Jesus only almost leave the sky,
 Become a man, and only almost die?
 Then shall I only almost take my cross?
 And only almost count my gain my loss?
 Forbid it, Lord, and help me to resign
 My heart to Thee, and be *entirely* Thine.—*Anon.*

 THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

(*Extracts.*)

THE righteousness of God is never imputed to the sinner. God imputes righteousness to the one who believes His testimony about His Son, that is, He reckons that person righteous; but He is never said to impute *His* righteousness. Rom. iii. shows us how God can be righteous in justifying the ungodly; there, then, His righteousness is treated of. Rom. iv. teaches us on what principle a person can be justified: hence the term righteousness of God is dropped throughout that chapter, and righteousness alone is treated of. For the righteousness of God means that God is righteous, and acts consistently with what He is. The moment, then, that we seize the meaning of the term “righteousness of God,” we understand why Scripture never speaks of God imputing *His* righte-

ousness to the sinner, and the phraseology is seen to be clear and precise. If we think of God in connection with righteousness, we know that He is righteous, and will, by-and-by, "judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts xvii. 31). But if this were all that we knew of God's righteousness, who could be saved? For if God enters into judgment with us, we know what the end of that must be (Ps. cxliii. 2). Thank God, His righteousness is also manifested in justifying the ungodly, and this is one of Paul's special subjects of instruction. The righteousness of God is revealed in the Gospel (Rom. i. 17). It is manifested now apart from law, though "witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe" (Rom. iii. 21, 22). To this people are to submit themselves if they would be saved (Rom. x. 3); and all who do that, become God's righteousness in Christ (2 Cor. v. 21). Viewing righteousness in relation to the sinner, we learn that God can impute righteousness without (or apart from) works (Rom. iv. 6). The principle on which God can do this is faith; hence it is called the righteousness which is of faith (Rom. x. 6), and we are reminded of the Old Testament Scripture which declared, "The just shall live by his faith" (Hab. ii. 4; Rom. i. 17). An illustration of God justifying a man on this principle is given us in Abraham (Rom. iv. 1-3); the moral class who can share in it is exemplified in David, after he had sinned so frightfully in the matter of Uriah the Hittite (ver. 6-8), whilst the special testimony now put before souls for them to be justified by faith, when they believe it, is set forth in verses 23-25 of that same chapter; and the effect on the man of this way of justification is this, he has peace with God, and can rejoice in hope of the glory of God (Rom. v.

1, 2); for the whole question of his standing before the throne of God is settled by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, writes the apostle, "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Hence justification is more than forgiveness, for it witnesses to the soul of its unchallengeable standing before the throne of God. Forgiveness of sins the *sinner* needs to be assured of. Justification forms part of the Gospel for God's *saints*, as the epistle to the Romans makes clear, in which forgiveness, only twice mentioned (iv. 7; xi. 27), is assumed as known and enjoyed by those to whom Paul wrote to unfold the manner and result of their justification by faith.

He had set His love upon us where we were, giving His Son, who was without spot, or motion, or principle of sin; and making Him (for He offered Himself to accomplish the will of God) sin for us, in order to make us in Him—who in that condition had perfectly glorified Him—the expression of His divine righteousness, before the heavenly principalities through all eternity (2 Cor. v. 21).

And the heavens shall declare His righteousness: for God is Judge Himself" (Ps. l. 6).

The heavens (though in result God be seated in Zion) bring in their display of the righteousness of God; distinct in itself, note, from His judgment. This is general. It is not in itself the judgment of God. I doubt not He shines forth in glory therein, but in a particular manner. We can say it is the glorified saints who display this; of course, with Christ Himself (2 Cor. v. 21).

He having perfectly glorified God when He was made sin for us, and bore our sins, God's righteousness has set Him as Man at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens; and part of that righteous-

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ness of God is that He should see the fruit of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. He must have us, therefore, in the glory with Him, and like Himself.

J. N. D.

WHATE'ER GOD WILLS.

WHATE'ER God wills let that be done,
His will is ever wisest ;
His grace will all thy hope outrun,
Who to that faith arisest.
The gracious Lord
Will help afford ;
He chastens with forbearing ;
Who God believes,
And to Him cleaves,
Shall not be left despairing.

My God is my sure confidence,
My light and my existence ;
His counsel is beyond my sense,
But stirs no weak resistance ;
His Word declares
The very hairs
Upon my head are numbered ;
His mercy large
Holds me in charge
With care that never slumbered.

There comes a day, when, at His will,
The pulse of nature ceases ;
I think upon it, and am still,
Let come whate'er He pleases.
To Him I trust
My soul, my dust,
When flesh and spirit sever ;
The Christ we sing
Has plucked the sting
Away from death for ever.

Albert of Brandenburg, while in exile, in 1666.

PROPITIATION AND SUBSTITUTION.

MY intercourse with saints, and especially with those who preach, has led me to discover that a good deal of obscurity in their manner of putting the Gospel, and, I may add, a good deal of Arminian and Calvinistic controversy, arises from not distinguishing propitiation and substitution. I am not anxious about the words, but about the practical distinction, which is very simple, and, I think, of moment. I say the words, because in propitiation, in a certain sense, Christ stood in our stead. Still, there is a very real difference in Scripture.

This difference is clearly marked in the offerings of the great day of atonement. Aaron slew the bullock, and the goat which was called the Lord's lot, and sprinkled the blood on and before the mercy-seat, and on the altar. The blood was presented to God, whose holy presence had been dishonoured and offended by sin. So Christ has perfectly glorified God in the place of sin, by His perfect obedience and love to His Father in His being made sin who knew no sin. God's majesty, righteousness, love, truth, all that He is, was glorified in the work wrought by Christ, and of this the blood was witness in the holy place itself. Our sins gave occasion to it, but God Himself was glorified in it. Hence the testimony can go out to all the world, that God is more than satisfied, glorified, and whoever comes by that blood is freely, fully received of God and to God. But there was no confession of sins on the head of this goat; it was about sin, by reason of Israel's sinfulness, but it was simply blood offered to God. Sin had been dealt with in judgment according to God's glory, yea, to the full glorifying of God, for never was His majesty, love, and hatred of sin so seen. God could shine out in favour to the returning sinner, according to what He was; yea, in the infiniteness of His love, beseech men to return.

But besides this, there was personal guilt, positive personal sins, for which Israel was responsible; and men are responsible, according to what is righteously required from each. On the great day of atonement, the high-priest confessed the people's sins on the scape-goat, laying both his hands on its head; the personal sins were transferred to the goat by one who represented all the people, and they were gone for ever—never found again.

Now this is another thing. Christ is both High-priest and Victim, and has confessed all the sins of His people as His own, borne our sins in His own body on the tree. The two goats are but one Christ, but there is the double aspect of His sacrifice, Godward, and bearing our sins. The blood is the witness of the accomplishment of all, and He is entered in not without blood. He is the propitiation for our sins. But in this aspect the world comes in, too. He is a propitiation for the whole world. All has been done that is needed. His blood is available for the vilest, whoever he may be. Hence the Gospel to the world says, "Whosoever will, let him come." In this aspect we may say Christ died for all, gave Himself a ransom for all—an *ἀντίλυτρον περὶ πάντων*, an adequate and available sacrifice for sin, for whoever would come.

But when I come to bearing sins, the language is uniformly different. He bore our sins, He bore the sins of many. "All" is carefully abstained from. I say carefully, because in Rom. v. 18, 19 the difference is carefully made. The first, our sins, is the language of faith, left open, indeed, to any one who can use it, but used and to be used only by faith. The believing remnant of Israel may use it, including the blessing of the nations, for He died for that nation; Christians use it in faith, for all that have faith to use it. The second "many" restricts it from all, but generally has the force of the many; the (all) *οἱ πολλοί* as contrasted with a head of leaders, the mass in connection with

them. Adam's *οἱ πολλοί* (all) were in result all, but all as in connection with him. Christ's *οἱ πολλοί* (all) those connected with Him. But it will never be found in Scripture that Christ bore the sins of all. Had He done so, they never could be mentioned again, nor men judged according to their works. That Christ died for all is, as we have seen, often said. Hence I go with His death to the world as their ground, and only ground, of approach, with the love shown in it. When a man believes, I can say, "Now I have more to tell you ; Christ has borne every one of your sins, they never can be mentioned again." If we look at the difference of Arminian and Calvinistic preaching, we shall see the bearing of this at once. The Arminians take up Christ's dying for all, and generally they connect the bearing of sins with it, and all is confusion as to the efficacy and effectualness of Christ's bearing our sins, and they deny any special work for His people. They say, if God loved all, He cannot love some particularly ; and an uncertain salvation is the result, and man often exalted. Thus the scape-goat is practically set aside.

The hyper-Calvinist holds Christ's bearing the sins of His people so that they are effectually saved, but he sees nothing else. He will say, if Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, there can be no real love for anything else, and denies Christ's dying for all, and the distinctive character of propitiation, and the blood on the mercy-seat. He sees nothing but substitution.

The truth is, Christ is said to love the Church, never the world ; that is a love of special relationship. God is never said to love the Church, but the world. That is divine goodness, what is in the nature of God (not His purpose), and His glory is the real end of all. But I do not dwell on this, I only point out the confusion of propitiation and substitution as necessarily making confusion in the Gospel, enfeebling the address to the world, or weakening the security of the

believer, and in every respect giving uncertainty to the announcement of the truth. I believe earnestness after souls, and preaching Christ with love to Him, will be blessed where there is little clearness, and is more important than great exactitude of statement. Still, it is a comfort to the preacher to have it clear, even if not thinking about it at the moment; and when building up afterwards, the solidness of the foundation is of the greatest moment. J. N. D.

IS IT NOTHING?

Is your title simply to be SAFE, sheltered by the blood? Haven't your hearts found anything uniting you to Christ in glory?

Is it NOTHING to say, "I am come to God, Judge of all, washed in the blood of His Son, the reproach of Egypt rolled away, and I see in Christ, in all the glory of God, the One who, as Man by perfect obedience, earned the glory of God"?

Is it NOTHING to you, to see the slain Lamb in the midst of the throne, and you to be like Him when He appears? "We have received not the spirit of the world." Have your souls never tasted what it is to be there, where there is nothing but HOLINESS, not a jar, not a thing that does not answer to the glory of God? God HIMSELF manifested as love, and we in the centre of it all, because like HIM there, who says, "Yet a little while, and I will come and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, ye may be also"?

NOTHING! in GOD'S APPROVAL as you enter, and the "new name" being written (a secret between you and Christ)?

NOTHING! in (I don't say the glory), but in, "Well done, good and faithful servant"?

NOTHING in HIS SMILE of recompense for any poor bit of service you are trying to do?

And, again, "no need of the sun?"

NOTHING! in the thought that's the One who bears

HE MUST INCREASE.

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all the effulgence of the light that dazzles, and I can look at it, because He is the One who GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME, to bring me there, able to gaze with undazzled eyes? He hiding not a single ray of His glory (John xvii. 22, 23)?

But deeper still in connection with His own blessed Person, will it be NOTHING to see HIM perfectly glorified who here is rejected and despised, and alas! how poorly presented by those who are His?

NOTHING to be there! and see Him enjoying the travail of His soul, perfectly satisfied?

NOTHING! to see the Man who was the Man of Sorrows here, and who suffered all for us in the brightness of the glory of God?

Infinitely more blessed than all He has to give me!
G. V. W.

 HE MUST INCREASE.

“HE must increase, but I must decrease”—the keynote of all His ways with us. The only things that I could, as a ruined creature, give Him, were my sins, my nakedness, my lost condition: to wash out the first; to hide me in His own acceptance as to the second; and to share His own glory for the third. But even these I could not give up to Him, so as to have done with them, for I was not greater than the “I” that loved myself. But He has adjusted that difficulty, and we are mutually satisfied; He, with His Father’s service in so doing, and I (renewed) with the delight He had in so acting. John’s reference to the words, I suppose, was as to service—the herald is of importance until the One heralded appears. But truly, as to us, He works our works in us (John xii. 24). “*It bringeth forth much fruit.*” . . .

What is wanted in our day, methinks, if He is to be magnified upon earth, ere He comes to fetch us, is a fresh action of the Spirit; it may be a hidden and quiet one, as that which wrought ere He came the

first time. But there was in the temple Zacharias ; and near it were Elizabeth, Mary, Joseph, Anna, and Simeon. So there might be going on now, a silent, formative power, preparing for the bright and morning Star's appearing. Do you judge that in heaven there is no movement toward that hour? Surely it is the present mind of heaven which has acted upon us, the very mind that says, " Surely I come quickly," which has led to our saying, " Even so, come, Lord Jesus ;" and led to our looking at what there may be still around ourselves practically inconsistent with that hope.

G. V. W.

GATHERED FRAGMENTS.

BE not conformed to the world ; be more and more conformed to the mind of God.

If sin doth not taste bitter, Christ cannot taste sweet.

If sin was better known, Christ would be better thought of.

It matters not who are our accusers if Christ be our Advocate.

As waters in motion are purest, so saints in affliction are holiest.

Trust not so much to the comforts of God as to the God of comforts.

Observed duties maintain our credit, but secret duties maintain our life.

Religion is the best armour that a man can have, but the worst cloak.

Never covet *easy* paths. The Lord keep you and me from that sin, beloved.

How sweet to work all day for God, and then lie down at night beneath His smile.

God is satisfied to the utmost, and therefore can save sinners to the uttermost.

Said Luther, " The greatest temptation the devil has for the Christian is comfort."

Men may judge us by the success of our efforts ;
God looks at the efforts themselves.

God will give us nothing for *our* sakes, but will deny us nothing for *Christ's* sake.

The soul is the life of the body. Faith is the life of the soul. Christ is the life of faith.

The blood of Christ *upon the heart* is the greatest blessing, *upon the head* is the greatest curse.

A child was asked, "What is faith?" She answered, "Doing God's will, and asking no questions."

If we would stand, Christ must be our foundation ;
if we would be safe, Christ must be our sanctuary.

Sad is the condition, and vain the endeavour, of those that would please both God and the world.

It has been beautifully said, that "the veil which covers the face of futurity is woven by the hand of mercy."

The blood of Christ, which satisfied the *justice* of God, may satisfy the *conscience* of an awakened sinner.

Wicked men stumble at a straw in their way to heaven, and climb over great mountains in their way to hell.

The Christian very frequently is the only Bible the world will read. How sad that the copy should be so defaced.

How free from care might every Christian be ! He might be free from all care, except that which relates to knowing and doing His Master's will. And those who do His will have His promise that duty shall be made plain, and we know that such go "from strength to strength."

The Christian must expect opposition from the world, because he is going just the contrary road from the multitude, and has to pass through them. Believer, if you and the world are upon good terms, it may be well to inquire if you are not come down from your eminence—do you live godly in Christ Jesus ?

It is said, "He answered him not a word ;" but it

is not said, He *heard* not a word. These two differ much. Christ often heareth when He doth not answer. His *not answering is an answer*, and speaks thus: Pray on, go on, cry on, for the Lord holdeth His door fast bolted, not to keep you out, but that you may knock, and it shall be opened.

There is no honour like a relation to Christ; no riches like the graces of Christ; no learning like the knowledge of Christ; and no persons like the servants of Christ. Think not the worse of Him for His manger or His cross. As He ceaseth not to be *Man* in His highest estate, so He was *God* in His lowest. His words were oracles, and His works miracles. His life was a pattern; His death a sacrifice; His resurrection glorious; His ascension triumphant; His intercession prevalent; and His coming again will be magnificent. All the angels in heaven adore Him; all the devils in hell fear Him; all the redeemed have been saved by Him; all who perish shall be judged by Him.

How cheerful ought every Christian to be! If he have Christ he has the promise of all things! Worldly objects and changes ought to have no power over him.

The Christian who has put aside his Christianity because he is in worldly company, is like a man who has put off his shoes because he is walking among thorns.

LETTERS OF INTEREST.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—We cannot have too clear a view of Paul's teaching union with an ascended Christ, putting us in a wholly new position. The more I go on, the more I see that the loss of this by the Church is the secret of their state; and it is mainly that which brethren have recovered, which God has brought out in these last days. But it is just that that makes it so important that the truth

should not be discredited by denying or in any way discrediting any other part of Scripture. It is curious that this was just the ruin of the Paulicians. They had nothing else but Paul's epistles and the gospels, and their adversary took up this very point against them—a certain Peter (of Sicily), if I remember. But it is a mistake to think Paul only speaks of this new place; John does, too. But that is not all; the other parts of Scripture are the Word of God, and if any have not attained to Paul's doctrine, we are to walk by the same rule. Besides, the other aspects of the truth are as important in their place as that. Where that truth is held alone, there is a hardness, a want of daily dependence, which leaves the best Christian affections dormant. Besides, the whole system is false. Those other parts of the New Testament were certainly available for Christians then, and if so, for Christians now. "Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling," is clearly Christian ground; and wilderness life is a part of Christian life, as Canaan and conflict are.

Further, the person who makes light of John's writings makes light of the manifestation of God and of the Father, and makes his own acceptance before God the only thing of importance now. This is a very bad state of soul, and such are clearly on low ground. We have to maintain redemption against the Puseyite heresy of making incarnation the saving work. But if we hold redemption tenaciously fast, the Bread come down from heaven to give life must not be lost. And as to Peter, if I lose his writings I lose the government of God, and the connection of this in Christian times with Old Testament times. Now the glory of God is concerned in these things, and it is a poor boast of knowledge to leave that aside, and think only of what exalts us. So of Jude, where it directly concerns the professing Church. In no place is Christ's personal glory, as Christ, brought out more fully than in Hebrews. Is that nothing for

the Christian, because the unity of the Body is not brought out? Even Paul's epistles give different aspects of truth. The epistle to the Romans does not hint at our resurrection *with* Christ, nor allude to Christ's ascension, save once in chapter viii., to lay the ground for intercession, which is really dropped out of their scheme. Ephesians never goes on Romans' ground at all; Colossians takes up in substance both. Their vaunted clearance is not sound knowledge, but rejection of many important parts of truth, and uniformly produces self-sufficiency and hardness, not personal dependence on grace and on Christ.—*From "Letters of J. N. D.," Vol. II., 1869.*

WRITING at this moment, I must personally sing of tender mercy and restoring health. . . . The last few months have been crowded with more trial than it would be worth while to mention, but in nothing has grace failed to support the struggling heart. More sure than ever am I of the truth of the Gospel, the faithfulness of God, and the certainty of His promise. The Lord lives when comfort dies, and reigns when nature fails. Not a line of His revelation has proved erroneous. There is not a syllable of the Inspired Book which has ever started from its place. You may hang the weight of your soul on any one of the words which proceeded out of the mouth of God. This I have proved by personal experience, times out of number.

Although I am not worthy to wash the feet of the servants of my Lord, I yet most boldly ask the prayers of my fellow-workers, that I may not on this occasion be disappointed, but may be allowed to rise from pain, and return to my happy sphere of service. I beg this specially of choice friends, to whose intercession I already owe so much.—Yours heartily,

February, 1889.

C. H. SPURGEON.

MARCH, 1889.

LESSONS OF THE PAST HELPFUL IN THE PRESENT.

FAILURE on the part of man to act up to his responsibility has been a leading feature in his history from the days of Eden downward. In the garden, that first displayed itself. God had provided all that Adam needed to keep right, if he would, but he would not. God's plain word was disobeyed, and the fall was the result.

After the flood dispensations were introduced, and we find what may be called the patriarchal dispensation, the Mosaic dispensation, and now the Christian dispensation. For each dispensation God provided what was needed for the guidance of His people, whether by revelations, which He vouchsafed as they were called for, or by a written revelation at the commencement of each, as was the case with the Mosaic and also with the Christian dispensations. To the patriarchs guidance was given as needed, God thus indicating that He was ever watching His servants, and at the right moment would intervene with fresh communications from Himself. But the introduction of a *written* revelation in the days of, and by, Moses, changed a little the divine procedure. Always reserving to Himself the right to speak to His creatures and to His people when and how He would, He nevertheless by the giving of the law provided instruction and guidance, by what it contained, for His people, till the greater Prophet should appear, like unto Moses, to whom Israel were to hearken, and of whom Moses had written (Deut. xviii. 18, 19). The predicted advent of this Prophet spoke plainly of two things. *First*, that all the communications which God would be pleased to make to His people were not as yet completed; and *second*, that, till that Prophet came, what God had given by the law-giver would hold good and be in season, unless directly

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cancelled by the authority and word of their God. We have to write thus guardedly, because there were in the law provisions suited for the wilderness, which would not suit when the people were in the land ; see, for instance, the law of Levit. xvii. 3, 4, and that of Deut. xii. 15, 21, 22. In the wilderness, if they ate flesh, they were to bring the animal to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation ; in the land they had not to do that, but might eat it within their gates as often as they desired. But, as a rule, the directions furnished by the law were to hold good throughout that dispensation. So with the instructions to Christians for doctrine, service, and worship.

Now this will be found to be important and helpful. Important, because attention to and observance of these instructions cannot fail to be productive of blessing ; helpful, because guidance has thus, it will be seen, been provided for days of declension and weakness, as much as for those days of great spiritual power and freshness of soul which characterised the first years of Christian times. We all know the common cry : "Oh, that was all well in apostolic times, but it will not do now ; we must seek for something more suited for the times, more in character with our day." Such virtually declare that God, who had provided for the early days of the dispensation, has not also provided for its closing days. Would that be like God ? Assuredly not. Men, of course—and human legislation proclaims it—cannot foresee all that will take place. So legislation for this day may be amended, or cancelled, on the morrow. But God sees the end from the beginning ; all is present to Him who is the eternal One. Nothing takes Him by surprise. All has been foreseen and arranged for by Him, whose prerogative it is to declare the end from the beginning (Isaiah xlv. 10).

It is well to remember this ; it is wise to act on it. And in illustration of what has been advanced, the

reader is requested to consider certain events in the history of the past, put on record for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages are come (1 Cor. x. 11).

To Abijah's history, Solomon's grandson, we would first direct attention (2 Chron. xiii.). Shrunken into small dimensions was that kingdom, the power of which had formerly reached to the Euphrates. Just two tribes out of the twelve owned the rule of the king at Jerusalem, the other ten being hostile to David's descendant; and as yet between the two kingdoms, the separation being an accomplished fact, a state of warfare had existed (1 Kings xiv. 30; xv. 6, 7), neither party desisting from it. As to numbers, of course Israel could overmatch Judah. And now things seemed approaching a crisis. "Abijah set the battle in array with an army of valiant men of war, even four hundred thousand chosen men: Jeroboam also set the battle in array against him with eight hundred thousand chosen men, being mighty men of valour." In Benjamin's territory were they thus gathered to battle; Zemaraim, on which mountain Abijah stood, being reckoned to Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 22); and Jeroboam was the invader—not content, it would seem, with the extent of territory God had assigned to him. Apparently, too, it was to be a decisive battle, no effort being spared to ensure for Jeroboam the victory. And, like many another who has really felt the weakness of his cause, on numbers he relied, not on God.

Eight hundred thousand against four hundred thousand! Two to one, this was, against the little kingdom of Judah. The outlook, humanly speaking, was not promising for Abijah. But he had a resource from which Jeroboam had cut himself off; his resource was in God, the God of Israel. With boldness, therefore, he addressed the invaders (2 Chron. xiii. 4-12), reminding them on the one hand of their idolatry, and on the other of the continuance of the true worship of God at Jerusalem, through the instrumen-

tality of the Aaronic priesthood. Now this gave Judah an advantage, of which they would avail themselves. As worshippers of God they would look to Him, and as having the Aaronic priesthood they could cause an alarm with the trumpets to be sounded against the invaders.

Abijah's speech, however, did not in the least disconcert Jeroboam. He doubtless looked at his numbers, double those of Judah, and thought himself sure of the victory, and that a crushing one. Skilfully he arranged his forces to catch his enemy, as it were, in a vice. "Jeroboam caused an ambushment to come about behind them: so they were before Judah, and the ambushment was behind them" (13). What must he have felt, as he saw his plan on the point of success—the long time of warfare to be concluded by Abijah's crushing defeat? Judah now perceived the danger to their host; for, looking back, "behold, the battle was before and behind."

A critical moment had come, but one for which God had provided centuries previous, and of that Abijah was not unmindful. They had the priests, he said, sounding with the trumpets. Yes; but Jeroboam and his army had heard of that without quailing, or suing for terms. Valiant men are not wont to be deterred from their purpose by a blast of trumpets. Centuries, too, had passed since God told Moses of the use of them on Israel's behalf. Joshua, indeed, had sounded trumpets before Jericho, and its walls had fallen; but then Israel were an unbroken people marching to victory. Since that day who had resorted to them? Since that time what failure amongst the people! An obsolete provision, some might have said; if that is all that you trust to, defeat must ensue. So men of the world would reason. But there stood in all its simplicity the word of God: "If ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the

Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies" (Num. x. 9).

God's promise was definite and sure, if under the circumstances indicated they resorted to this provision. Abijah recalled it to mind. The word given in the wilderness stood good for that day. The alarm was blown. God did remember Judah, and they were saved from their enemies. That word had not been cancelled, so it still held good. Given at the commencement of that dispensation, a little more than a year after the exodus, it was valid in the days of Abijah, and was valid for all that dispensation. "They cried unto the Lord, and the priests sounded with the trumpets. Then the men of Judah gave a shout, and as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass that God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. And the children of Israel fled before Judah, and God delivered them into their hand. And Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter: so there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men. Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time, and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied on the Lord God of their fathers" (vers. 14-18).

Marked was this victory. Jeroboam had marshalled his hosts, and had skilfully disposed them. Naturally he might have felt himself sure of success. Two to one, he could surround the host of Judah, and settle on this battlefield the question of supremacy between Abijah and himself. How different was the result. Judah slew more of their enemy than they were in number themselves. *Four hundred thousand men slew five hundred thousand men*, "because they relied on the Lord God of their fathers." Jehovah's word was steadfast, His promise sure. Abijah relied on it; he acted in accordance with it, and found it just as efficacious as in the palmiest days of their past history. God's word by Moses was God's word for the days of Abijah: "Because they relied on the

Lord God of their fathers." True for all time will this be in principle, the difference of dispensation being taken into account, and the provision for the dispensation being remembered and resorted to. Weakness, smallness of numbers, failure in the past, none of these things, which might damp the courage, or paralyze the energy, of men of the world, can change the word of God, or make His promise and provision of none effect. Surely, when He gave that direction in Numb. x. 9, He knew when His people would act on it, and had before His eye (for all is present to Him) the battlefield of Zemaraim, and the victory which would ensue when that provision in the law should be acted upon by Abijah.

Faith in the divine word, and acting upon it, are followed by great results. The priests blew with the trumpets, the opposing host fled; God delivered it into Abijah's hand; great slaughter followed, and Jeroboam received a signal and final defeat. *Half a million* of the Israelites fell; not one of Judah, that we read of, lost his life, or was even temporarily disabled. God's provision—the sounding the alarm—was effective and sufficient.

A century rolls by, and another illustration is afforded us. The temple structure, which had stood for a century and a half, needed extensive repairs. Joash, the fifth king from Abijah, was now on the throne. By Asa the altar of burnt offering had been renewed (2 Chron. xv. 8), but no structural repairs apparently were then needed. In the days of Joash such were evidently required. A work like that would cost much; how could the expense of it be defrayed? Again we see that God had provided at the beginning of that dispensation for that which might be required from time to time throughout it. But diligence in studying the Word is at times needed to learn where to find what is wanted. This, illustrated already in David's life, when the Levites, it was remembered, were alone to carry the ark (1

Chron. xv. 2), receives a fresh illustration in the days of Joash and Jehoiada. To repair the house of the Lord was Joash minded (2 Chron. xxiv. 4), but he set about it first in a wrong way.

To Kings must we turn for that, where we read that he proposed to sequester part of God's provision for the priests, to swell the fund for the repairs of the house. "All the money," so ran the decree, "of the dedicated things that is brought into the house of the Lord, even the money of every one that passeth the account, the money that every man is set at, and all the money that cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the Lord, let the priests take it to them, every man of his acquaintance: and let them repair the breaches of the house, where-soever any breach shall be found" (2 Kings xii. 4, 5). Three distinct funds the king sought to lay his hands upon for this work: 1st, the money of every one that passeth the account, a fund well known by this description; 2nd, that which every man is set at; 3rd, all the money freely brought into the house of the Lord. Now the second of these funds, certainly, it was not in Joash's power to lay hands upon. It formed part of God's provision for His priests (Levit. xxvii.; Num. xviii. 14), for their sustenance. What He had so given He did not mean should be alienated, and applied to a different use. No wonder, then, that under the circumstances, the priests were not hearty in the cause, and did not further this plan of the king; so that it was found, in the twenty-third year of his reign, that the dilapidations of the house were unattended to. It was not the priest's duty to surrender of their maintenance to repair the breaches of the house of the Lord.

Whence, then, could the funds be provided? Had such an emergency been unforeseen, and consequently unprovided for by the Lord? There was a fund which could be legitimately applied to such a purpose—"the money of every one that passeth the account."

Had Joash fully understood the matter, and kept to that, the repairs would doubtless have been finished ere his twenty-third year. On that alone, it was found, could he really rely for the important work in hand. Exod. xxx. 11-16 authorised such a disposal of it; Exod. xxxviii. 25-28 was a precedent for the use of it. But times were changed. Would it now be sufficient for such a purpose? Would the half shekel, collected from the men of Judah and Benjamin only, provide sufficient to repair the breaches of the house of the Lord God of Israel?

A chest was made, and set without at the gate of the house of the Lord. A proclamation was made through Judah and Jerusalem "to bring in to the Lord the collection that Moses, the servant of God, laid upon Israel in the wilderness. And all the princes, and all the people, rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest, until they had made an end, and they gathered money in abundance." No stint was felt; no pinching was called for. Money in abundance was forthcoming when the collection—laid on *Israel* by Moses in the wilderness—was responded to by *Judah and Jerusalem*. Many a shake of the head, one can fancy, there may have been, as the breaches were surveyed, and the limited area from which that collection could now be expected was thought of. Will Judah and Jerusalem be able to meet it? Well, they did. God's provision for such a work, indicated in the wilderness, under the shadow of Mount Sinai, was ample for all that was needed in the days of Joash. To it no addition was requisite; it fully supplied what they wanted. The provision made at the beginning of the dispensation was found ample for the calls on it six hundred years later. Times were changed, but God's word had not. Acting on it, the house was repaired, set in its state, and strengthened.

Nearly a century and a half roll by. We reach the days of Hezekiah, and read of his service in restoring

the worship of God, and the caring for the due maintenance of the priests and Levites. "He commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the Lord" (2 Chron. xxxi. 4). Set apart for the service of God, they, their wives, and their families needed support. This God in the beginning had not overlooked, as we learn from Num. xviii. According to that chapter, however, the provision made was to be drawn from all the tribes, to help to support the one tribe. In early days that was enough. But now how altered was the nation's condition. The tribes east of Jordan were in captivity (1 Chron. v. 26); Naphtali, too, was gone (2 Kings xv. 29); and the little kingdom of Judah did not extend beyond the territory of that tribe and that of Benjamin as well. How could they support the priests and Levites? People might ask that question. The solution of it was found by acting on the divine revelation of Num. xviii. They did that; and heaps in abundance testified to the sufficiency of that provision. From the third month to the seventh the heaps swelled, beginning with the barley harvest and going on to the vintage. Hezekiah and his princes inspected them, and blessed the Lord and His people Israel. God had richly blessed the fruits and the flocks and herds *that year*, and the people brought of the abundance wherewith they had been blessed. Had God withheld the fruits of the ground, or decimated the flocks, the provision might have been scanty. He blessed both, when the people were willing to render to the priests and Levites their due. And Azariah attested the fulness of the supply, as he told the king, "Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the Lord, we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty: for the Lord hath blessed His people; and that which is left is this great store" (2 Chron. xxxi. 10). Thus the word about the priest's sustenance at the beginning of the

Mosaic dispensation was found suitable guidance for the people seven centuries and a half later; and the supply obtained testified to the foreknowledge and goodness of the Lord.

Of the past we have been reading. We live in a different dispensation. Has, then, what has passed before us no voice for the present day? What God ordained at the commencement of that dispensation held good, we have seen, centuries later, and surely would have done to its close, whether the emergency arose from an invasion of the land, the dilapidated state of the house, or the wants of the priests and Levites. The alarm sounded would have ensured victory to the people; the half shekel offering would have supplied a fund for the repairs of the temple; the tithes duly brought would have satisfied the need of the ministering servants of the Lord.

Of course, a change of dispensation may involve a change in what is needed. This is the case. And one may not be able always to draw a strict parallel between the provision made for the former dispensation, and that which is required in the present. But the principle will hold good. God does not leave His people to shift for themselves in matters in which He is concerned. He foresees and provides what is needed, and it will be found sufficient when resorted to.

He *foresees*, we have said. In no dispensation is that more apparent than in the present one. He foresaw, and predicted, the state of things that would arise at Ephesus after Paul's departure (Acts xx. 29). He foresaw, and announced, the evil that would characterise the latter times, or post-apostolic period (1 Tim. iv. 1-3). He foresaw the spirit which would be prevalent in the last days (2 Tim. iii. 1-5). He foresaw, too, and has told us of, the special feature of the end of those days (2 Pet. iii. 3, 4). Have these divine prognostications been verified, or falsified? We all know how faithfully were portrayed in the

Acts and in the two epistles to Timothy the evils which arose. Rev. ii. 2 indicates the correctness of the divine forecast as to Ephesus. History confirms most fully the statements made by Paul to Timothy. Has God, then, left His people without directions and supply for such epochs? No. "I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace," said Paul to the Ephesian elders (Acts xx. 32). To apostolic teaching he turns Timothy. Of the Lord's promise concerning His coming Peter reminds his readers.

Conflict, then, there must be, since evil has to be met. The weapon for that is the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God (Ephes. vi. 17), a weapon competent for such work, and one which defies the tooth of time, for it lives and abides (1 Pet. i. 23); and whether it be that one is called to resist the seduction of the enemy, or the arguments of men, that will be found sufficient and effective. Of this the Lord has taught us. He used it against the enemy, and he departed from Him (Matt. iv. 11); He used it to meet the reasonings of men, and they were silenced (Matt. xxii. 34). The alarm blown by the trumpets was the provision for Israel; the Word of God is provided for us.

Again, as we look around and survey the state of the Church of God, what disorder, what confusion, is there. Is despair to paralyse our energies? It is not, indeed, with a material structure that we have to do. Restoration to primitive order in the Church we cannot expect; apostles to correct abuses we have not; but the Spirit abides. He, by whose coming the House, God's habitation on earth, was formed, is here still. God, in the person of the Holy Ghost, dwells on earth (John xiv. 16). As He is given His place, blessing does result. He works, too, on earth, sovereign in His action (Acts xiii. 2), opening doors as pleases Him. Of this Acts xvii. so fully testifies, when Paul was forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in proconsular Asia (ver. 6), and was not suffered by the Spirit of Jesus—as we should read

(ver. 7)—to go northward into Bithynia, but was led on directly to Greece, to commence his work of evangelising in Europe. Now the Spirit is on earth still, to direct the spread of the work, as well as to energise each labourer for his special department, it may be, in that work (1 Cor. xii. 11). The power that is needed God has provided, and did on the day of Pentecost.

Shall the sense of weakness in the assembly, the consequence of past failures on the part of the Church of God, discourage His people? The presence of the Lord Jesus in the midst is assured them, on the condition of gathering unto His name (Matt. xviii. 20). And surely it has been verified, and will be, that, the condition conformed to, the presence of the Lord can be, and has been, and is, known in the midst of His gathered ones; and in the language of Elisha they can say, "They that be with us are more than they that be with them." "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

Now these provisions, made at the beginning of the dispensation, will hold good to its end. God has not left His people to do the best they can in these days, any more than in the days of the kingdom of Judah. Now, as then, the Word can direct them, and is sufficient. The trumpets, the half shekels, the tithes, &c., had only to be resorted to, to prove the wisdom, foresight, and goodness of God. His Word, the presence of the Spirit on earth, and the promise of the Lord's presence in the midst of two or three gathered unto His name, have now to be acknowledged, to prove the wisdom, foresight, and unfailing goodness of our God, in spite of the great and grievous failure of His people in these days.

C. E. S.

MARK xiv. 17-19.—"Is it I?" Upright and tried hearts, thinking of the possibility of such a crime, with more confidence in the Master's word than in themselves.—J. N. D.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

IF we examine the value of the death of Christ, what do we find attached to it in Scripture?

1. Do I need *redemption*? We have redemption through His blood, an eternal redemption, for "neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption."

2. Do I need *forgiveness*? That redemption which I have through His blood is the forgiveness of sins—yea, without shedding of blood is no remission.

3. Do I need *peace*? He has made peace through the blood of His cross.

4. Do I need *reconciliation* with God? Though we were sinners, yet now hath He reconciled us by the body of His flesh through death, to present us holy, and unblameable, and unreprouvable in God's sight. When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.

5. Do I desire to be *dead to sin*, and have the flesh crucified with its affections and lusts? I am crucified with Christ. Knowing this that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed; for in that He died, He died unto sin once, and in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. This gives deliverance also from the charge and burthen of the law which has dominion over a man as long as he lives.

6. Do I feel the need of *propitiation*? Christ is set forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood. The need of justification? I am justified by His blood.

7. Would I have a *part with Christ*? He must die, for except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone; if it die it brings forth much fruit.

8. Hence, unto what am I *baptized as the public expression of my faith*? As many of us as are baptized unto Christ have been baptized unto His death; for what indeed has broken down the middle wall of partition and let in the Gentiles, slaying the enmity

and reconciling Jew and Gentile in one body unto God? The Cross. How have we boldness to enter into the holiest? By the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way which He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is His flesh? for till that was rent the Holy Ghost signified by it that the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest.

9. Hence it was a lifted-up Christ that was the *attractive point for all*. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto Me."

10. In the power of what was the Great Shepherd of the sheep *brought again from the dead*? Through the blood of the everlasting covenant.

11. How was the *curse of the law taken away* from those who were under it? By Christ's being made a curse for them, as it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.

12. How are we *washed from our sins*? He has loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, for His blood cleanseth us from all sin.

13. If I would be *delivered from the world*, it is by the cross, by which the world is crucified to me and I unto the world.

14. If the *love of Christ constrains us* towards men in the thought of the terror of the Lord, how is it so? Because I thus judge, if One died for all, then were all dead, and they that live should live not to themselves, but to Him who died for them and rose again. Hence the apostle knew no man after the flesh—no, not even Christ. All was a new creation. If I would live in divine power, it is always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in my mortal body. If He would institute a special remembrance to call Him to mind, it was a body given and blood shed. It is not less a Lamb as it were slain that is found in the throne.

All was love, no doubt, but do I want to learn 'it? Hereby we know it that He laid down His life for us, and that even of God in that He loved us and gave

His Son as a propitiation for our sins. It is to the sprinkling of that precious blood of Christ that we are sanctified, and to obedience ; and through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once (contrasted with the many Jewish sacrifices) we are sanctified and perfected for ever, so that there is no more offering for sin ; for having offered one sacrifice for sins, He is set down for ever at the right hand of God. For He should not offer Himself often, as the high-priest entered into the holy place once every year with the blood of others ; for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world ; but now once in the end of the world He hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself ; for as it is appointed unto *men* once to die, and after this the *judgment*, so Christ was once *offered to bear the sins* of many, and to them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

15. Did I need, therefore, my *conscience purged*? It is through the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God. For it is by means of death that there is the redemption of the transgressions which were under the first covenant, and in that view He became Mediator. Indeed, a testament could have no force while the testator lived.

16. Do I seek *the destruction of the power of Satan*? It is through death that He destroyed [the power of] him that had the power of death.

17. What do I find to be the *central object of Christ's coming*—the ground-work of His glory as Man? We see Him made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that He by the grace of God should taste death for every one—for all things in heaven and earth depend on this (Heb. ix. 23 ; Col. i. 20).

18. Would He *sanctify even the Jewish people* to Himself? It must be by His blood, suffering, rejected, without the gate. No remission for us—no

100 "ONLY PRAY, THOU TROUBLED HEART."

privileges of the new covenant for us, nor establishing of it with them, without this blood—redemption is not without it. The living sinner, as such, cannot be presented to God, nor a living Christ offer that by which the sinner must draw nigh. The veil remains unrent, the conscience unpurged, the propitiation unaccomplished.

God forbore with the Old Testament saints, and has now shown His righteousness in doing so—a righteousness now declared in that Propitiatory set forth through faith in Christ's blood. "By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." J. N. D.

"ONLY PRAY, THOU TROUBLED HEART."

("Bete nur, betrübttes Herz.")

ONLY pray, thou troubled heart,
If anxieties distress thee ;
Tell to God how pain'd thou art.
Trust Him : He intends to bless thee :
Simple, earnest prayers and cries,
God, thy God, will not despise.

God will answer all thy sighs,
Rightly, at the time appointed ;
Wait on Him till help arise,
Faith shall ne'er be disappointed.
Well He knows thy spirit's smart,
Only pray, thou troubled heart.

Always pray, thou troubled heart :
Jesus' Name will fail thee never :
Fear not : God will peace impart,
"Yea, Amen," He saith for ever.
Jesus died : His precious blood
Makes thy prayer avail with God.

Jesus lives, and by His blood
Thou hast reconciliation :

NOTE FROM "CHRISTIAN WITNESS." 101

Therefore pray : have faith in God,
He Himself is thy salvation :
" Be thou faithful unto death,"
" Watch and pray," the Scripture saith.

Prayer brings help in time of need,
Pray, then, steadfastly believing,
God with bread His poor will feed,
Guarding thee from sin's deceiving :
Doubt Him not, whate'er betide,
Only pray, He will provide.

God the Lord is on thy side,
Therefore sink thou not in sorrow :
Thorns thy pilgrim-feet have tried :
Roses thou shalt find to-morrow :
God Himself thy path doth weigh,
Fear not, faint not, *always* pray.
JOH. GOTTFRIED KRAUSE.—*Newly translated.*

NOTE FROM "CHRISTIAN WITNESS."

VOL. II., pp. 22, 23.

THE ascension glory was as yet unrevealed to the faith of God's people. If Daniel had known the glory of the saints in the heavenly places, which will be distinct from that of Jerusalem on earth, though inseparably connected, he would have found increased reason to sorrow (Dan. x.) for the absence of that link in the chain of blessing, in which Jezreel, the earth, the heavenlies, and the heavens are to be bound together (Hosea ii.).

It seems to me that the full understanding of Leviticus xvi. depends on seeing this connection between the heavenlies and the earth—the holy of holies and the holy place, with the veil rent between them, representing the future connection of heaven and the heavenlies, where the saints will be. In Leviticus they are, except in ver. 33, both comprehended under one name, viz., the holy place into

which the high-priest has entered *alone*, in order to hallow it. And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, *until he come out*, and have made an atonement for himself and for his household (*i.e.*, the Church as priests with Him), and for all the congregation of Israel. As soon as he comes out he hallows the altar of burnt sacrifice, which was outside the holy place, and finally turns away ungodliness from Jacob, by confessing the sins of the congregation over the scape-goat.

It appears to me that Levit. xvi. 33 enumerates—

1. The holy of holies, which answers to the heaven of heavens in the millennial glory, where God dwelleth.

2. The holy place, or the heavenlies, where the altar of incense, candlestick, and shewbread were placed, and where the Church of the first-born will minister. These places are now being hallowed by the High-priest, even Jesus, who remaineth "alone," "the first-fruits of them that sleep," until He cometh out into the court of the tabernacle to hallow the altar which was in the open air at the door of the holy place.

As the two holy places already mentioned are types of the place of Christ's heavenly ministry (Heb. ix.), so the court of the tabernacle, where the sacrifices of blood were offered, was the place of His earthly service. The place will be hallowed as the place of earthly service for the sons of Levi, when He shall purify them, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness: "Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old." The altar of burnt sacrifice, the earthly priesthood, and the congregation of Israel, all of which are mentioned in this verse of Leviticus, will then be hallowed for ever.—*Anon.*

"PRAYERLESSNESS is the cradle which is rocking the Church to sleep."

THE HEAVENLY ONE AND THE HEAVENLY ONES.

I DO not see any difficulty in 1 Cor. xv. 47-49. *Ek* is the source, hence characterises a thing in its nature. *Ek pneumatos, e.g., so ex ouranou.* One man is earthy dust, the other from heaven. It is not *apo*, merely, that He came thence. Then verse 48: as we are all what fallen Adam was, so our place, as in Christ, is to be just like Christ; and as we have carried this in manifestation as Adam's children, so we shall be manifested just such as Christ Himself, as Man. It is the source, and so character, nature, and constituted condition, and then manifested form. Of course, we have to realise it now we are in Christ, sitting in heavenly places in Him. As He is, so are we also, in this world. This characterises a class of Christians the "perfect," as contrasted with forgiven children of Adam. But the state of the affections is not the subject here (1 Cor. xv.), but to be in glory like Christ acts on them now and here.—J. N. D.

THE angels rejoiced when God laid the foundations of the earth (Job. xxxviii. 7); they rejoiced when Christ was born (Luke ii. 13), and when a sinner repents (Luke xv. 10). They are interested in all that God is interested in concerning us, and interested in all that we are interested in concerning Christ (Rev. v.).—W. T.

THE soul is the dwelling-place of the truth of God; the ear and the mind are but the gate and the avenue—the soul is its home, or dwelling-place. The beauty and joy of the truth may have unduly occupied the outposts, filled the avenues, and crowded the gates, but it is only in the soul that its reality is felt, and it is by meditation that the truth takes its journey from the gate, along the avenue, to its own proper dwelling-place, the soul.—J. G. B.

THE PERFECT WORK OF THE CROSS.

THE perfection of Christ's work as Lamb of God, is the grand foundation of all His glories. He would not have perfected His moral glories here if He had not gone on to the cross and died there. He would not have had His official glories in heaven, if He had not gone on to the cross and died there. When the Lord Jesus was hanging as the Lamb of God on the accursed tree, and over His bleeding brow was written the inscription in every language, "This is the King of the Jews," they sought to blot it out—but God would not have it blotted out. He would have the whole creation know that the cross was the title to the kingdom. The inscription that Pilate wrote on the cross, and God kept there, is very fine.

What sustains the cross is its foundation. Supposing the cross sustains the glory, according to the inscription, what sustains the cross itself? Is the cross without a foundation? The secret comes out in these chapters: *as the cross sustains your hopes, it is the Person that sustains the cross.* His *personal* glory is the sustainment of the cross. If He were less than God manifest in the flesh, all He did was of no more worth than water spilt upon the ground. Of all the mighty mystery of official, millennial, eternal glories, the *cross* is the support, and the *Person* is the support of the cross. He must sustain His own work, and His work must sustain everything. This is just the argument of Heb. ix. and x. There was a veil hanging between the place where the priests ministered and the mystic dwelling-place of God. That veil was the expression that that age gave a sinner no access to God. Were there not sacrifices? Yes, there were; and God's altar was accepting them. But they were "gifts and sacrifices that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience." Beautifully, then, at this point, He comes to your heart, and demands a note of admiration. "For if the blood of

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bulls sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, *how much more* shall THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God !”

Supposing we inspect the old tabernacle, and see the beggarliness of all its elements—that the blood of bulls could not bring you into the presence of God ; and from the beggarliness of all that, look at the satisfyingness of the blood of Jesus, will you not exclaim, “How much more shall it purge our consciences !” ? That is the way you are to come to the cross—laying doubtings and questionings aside, and losing yourself in admiration. The thing the Spirit does is to take you gently by the hand, and lead you up to the altar of Calvary, and tell *you* who is the victim that is bleeding there. None but One who was personally free could say, “I come to do Thy will.” Have you any right to a will ? Has Gabriel or Michael ? To do God’s pleasure is their business ; but here was One who could offer Himself without spot to God. “How much more,” then, shall such a sacrifice purge our consciences, and *introduce us at once to the living God !* That entitled me to say, that while we look at His glories—His official glories—we see that the cross is the sustenance of them all. But if the soul does not know the personal glory of the Lord, it positively knows nothing. That is the secret you get here. He, for whom God prepared a body, through the eternal Spirit, satisfied the altar. Yes, *satisfied* the brazen altar before He went into the holy sanctuary to do the business of God’s priest. And atonement flows from satisfaction.

If I find out that Christ’s sacrifice has answered the cravings of the brazen altar, I see that my reconciliation is sealed and settled for eternity. The Epistle to the Ephesians tells you to stand upon this, and look round about you at the glories of *your* condition. The Epistle to the Hebrews shows you the glories of *Christ’s* condition in the compass of about 300 verses.

What a world of wonders is opened! *You* sustained by what He *has done*; and what He has done sustained by what He *is*! J. G. B.

GRACE SUFFICIENT.

I TOLD my people the other morning, when preaching from the text, "My grace is sufficient for thee," that for the first time in my life I experienced what Abraham felt when he fell upon his face and laughed. I was riding home, very weary with a long week's work, when there came to my mind this text, "My grace is sufficient for thee;" but it came with an emphasis laid upon two words, "*My* grace is sufficient for *thee*." My soul said, "Doubtless it is; surely the grace of an infinite God is more than sufficient for a mere insect as I am. And I laughed and laughed again, to think how far the supply exceeded all my needs. It seemed to me as though I were a little fish in the sea, and in my thirst I said, "Alas! I shall drink up the ocean." Then the Father of waters lifted up His head, and smilingly replied, "Little fish, the boundless main is sufficient for thee." The thought made unbelief appear supremely ridiculous, as indeed it is. —*C. H. Spurgeon.*

I SAMUEL i. 13-16.—Our High-priest can never so misunderstand us; He knows the heart (Heb. iv. 15). —C. E. S.

THE blessing (Eph. i.) has its origin in God Himself; He is its source and author; His own heart, His own mind, its origin and its measure. Therefore it is only in Christ that we can have any measure of that which is immeasurable; for He is completely and adequately the delight of God. The heart of God finds in Him a sufficient object on which to pour itself out entirely, towards which His infinite love can all be exercised.—J. N. D.

EXTRACTS FROM THE LIFE OF EDWARD PAYSON.

“ Oh, what a blessed thing it is to lose one's will ! Since I have lost my will, I have found happiness. There can be no such thing as disappointment to me, for I have no desire but that God's will may be accomplished.”

“ Christians might avoid much trouble and inconvenience, if they would only believe what they profess,—that God is able to make them happy without anything else. They imagine that if such a dear friend were to die, or such and such blessings to be removed, they should be miserable ; whereas God can make them a thousand times happier without them. To mention my own case, God has been depriving me of one blessing after another ; but, as every one was removed, He has come in and filled up its place ; and now, when I am a cripple, and not able to move, I am happier than ever I was in all my life before, or ever expected to be ; and if I had believed this twenty years ago, I might have been spared much anxiety.”

“ A friend, with whom E. Payson had been conversing on his extreme bodily sufferings and his high spiritual joys, remarked—‘ I presume it is no longer incredible to you, if ever it was, that martyrs should rejoice and praise God in the flames and on the rack.’ ‘ No,’ said he, ‘ I can easily believe it. I have suffered twenty times—yes (to speak within bounds), twenty times as much as I could in being burned at the stake ; while my joy in God so abounded as to render my sufferings not only tolerable, but welcome. The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed.’ ”

“ At one time he was heard to break forth in the following soliloquy :—‘ What an assemblage of

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motives to holiness does the gospel present! I AM A CHRISTIAN; what then? Why, I am a redeemed sinner, a pardoned rebel—all through grace, and by the most wonderful means which infinite wisdom could devise. I AM A CHRISTIAN, what then? Why, I am a temple of God, and surely I ought to be pure and holy. I AM A CHRISTIAN, what then? I am a *child of God, and ought to be filled with filial love, reverence, joy, and gratitude.* I AM A CHRISTIAN, what then? Why, I am a disciple of Christ, and must imitate Him who was meek and lowly in heart, and who pleased not Himself. I AM A CHRISTIAN, what then? Why, I am an heir of heaven, and hasten on to the abodes of the blessed, to join the full choir of glorified ones in singing the praises of Him who hath redeemed us to God by His blood; and surely I ought to learn that song on earth.’”

A Christian witnessing the conflagration of his property, exclaimed, “Glory to God! there go the fetters which bound me!”

One of the great secrets of Cæsar’s power over his soldiers was, that he seldom said “*Ite*” (Go), but “*Venite*” (Come, follow me).

CHAPTER IX. of Hebrews takes us back to Levit. xvi., and, though not a complete exposition of its contents, presents the leading features. On the great day of atonement the service of the priesthood consisted in this: the sacrificing of the goat offered to Jehovah, the blood of which was sprinkled upon the mercy-seat; the sprinkling of blood on the tabernacle; and the sending off the scape-goat to the wilderness, bearing away the sins of the people. We find these three actions in this chapter now before us: the blood put upon the mercy-seat (ver. 12); the sprinkling on the tabernacle (ver. 23); and the scape-goat bearing sins (ver. 28).—J. N. D., *Collected Writings, Vol. 28, p. 35.*

PRESENT failure unfits for present sympathy with God and His people, and present sympathy with God and His people preserves from present failure.

NOW once in the consummation of the ages He has been manifested for the putting away of sin by His sacrifice (Heb. ix. 26). Christ has been manifested for the putting away of sin out of God's sight, out of man's heart, and out of the world. The work which does it is accomplished, but the results are not all accomplished in power.—J. N. D.

DEAR John G. Bellett used to say, in connection with James i. 17-21, "Beloved, we are all either fountains or channels; if fountains, it is the superfluity of our own naughtiness; if channels, we are the medium of the revelation of the good which comes down from the Father of lights. Therefore, let us be 'swift to hear' what comes from Him; 'slow to speak,' lest it be that which cometh from ourselves."

I KNOW right well the deep abyss of gloom that, like an atmosphere, surrounds the human heart; and I know, too, how often even physical weakness lets one drop into it, and how hard it is to shake it off. Our strength is gone, and oft we "wist it not," so that I always say to myself, "Take care! ward it off in the beginning." If one gives way, one drops deeper and deeper into it—into the thing, of all others, most fallen, most afar from God—a dark, brooding, human heart. The Lord is very pitiful to such an one, very tender and gracious, but if (as has been said) I have *all* the grace of Christ I have no business to give way as if it were not "sufficient." What oppresses me to-day will be gone to-morrow, but a glimpse of Christ—the felt answer of His heart in the moment of oppression—will last until to-morrow, and the next day, and for ever, and for ever. Shame on the heart that can go down so low for the worry of the moment, and rise so little to the realities that are to last for ever!—*Present Testimony.*

LETTER OF INTEREST.

DEAR ———, The entire and utter alienation of man, and his being under death and judgment, came first ; then God's working out salvation—giving a ransom—and the work *being finished* ere ever it is preached—divinely FINISHED, so that the moment we believe we are planted by God in a divine work ; more, "*in Christ*" (which was the verse that gave rise to this train of thought), "divine righteousness in Him." O ! this is sweet and precious. The atoning work is DONE ; faith plants its feet on it, on a divine redemption, on *Him* who put the sin away. And now faith is occupied in reviewing the glory and excellency of His work, and in beholding the glory of Him who did it, in taking in all His fulness. This latter thought led to the mystery, even our *union* with a risen Christ—Christ in us the hope of GLORY.

But I cannot go on now only just to note, that we had already Christ for us on the cross, and Christ for us above ; but here it is Christ in us down here, but the hope of GLORY *with Him*. The first part, Paul's conversion illustrates ; the second was sweeter than ever before : I am hoping for GLORY, *glory with Jesus*. This is my hope through infinite grace ; not merely getting on well here, and getting supplies of grace here, but Jesus has been made precious to my soul, the thing for which He has saved me, to be *with Him in eternal glory*. O ! that is the delivering thing, the hope of glory ; and the moment your soul has truly apprehended GRACE, you will see that the only suitable answer to it is glory. Your soul will span all the journey, and here now, in spirit, joy in the hope of glory. O ! beloved, we shall be together for ever in *glory*, and with Jesus ; it would not be heaven if He were not there. I had a thousand times rather be here, and have Him in spirit—little as I have tasted His love—than be in heaven without Him.

My heart now says, "O ! that will be joyful," and

so on, as it never did before, in the prospect. What do we not owe Jesus for this! I do desire to know it and to praise Him. I am sure of getting a place with *Jesus*; He won't deny us a place in the Father's house. . . . Tell them we are nearer home; tell them to be looking for glory; *our* Jesus, and *for* Him, and for glory *then* and yonder. . . . I am hard at work in the joyfulest of services, for the best of masters. Give your heart to Christ, or it will be fit for nothing. Jesus says, "I am strong and mighty."

It was most precious (Psalm xxii.), the glory of the One there forsaken. Who would ask such a question but Himself? Then, after dwelling on the real bearing of sin, and forsaking on account of it, and death, then a few words on the deliverance, from verse 22 onwards—remarking that, as it was in the beginning "Messiah" offering, in the end it is "Messiah" praise and glory; but adding what is not in the Psalm (even as the divine glory is not in it), fourthly, that the suffering of Jesus there had a heavenly end and issue for us, which is not in the Psalm, though the earthly one is fully represented. All that suffering was, that God might bring us, whose sins Jesus was bearing, freed for ever from the sin, into heaven. O! what cleanness a sinner must have, if heaven and God's own holy dwelling is to be his habitation. It was to bring out the *value* and *perfectness* of the work, its everlasting completeness, that I referred to both these points.

But God was with us, and I did truly enjoy the sweetness and perfectness of grace myself, and the joy of the house to which it introduces. The sweetness, moreover, of *now* being *with God* as *my Saviour* from my sins, through the blood of His own dear Son. ——— gave out the hymn, "A debtor to mercy alone." ——— read Romans viii., from "If God be for us" to end, led to do so by the line, "I to the end shall endure." I then took up the thought thus, remarking that there were three parts in the chapter,

the cross, the glory, and the journey with the love of Christ, in spite of everything, but calling attention especially to this, that the beginning and end of the journey are first dwelt on, ere the middle is. The whole power of beginning to *run* out of the world, and to run in liberty, being found in being set *in Christ*, in virtue of a divine deliverance from the condition I am in as a man in the flesh; and this through the condemnation by God of sin in the flesh (the very evil principle of my being), in His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, &c. Now I stand with a wholly new principle of existence, even life in Christ—a life that is not under the bondage of sin, a life that came *from God*, that finds its *position* and home now *in Christ* in God's presence.

Moreover, the one who is after the Spirit minds the things of the Spirit—knows his relationship to God, and is sustained, and guided, and comforted by the presence of the Holy Ghost.

But such a life here (being the life of Christ) necessarily leads into suffering. But now the *power* of living it, notwithstanding, and of taking pleasure in the suffering, is found in living by faith in the present joy of the glory that is to be revealed in us and to us. The hope of glory is the sustaining power on the way, the thing that attracts onward, the thing so precious in our eyes, as worth the sacrifice and trial of everything in order to attain it. Ah, it is the glory of God—it is to be in the full manifestation of His excellency.

Now comes the journey, and the love of Christ cheering and sustaining, by the ministration of present grace day by day, present sympathy and love, so that in the very tribulation we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

That is but a little of our morning feast. J. R.

APRIL, 1889.

FULL ASSURANCE: A THREEFOLD CORD.

GOD ever speaks in His word so as to inspire our confidence in Himself, and to give us an intelligent apprehension of the things which He communicates; and I use the word communicates rather than say makes known, because He not merely there tells me what I should not otherwise know, but He gives me that which I should not otherwise receive. His word not merely speaks of blessing, but itself conveys, under the operation of the Spirit of God, positive blessing to the soul. It constitutes the indispensable food of the new nature during our sojourn on the earth, and it is as needful and as nourishing to the advanced saint as to the babe in Christ. I have said that God has sought to inspire confidence in Himself, for otherwise there could not be communion between us and Him; and He has sought to give us such a grasp of divine things as should make that communion intelligent, and, I may add, of growing intelligence from day to day, in view of its fuller enjoyment in glory. God's work with us, when in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, is ever a solid work, and its results are solid also. This is reflected in the apostle's word to the Corinthians (2nd epistle i. 17-22). The word of the apostle was not yea and nay; the Son of God was not yea and nay; the promises of God were not yea and nay. What, then, were the results of this to the saints? They were stablished, they were anointed, they were sealed, and were given the earnest of the Spirit in their hearts. This train of thought also brings to recollection how God has in His Word spoken of "full assurance," and not only so, but given us the privilege of it in a threefold way.

In Heb. x. 22 we read the encouraging words with which God makes known the liberty we have to enter the holiest, and the solid title we have thus to approach Him: "Let us draw near," says the apostle, "with a true heart, in full assurance *of faith*," remind-

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ing us of that earlier word in the same epistle, "Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace." Faith honours God, and He delights to work in our hearts that happy confidence in Himself which brings us trustingly into His own presence, even in the holiest. And here we recall another Scripture, one which so memorably fell from the Master's lips in the course of His farewell words on the night of His betrayal: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Surely we do not err in connecting the full assurance of faith, which carries us into the holiest, with Him who says, "I am the Way." Not the Way into the holiest only, but the Way to the Father. He was departing out of this world unto the Father (John xiv. 4-5), and Thomas then learnt that the Lord Himself was the Way alike to the Father (xiii. 1) and to the Father's house (xiv. 1).

But we find "full assurance" in another connection in Col. ii. 2; there we read of "the full assurance of *understanding*," without which we lack the full knowledge of the mystery of God, in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge. This points our attention to Christ in the second character in which He spoke of Himself—the Truth. But one thing—one thing only—characterised the fathers, in 1 John ii. 13-14—they had "known Him that is from the beginning." This is the final goal and terminus of all knowledge, not in John's teaching only, but in Paul's—"That I may know Him." "No man knoweth the Son but the Father" teaches us clearly enough that exhaustive or absolute knowledge of the Son pertains only to the Father.

Lastly, we have "the full assurance of hope" (Heb. vi. 11). This looks on to "the end," and is connected with a diligent following "of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." As Peter, also, says, "Be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter i. 13). This equally suggests Christ

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in His third character, as "the Life;" for when He "who is our Life shall appear," then shall we "also appear with Him in glory!" The full assurance of hope sustains and encourages to the diligence and the patience that the length and stress of the journey bring into exercise.

How ought we to bless our good and gracious God that He thus keeps the feet and strengthens the hands of His saints during their journeyings through this dry and thirsty land, and in this evil and closing day, a day of much difficulty and of many discouragements. "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure," nothing takes Him by surprise. It is "by a right way" He, "who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will," is bringing us to our desired haven. Meanwhile we have a triple consolation in the full assurance of faith, the full assurance of understanding, and the full assurance of hope; above all we have the presence with us, in enjoyed communion, of Him who is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life, to whom be praise everlasting!

IN Christ has been the revelation of the fulness of the Godhead. There was not a trait in His character, an act in His conduct, or an expression of the feeling of His heart going out to the misery around Him, that was not the revelation of all the fulness of the Godhead in One who has come close to me in love, that I may know He is love.—J. N. D.

CHRIST MINISTERED.—It is a great thing to minister what the soul is fed with by God. It may be but one thought, but then it is the channel between Christ and the soul. The Christ who feeds one can feed a thousand. Moreover, it is in *breaking the bread* that it is multiplied, not before it is broken. It is not many thoughts that make a good meal for the soul, but Christ ministered; and a little in the Spirit goes a great way—joy is ministered and strength.

TWO CONFESSIONS.

PSALM xxxii. ; MATTHEW xxvii. 3-5.

THE conviction of sin, and consequent confession of two men, these Scriptures record. The former speaks of David, the latter of Judas Iscariot. In this life they both confessed that which was pressing on their consciences ; and the history of each has something to teach us, for whose instruction and profit they both have been recorded in the passages of Holy Writ (1 Cor. x. 11).

Turning first to the case of Judas Iscariot, ensnared by the enemy through his love of money, he was led on till he committed the sin of betraying the Lord. Peculation, it would seem, though unknown doubtless to the other disciples at the time, was not an uncommon thing with him. "He was a thief," writes John (xii. 6). Nettled by the Lord's rebuke administered in the house of Simon (of Bethany) six days before the passover (John xii. 7), he became the willing tool in the enemy's hand. That it was the rebuke then administered which incited him to turn traitor seems pretty plain from the juxta position, out of chronological order, of that scene at Bethany with his interview with the chief priests and scribes, as recorded by Matthew (xxvi. 3-16) and by Mark (xiv. 1-11). And perhaps Matthew's statement, after reciting that incident at Bethany, "*Then* one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests," &c. (xxvi. 14) may imply it. Without, however, building anything on the adverb, *then*, in that passage, the events as related by Matthew suggest a motive for the treachery of Judas.

He went to the chief priests and scribes, not they to him. Sitting in conclave to determine how they could best apprehend the Lord without stirring up a popular movement in His favour, Judas appeared in their midst, and offered to effect that which they desired. Unexpected on their part was such treachery.

But when they heard it they were glad, and promised to give him money (Mark xiv. 11). The price was agreed upon—thirty pieces, or shekels, of silver—between three and four pounds of our money. Unconscious, probably, were all the parties to this infamous transaction of that passage in Zech. xi. 12, prophetic of this event in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The terms arranged, within two days the compact was to be carried out, for the passover was nigh at hand. At the paschal feast with the Lord, Judas learnt that his purpose was known to the Master, though, till then, concealed from the rest. Whilst the others in their bewilderment were asking the Lord, "Is it I?" Judas had kept silence, it would appear, till doubtless very shame made him speak, saying, not "Lord," like the rest, but "Rabbi, is it I?" (Matt. xxvi. 25). To have remained silent would have betrayed himself to all. The Lord's immediate rejoinder, "Thou hast said," showed plainly that the plot was known to Him. Gehazi, in a past age, had learnt by Elisha's words that his duplicity and covetousness were known by the prophet. Judas must have understood that his plan, however carefully he had tried to conceal it, was not hidden from the Lord. Now, his treachery exposed, would he recoil from it? In what light the others would henceforth view him must have been apparent by their concern at the Lord's announcement of a traitor in the midst. That did not stop Judas in his career. If anything would have done it, surely the Lord's solemn words, uttered before Judas asked the question—"It had been good for that man if he had not been born"—would have had a deterring effect. But no. Satan had put it into Judas' heart to betray Him; and after the sop, Satan entered into him (John xiii. 27).

Impelled by the desire for gain, he went out to fulfil his bargain, that the coveted prize he might grasp. All went on as well as he could have wished. The

plan made for the Lord's apprehension was carried out without a check. No obstacle hindered its accomplishment ; for Peter's stroke with the sword, though it hurt Malchus, did not further the release of his Master. Judas must that night have got his money ; clutched it, doubtless, eagerly, and carefully counted it, we can well believe, to see that it was correct. The chief priests had got their prisoner in safe custody, and quietly. Judas thus enriched, how long did he keep the money ? The time might easily be counted by hours. Nobody snatched it from him. Nobody coveted, that we know of, that ill-gotten gain. With none was he asked to divide it. It was all and exclusively his own. Yet he could not keep it. That for which he had bartered away his soul he now loathed, detested, and threw from him.

Conscience hitherto dulled, awoke and spoke. No one, do we read, reproached him ; no one accused him. He accused himself. His work as the enemy's tool was over ; his service to the chief priests was a thing of the past ; nobody now wanted him. And on the morning of the Lord's crucifixion day Judas was thoroughly wretched. He saw that the Sanhedrim had condemned the Lord : His death, then, was sure. The Roman governor would yield to the wish of the populace at such a time, and the plans of the chief priests seemed in process of fulfilment. Now it was just at that moment, humanly speaking the most unlikely, that Judas repented himself. Humanly speaking, seeing that all was working in the way in which he had assisted, he would have persuaded himself that he had wrought a service to his countrymen, and that he had ingratiated himself with the leaders of the Jews. It was just at that time that his conscience spoke, and in tones to which he was compelled to give heed.

There is a time when conscience will exert its sway, and insist on being heard. That time for Judas had come. A solemn moment, indeed, it was for him

—a warning now for any who need it. Conscience cannot be deadened for ever. Judas proved that, and his history shows it. In his case, conscience roused up and spoke whilst he had on earth the possession of all his faculties. In some cases it may only speak when opportunity for intercourse with others around has ended. But speak it will, assuredly, unless peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ is the individual's blessed portion. Conscience—the inward, silent monitor—will speak, and the individual at some time or other, as the Judge of all men may determine, must hearken. Surely it is for man's instruction that in the case of Judas it spoke while he was still in life, and able to confess.

Was it with him just a momentary waking up of conscience, ere the sleep of death was to silence it for ever? No; memory is not impaired, though the body lies in the tomb in which it has been buried. Now this was taught us by One competent to teach—the Son of God. The secrets of the other world God can disclose. In both Testaments has He in measure done that, distinctly teaching us that unconsciousness and slumber are unknown in that region.

The soul does not sleep, though the body does. In this, both Old and New Testament agree. Witness the graphic, though poetical description of the descent into the under world of the king of Babylon (Isaiah xiv. 9, 10) and of the king of Egypt (Ezek. xxxii. 21-31). Witness, too, the story of Dives and Lazarus (Luke xvi. 23-30). Figurative language, perhaps some may say, these passages present. Well, but of what? God does not deal in unrealities, however figurative may be the language in which the truth is expressed. The Spirit of God in the Old Testament, and the Lord in the New, impress upon us that the spirit of man slumbers not when it enters the abode of the departed. Nor is the past there forgotten. "No peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isaiah lvii. 21) will be found awfully true. But the righteous who

die do enter into peace, the same prophet tells us (lvii. 2); and the story of Dives and Lazarus illustrates, and emphasises both these statements.

Judas, now woke up to the enormity of his guilt, confesses it, and confesses it openly. I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood (Matt. xxvii. 4). Only in the gospel of Matthew have we any account of that wretched man's confession. But mark, he makes it to men, not to God. Had he injured the chief priests by what he had done, confession to them would have been in place. *The One* he had injured he did not seek out, and make confession to Him of his guilt. To God he did not turn, and acknowledge what he had done. Confession to men without confession to God was not, is not enough. Against God he had sinned; His Son he had betrayed: but to God and His Son the traitor was silent.

And now the money, the silver, once so precious in his eyes, has become worthless, nay, positively hateful. He casts it from him, throws it down in the sanctuary, and would have nothing more to say to it. It could not be a salve to his conscience; it could not purchase forgiveness for his sin. All he had coveted he himself threw away, proclaiming to any one who might be tempted to act the traitor's part against God and His people, that the reward of iniquity is just like dross and dung when contrasted with the interests of the soul for eternity. "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood" (Matt. xxvii. 4). Such a crime God does take notice of (2 Kings xxiv. 4). It is an offence in heaven's statute book which is grievous in God's eyes, and when the guilty one wakes up to that, he needs no array of witnesses to convict him; he convicts himself. Many a hardened criminal, aware of his guilt, has boldly challenged his accuser to prove it. Between the conscience and God, however, when the former is aroused, it speaks, and the person is self-condemned, and, as here, may turn to be openly his own accuser.

TWO CONFESSIONS.

Most welcome must Judas have been when he first visited the chief priests, and offered, unsolicited, as we have seen, to betray his Master. They were glad, and eagerly listened to his plan for the accomplishment of their cherished object (Luke xxii. 5, 6). Again he visits the chief priests and elders, making full confession of his guilt, but found a very different reception. "What is that to us? see thou to that" (Matt. xxvii. 4) was the answer they gave him. Heartless, indeed, was their conduct. What an opening of eyes to him! He had not a friend on earth; certainly he had no one to befriend him in heaven. "He departed, and went and hanged himself," is the brief record of his last act in this scene. "To go to his own place" is the significant and awful acknowledgment of his fate both in the present and in the future, of which the disciples were fully aware after the Lord's resurrection (Acts i. 25).

Now we have called attention to this history not to dwell on it as mere history, but to cull instruction from it. We see in it a finally-lost soul, wretched, self-condemned, compelled, as it were, to witness against itself. What caused this? Conscience spoke, and insisted upon being heard. Conscience condemns, but cannot save. Conscience, too, if it works, makes its guilty possessor to feel his unfitness to be in the divine presence. The accusers of the woman taken in adultery attest that (John viii. 9). And Judas has left on record that a time comes when conscience speaks to the finally impenitent, and leaves them in all their nakedness without any excuse.

What would have been the prospect of any one of us, if divine grace had not wrought in us, and the atonement had never taken place? The prospect would have been black indeed—just that of Judas when he stood in the temple court. We should have been self-condemned, hopelessly condemned, without a friend to turn to for relief, in heaven or on earth. An awful position. Conscience accusing, no excuse

admitted, no waiting for others to prove the guilt, nor taking the chance of a possible acquittal. The awful reality of eternity surely broke in upon him. At some time or other that will, that must break in on the finally impenitent. Such must have been the *only* prospect before us, had the Lord not died upon the cross.

Turning to the record of David, the resource that a guilty one needs, and its perfect sufficiency, is brought before us, and that in the language of David himself, who had proved it; for in both cases it is the guilty one who speaks and unbosoms himself, so there can be no misunderstanding about it. A bystander might, of course, exaggerate in the one case and minimise in the other. When those guilty speak, each for himself, that is out of the question. We have heard the utterance of Judas, now let us attend to the words of David.

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile” (Ps. xxxii. 1, 2). True this is. No one will dispute it. But who is the man that partakes of this blessedness? and how can he share in it? Two important questions. David first speaks, it will be observed, of *the one* who is forgiven. He speaks, as we afterwards learn, of that which he had found, and then enjoyed. His language, however, is in the third person at the opening of the Psalm—“the one,” &c.—though he was the illustration of it; for he writes not only of himself, his words implying that the grace he had found others might also enjoy. A hope this is held out to the reader of the Psalm, if he needs it, and that at the very threshold of this inspired composition. Forgiveness can be known, the sin committed may be covered, and the non-imputation of guilt may be assured to an offender. If David had found that, others might find it likewise; for if God can righteously act in grace towards one who has sinned, He can, as

far as His nature is concerned, act in grace towards all.

Why such favour can be extended to any of Adam's race the New Testament must explain. That it does in Rom. iii. and iv., quoting in the latter from this very Psalm. The blood of Christ before God enables Him righteously to justify the ungodly; and the one who believes on Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification (literally, "justifying"), that one is justified by faith (iv. 24—v. 1). Well then might the psalmist write, "Blessed is he," &c., for others besides that king of Israel might be assured of such favour on the authority of God's word.

Now, passing from the Old Testament to the New, we mark a change in the language, the apostle enlarging the expressions in harmony with the dispensation under which he lived. Under the law, one and another might know the forgiveness of a transgression and the covering of some sin; so in the Psalm all is in the singular. By the gospel, all believers should know the fulness of divine grace; so the apostle wrote in the plural, both of the persons blessed and of their iniquities forgiven. Dispensational teaching required the *singular* in the Psalm. The freeness and fulness of grace proclaimed in the gospel called for the *plural* in the epistle. Yet it is personal blessing, and must be individually known, so the apostle goes on, "Blessed is *the man* to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Far and wide can such blessing extend. "Blessed are *they*," &c., proclaims it. Individually it must be taken up and enjoyed, so the language reverts to the singular, "Blessed is the man," &c. What Judas never knew David had proved, and in it all believers now have part.

But *how*? Here David's history affords light. "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into

the drought of summer." No rest had he, no rest could he have, till he had confessed to God. Till then, wretchedness of spirit he knew; no rest could he find for his soul. He did confess, and that to God—the One against whom he had sinned—and found relief. The burden was gone. "I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and my iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."

Judas confessed to men, and found no compassion nor relief; David confessed to the Lord, and forgiveness was accorded him. "Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." David, then, went to God. To Him every sinner must go if he would be forgiven. Both Judas and David have left earth, and are in the place of the unclothed, waiting for the voice of the Son of Man to call forth their bodies from the tomb. Judas has left behind him the record of wretchedness of soul without relief, a conscience burdened with unforgiven sin. David has left on record his happiness, and his enjoyment of divine forgiveness, and has told how he got it. "I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." God ready to pardon is a character of Him given in the Old Testament (Neh. ix. 17). God ready to pardon is illustrated in the history of David. David's confession resulted in the divine and conscious forgiveness. "For this," he writes, his heart full, "shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him." Divine judgment, like an overflowing flood which carries irresistibly all before it, will never reach that person. He is delivered from the wrath to come. Thus wrote David in the enjoyment of the divine forgiveness.

And now to whom does he turn, but to God? "Thou art my hiding-place." Had he not sinned against Him? Yes; but having confessed, he was

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forgiven. His hiding-place, his refuge, was in God, against whom he had sinned. Judas had no refuge. The sinner's refuge is in God, when truthful confession has been made to Him, the person thus showing that in him is no guile. “Thou art my hiding-place,” says David. “We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” says Paul (Rom. v. 11). “Thou shalt preserve me from trouble ; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance,” confidently wrote the psalmist. “If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life,” wrote the apostle.

Conviction of sin, followed by truthful confession to God, ensures everlasting blessing. Conviction of sin, without confession to God, must land the sinner in hopeless, irremediable despair. C. E. S.

“I LOOKED UP, AND I WAS NOT
DISAPPOINTED.”

SWEET was the message, sweet with meaning fraught ;
Sweet was the peace, encouragement it brought :
’Tis ours “to look on high,” e’en unto God,
Above the dangers of the homeward road.

“Not disappointed,” nay, it could not be
That one should look, and yet no sunshine see ;
“Not as man giveth” is inscribed on all
The good Lord sendeth, e’en before we call.

“Not disappointed,” ah ! we shall not be
When face to face the Christ of God we see :
Then we shall safely, calmly look around—
No sin is there to grieve, no evil found.

Till then, oh ! let us each look ever up ;
Mercies there will be, are, in every cup,
Yea, goodness, mercy, follow all our days ;
Soon in God’s house, we’ll sing unfalteringly His praise.

J. M. I.

NEEDED WORDS.

ACCORDING as Christ simply and exclusively engages the heart, so is the body, the whole being, luminous with the manner and mind of Christ.

Blessings apart from God, like flowers detached from their roots, soon fade away, and corruption succeeds their beauty and fragrance.

Change of circumstance is often permitted because God will not allow a mere habit formed. What He wants is *life*.

Do you give thanks for the discovery of weakness? Directly we give thanks for a thing that is trying to us, Satan is worsted.

Even a babe may have his face turned to Christ. Are you going God's way? God has only one way,—Christ.

Faith is, you close your eyes to everything visible, and you open your ear to God.

He came to be received—came to gather all your thoughts and affections round Himself. His love will not be satisfied till He has us in the glory with Himself.

If I adhere to the purpose of God for me, then through His power I shall be preserved from every influence which would damage me if I were outside of it.

Jonah, after coming out of the sea, wanted something more. When the gourd was gone he had nothing but God.

Love and light laying bare our hearts, give us such confidence in God that we ourselves delight to bring all to His light: everything—to bring it consequently to His love.

Motives make the good and bad of things. I cannot get on without *faith*.

Nothing will get us over our difficulties or the sense of our rights, as joy in the Lord.

Our privilege is to have our conversation in heaven,

our hearts fixed on a treasure that is eternal. Never let us live below it.

Plants are developed by the sun, and according as they are developed their capacities are enlarged for taking in more sun.

Question Scripture as you may, from Genesis to Revelation, the only answer you can have is—Christ.

Righteousness is in itself good, but grace is better; only it is not grace where righteousness is either sacrificed or not respected. Grace therefore will not fail to honour righteousness while rising above it.

Superstition is the subjection of the mind of man to that for which there is no warrant in divine testimony.

Temporal influence does mischief. Moses gave it all up.

Under the law, and under conditions the fulfilment of which depended on the stability of man, the effect of the promise was never attained. He who has firmly established us in Christ is God Himself. The accomplishment of all the promises is in Him.

Victory over circumstances (2 Cor. vi.), a ministry which displayed the power of God in a vessel of weakness, whose best portion was death.

“Your perfection” (2 Cor. xiii.) is the true aim of a servant of Christ.

WE are now fixed in our new habitation, probably not to change it again until it pleases God to remove us hence. May the eyes of the Lord be over it by night and by day! May His presence be sensible to every heart which dwells in it, and much communion be enjoyed with Him in secret prayer, and reading and meditating on His Word! Under our favoured roof may the Lord hearken and hear the conversation of the parlour and of the kitchen! May all who live in it live as strangers and pilgrims, and all who die in it die to the Lord.—*Found in the pocket-book of the Hon. Sir HENRY DUNCAN after his death.*

LESSONS IN LUKE X.

THE Lord (having here taken a different place for Himself, so opposite to the place He was upon when in the Mount, and having marked out His own path to Jerusalem for the accomplishment of His decease ; and further, having connected His disciples and followers with Himself in rejection, by contrast to the foxes and the birds with their holes and their nests) goes forth again to gather upon these altered relations of the kingdom of God and Himself. "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before His face into every city and place, whither He Himself would come." Outside all dispensational bounds, and acting *now* in the largeness of His own personal title as the beloved Son, as well as under the authority "of the voice" out of the cloud which said "Hear Him," He speaks as in His heavenly position of the great harvest which is before His view. "Therefore said He unto them, the harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few : pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest ;" and He thus directs His disciples to the Lord of the harvest by faith and prayer, as to labourers and their being sent forth, because it is His harvest, rather than to Himself any longer, as in His Messiah character merely.

He sends them forth "as lambs among wolves," and bids them salute no man by the way, nor carry either purse, or scrip, or shoes : and into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, "Peace be to this house." Why is this change made from the angelic announcement of "peace on earth"? Are the outward and governmental intentions of God and the earth changed as to "peace," because the kingdom of God and its King upon the throne of David, in the royal city of Jerusalem, in manifest glory and honour, as displayed on the Mount, have been postponed, and His decease

accepted instead? Nay, more than this, are “glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good pleasure to men,” as proclaimed by the heavenly host at the birth of Christ, so indissolubly connected in the counsels of God with the reign of the Son of David, and the establishment of the kingdom in Jerusalem, that they stand or fall together?

Jesus has changed His position and His relations to the earth, and to men therein, and to the heavens likewise; so that if the earth is unwilling to receive Him, and all that was presented and published in the angels’ announcement, or to become the centre for His opening glories and the purposed blessing of God, the peace, and the good pleasure, and the glory too must accompany Jesus, go where He may, and depart with Him, till He comes a second time. By His rejection the earth has lost Him, and these things too; by His decease and departure from the Mount of Olives, the heavens have received Him, and God has crowned Him with glory and honour at His right hand. The peace, and the good pleasure, and the glory are gone with Him, and a believer in Christ finds them there, and enjoys them with the God of peace.

These considerations may make plain this commission from Jesus to the seventy, viz., “Say, Peace be to this house. And if the Son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again;” for the ordered and outward relations as between God and Israel, and heaven and earth, are changed, by the change of position and place which Jesus has accepted for Himself, and in which He is now acting. It is, therefore, no longer “peace on earth,” nor prosperity and peace introduced by the manifested kingdom of God, but “peace be to this house” and those in it, provided “the Son of peace” be there. If not, “it shall turn to you again.” Nor were they to go from house to house. Likewise, “into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you,

eat such things as they set before you, and heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you ;” and this was now the altered character of their testimony. Not that the kingdom of God would be set up on the earth, and they enter into it in that form and order ; for how could this be, when the time was already come that He should be received up to heaven? Nevertheless, the kingdom of God had “come nigh unto them,” and it was in “the Son of peace” it was to be known by them. In like manner was this testimony to be delivered to whatsoever city would *not* receive them, viz., “The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you,” though that city refused them, and the Son of peace with them ; for he that heareth you, heareth Me (are the words of Jesus to the seventy) ; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me ; and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me. “The Lord of the harvest” would settle this refusal with that city. “Woe unto thee, Chorazin ! woe unto thee, Bethsaida ! for . . . it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell ;” for these are the issues of their testimony. “And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name. And He said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” Cities “thrust down to hell”—Satan “fallen from heaven”—disciples “whose names are written in heaven”—are before the eye of the Lord, because in spirit “the time is come for Him to be received up,” and He is *now*, as the rejected One by the earth, already in heaven, speaking of persons and things in their new relations to Himself as there.

The heavens can righteously purge themselves from Satan, when the received-up Son of Man is seated there, in His own title, by Him who dwells in them. If He is received up, Satan as lightning must fall from

heaven ; accordingly He adds, " Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy : and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you ; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." If such changes of position and place, whether in the heavens, or the earth, or hell beneath, are the consequences of Christ's own action by His postponement of the kingdom and His own glory, and the acceptance of His decease at Jerusalem instead, what must such an hour as *this* be to Jesus, in the midst of His disciples, as the leader and author of their new-born delights ? " In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes : even so, Father ; for so it seemed good in Thy sight" are the utterances of the blessed Lord, as He pours out His own heart to the Father ; for who but the Father could comprehend and reciprocate the words, " I thank Thee," and " Thou hast hid," and " Thou hast revealed" as applied by Jesus " in that hour" ! In the immensity and infinitude of this circle, of which He has now become the centre in heaven with the Father, He enters upon other possessions and glories far beyond what the mount of His transfiguration would have warranted, as having come in the flesh to take the kingdom.

" His decease" yet in prospect at the Mount of Olives, has opened out these new sources of joy between Him and His Father and those around Him, whose names are written in heaven. " All things are delivered unto Me of My Father ;" but far beyond inheritances and dominions, or official distinctions and titles, in the manifestation of the kingdom (though these may all be displayed in their own season), is this new testimony which is before the heart of Jesus to the Father and the Son. He has passed into

another sphere, beyond all the promises and covenants and prophecies made to the fathers of earthly blessing, establishing these (on the way) through "His decease," and making them yea and amen to the glory of God by His resurrection, so that not a jot or a tittle shall fail to the heirs of promise at a future day.

"In this hour" another revelation is to come out, making known the personal relations of the Father and the Son to those who have "entered into the cloud" (during the suspension of the outward kingdom) and have heard "the voice, This is My beloved Son." To such Jesus says, "No man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him." Their fellowship is of another kind, and in a new order, established through the decease and the receiving up of the Son of Man into the heavenlies. "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ," in the light where God dwells. "And He turned Him unto His disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

Thus, gradually, but distinctly, does Jesus lead away from the former position, which prophets and kings occupied, to this new ground of Christianity with Christ; where old things have passed away, and all things are become new, and all things are of God. The disciples are being put into another position, and into other associations, by which they and we take the heavens and the earth with Christ, and according to God, viz., to go through the world with Jesus, as the rejected One; and as called with a "heavenly calling" into the heavens, with the accepted One, as "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ."

Into this scene of present grace and blessing to the disciples, and of rejoicing in spirit to Jesus, an intruder

comes to propound a question from the far-off country, tempting Him, and saying, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" How little does he perceive in his proposal what *he* must do to get it—that he is in the presence of the Life itself, and of Him who has brought it to them, who by the covenant of works are already killed, and do not know they are sold under sin! Jesus answered him, "What is written in the law? how readest thou? He said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." How easy it is, like this lawyer, to answer right, and yet when told "This do and thou shalt live," to be ignorant even of who one's neighbour is! Still, we are all indebted to this lawyer out of place, and out of practice, for the exposition that follows from Jesus; for who declares one's neighbour, but a person who had learnt it by being a friend to him? Perfect in His relations to God, by His obedience unto death, He alone can be perfect in His relation to man, by becoming His Substitute and Surety. He could not find one around to take pity, or become a neighbour to Him, in the hour of His sufferings and decease; but He shows the perfection of His own love by being a neighbour to the man who fell among thieves; yea, and at His departure He becomes neighbour to the dying thief himself (binding up his wounds, and pouring in oil and wine), in answer to his cry, Lord, remember me! and assuring him, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." Under the law of flesh and blood, and clean and unclean, as commanded by the law of Moses and the synagogue—and under the strict Levitical laws of the kingdom, in Solomon's days of prosperity—and, may be, even with the Messiah at the mount of transfiguration (as with the Syrophenician woman down below)—or as afterward between the Lord in heaven, and Peter's instruction and warrant by the sheet—the lawyer, and the certain priest, and the

Levite might have raised questions, with Peter in their company, as touching Who is my neighbour? But the sheet let down thrice from above settled all such matters between the heavens and the earth; like "the decease" at the Mount, opened a door to Jesus, in prospect, by which He could say before the time, "Who is My mother, and sister, and brother?" and as *here* with this "lawyer," speak according to the riches of the grace of God, of which He is now the channel and the expositor, to every creature under the heavens. In the place which Jesus had before Him, when "He rejoiced in spirit," and where He now personally is, as the heavenly Man in the heavens, "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all, and in all."

The parable, or narrative, of the good Samaritan is quite in keeping with this subsequent teaching of Paul—nor could it fail to be so, as Jesus by His own title as "the beloved Son" was showing forth "the kindness of God" (as even David had aforetime done to Mephibosheth), and according to His own personal knowledge of the Father's love, for He was the Son of His bosom. Indeed, it is the introduction and exercise of this grace of God, founded on His being received up, and by this means passing outside and beyond the range of limitations and restrictions as the heavenly Man on high, that gives the charm to this chapter x. and the following ones, which are of the same character.

Put the question, Why was not the narrative of the good Samaritan, and also the parable of the father and the prodigal in chapter xv., brought forward earlier in this gospel? and what answer can be given? There is but this reply—first, Jesus had not in righteous title reached by obedience the mount where He was transfigured and accredited, as having obtained the highest place on earth, which as Son of Man He could attain to; and secondly, He had not

come down from that mount, or postponed His kingdom reign and greatness, that He might by His decease and resurrection get into another place, and a far higher, on the right hand of God, and be the channel of the effectual and unlimited grace which these two precious chapters record.

If Jesus would have the riches of the grace of God brought in, before the kingdom in its outward prophetic form is manifested, as it appeared at the mount, with Him in the midst to order and establish it, He must accept His cross in Jerusalem, and open a channel by which grace could come in, before the glory, and become a Kinsman-redeemer, as well as near Neighbour, to a world which was under the dominion of sin, and led captive by the liar and murderer from the beginning. He has changed thus the order of grace and glory by His decease, according to the foreknowledge of God ; and now the narratives which follow will be discovered, as we trace them, to carry this impression on their face.

“Now it came to pass, as they went, they entered into a certain village: and a woman named Martha received Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard His word.” It is *here* His own personal grace, as we have been remarking, that takes the precedence of all else, and makes Him as much a neighbour and at home, as a teacher in this scene with Mary and Martha, as He was when hidden under the figure of a certain Samaritan. The two women with whom we are all so well acquainted by name, and in the self-same nature, have each of them Jesus as their object, but in diverse ways ; Martha desirous of contributing to His comfort by her service in the house, but Mary sitting at His feet to receive His words—at least, these seem to have been their characteristics. How often the error of the house, and the reception, and the guest, with the service, and its consequences of care and trouble, and cumbrance, are repeated under

the idea that the guest will be pleased with what most pleased *us!* This was Martha, with the addition "Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me." On the other hand, Mary thinks of what would be most in correspondence with *His* mind who is come, so she sat at His feet and heard His word on this occasion. "One thing is needful," the Lord says to Martha, "and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her;" and not the least part of this divine instruction is, perhaps, that our service for Christ should not be separated from our communion with Him, lest the "many things" of Martha should crowd out the "one thing" of Mary, and "the good part," viz., Christ and what *He is*, and is to us, be in any measure overlooked, and His sayings and doings eclipsed by our own in the house!

The descending steps by which Jesus is leading His disciples (morally) down from the highest place to the lowest, and yet the connection of the two in this teaching, agrees in spirit with His own action in the previous chapter, when He really brought them down from the mount, in acceptance of rejection instead of the kingdom. For example, "their names were written in heaven," in lieu of their Israelitish hopes; they were also brought to the Father and the Son, and to this previous revelation of the Father by the Son. They were blessed, moreover, even beyond many prophets and kings, because of what their eyes saw, and their ears heard; in practice they would pass with the heavenly Man far beyond the letter of the law, both as to God and man, to learn grace with Christ and "shew mercy" to the stripped and wounded and half-dead neighbour. Their place of blessing was to sit at His feet, to hear His words, and learn of Him—this was *now* the good part and the one thing needful.

J. E. B.

MANOAH'S WIFE.

I BELIEVE that very commonly when we read such writings as the Epistle to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, or to the Hebrews, indeed any of the epistles, we might profitably keep in memory the words of Manoah's wife to her husband. He was afraid, for they had seen God, and he thought he should die ; but she said to him, " If the Lord were pleased to kill us, He would not have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hands, neither would He have showed us all these things, nor would, as at this time, have told us such things as these " (Judges xiii.).

A very simple, beautiful, and convincing argument. Faith is always the best reasoner ; because it uses the very arguments which God in grace suggests, as in this instance of this simple woman, whose simplicity of faith is apparent from the whole chapter. Her husband was rather a devout and good man, who walked more in a praying than a believing mind ; but this simple reasoning of his wife may be our reasoning as we read such Scriptures as those I have mentioned. There we find that our God has told us wonderful secrets, brought us into intimate and near relationship to Himself, and looks for our presence in His sanctuary within a rent vail, with burnt-offerings and sacrifices of praise. In such character and places as these He addresses us. And how full such a thing as that is of the great proof that He has no purpose of a controversy with us, but that He has already accepted our persons, and forgiven our sins ! Surely it is. He would not set us in the place of either sons, friends, or worshippers, had He not first set us as accepted and pardoned. The less is surely included in the greater.

And He Himself treats acceptance and pardon very much in that way in such epistles. He rather *assumes* it than *teaches* it. If He is recalled to it at all, it is

because the saints were so disposed to return to the law, to the legal mind, and the world of ordinances. The question of pardon or justification suits the presence of God as a judge. But in some of these epistles our God speaks to us as a *Father*; or as from the sanctuary of peace; or face to face, as a man would speak to a friend communicating his secrets; or as One that has us with Himself in heavenly places; and He would not thus deal with us, we may say, in the spirit of Manoah's wife, if it were His pleasure to kill us, or to keep us under law, and in fear of judgment.

Indeed, the reasoning of the apostle at the close of Rom. viii. has this character. It may remind us of Manoah and his wife in the field of Zorah. For, like that believing woman, the apostle is challenging the inferior thing in the presence or name of the higher thing. She says, He would not kill us because He has spoken to us, and accepted our worship; the apostle says, Who shall condemn, since Christ died, and rose, and intercedes?
J. G. B.

“Christ's great end,” says Richard Baxter, “was to save men from their sins; but He delighted also to save them from their sorrows.”

WHEN divine love makes furrows in the bereaved heart, it is to sow the seed which shall ripen in eternity; and those furrows are but the channels through which the love of our Father's heart flows to us.

WE should more intensely press Scripture on the soul. We should remember that all in us is to be Christ's disciple—the heart, the conscience, and the understanding. The light, and joy, and beauty of the truth may be received at the door, but the *reality* of the truth must be known in the soul, its *dwelling-place*. God looks for it, that *our very selves* be occupied with this truth. It addresses itself to *us*, in the deep, full sense of *us*.—J. G. B.

LIFE IN VICTORY.

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 speak of life in death, and though under the hand of murderers, the region of life and glory is seen beyond and above it, and is seen as the home of our spirit.

It is 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).

“When Christ who is our Life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.”—*Extract.*

NOTES OF THE LORD'S WORK IN THE BAHAMAS.

ABACO.

MARSH HARBOUR.—Until lately two have been standing for the truth in this settlement, now the tidings reach me this day telling of rich blessing resulting from the sowing precious seed, our God giving the increase; thirty of His people going on for long in bondage of a character too shameful and heart-aching to recount have found Christ to be the centre. What joy for these dear ones, and for us to know of their deliverance. The uncertainties are gone for these; eternal security is welcomed. Praise the Lord! Look to Him that all may be kept. Persecution takes place; His servants are threatened.

He sustains, however, and if He tarry we shall hear of blessing again and again from this quarter.

SAN SALVADOR.—This island being revisited, report comes to hand that the Lord's dear people there have profited by the ministry of the Word presented about two years ago. They have made progress. What cheer is this. All praise to Him!

ANDROS ISLAND.

This, the largest island in the Bahamas, has been reached, the gospel also responded to by ten confessions of Christ in two weeks. We had hoped to get along the shores of this island, but found our strength gone before we had gone over very much ground on the neighbouring islands. His Word prospers in spite of corrupt religion and extreme superstition.

KEY WEST, FLORIDA.—From this place almost continuously words of cheer reach us—they prosper in their souls, they increase in numbers, care for one another, love His people, don't get carried away by blessings vouchsafed them. How much He gives us to cheer our hearts. We can surely thank Him and take courage. Our brethren and sisters are yet young, and we should have an interest in them. Let us look up to Him especially for the young converts, praising Him for what He by His grace has wrought.

W. B.

I AM WHAT I AM.—I am not what *I was*—I am not what *I would be*—I am not what *I should be*—I am not what *I shall be*—but, by the grace of God, I AM WHAT I AM.—J. G. B.

WHAT IS IT OCCUPIES YOU?—It is an easy thing to set sail and get fairly out into the ocean; but when many days have passed and no land is in sight, one is apt to get weary. If the heart is not fully occupied with the Lord, something is taken on board to fill up the void.

MAY, 1889.

THE COMING ONE.

A CERTAIN forecast of the distant future is beyond the ken of men. Some, more observant than others, may discern at a little distance off that which is about to happen. But how often the prognostications of men have been falsified through hidden influences exerting a sway, or diverting the popular current into a channel of which they had taken no account. Just as a storm, predicted to be on its way from the Gulf of Mexico, may be diverted by unforeseen aerial forces from its course, or may expend itself before it reaches our shores; so many a human calculation of coming events, though based on reasonable deductions, has proved to be erroneous, owing to man's limited powers of observation, and his imperfect acquaintance with forces which are at work. Not so is it with God. He sees the end from the beginning, and is ordering all things after the counsel of His own will. Hence, with His word in our hands, though we may not be able to present a true forecast of the morrow, we know with certainty who is the coming One, and the effect and consequences of His coming on the world.

For ages has that been announced, and His person and personal appearance have been described (Ps. xlv.; Rev. xix.). The effect on men when they shall see Him—the feelings of creation when it beholds Him—the joy of His suffering saints when He is revealed—all this has been recorded centuries ago. Kings will be astonished (Isa. lii. 15), men will wail (Matt. xxiv. 30; Rev. i. 7) and be angry (Rev. xi. 18), creation will manifest her joy (Ps. xcvi. 11-13; xcvi. 7, 8), and the afflicted, harried saints will be glad (Isa. xxv. 9). Who, then, is this One, that His appearance should thus act on men and on creation? In that day no one on earth will manifest indifference to what will be taking place. All will be aroused, some alarmed, some rejoicing, kings astonished, none unconcerned.

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A day like that has never been known ; an advent equal to it has never been witnessed. But who, and what is He whose coming will act thus positively and powerfully on all ?

In Rev. xix. 11-16 His coming is described, and who He is is declared. Heaven is opened, not to let the angelic host look down on an object on earth, but to allow Him to come forth with the armies of heaven in His train. He comes from heaven whose advent will reveal the thoughts of men's hearts. The heavens were opened for Ezekiel, a captive by the river Chebar—probably the modern Khabour—to see visions of God (Ezek. i. 1). The heavens were opened to the Lord at His baptism in the river Jordan (Matt. iii. 16), and from them the Holy Ghost descended on Him. To Stephen the heavens opened, as he stood the solitary witness for Christ in the presence of the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, and saw there the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God (Acts vii. 55, 56). These are past events. Again will the heavens be opened, but for a purpose wholly new. For Ezekiel and Stephen they were opened to look in ; to the Lord, they were opened for the Spirit to descend upon Him. By and by they will be opened for the Lord to come out ; and, what has never been known before, for men—saints—to re-appear, coming out of heaven in His train.

He comes on a white horse, in righteousness judging and making war, with His eyes as a flame of fire, on His head many diadems, clothed in a vesture dipped in blood, and with a sharp sword proceeding from His mouth with which He will smite the nations. He comes as One invested with supreme power, for many diadems are on His head ; and as the administrator of divine judgment, His garments attesting it, His eyes expressing it, and the sword from His mouth executing it.

But who is He ? What is He called ? How is He known ? He has many names, for one could not fully

describe Him. And first He is called (11) Faithful and True. Now, if we desire to understand this, we must turn back to Rev. iii. 14, to His own description of Himself as "the faithful and true witness." Faithful and True is He called who comes out of heaven, for He was the faithful and true witness on earth, ere He ascended, and sat down on the right hand of God. "Faithful and true," then, recalls to mind His path on earth in testimony for God. Of His humiliation, therefore, it is that these titles speak. They are His, rightly His, for His life on earth shewed Him to be the faithful and true witness. But the One who was here in humiliation will come out of heaven in power and glory. His life in humiliation will never be forgotten amid all the splendour of His glory. Seen in glory, surrounded by the whole court of heaven, all the holy angels attending Him, invested with a majesty such as earth has never yet witnessed, none will be allowed to forget His life of obedience, devotedness, and love when He tabernacled amongst men. Those names will recall it; those titles will for ever proclaim it.

Next we read, (12) He has "a name written which no one knew but He Himself." No one—no man, no angel, no creature—knows it, but He Himself. A secret from all creatures, but fully known to Him. Who, then, is He? A man, surely—the faithful and true witness. But not only a man. This name written, which none knows but Himself, marks Him out as distinct, separate from angels and from men. True, indeed, is that, for He is the eternal Son, the incarnate One, the mystery of whose Person no creature can fathom. For "no one knoweth the Son but the Father" (Matt. xi. 27). The eternal life was manifested, men could see it, and handle Him who is it (1 John i. 1); yet there was, there is, there ever will be a mystery about His Person which no creature can understand. And when He appears in power, who has been here in humiliation, all will see, and have to

own by that name written, which no one knows but He Himself, that the once despised son of the Virgin is the only-begotten Son of God—Son of God and Son of man—two natures in one Person never to be confounded, yet never to be divided.

Further, we find (13) that He has a name which all can read. "He is called the Word of God." By Him God has been expressed. "No man hath seen God at any time ; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him" (John i. 18). Of the mystery of His Person the unknown name reminds us. Of His divinity and everlasting existence this name instructs us—"The Word of God ;" for "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him ; and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life ; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness ; and the darkness comprehended it not" (John i. 1-4). No doubt, no hesitation will there be in that day concerning His divinity ; His name, "The Word of God," will proclaim it. All will see it, and all will recognise the meaning of it. God, then, has declared Himself. He did of old, in the display of creative power by Him who is the Word. He has done it, likewise, in the life, walk, ministry, and death of the Word who became flesh.

Lastly, we are told (16), "He has on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords." This speaks to us of coming victory (Rev. xvii. 14) and of earthly supremacy, both as yet future.

What a history, then, is there in these names, and in the order in which they are given us ! Turned first to the remembrance of His humiliation, we are reminded next of the to us inscrutable mystery of His Person, of whose divinity we are further told there is no doubt, and whose coming day of power over

earth as a man is certainly on the way. It is His history as connected with earth, from His life of humiliation to the display of His kingly might, and acknowledged supremacy over the world.

Awfully real to men, to His enemies who will thus see Him, will be His presence within this sphere of human activities. A mythical personage some have tried to persuade themselves and others that He is; a living Person it will then be apparent that He is—no mythical, fabled personage. The One who was here will re-appear. Then, too, the difficulty expressed by some, when they saw Him of old, how He who was a man could make Himself God, will be a difficulty no longer. His name, “The Word of God,” will silence all human reasoning, and disperse the cobwebs and mists now engendered by wilful unbelief. No one in that day will doubt that He was here in humiliation; no one in that day will pretend that He is not what He declared He was—the only-begotten Son of God. But why wait till the day of His power to own what, if true then, is true now—that “God sent His only-begotten Son into the world”? And why that mission? Let the sent One Himself declare:—“God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not judged: but he that believeth not is judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only-begotten Son of God” (John iii. 17, 18).

How blessed, on the other hand, will it be for His saints to behold Him in His glory coming to reign! Blessed for those on earth who will witness it, and hail it. Blessed, far more blessed surely, for those who will come with Him—His heavenly saints; the line commencing with Abel and terminating with—but here we must leave a blank; for who of men yet know the name of the last saint who will die, ere the heavens will open for the coming One to appear with the many diadems on His brow? C. E. S.

“THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.”

IT was a simple request that Joseph made to the butler when he interpreted his dream, “*Think on me when it shall be well with thee*” (Gen. xl. 14); and the time came when it *was* “well” with him, “Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but *forgot him*” (ver. 23). Alas!

Beloved young Christians, it is “well” with us, through God’s infinite mercy. Oh, how well! “God *hath saved* us, and called us with an holy calling” (2 Tim. i. 9); forgiven us all our sins (1 John ii. 12); given unto us eternal life (1 John v. 2); sealed us with the Holy Ghost (2 Cor. i. 21, 22); and “made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col. i. 12). Many other blessings besides these has He made ours, too numerous to mention here; and all based upon the Sacrifice of His own well-beloved Son, and made known to us in the Scriptures—a Sacrifice that can never lose its value, and a witness that will never change in its testimony; but these few blessings are noted at present, to remind us each and all that it is “well” with us. Well may we say, What a God! What a Saviour! What a salvation! And well may we sing—

“It is well, it is well with my soul.”

But what about the One through whom we have obtained all these present blessings, and through whom we shall obtain all the blessings that are still future? It was a simple request that He made to His disciples ere He left them, and, shall I say, made afresh from the glory after He had died and risen; for St. Paul said, “I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you” (1 Cor. xi. 23). Now Paul never knew the Lord on earth, so that he did not get the truth about the Lord’s table and supper from Him on earth. Neither did he receive it from the other apostles. He got it therefore from the

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Lord in glory, when he received those marvellous revelations which are peculiar to his writings in the New Testament. I repeat, it was a simple request. It was to come together and take the bread and wine, and thus "*remember*" the Lord in His death till He come again (1 Cor. xi. 23-26). What, then, about Him, and His simple request?

Dear young Christian, have *you* done this? Are you in the habit of doing it? It is "well" with you, thank God, through the sufferings and death of His Son—our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. But do you, in company with other Christians, meet to break bread and think of Him? Do you find your joy in thinking of Him? or are you like the ungrateful butler who forgot Joseph? There was no *command* to think of him—no compulsion in the matter. But the butler's conduct showed the state of his heart with regard to Joseph. There is no command to take the Lord's supper—no compulsion in the matter for us. We are not under law to obey ordinances; such an idea is foreign to Christianity. But seeing it is so "well" with us, and at such a cost, does it not become a sort of index to the state of our hearts with regard to our Lord and Saviour, when we can treat so lightly *His* simple request? Moreover, He may come again at any moment, and our opportunity for responding to it will be past for ever; and we shall then find that we have lived here, blessed with untold blessings, which cost Him His death upon the cross to obtain for us, and although He expressed His desire that we should remember Him, we never gratified His heart by answering to it. O see to this, dear young Christian!

Let me see if I can help you in this—if I can "cast up the highway for you," and "gather out the stones" that may be lying in your path as so many hindrances, and "lift up the standard" (Isa. lxii. 16), so that you may see the rallying point, and find your way to it, to the spot where the Lord would have you

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be ; ready to do the thing the Lord would have you do.

We shall start, then, with "lifting up the standard." And what is it? Let Matt. xviii. 20 furnish the answer : "Where two or three are gathered together unto My name, there am I in the midst of them."

It is not now a particular spot on earth where Jehovah recorded His Name, and to which all worshippers must resort for their worship to be acceptable, whether to the tabernacle in the wilderness, or to the temple when in the land (see Deut. viii. and 1 Kings viii). But now, in Christianity, while we have liberty to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, &c. (Heb. x. 19, 20), the Lord's presence is found even here on earth wherever *two* or three are simply *gathered to His Name*. There may be different reasons for the saints as such being gathered together. It may be for *prayer*, as Matt. xviii. 19 shews ; it may be for *discipline* (see vers. 15-18) ; or it may be for the express purpose of remembering the Lord, and shewing His death till He come (Acts xx. 7). But it must be as gathered unto His Name. This is what I should call the standard—the rallying point for saints. They refuse to recognise any other Name as a centre of gathering, no matter how great it may be ; and they are satisfied with the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. *It* is broad enough to cover all the Christians in the world ; at the same time it is the Name of the One who is the "Holy and True" (Rev. iii. 7), and therefore it excludes all evil, which scripturally disqualifies. We shall have no other centre in heaven—we need no other on earth. It will be the Lord Jesus as the Lamb "*in the midst*" up there (Rev. v. 6). And for those who are satisfied with His Name, they find that He is "*in the midst*" even here.

Next, we shall seek to learn from Scripture *who* ought to be at the Lord's table to partake of His supper ; and if we get that clear, we may say we have

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got "the highway cast up" for you. Then we shall try and "gather out the stones," *i.e.*, remove the various difficulties that stand in the way. And, then, I think it will simply remain for you to "Go through, go through the gates," and enter into the enjoyment of your privileges.

Who, then, ought to be at the Lord's table? The answer is very simple—disciples, or Christians, ought to be there; no others. It was the Lord's disciples who first partook of it. The night before His death—the night on which He was betrayed—while they were eating the Passover, the Lord Jesus instituted what was afterwards called "*the Lord's supper*" (1 Cor. xi.); called also, "*the breaking of bread*" (Acts xx. 7). He took bread and wine, and after giving thanks He broke the bread, and gave it to them, and said, "Take, eat, this is My body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it. For this is My blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 26-28). But only the disciples were there to partake of it. It was not a mixed assembly of converted and unconverted people. It was the disciples only.

In Acts ii. we read of 3,000 souls being converted, and the Lord adding to them daily the saved ones. Then we read: "They continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in *breaking of bread*, and in prayers" (ver. 42).

Who did this? Those who had been converted and were now Christians, is the answer. They had been pricked to the heart under Peter's preaching—they repented—were baptised, and received the forgiveness of their sins and the Holy Ghost (verses 38-41). They were not unconverted, but *saved* people, and they knew it and enjoyed it.

Again, in verses 46, 47, we read: "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and *breaking bread* from house to house (or at home), did

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eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. Praising God, and having favour with all the people." They praised God in the temple. They had not yet given that up. But there was a service which they could not carry on *there*—a service which was a very real one for their hearts—a distinctly Christian service, "*the breaking of bread.*" They did that at home. *There* they partook of that blessed privilege, and remembered their Lord who died for them; not in the temple. But we see in all this *who* it was that did it. It was the disciples—the saved persons. They were not *wishing* they were forgiven, or *hoping* to be saved. No! They possessed and enjoyed these blessings, and could praise God for them.

Further on in Acts we read (chap. xx. 7): "Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together *to break bread*, Paul preached unto them." Here we learn three things. First, *when* they came together! "On the first day of the week!" This was the evident custom of the early Church, and settles the question of *when* it should be done. Second, *who* it was that came together! "*The disciples!*" We read of no unconverted people partaking of the supper. It was the disciples only. Such a thing as unsaved people partaking of it is certainly not taught in Scripture. Thirdly, *why* they came together! "*To break bread!*" Paul was there, and preached to them; but they did not gather together to hear him, but for the express purpose of "*breaking bread.*"

But there is another thing which it is important for us to notice. Not only is it a distinctly Christian service, in which only those who are real Christians ought to partake, but we still further learn from the Scriptures that a person might be a real Christian, and yet have forfeited his right to that and other privileges by his unchristian conduct. An example of this we have in 1 Cor. v. There we see that one of the saints at Corinth had fallen into grievous sin, and was put away from fellowship as "a wicked per-

son." He was not unchristianised, but the privileges of the people of God were denied him until he repented and confessed his sin, and was restored to the communion of the saints, which we see was the case from 2 Cor. ii. 4-11 and vii. 8-12. We learn, therefore, that a person had not only to be a Christian, but he had to be separate from *moral* and *doctrinal* evil, according to 1 Cor. v. 11 and 2 John ix. 11, or he forfeited his right to his privileges.

Moreover, the saints of God gathered unto the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ were responsible to see that no such person was allowed to partake of the assembly privileges until, so far as they could judge, he was scripturally entitled to them. This responsibility did not rest with any one particular individual, however learned, but on the whole assembly in that place as such. When Paul wrote his letter to Corinth, it was "Unto the church of God, which is at Corinth." And in chap. v. he says to them, Wherefore put away from among *yourselves* that wicked person. It was to be not the act of one with authority vested in his hands, but the act of *all*.

In like manner, if persons are received into communion, it is not one special person set apart for such service who receives them, but the assembly as such. *They* must be satisfied that those desiring fellowship are entitled to the place and privilege. We have an example of this in Acts ix. 26-28. When Saul was converted he essayed to join himself to the disciples, but they would not receive him until Barnabas took him by the hand and introduced him as one to whom the Lord had spoken, &c. *Then* they received him. All this is simple, if people will only let the Word of God teach them. And it shews to us that Christians only, and such Christians as are *scripturally* entitled to the privilege, have right to be at the Lord's table and partake of the Lord's supper.

One other thing it is well to remember, *i.e.*, it is "*the Lord's*" table, therefore *we* have no right or

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authority, and so cannot *ask* or *invite* any one to come and break bread. The desire and application must come from themselves; then those in the assembly have simply to see that those desiring to come are not disqualified in any way from their place there, and, if satisfied about them, give them a welcome.

Let us now briefly enquire what is the object of the saints in gathering together to break bread? Scripture answers, to remember the Lord who died for them, and shew (or announce) His death till He come (1 Cor. xi. 23-26). It was the Saviour's desire that His disciples should call Him to remembrance in this way after He was gone from this world, therefore He instituted the supper. And what a wonderful expression of His love it is! Not only is His love seen in coming into this world and dying for us (Eph. v. 25); in appearing in the presence of God for us (Heb. ix. 24); in coming again by and by to receive us to Himself (John xiv. 3); but it is seen *now—to-day*—while we are here in this world, by the very fact that He has requested us to remember Him.

Were any of us going away for a time, we should not go to our enemies and ask *them* to remember us! Certainly not! But we should, in all probability, go to the friend, or friends, we loved most and best, and ask *them* to think of us. Maybe we should leave them a photograph, or a keepsake of some kind, to recall us to their remembrance. And the very fact of asking them to think of us, would be a proof of our love to them. Just a way of saying, "You see how I love you, for I value your remembrance of me."

Thus the Lord's table is a most wonderful expression of *His* love to us. He was on His way to die; and, although the dark shadow of the cross was falling across His path, and the hour of His suffering unto death was close at hand, yet He had leisure to think of His own He was about to leave behind Him in the world, and He instituted the supper, so that they might be able to meet together and partake of it in memory

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of Him. How beautifully and blessedly true is that word, "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end" (John xiii. 1). Blessed be His holy Name for ever and for evermore ; and it is just as true to-day as when it was first penned by John. He will never give up "His own." He loves them "to the end."

On the first day of the week, then, the disciples gathered together, but not to receive a blessing, though there is no doubt they did receive one. They did not meet to pray, though they might pray afterwards ; but that was not their object. Neither did they meet to hear someone preach, not even the apostle Paul, as we have already seen. They were not silent spectators of some religious ceremony, or listeners to some sweet and melting musical strains. All these, and various other things, are modern innovations, which are palmed off as the public worship of God, and no thought of such things is found in the simple, yet solemn and touching, service which the early Christians engaged in on the first day of the week. They met together to break bread, and thus remember the One who had won the affections of their hearts by His death on the cross to save them from eternal ruin. Methinks I see those bowed heads, and oftentimes streaming eyes too, as the Holy Spirit led their hearts through those scenes marked by the footprints of their Saviour, leading at last to Gethsemane and Calvary ; and, after judgment and death were past, by way of the open grave, up to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, from whence they look for Him to receive them to Himself ; His sufferings and glories joining hands, as it were, over His table. What a reality !

What place could unsaved souls have at such a service? None! except as silent spectators. What place could doubting and fearing souls have there? It is not that the Lord does not love such, or that such would be lost. No, no! but they are not free,

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and could not think of those things which the Spirit would lead to. They would be occupied with themselves and their sins, instead of with Jesus, who had died and put their sins away for ever, and was now in heaven the proof of it all, and soon coming to receive them to Himself. No, no! souls *must* know forgiveness and blessing to be there, then they are free to be led by the Spirit to think of Him who won it all for them. It is not that a certain standard of intelligence is set up, but souls should be clear as to their standing before God.

It was a service, then, simple and solemn. Someone, led by the Spirit, would give thanks for the bread and the cup (1 Cor. x. 16), and all partook of them. They met together for this purpose. No one had any rights, then, either to speak or anything else. The Lord Himself was present (Matt. xviii. 20), and He would guide by His Spirit as to what should be done. The authority was in His hands; all others were but guests at His table.

But I must say a few words as to the difficulties ere we close. Some might say, "The supper was only for the twelve disciples." The Lord has, however, met that by giving it afresh from the glory, as we have already noticed in 1 Cor. xi. 23.

Others affirm that "Judas was allowed by the Lord to take the supper, and, therefore, *we* should not sit in judgment on people, but leave it to the Lord and their own souls."

But this will not do; for, supposing for a moment he was there, no one knew he was a traitor but the Lord; and if He allowed him to be there, certainly He does not mean that *we* should knowingly allow any who are scripturally disqualified to be there *now*, for He has given us distinct directions as to that, as we have already seen in 1 Cor. v. 11-13. A Judas *may* "creep in unawares," but when known to be such he must be put away. According to God's word, therefore, that "stone" is cleared out of the way.

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Then there are many Christians who would like to be there, but who keep searching their own hearts to see if they are fit, and because they never feel satisfied with themselves, they deprive themselves of their privilege. Now, Scripture does not say, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him *stay away*;" but "*so let him eat.*" If a man is a Christian, and not otherwise disqualified, the table is his place. God never tells anyone to be satisfied with *themselves*, but He does expect us to be satisfied with His Son; therefore we need not be occupied with self, but with Christ.

Then many are frightened by verse 29 in 1 Cor. xi.: "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation (or judgment) to himself, not discerning the Lord's body," and fear lest they should do this. A glance at the previous verses, however, explains this.

These Corinthians had been heathens, and had not yet got out of all their heathen and sinful practices; hence some of them had even been getting drunk, &c., at the table (ver. 21). The apostle, therefore, wrote to correct them in this, and brought before them the object for which they came together, and shewed them it was because of their sinful conduct that God had come in in chastening among them (ver. 30). Therefore they must judge themselves for such conduct, or the Lord would judge them (vers. 31, 32). But he does not tell them to stay away, but to judge themselves, and so eat. Therefore, the eating and drinking unworthily referred to the shameful conduct among the Corinthians, who failed to discern the Lord's body. What we have to do, therefore, as Christians, is to judge ourselves if we have allowed anything unsuited to God, and so go to the table (not stay away), and there remember that blessed One who died for us, that we might be delivered from all our sins, and have the blessed privilege of gathering together to think of Him.

Presently we shall hear the summoning shout ; for while we remember Him in His death, we look forward to His coming. It may be to-day ! Should He come to-day, will He find *you* like the ungrateful butler ? or among those whose joy it is to be at His table, the language of whose hearts is, " The desire of our soul is unto *Thy Name* : and to *the remembrance of Thee*" (Isa. xxvi. 8) ? Which ?

Having thus sought to " set up the standard," and also " cast up the highway, and gather out the stones," may I not now say, " Go through, go through the gates," Christian, and enjoy the blessed privilege which is yours. Let not Satan and your own heart hinder you. It is the happiest place this side of heaven's gate. If you are clear as to your standing before God, and not otherwise disqualified, go with a humble and chastened spirit, and sit down with those " gathered to His Name," according to His word, and gratify His heart who says to you, " Do this in remembrance of Me."

W. E.

JOURNEYS TO JERUSALEM.

I. THE WISE MEN OF THE EAST.

THE journey of the wise men of the East, in Matt. ii., and the journey of the queen of the South, in 2 Chron. ix., shine with something of kindred beauty and significance. They all of them go to Jerusalem—but the wise men of the East began their journey under the sign or preaching of the star ; the queen of the South began her's simply on the ground of a report. For, at times, the Lord has visited and guided His elect by visible tokens, dreams, voices, angelic visits, and the like—at times He has simply caused them to hear a report, as was the case of this illustrious

lady. But let Him address us as He may; faith is cognisant of His voice. "My sheep hear My voice, and they follow Me."

The wise men went to worship, and took offerings with them, the queen of the South went to inquire at wisdom's gate, and to learn lessons of God; and trafficking for that which was more precious than gold or rubies, she took with her of the choicest treasures of her kingdom.

The journey of the wise men is rich in illustrations of the life of faith. But Jerusalem did not satisfy them. They had to go on to Bethlehem to reach the object of their faith. In the earlier journey of the queen of the South, Jerusalem answered all expectations. In it we may find some striking moral characteristics, which carry healthful and significant admonitions.

II. THE QUEEN OF THE SOUTH.

The report which had reached her touching the king in Jerusalem at once makes her dissatisfied with her condition, wealthy though it was, and honourable in no common measure. For she sets out immediately, leaving behind her royal estate, with all its advantages in the flesh and in the world. The fact of her journey bespeaks the uneasiness and dissatisfaction which tidings about Solomon and Jerusalem had awakened.

This speaks in our ears. It tells us of the operation upon our hearts which the report that has gone abroad about a greater than Solomon should produce. In like spirit, to this day, the quickened soul, under the report it has received about Jesus, is convicted, and made restless in that condition in which nature has left us, and this report has found us. We have been upset by it, turned out of all the ease and satisfaction which we may have taken in ourselves, our circumstances or our character.

But again. As soon as this elect lady reached Jerusalem, she set herself to survey all the estate of

the king there. She came on that business, and she does it. She is not idle. She acquaints herself with everything. She puts her hard questions to the king, listened to his wisdom, and surveyed his glories. The very sitting and apparel of his servants did not escape her, and surely not the ascent by which he went up to the house of God.

This again speaks in our ears. When we reach Jesus, our souls make Him their object. We learn Him, we talk of Him, we search the secrets of His grace and glory. We carry the sense of this one thing, that our business is with Him. He is our object.

But thirdly. After this stranger-queen had acquainted herself with all that belonged to the king in Zion, she was satisfied. Her soul was satiated as with marrow and fatness. She knew not what to make of herself. She did not understand her new condition. The joy was overwhelming. The half had not been told her, she says ; and Solomon exceeded the fame that had reached her about him. There was no more spirit in her. She returns to her land and to her people filled. She left him as the woman of Sychar left Jesus ; emptied of all beside, but filled and satisfied with her new-found treasure !

Such had been her wondrous path. Her journey had begun in the *restless, uneasy sense of need* ; all her former fair surface of flattering circumstances being broken up. She had *acquainted herself with the vast, mysterious treasures of the place where her journey had led her* ; she had done this carefully, with a heart only the more engaged and interested as she went onward in her search. She ended her journey, or returned to her own land, as one *filled to the very brim of all her expectations and desires*.

III. THE EUNUCH OF ETHIOPIA.

The journey from the south to Jerusalem, recorded in the New Testament, has much the same character-

istics. I mean that of the eunuch of Ethiopia in Acts viii.

He begins his journey with an unsettled conscience. He had gone to Jerusalem to worship, but he left that city of solemnities, that city of the temple and service of God, with its priesthood and ordinances, still unsettled, and we see him an anxious inquirer on his way from Jerusalem to the southern Gaza. Nothing in that centre of religious provisions and observances had given him rest. He was dissatisfied with the worship he had been rendering there. His conscience was not purged. He had as yet no answer for God. There was no rest in his spirit. Jerusalem had disappointed him, as it had the wise men.

But if, like the queen of Sheba, he were at first, on starting on his way, uneasy and dissatisfied, like her he was deeply engaged with what God was providing for him, through His witnesses and representatives. The Word of God was addressing his soul. The prophet Isaiah was taking him out of himself. He started not at the surprise of the stranger's voice in that desert place. All he cared for, all he thought of, was the secret of the Book. He was inspecting that witness of God's grace, as the queen had once inspected Solomon's estate, the witness of glory. And Philip let him into the secret that he was searching.

And then he is satisfied. His heart, like hers, is filled with what had now been discovered to him. He pursues the second stage of his journey, from Gaza to Ethiopia, "rejoicing." Philip may leave him, but he can do without him. The woman of Sychar may again leave her water-pot, and find Jesus everything to her. With a soul satisfied as with marrow and fatness, he can go on his way. He returns to the south, to Sheba or Ethiopia, with a heart rich in the discoveries he had made on this his visit to Jerusalem.

These kindred characteristics are easily traced in these narratives. But it was rather *conscience* that set the eunuch on his journey; it was *desire* that moved

the queen. And she came in contact with *glory* in the court and estate of Solomon ; he with *grace*, in the words of the prophet Isaiah. But whether God address us with a revelation of His grace or of His glory ; whether He address the conscience or the heart, it is His high and divine prerogative to satisfy us—as He does these two distinguished individuals. He satiates the soul with a manifestation of Himself, let that manifestation take what form it may, or adapt itself to whatever exigency or demand of the soul it please. And such satisfaction we get differently, but very blessedly, exemplified in these two cases.

And let me add one other feature common to both. Their spirit was free of all grudging. The queen surveyed the glories of Solomon, and she could look on his higher, more eminent, and excellent estate, without the stir of one single jealous, envious movement. She was too happy for that. She could congratulate the king in Zion, and his servants that waited on him, and his people who heard his wisdom, and return home as one that was privileged only to visit him ; but she begrudged them not the richer portion they were enjoying. Her own share of blessing filled her, though her vessel was comparatively small. And so the eunuch, I am full sure. He was willing to be a debtor to Philip—to know that it is the less that is blessed of the better. Be it so, his spirit would say. He was happy, he was filled ; and if there was no void in his spirit, so we may assure ourselves, there was no grudging there.

What joy there ought to be, as we look at such examples of divine workmanship ! The soul, disturbed by reason of its own condition—fixed in earnest searching after Christ—satisfied by the discovery of Him—and then, too happy to dwell amid the tumults and jarrings of that nature that lusteth to envy ! And how noiselessly the process is conducted ! It goes on in the spirit of a man by the power that works after the pattern of the wind that blows where

it lists, but whence it comes and whither it goes we know not.

IV. THE NATIONS.

I have, however, another thought upon this subject of the journeys to Jerusalem.

At times we find, as in the case of the queen of Sheba, that that great city answered all the expectations that had been formed by the heart respecting it. What was there deeply and fully satisfied her, as we have seen. But Jerusalem has at times grievously disappointed the heart. It did, as I may say again, the wise men of the East, who went there looking for the King of the Jews. They had to pass it, and put themselves on another journey, down to Bethlehem in the south. It disappointed the eunuch also, as I have also observed. He had gone there to worship; but he left it unsatisfied in spirit, and searching for that rest which all the religious provisions of that city of the temple and the priesthood did not, could not, give him. And I may add, it disappointed the Lord Jesus likewise. Instead of finding His welcome and His place there, He had to weep over it, and to pronounce its doom, and meet there in His own person what we may here rather remember than mention.

It will however, in the last days, as it were, revive, and take again the character that it fulfilled in the first days. It will answer all the richest expectations of those multitudes who will then, like the queen of the South, go up there to see the King in His beauty. The highways will then be thronged with joyous visitors, and the hearts of the thousands of the nations will repeat again what they have found in the holy city. "All nations shall flow unto it, and many people shall go and say, Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob: and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

And again we read : " It shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year, to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles." And again : " I was glad when they said to me, Let us go unto the house of the Lord : our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together, whither the tribes go up ; the tribes of the Lord unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord." These are among the divine, inspired witnesses of the satisfying virtue of these journeys to the city of the great King in the day of the kingdom, when the pledge which the journey of the queen of Sheba has given us shall be blessedly redeemed in the joy of the hearts of the thousands of the nations who, in the coming day of Zion's restoration, shall wait there to do willing service to the Lord of the earth.

The sequel, then, is simply weighed. Journeys to Jerusalem either satisfy or disappoint ; and it is the Lord Himself that has to determine which. His glory was at that time displayed or reflected there, and therefore her visit satisfied the queen of Sheba : His grace was not then ministered or testified there, and therefore his visit disappointed the eunuch of Ethiopia. And thus the value of that city of solemnities was to be measured by the presence of Christ there.

And so, let me say, of all ordinances and services. Jerusalem is but " a city of the Jebusites," if Jesus be not the life and glory of it ; it is " the joy of the whole earth," if He be. Like Mount Sinai or Horeb, it is but " Mount Sinai in Arabia," or it takes the dignity of " the mount of God," according as the Lord adopts it or not. The ordinances of the law were " shadows of good things to come," the furniture of God's " beautiful house," or mere " beggarly elements," as Christ used them or disowned them.

J. G. B.

A LESSON ON SERVICE.

“YE are not your own, but bought with a price,” is a word we often lose sight of, and our service is consequently marked with much failure.

Referring to Ezekiel i. we get a beautiful example of service, and one we need well to ponder over. The description given of these creatures is full of instruction for us: (ver. 7) “Their feet were *straight* feet;” (ver. 9) “They went every one *straight forward* :” (ver. 12) “They *turned not* when they went.” Their way was not only straight, but they were straight in the way. Unswerving in their path, this straightness of aim characterised them. “As for God, His way is perfect,” and “He maketh my way perfect.” Surely, beloved brethren, this searches us through and through. Has every act of ours been done with straightness of aim, singleness of eye, and with the sole desire for His glory? I trust it is our desire, but how far has it been so?

Then again, “Whither the Spirit was to go, they went” (ver. 12). Obedient workers truly. The Spirit led and guided. Again must we confess our failure; our stunted growth, indeed, reveals that the Spirit has been grieved or quenched. For “when the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth: He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you.” What a blessed thing it is that we have One dwelling in us who will only engage us with Christ! If we “lay aside” then, as new-born babes, desiring earnestly the sincere milk of the word, we shall grow, for the Spirit searcheth all things.

“And the living creatures *ran and returned*” (ver. 14). Think of it, beloved brethren, what holy liberty we have been brought into. Here these creatures ran. They were willing messengers, just as we get in Matt. xxviii. 8: “And they departed *quickly* from the sepulchre with fear and great joy! and did *run* to bring His disciples word.” But these messengers not only ran, they also returned. They were always

dependent. Do we ever return? Yes, beloved, we do; when we have failed in our message we are glad enough to get back to be comforted. But what about success? Ah! then the thoughts of success fill our hearts, and we forget to return. "They ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning." Do we not bow our hearts in shame as we think of our slothfulness? Oh, beloved brethren, let this word stir us up from the sleep of indifference. "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh." Are we redeeming opportunities? "They were like burning coals and lamps" (ver. 13). "A city set on a hill cannot be hid." "Among whom ye shine as lights in the world." I trust we shall feel our responsibility. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and *glorify your Father which is in heaven.*"

"And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty" (ver. 24). Not only was their service God's, but the manner in which they went was "as the voice of the Almighty." It is only when we measure and test ourselves by this blessed word, we find out what poor, stumbling creatures we are. Is Christ presented by us in the manner we do our work?

Now, beloved, we come to the secret of it all. "There was a voice" (ver. 25). "My sheep know My voice." And it was from above. We were born from above. The beloved Paul heard that voice. "Who art Thou, Lord?" and what *wilt* Thou? And he listened to that voice from beginning to end, and What wilt Thou? characterised his career. Beloved, not only do we long to hear, but He longs to speak. Now, how do they hear it? "When they stood and let down their wings." How often do we get into this position? They stood, they listened, and were perfectly still, and thus He spoke. Now we can view it all. Look at it, beloved brethren; is there any reason why it should not be seen in us? Have we not the same voice speaking to us? Have we not power to

carry out our instructions? How can we go unless we be sent? The still small voice Elijah heard, and then he went out (1 Kings xix. 12, 13). If there was need for these creatures to stand still in His presence, how much more for us? Everything about them spoke, not of themselves, but of God. What have we in ourselves to boast of? "Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold" (Ps. lxxviii. 13). Beloved, we have been taken from among the pots to live in His presence, and to set forth *His* excellencies who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.

"O pardon us, Lord! that our love to Thy Name
Is so faint, with so much our affections to move!
Our coldness might fill us with grief and with shame,
So much to be loved, and so little to love.

O kindle within us a holy desire,
Like that which was found in Thy people of old,
Who tasted Thy love, and whose hearts were on fire,
While they waited, in patience, Thy face to behold."

J. H. I.

ROMANS V. I-II.

IN this portion we have the blessed results of God's ways of acting to us, as detailed in the previous chapters. As we advance in the epistle, we get the apostle halting again, and giving us another "glorious conclusion."

The whole truth as to man in whatever circumstances he is found is out, and he is pronounced "guilty before God"—the verdict has been given, and is established by proof no one can dispute. Then God declares what He *is* and *has* for sinners, *i.e.*, those who cannot improve themselves, and who do not try, but who submit to His judgment of them. He is the "Justifier of the ungodly." Righteousness is imputed to everyone who believeth on Him who raised up

Jesus our Lord from the dead, and God is declared to be just in doing so. His righteousness in judging the world in the day to come is maintained in chap. iii. 5, 6. This is the first part, then, of the gospel—God's gospel—suggested by no one; no one was His counsellor.

The apostle takes his stand on the immutable ground he has been setting forth, and begins to sum up the results, dwelling fully on the love of God that has so wondrously reached us.

“Therefore,” he exclaims, “being justified by faith” (on that principle which is the opposite of works), “we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith into *this* grace wherein we stand, and boast in hope of the glory of God” (v. 1, 2).

A simple and attentive reader will enquire what “*this* grace” refers to, and will find an answer to the question in returning to chaps. iii. 24, and v. 1. Chap. viii. 30 shows us that this grace of justification is the ground of glorifying—“Whom He justified them He also glorified.”

Then in verses 3-5 we have lessons of the wilderness, through which the mighty objective teachings of the previous parts of the epistle are wrought into the soul, so that hope is confident in spite of all appearances—“because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us.”

Verses 6-10 present us in various conditions; but note, they are all mentioned as of the past.

“We *were* without strength;” “while . . . sinners” and “when enemies,” “Christ died for us,” and we were “reconciled to God by the death of His Son.” Then ver. 11 reaches the climax; no soul can get beyond boasting in God—the God through whom we have now received the reconciliation!

God is a God of order in His word as well as in His works. We see this clearly and happily presented to us in the first part of the epistle, as distin-

guished, though not separated, from the second part. Our sins have all been met, and righteousness has been imputed to us who believe. The second part of the gospel, taking up the question of our sinful condition "in Adam," and our righteous condition "in Christ," follows from verse 12 of our chapter. D. S.

EVIL, AND HOW TO MEET IT.

THERE is, probably, no more necessary and salutary lesson for the saints of God to-day than how to meet evil. It is assuredly a time of evil, and we pass through a scene of evil. "Evil men and seducers," said the apostle, "shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." This state of things has ripened into full development. But it has a blessing in its train for those who are in the secret of the Lord. In Matt. v. the Lord's words are full of abounding consolation: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Now, the question arises, what are properly our relation and attitude towards evil?

The first answer is *endurance*. As the aged apostle instructed Timothy, his son in the faith, "Take thy share in suffering" (2 Tim. ii. 3); and again, "Bear evils" (iv. 5). As the Lord said to His disciples, "Ye shall be hated of all men for My Name's sake; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved." What a needed word does the Spirit of God give us, beloved, in Heb. xii. 3: "Consider Him that *endured* such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." His words and His example are in perfect harmony, and pregnant with richest blessing to those who have an ear for His voice, and eyes to behold the divine beauty and moral glory of His ways.

The second answer is found in the Lord's words in Matt. v. 39: "But I say unto you, That ye *resist not* evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." Herein, beloved, is another wholesome and needful lesson. We are to make no resistance. "If, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is ac-

ceptable with God" (1 Peter ii. 20). Three things here coalesce: good done, suffering borne, patience manifested; "*this is acceptable with God.*"

The third answer is seen in Paul's word to the Romans (ver. 9), "*Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.*" With this we may connect the Lord's commendation of the church at Ephesus, "Thou canst not bear them which are evil." We ought to have a perfectly clear discernment and abhorrence of evil. Every form of evil is repugnant to the nature of God, and should be intolerable to us. "He that doeth evil hath not seen God" (3 John 11).

The fourth is recorded in 1 Thes. v. 22, "*Abstain from all appearance of evil.*" A lesson most important for us to learn, beloved; the outward aspect of evil, its mere semblance, is morally defiling. We must "eschew evil"—that is, shun it, flee from it, and everything that carries the character of it in any degree in its aspect. It is not enough to do no evil, and to mean no evil; we must give no countenance to it, or that which suggests it even in appearance only. It is, it must be, obnoxious to Him who is the Holy and the True.

Lastly, in Rom. xii. 21, "Be not overcome by evil, but *overcome* evil with good." The evil and the good are side by side in this world. The evil has to be endured; it is not to be resisted, but to be hated, abhorred, eschewed, every appearance of it abstained from. We are to make no compromises with it, give no countenance to it, yield to it in no respect and in no degree. What then? Scripture supplies the divine answer. *Overcome it.* Overtop the evil with good. Rise above it, and keep above it in the power and practice of that which is good. "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God; but he that doeth evil hath not seen God" (3 John 11).

The Lord give His saints to be both endurers and overcomers in relation to the prevailing evil of this evil day.

THE LORD.—"Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously" (1 Peter ii. 23).

PAUL.—"Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we intreat; we are made as the filth of the earth, and are the off-scouring of all things unto this day" (1 Cor. iv. 12, 13).

SAMUEL ON CIRCUIT.

THE Old Testament narratives possess a peculiar interest, and are invested with a singular charm to the child of God, partly due to the fact of their antiquity, setting forth the ways and actings of God with His people in a far distant day and far different dispensation; and partly to the fact that they have a more or less typical character; as the apostle Paul says (1 Cor. x. 6, 11), "These things happened as types of us," "and have been written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come."

In 1 Sam. vii. 15 we read: "Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places. And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the Lord." The Spirit of God has here recorded three places which Samuel visited in his judicial character; and if we give heed to the signification of the names of these places, as well as that of the fourth place (Ramah), where Samuel dwelt, we cannot fail to find instruction provided for us in this Scripture, instruction which we should otherwise miss. The names of persons and places in Old Testament times had a striking significance which we cannot afford to ignore, and which will amply repay our observation and study. The name of Samuel himself is full of interest; the word "Samuel" literally signifies "heard of God." Hannah, his mother, had given him this name because she had been *heard of God* as to the gift of this child. And throughout his course of faithful testimony to Jehovah, the God of Israel, nothing is more marked than the way in which, even from his childhood, God spake unto him, and he was heard of God. Surely, beloved, this is something which our hearts might well covet. What could be happier or more blessed than to have an ear ever open to His

voice, realising that He vouchsafes to make communication of His thoughts and the desires of His heart unto us as we pass along, and makes good to our souls the consciousness that we are ever *heard of God*, His ear ever open to us by night and by day?

Before accompanying Samuel upon his circuit, we may suitably ask how far there is an identity between Samuel and ourselves in respect to our relation to God. Samuel's official position we, of course, pass over. This much, however, we may point out, that before Saul was anointed, Samuel really stood before God invested, in a certain sense, with the threefold dignity of prophet, priest, and king, even as Moses before him, and David in a later day. And while in this we see him as a type of Christ, we yet may point out that we, on our part, ought to discern that God in His grace has made us to occupy similar relations to Himself. Moses in his day had said, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets" (Num. xi. 29); and Paul to the Corinthians says, "Desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy;" whilst John (in Rev. i.) says that the Lord Jesus Christ hath "made us kings and priests unto God, and His Father."

Thus qualified, then, in the riches of God's grace, we may now accompany Samuel on his journey. The first stage is from Ramah to Bethel; Ramah is where he dwelt, his *high place*, as the word signifies. There, beloved, is our home, the heavenly places; where Christ is we dwell; there it is we have found our centre, and only from thence can we properly take our first stage. Our journey is to Bethel. Why to Bethel? Because Bethel signifies *the house of God*, and that which is the scene of all Christ's interests on earth is necessarily the first object in the path of testimony. "Judgment," we read, "must begin at the house of God" (1 Pet. iv. 17). It is true even now, "Do ye not judge them that are within?" Within what? The house of God. "Let the prophets

“speak, two or three, and let the other judge” (1 Cor. xiv. 29). These judicial functions devolve upon us. John reminds us of them very distinctly, when he says, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God : because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John iv. 1). We cannot too distinctly emphasise these truths, that the sphere of Christ’s authority and the scene of His interests on earth is the house of God, and that it is there we have to further and follow His interests—where, in a word, grace reigns through righteousness, and where, as having the mind of Christ, we have to judge righteous judgment.

The second stage is Bethel to *Gilgal*. The latter word signifies *rolling*. It was the place where, by circumcision within the land, Egypt’s reproach was rolled away from Israel. In a word, it was the positive and emphatic denial of the flesh, however lacerating and painful the exercise be. It is the individual’s habitual relation to God. We may have started from Ramah, where we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, and we may have gone directly to Bethel, making His interests our first and paramount object ; but a deeper, a more personal thing is necessary. We must write Ichabod upon the flesh and its actings ; we must judge it, root and branch, stem and fruit, not once only, but habitually, in self-judgment before God. This is another character of judgment, surely, the judgment of the flesh according to God’s judgment of it.

The third stage is to *Mizpeh*, which signifies *a watch tower*. He who has fully judged himself at Gilgal, who has there learnt what the flesh really is in the sight of a holy God ; he who has passed upon it the sentence God has passed, he will there have learnt that watchfulness must follow circumcision, or, in spite of self-judgment, the flesh will re-gather ascendancy, and our testimony break down. We meet with this word in the 5th verse also of our

chapter. Samuel said, "Gather all Israel to *Mizpeh*, and I will *pray* for you unto the Lord." There, then, we find in principle what the Lord so often connected in His teaching to His disciples—"Watch and pray." How blessedly had the prophet Habakkuk learned the lesson of Mizpeh! (see chap. ii. 1): "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd."

"And his return was to *Ramah*." He ascended to an even greater height than Mizpeh, and there was his abode. The watch tower is for the observation, detection, and judgment of *evil*; Ramah is for occupation with and enjoyment of that which is *good*. It answers to the heavenlies, or heavenly places, where our abounding blessings in Christ are abundantly enjoyed. Thence we *start forth* for the furtherance of Christ's interests below, in consonance with that word, "I am glorified in them," and thither *we return* for communion with Him on high. His presence makes it the present home of our spirits, as His word says, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. vi. 21; Luke xii. 34). And why do we return, beloved, but because Himself is the load stone of the heart, and whatever our service may be, and wherever it may take us, we must get back to Him and to the peaceful calm of personal communion with Himself? Notice, too, what emphasis is given to Ramah in the word we are considering: "For *there* was his house; and *there* he judged Israel; and *there* he built an altar unto the Lord." Only of Ramah could all these three things be said. And equally so of the antitype. The heavenlies is our true abode—

"Home of our hearts, how dear."

"Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!" (Ps. cxx. 5). Our bodily dwelling may be here, the place of our sojourn till morning;

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but meanwhile our spirits are in the heavenly places.

“In spirit there already.”

Only as at home *there*, can we form a true judgment of Christ's interests on earth. As in David's case, he was perplexed and confounded, “until,” he says, “I went into the sanctuary of God.” There he could appraise things rightly; then and then only could he form a righteous judgment (Ps. lxxiii. 17).

And if it was *there* Samuel dwelt, and *there* he judged Israel, it was *there* also that “he built an altar unto the Lord.” So, also, for us, beloved; we have no altar in any earthly tabernacle. Our place of worship is the holiest, within the veil, where Christ is, where the perpetual and infinite value of the One Sacrifice speaks—as nothing else ever has spoken—before God for ever.

Beloved, I have done. It is our privilege to be, in our measure and degree, Samuels unto God, beginning our course, as he began his, with the words, “Speak, for thy servant heareth;” journeying from stage to stage in His service; but ever abiding in the secret of His presence, ever regarding things as seen from the sanctuary where He dwells, and ever worshipping “where glory crowns the mercy-seat.”

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Mark vi. 30.

WE must ever remember that communion with Christ is at once our joy and our security, the life of all service, and the power of all knowledge.

Whatever knowledge we have that does not connect us in spirit with the Lord, is a vanity of the mind, even though it may even have the *form* of the truth, and be fully *orthodox, as it is termed*.

How often do we gather sorrow and shame in the end of our doings and ways, when we might have

reaped joy and assurance, because we did not walk in the Spirit, or in fellowship with Christ, through the circumstances as we should have done?

This is frequently illustrated in Scripture. As, for instance, in the striking and varied histories of Lot and Abraham; the former walked in the light of his own eyes, and he repeated shame, and loss, and sore disappointment; the latter walked by faith, and was brought to power and high estate, and great *favour* with God; and yet they were both in the main righteous.

I have just been meditating on a scene in the Gospel of Mark which illustrates this (chap. vi. 30). You will observe on the return of the disciples to their Master, wearied and somewhat faint in their labour, He in tender consideration for them draws them aside to take rest and refreshment; in this He acted in the Spirit, as ever entering into their necessities. You can find Him moved with pity towards the scattered and unpitied flock of Israel, and again regardless of Himself, He turns to minister to them, and began to teach them many things. Here also He was not pleasing Himself but others, to their good to edification (Rom. xv. 2). But here we find the disciples ceasing to sympathise with their Master. His heart was set on the urgent necessities of their spiritual wants, and He began to teach them. But towards evening the disciples seem to interrupt His work, and present to His attention their temporal wants, and would fain have them dismissed, that they might go into the villages and buy themselves victuals.

Now in this they were not walking in the Spirit, they were not of one mind in the circumstance with Him. However, He does not rebuke them *there*; the rebuke was to come afterwards, as we shall see in the fruit of their ways. He, still as the minister of the need of poor necessitous man, sets Himself to meet the occasion, and He supplies the multitude with bread. When He had thus done, He sends His

disciples off in the ship, while He remains behind with the people.

Now I believe that He resumes His teaching of them, for by the words, "He sent away the people," I understand that He dismissed them in a solemn manner, giving them godly admonition, and testifying further of the Father to them. But you observe the disciples forfeited all title to take part with Him in this service, and therefore He previously constrained them to go away in the ship. They had forfeited this honour, inasmuch as they had not been one with Him in His compassion for the multitude, as I before observed; for you know we cannot suitably *instruct* others, or take part in ministering to their souls, till we feel for them.

We then find the blessed Jesus, having sent the multitude away, in the mountain at prayer. There you see Him still in spirit, fervently labouring in secret with God, walking in the light, in full fellowship with the Father.

The disciples meanwhile began to gather the bitter fruit of departing in spirit from the Lord; while He was in prayer, they were toiling in rowing against contrary winds. He, in the fulness of power, and as the Lord, who is mightier than the noise of many waters, who spreadeth out the heavens and walketh upon the waves of the sea, having finished His course of ministry and come down from the mountain, that had witnessed the fervency of His spirit, gathers glory, the reward of His ways. He appears treading on all that was the occasion of His people's travail and trial, and they were amazed and confounded in the presence of His glory!

They did not understand it. They cried out and were troubled, and all this because the heart was hardened; had their hearts been tender, had they continued in full sympathy and communion with their Lord through the previous circumstances, they would now have stood in the presence of His glorious power,

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not abashed and confounded, but in assurance and joy,—and so with us.

Let us now, in this time of His absence, seek communion in spirit with Him, and then when He appears we shall not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

I do not speak of loss of the *glory*, as in this scene you find the disciples *with* their Lord safe over the storm and *together* on the other side of the lake. His blessed grace and power reserve the glory for us ; but I speak of the presence of that glory not putting us to *shame*, as it surely must if we now walk in fellowship *with that which is not of its own character*.—*M.S. of J. G. B.*

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OF the New Testament there are five books which may be termed historical, viz., the four Gospels and the Acts ; and one which is prophetic, the Revelation, or Apocalypse. So far, the New Testament has features in common with the Old. The remaining twenty-one books, however, are of a character peculiar to themselves, being epistolary communications from apostles to individuals, to assemblies, to a class of believers, or to saints in general. Turning now to the Acts, the only inspired Church history that we have, and the earliest account of the spread of Christian truth that we possess, written by Luke, an eye-witness of some of the facts which he has recorded (Acts xvi. 10-40 ; xx. 5—xxi. 25 ; xxvii.—xxviii. 31), we find compressed into a very small bulk an outline of the chief features of the work in Palestine, and outside of it, during the first twenty-eight or thirty years from the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost.

It is clear that we have not a full account of all that went on. It is not a journal or diary giving the events of each day, or each week, as they passed

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before the writer's eye, or were related to him by those who took part in them. Yet there is a plan, a method in the book, presenting to us a careful selection of facts, by which the character of the work then carried on may be readily understood. Had Luke desired it, he might, we must be well assured, have written a much more detailed account of the rise and spread of that most interesting work, by which people of all classes, nationalities, and intellectual powers were turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God. For, confining ourselves for the moment to the labours of St. Paul, whose companion for some years he clearly was, how much was there of interest in the active life of the great apostle of the Gentiles which the historian must have known, or could easily have procured from the prisoner at Rome during his enforced cessation from active missionary enterprise, whilst awaiting the issue of his appeal to the Emperor Nero! From the little that we do know, we can surmise that very much has been left unrecorded.

The history, however, bears on its face no mark of having been written in haste, nor do we gather from it that the writer was intruded upon ere he had finished his labours, obliged, from some interruption, to lay down his pen at the moment, with the intention of taking it up again 'on the first favourable opportunity.

Perusing the book, we surely rise up with the belief that we have all that Luke, guided by the Holy Ghost, was intended to give. It is not a mere fragment of a history. It is not a syllabus for an elaborate work on an extended scale. It is complete as it is. It is all that he wrote, and all the history that he was intended, by the Spirit, to add to the pages of Sacred Writ. From Jerusalem to Rome, from the metropolis of Judea to the metropolis of the Roman earth the historian conducts us, and there leaves us. We learn how the work commenced in Jerusalem. We learn

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that it had extended to Rome. But how or when it got there we know not. On this point, as on many others on which Luke could have enlightened us, he is carefully reticent. "My Church," as the Lord calls it, did not exist before the day of Pentecost. There was, however, an assembly in Rome before Paul first journeyed thither along the Appian Way: and in the house of Priscilla and Aquilla Christians met for worship, ere Paul had reached Jerusalem for the last time previous to his voyage to Rome (Rom. xvi. 5). Much, then, of interest, which he has left unsaid, Luke could surely have told us. Yet he has done his work, written his inspired history, in the way of all others most calculated to benefit God's saints. For, whilst narrating facts, he recounts them in such a way as to furnish us with the characteristic features of the work to which he calls our attention.

And now, confining ourselves to the narratives of the missionary journeys of the apostle Paul, we must see that, whereas that energetic servant and traveller goes over a great deal of his ground more than once, the historian rarely details to us anything which happened in a place in a subsequent visit, if he has dilated on the work carried on there during a previous one. Twice was Paul in Macedonia and in Greece (xvi.—xviii. ; xx. 1-4), twice also was he at Lystra and Derbe (xiv. ; xvi. 1-3) ; but most of what took place on the occasion of his second visit to these districts, with the exception of a short account of Timothy's admission to the travelling party of his father in the faith, is buried in forgetfulness, as far as men are concerned, though written, we well know, in the book of God's remembrance for ever. Again, on two separate occasions the apostle traversed the regions of Phrygia and Galatia (xvi. 6 ; xviii. 23) ; and, although we know that in the latter province there was an extensive and most interesting work, several assemblies having been formed there (Gal. i. 2 ; iii. 2-4 ; iv. 13-15), the historian passes it over in silence,

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and acquaints us only with this fact—that Paul, when he revisited those provinces, did it in an inverse order. On his first visit he went into Phrygia before Galatia, for he approached them from Lystra in Lycaonia. On the second he traversed Galatia before he entered Phrygia, having journeyed there from Antioch, in Syria. Then of his labours round about to Illyricum we have not a syllable from Luke, though Paul had travelled over those parts before Luke's history was finished, if, indeed, it had been begun; for our only informant of this portion of the apostle's labours is the traveller himself, who just mentions it in his letter to the Romans (xv. 19). Since, then, it is evident that it was not the historian's intention to give us a full account of the apostle's labours—for of his travels after the termination of his first imprisonment we have not a word from Luke, and only learn of them from notices in the epistles (2 Tim. iv. 20; Titus iii. 12), and yet the evangelist was with him to almost, if not quite, the close of his life—what, it may be asked, was Luke's design in writing, as he has done, his account of Paul's missionary journeys? An answer to this may be found if the characteristics of these journeys are pointed out.

The journeys are three in number, related respectively in xiii.—xiv.; xv. 36—xviii. 22; and xviii. 23—xxi. 17; having features some of which are common to them all, but some peculiar to each of them.

Of features in common the following may be specified:—

I. On each journey Paul starts from Antioch, in Syria, never from Jerusalem (xiii. 1; xv. 36; xviii. 23), though Jerusalem was dear to his heart, and, as occasion offered, he revisited it. God's work among the Gentiles, however, had for its starting place that city in which the Gospel had been first preached to Greeks by Hellenistic Jews (xi. 20). The importance of this was afterwards seen; since Gentiles, though indebted to those who had been Jews for their

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first acquaintance with the glad tidings of salvation, were never to be subordinated to Jerusalem. They stood upon equal, common, nay, the same, ground as Christians in Judea, being members with them of the Body of Christ. Hence the Spirit of God selected a centre on earth from which that work should spread, and He chose Antioch, on the banks of the Orontes. From thence the apostles Barnabas and Saul started at first; from thence, too, Paul, with his companions, went forth on his subsequent tours. Thus the Gentiles to whom he went had nothing to do directly with Jerusalem and Jewish customs; and the habits of Christians in the holy city were never the rule for Gentile converts, nor the model to which they were to be conformed. Peter, the apostle of the circumcision, started forth each time from Jerusalem (viii. 14-25; ix. 32—xi. 2). Paul each time began from Antioch, and returned thither twice. What his purpose was in his third journey we cannot state, for that tour was never concluded; his arrest at Jerusalem upset all his plans, and certainly prevented his return to Antioch.

II. But whilst the freedom of Gentile converts from Jewish ways and Judaising practices was thus provided for, it is instructive to remark that the uniform plan of Paul was to seek out, first of all, those of his own countrymen in the cities whither he went.

To the Jew first, and also to the Greek, was his invariable rule. If the former rejected the offer of grace, he left them and turned to the Gentiles. God's joy in saving souls was not to be curtailed because the Jews rejected the salvation (xiii. 46; xviii. 6, 7; xix. 9). Hence he taught in the synagogue, wherever there was one, till the Jews could bear the word no longer. At Salamis there were several synagogues (xiii. 5). Elsewhere very generally there was only one (xiii. 14; xiv. 1; xvii. 1, 10, 17; xviii. 4, 19). At some places, as Philippi, and, perhaps, at Lystra, Derbe, Amphipolis, and Apollonia, there was none.

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Yet at Philippi he sought out the place for prayer, whither the Jews resorted, and spoke unto the women whom he met there (xvi. 13). Thus earnestly and persistently did he seek to win them to Christ, and though they were, for the most part, his bitterest foes, divine love in him was active towards them.

III. A third feature common to the three journeys is Paul's care for the saints. With a heart that yearned over sinners, as his first epistle to the Thessalonians discloses (1 Thes. ii. 1-8), he also thought of the saints and provided for their welfare (Acts xiv. 21-23; xv. 36, 41; xviii. 23; xx. 2, 7-11, 17-36). His desire for such the above-named epistle (1 Thes. ii. 9-12) and others fully demonstrate. Besides these features, common to all the journeys, and indicative of the principle on which the work in general was carried on, there are characteristics peculiar to each of Paul's missionary travels.

Very soon after he was converted, he commenced working for the Lord by preaching and teaching. The synagogues at Damascus—for there were several in that city—were visited by the convert, and the truth, that Jesus is God's Son, was preached to the congregations assembled within their walls (ix. 20-22). At Jerusalem, too, he laboured (ix. 29), and probably in Syria and Cilicia (Gal. i. 21; Acts. xv. 41), before Barnabas brought him to Antioch. Barnabas, too, was no untried servant before he went down to survey the work on the banks of the Orontes. Hence the appointment of these two for the mission work, narrated in Acts xiii., was not their first attempt at labouring in the word. Paul, ere this, had preached the faith which once he destroyed. Yet it was a call of no ordinary kind which they received at Antioch, and one peculiar to them.

The glad tidings of grace had reached Antioch through human channels, whose names are to us unknown, but led surely of the Spirit in what they did, and blessed greatly in their simple, yet earnest

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work of acquainting the Greeks around them with the grace of which all could be partakers (xi. 21). But a time had come when the Gospel was to spread abroad far and wide, and the instruments chosen for that service were Barnabas and Saul. Accordingly, one marked feature of this, the first of the three missionary journeys of which Luke gives details, is the action of the Holy Ghost in selecting and sending forth these two workmen, commissioned by Himself, to commence and to carry out the work to which He had called them. They departed on their travels, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost. A divine Person was on earth directing the spreading abroad of God's truth.

One discerns in the work at Antioch, and in the setting apart of these two men for aggressive missionary enterprise, the care of the Spirit of God. He led, undoubtedly, those Hellenistic Jews to evangelise Greeks at Antioch. A happy service it must have been. Something, too, so new for the believers to embark in, viz., to be allowed to tell to men of other nations of the saving grace of God, in which they, too, could share—no longer to be as dogs under the table, but to enjoy equal, common rights with the most favoured of men upon earth. How the hearts of those earnest Christians must have swelled within them as they witnessed Greek after Greek bow to God's testimony, and drink for himself of living water, never more to thirst! A great number, we read, believed. The work was extensive, genuine, and abiding. Earnest labourers spoke to hearts made ready to receive the message. The hand of the Lord, too, was with those men, from whom streams of living water were flowing out in fertilising streams.

Tidings of this reaching Jerusalem, Barnabas, himself an Hellenistic or foreign Jew, a native of Cyprus, was sent by the Church to look into the work. Fresh workmen were now required to carry on what those hearty Christians of Cyprus and Cyrene had com-

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menced. Exhortation was needed. This Barnabas could give, and he gave it (xi. 23). But more was wanted. Conversions, in great numbers, had taken place. The believers then required teaching, and such, as Barnabas evidently felt, he could not supply single-handed; so he went to Tarsus for Saul, and brought him to Antioch, and there, for a whole year, they *taught* much people (xi. 26). Thus, to the ordinary work of evangelisation there was added exhortation, and there was introduced, in addition, what is called teaching. Conversion, exhortation, teaching, all these were recognised as requisite in such a work. Barnabas was pre-eminently, it would seem, an exhorter, but Paul was a teacher. Whilst the quondam Levite was alone at Antioch, exhortation seems to have been the character of the work; when Saul appeared, teaching was its distinguishing feature. What happy days these must have been—a halcyon time for all concerned! But souls elsewhere had need of salvation, and the Spirit was about to manifest His care for such.

Barnabas, then, and Saul are nominated for this new work—called to it by the Holy Ghost. We have seen what simple-hearted men can do in the way of evangelistic service, and how the Lord owned their work; yet for the service now to be undertaken men were chosen who could not only tell of God's saving grace, but could minister to believers as well. Their journey, then, was undertaken by divine *authority*, and souls were to be evangelised, churches planted, and believers built up by men fitted for such a work, and specially selected by the Spirit of God. How carefully did the Spirit keep the direction of the work in His own hands. The instruments were both chosen and commissioned by Himself.

Besides telling us this, viz., that the work was set on foot by divine authority, Luke gives us a sample of the gospel which they proclaimed. Often must Paul have preached the good tidings of grace. It was

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nothing new to him to set them forth. Yet, till he started on this journey, we have no opportunity of learning how he presented them. But now, conducting his readers, as it were, to Antioch in Pisidia, after tracing thither the steps of these two apostles (xiii. 4-14), Luke admits us to the privilege of becoming acquainted with an evangelistic address given by Saul of Tarsus to the congregation assembled in the synagogue on the Sabbath day. And this is the only one of its kind delivered by Paul of which the historian has preserved the account. The company was a mixed one, composed of Jews and proselytes—children of the stock of Abraham, and men who feared God. At Jerusalem Peter had preached, but he had for his audience those whom he charged with the judicial murder of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul's audience at Antioch in Pisidia stood on different ground; hence to them he could speak of the fullest grace, without having to charge on them the sin of crucifying the Lord; the position of Paul's audience being more like that of souls in general, the position of Peter's being peculiar. Compare Peter's words in ii. 23; iii. 14-17; iv. 10; v. 30 with Paul's in xiii. 27.

What, then, was the character of the message delivered by him on that day? The burden of it was this: God was a *giver*. He had given to Israel rulers; He had given them promises, which He now fulfilled; and would give to Israel the sure mercies of David, made sure because to be fulfilled to them in the One who was risen from the dead. And so free, so full was God's grace, that forgiveness of sins was now preached through the Lord Jesus, and justification, too, from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses. A full, a rich, a precious message indeed; and many felt it to be so, for they asked to have it repeated. For we should read the passage—"And as they went out they besought that these words might be spoken to them on the next Sabbath" (xiii. 42); the general request of the

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congregation thus witnessing to the character of the message, which suited all classes. We see then, surely, the propriety of the historian introducing into his account of the first journey a sample of the apostle's way of preaching those glad tidings of which he was made a minister (Col. i. 23).

Another feature of this journey should be noticed. At Antioch, addressing those who knew the Scriptures, or had access to them, Paul refers to them. But at other times he had people to speak to—pure barbarians, ignorant barbarians—who knew nothing of the Old Testament volume. How would he deal with such? On what common ground could he meet such? Of this likewise Luke informs us (xiv.), as he narrates the brief discourse to the multitude at the gates of the city of Lystra. The God of grace was the God of creation, the living God, who displayed Himself in creation as a giver to men upon earth of rain and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness. Thus, whether in the synagogue, or surrounded by a crowd of ignorant idolaters who thought to offer sacrifices to him and Barnabas, he proclaimed the living God as One who gave to His creatures—a thought to many, surely, so new, but so bright. God in the activity of His grace had given His Son to die for sinners, and was now giving everlasting life, and pardon, and peace to all who believed on the Lord. Such was the character of God which they set forth, a message capable of adaptation to every class and condition of men upon earth.

The second journey was undertaken by Paul without Barnabas, for reasons into which we need not here enter. The work which, we have seen, was commenced by divine *authority*, was carried on under divine *directions*. This last was the special characteristic of the second journey, which, commencing from Antioch in Syria, was continued through Asia Minor to Greece, and subsequently to Jerusalem. On this

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tour Paul was to be brought into contact with educated Greeks, in places which had become famous for mental activity, as Athens and Corinth. The Greeks, he wrote to the Corinthians, seek after wisdom; the activity of man's mind was thought much of by them. On this tour, then, the guidance of the Spirit was specially demonstrated. Human wisdom did not direct the apostle. He was subject to divine guidance. Traversing Asia Minor, he desired to enter the province of Asia, but the Holy Ghost forbade him. Seeking to turn aside to Bithynia, the Spirit of Jesus would not suffer them to go there. Neither to the right hand nor to the left could they turn, so they had to journey straight on to Troas. Clearly divine guidance was manifested. Paul's mind would have led him to evangelise still in Asia. The Holy Ghost's purpose, however, was to lead him into Europe. The plan, then, of the work, and the development of it, were both of God. And when they arrived at Troas, Paul understood the reason and the wisdom of his being diverted from his purpose. The time had arrived to carry the gospel into Greece, and a vision appeared to him of a man of Macedonia entreating his assistance. Thus were they directed.

Reaching Philippi, there was work to be done in the prison. But to evangelise the gaoler, one of those whom the Father had given to His Son, Paul and Silas must be imprisoned. In a way surely never expected, the Lord worked in that chief town of the province of Macedonia Prima. To Thessalonica, the capital of the second division of Macedonia, to Berea, and to Athens the apostle travelled, and finally reached Corinth. Labouring for a time with apparently little success, the Lord Jesus by night in a vision comforted him, and acquainted him with His purpose of grace towards souls in that licentious city; and thus again divinely directed, the apostle remained and met with great success.

How plain was it that in this work human wisdom

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had no place! Had Paul acted in accordance with his own thoughts, he would not then have crossed the straits which separate Asia from Europe, and the work at Thessalonica, Philippi, and Corinth would have been postponed. What he was not then allowed to do he accomplished on his third circuit. Where he had not thought of going he was guided by the Holy Ghost, who always in the Acts directs the work, whilst the Lord cheers His servant in the midst of discouragements. How needful is divine direction and superintendence, when even an apostle could be wholly at fault!

Another feature in connection with this journey is the character of the only address of which Luke has preserved any account. For a purely evangelistic discourse by the great apostle of the Gentiles we should turn to Acts xiii. ; for his manner of reasoning with ignorant heathen we should read his few words at Lystra. At Athens, on the Areopagus, how different is the tenor of his discourse from either of the two just mentioned! On this occasion he is more on his defence; but seizing an opportunity from the inscription on an altar he had met with, he announced to them The Unknown God, and demonstrated the insensate folly of even the most intellectual of mankind. The Greeks called themselves "Offspring of God." This, in a way, was true, for Adam was the son of God. But how then could they worship stocks and stones as their gods? The boast of their poets, Aratus and Cleanthes, demonstrated the folly of their practice. If human wisdom could be at fault as regards the work of the Lord, it was indeed a blind guide to lead its possessor into the knowledge of God. The tenor, then, of this discourse is in perfect harmony with the special characteristic of St. Paul's second journey.

From Antioch he started a third time to visit the churches and evangelise souls. Re-visiting scenes of former labour in Asia and in Europe, the historian

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directs our attention chiefly to the work at Ephesus. A special feature of this circuit is the divine *witness* borne to the work. Paul worked miracles through divine power. Ephesus was a chief centre of idolatry. The inhabitants prided themselves on their city being the temple-keeper (*νεωκόρος*) of the goddess Diana, or Artemis. On this journey, then, the apostle was brought in a very marked way face to face with idolatry, and God bore witness to His servant, accrediting his teaching and apostolic commission by the works which Paul was permitted to do. He ministered the Holy Ghost to believers at Ephesus, and God wrought special miracles by him. Virtue could flow to others through handkerchiefs and aprons carried to the sick from his person, and the name of the Lord Jesus, when used by him against evil spirits, was found to be a word of power. This was specially demonstrated on one eventful occasion, when two of the sons of Sceva, a Jew and chief of the priests, attempted to exorcise demons by virtue of that name. For the evil spirit leaped on them and overcame "both of them"—as the most ancient authorities have delivered to us—and from the mouth of his wretched victim the demon proclaimed his knowledge of Jesus and his acquaintance with Paul. Jesus he knew; with Paul, as His servant, he was fully acquainted;—but who were they?

Now such wonders wrought in Ephesus impressed men with fear! There in the very centre of idolatry, within the city devoted to Artemis, that which no heathen, no idolater could do, that which these Jews were not permitted to effect, Paul could do, and did, by the name of the lowly Nazarene. Thus to minister the Spirit to believers, to heal the sick though at a distance from him, and to cast out devils by the name of Jesus, and to raise the dead as he did at Troas (xx. 9)—for Eutychus was taken up dead—these works of divine power attested the apostle's divine commission, as one entrusted with a message from God to man.

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The importance and the significance of such attestations, especially at Ephesus, cannot surely for one moment be doubted.

But who was Paul, who wrought these mighty works, and with whom the evil spirit was well acquainted? He was a man of like passions with those around him, made of the same blood, and partaker of the same nature. He was mighty when energised by the Spirit, though a weak dependent creature in himself. Bold for the Lord before the world (xix. 30), he felt all the weakness of a creature when he looked at himself or his surroundings (Acts xx. 19; 1 Cor. ii. 3; 2 Cor. i. 8-10). He was powerful when dependent and obedient, and in nothing behind the chiefest apostles, though he was nothing; and though able to cast out devils, and to heal the sick, and to raise the dead, he could neither shelter himself from persecution or death, nor, it would seem, raise up a companion to health for his own comfort (Phil. ii. 27). And during that very journey when his power seemed the greatest, he felt his own weakness, despairing even of life. He had done wonders before (xiii. 11; xiv. 3, 8-10; xvi. 18), but these wrought in the third journey were of a special character, confirming his divine commission and the truth he proclaimed, as the miracles wrought by the Lord Jesus in the temple at Jerusalem attested in the most marked way the reality of His claim to be Jehovah. In Jehovah's house the Lord Jesus healed the blind and the lame. In the city of Artemis, the Ephesian Diana, Paul worked miracles by the power of the One true God, and in the name of His Son Jesus. Of the character, then, of the works done by this true servant of Christ, Luke particularly informs us; but of his discourses when disputing with the Jews in the synagogue at Ephesus, or in the school of Tyrannus in the same city, we have no description, any more than we have of his exhortations to disciples in Greece, or of his sermon on that memorable night at Troas. The only one that

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Luke gives us is the apostle's valedictory address to the elders of Ephesus assembled to meet him at Miletus.

On the first journey we were introduced to a sample of his evangelistic addresses. On this, the third journey, we have Paul's own review of his labours at Ephesus. In it the general tenor of his preaching is sketched out (xx. 20-21, 24-27), and his general bearing in that city is described (vv. 19, 31, 33-35). This, then, was no ideal sketch of what an apostle ought to be and to do, but the simple, unvarnished outline of his labours and practices, with all of which his audience must have been well acquainted. With the words of the Lord Jesus, unrecorded elsewhere—"It is more blessed to give than to receive"—Paul's affecting address ended. A fitting conclusion, indeed. The Master had fully exemplified the truth of His own words. His servant in measure had done the same. But the work commenced by Paul and Barnabas was not to drop because Paul might depart; so he commended the elders to their unfailing resource—God, and the word of His grace. The chief human instrument might vanish from the scene, but the work was not his—it was God's. The distinctive features of these several journeys proclaim it; Paul in his closing words asserts it. A divine work had been begun, the continuance of which depended not on the preservation on earth of the first workmen, but on the unchanging purpose of God and on the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost.

And, further, the suitability of the word to meet all classes had been amply demonstrated. Jews and Greeks, ignorant and educated men, worshippers of Jehovah and worshippers of idols, alike attest its saving power. Cities most famed for the cultivation of the human intellect and for philosophical speculations, great centres of commerce, as well as rural and outlying districts, had heard the word, and from their midst the number of believers had been augmented.

“WHOM HAVE I IN HEAVEN BUT THEE?” 191

An Areopagite at Athens, and the city Chamberlain of Corinth were enrolled as converts. The jailer at Philippi, and Lydia of Thyatira confessed the Lord Jesus.

God had worked. This, Luke's account of these journeys forcibly impresses on his readers. By divine *authority* this great movement commenced, under divine *direction* it was carried on, and it was *borne witness to by works of divine power*. Paul has, we all know, left the earth; but the work has not stopped, for its Energiser and Director abides here still.

C. E. S.

“WHOM HAVE I IN HEAVEN BUT THEE?”

O SAVIOUR, Lord, belov'd, adored,
Soon shall we see Thy face;
What joy to know Thee, precious Lord,
What joy to sing Thy grace:
'Tis meet that we who love Thy name
Should, Lord and Saviour, Thee proclaim.

If we but see or trace Thy ways,
Our hearts break forth in song;
For those who taste Thy tender grace
With joy Thy praise prolong:
Soon shall we celebrate above
The full display of grace and love!

O Saviour, let us hear that voice
Which bids us welcome home;
With what a joy shall we rejoice
When Thou, blest Lord, shalt come;
Then unto Thee our hearts shall raise
A long eternity of praise.

Thy Father's house, Thy Father's heart
Shall our bright dwelling be;
Yea, with Thyself shall we have part
In glory given to Thee.

O what a crown to matchless grace
When, glorified, we see Thy face!

“HE DOETH ALL THINGS WELL.”

OUR feelings and exercises of soul would bankrupt us outright unless we knew Christ, and how easily He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities from day to day, and thus led to cast ourselves entirely upon Himself, and what *He is*; then a song is put into our mouth, “*He doeth all things well.*”

It was a heavy blow for Aaron when his two sons offered “*strange fire*” before the Lord, and were destroyed; nor was this lessened when, by his own negligence, he had allowed the goat of the sin-offering to be burnt.

One is struck with the difference in Moses, who is angry with Eleazar and Ithmar, the sons of Aaron, which were left alive, and said, “*Ye should indeed have eaten it in the holy place as I commanded,*” and thus have been brought *nearer* to God by it.

But Aaron was more impressed by the things that had befallen him, and made them his rule by feeding on his sorrow, instead of on the goat in the holy place, with God as the antidote.

On the other hand, it is refreshing to see how Paul turns everything to account in writing to the Philip-pians, because he did not desire circumstances to be suited to himself, but for the furtherance of the *gospel*. His joy was that his bonds in Christ were manifest in the palace, and in all other places; so that the brethren in the Lord were much more bold to speak the Word without fear. This was fruit to him, and he rejoiced, though produced by his own imprisonment and bonds.

No doubt the secret for ourselves is to accept with readiness the circumstances through which God passes us as suitable to His own ends, and to our growth, provided *His* purpose and objects govern us, and not our own wishes.

While we are educating others, our own education in the school of God is as really going on, and we are either apt scholars or dull ones to the Master’s eye.

J. E. B.

"SANCTIFY THEM THROUGH THY TRUTH:
THY WORD IS TRUTH."

John xvii.

SEPARATION of heart to the Lord Jesus must necessarily bring with it reproach ; and if there be reproach, His power will rest upon that saint of God whose heart is with the One who is outside the camp. The Lord says, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." And again, "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate." Now, "Let us go forth therefore unto without the camp, bearing His reproach."

I would ask my beloved brethren, how far have we obeyed this word? I grant you we acknowledge one centre, also that there is the outward thing ; but what about our hearts? are they in deed and in truth with that One? If so, where is the reproach and power that should go along with it? The Lord says: "For *their* sakes I sanctify Myself." He separated Himself for *our* sake! He suffered without the gate for our sake! He took the place of reproach for our sake! And He has left us an example that we should follow His steps.

Oh, may God rouse us up from this indifference which we sleep in. Selfishness, and with it the spirit of worldliness, has come in, and so He has had no room. We have only to look over the past, to see how we have been broken up. Hezekiah furnishes us with an example in Isa. xxxix. While he allowed Jehovah to be everything, and himself nothing, everything was safe, but the present from Babylon lifted his heart up, and he showed and boasted about *his* treasures to the Babylonian ambassadors. The decree, therefore, went forth that his house should be broken up.

Beloved, have we not been lifted up and boasted in the truth we possess? and where is the corresponding

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sanctifying effect of it? We must acknowledge that those who have not half the truth we know, and are living up to that light, have been, and are, used of God. Truly, knowledge puffeth up. How can we look for power while such is the case? We must go to the root of the matter. The word has not found its proper place in our hearts. "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee." "Seeing ye have purified your souls in *obeying the truth* through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." Obedience to the word manifests dependence and weakness; then we may expect reproach. Satan will not let us honour our God, as children of obedience, without bringing down reproach and suffering on us. "Woe unto you, when all men speak well of you."

Now, beloved, let us see to it that the time past may suffice wherein there has been this lack of separation of heart.

"Be not men's servant; think what costly price
Was paid that thou mayest His own bondsman be,
Whose service perfect freedom is. *Let this
Hold fast thy heart*, His claim is great to thee.
None should thy soul enthral, to whom 'tis given
To serve on earth with liberty of heaven.
All His are thine to serve! Christ's brethren here
Are needing aid! in them thou servest Him."

Let our cry, individually and collectively, be to Him: "Search me, O God." Think of Him, beloved, who took upon Him the form of a servant, and who made Himself of no reputation, becoming *obedient* unto death, even the death of the cross. "Crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God." Let it be remembered that, as obedient children is the sign of our *weakness*, it is only thus we are in a condition for the *power* of Christ to rest upon us. Let us be learners from Him, and meditate over the word in His presence, that, like as clay in the hands

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of the potter, we may be formed by its sanctifying power. May God, in His grace, lead our hearts into this, to the glory and honour of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen. J. H. I.

 LETTERS OF INTEREST.

 THE LORD'S WORK IN CANADA.

The gatherings at Prescott, Brockville, Cumberland, Carleton Place, Renfrew, Douglas, Admaston, and all up the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway are, so far as I know, going on happily; and at Renfrew, Carleton Place, and Prescott there have been quite a few added to the gatherings, and about half-way between Prescott and Brockville, on the Grand Trunk Railway, there is a real work going on in the Gospel. These places are about twelve miles apart, and about a dozen go up from Prescott every Lord's day afternoon, and a brother from Brockville preaches. At Renfrew, too, there has been quite a work in the Gospel lately. There is one other place, about sixteen miles from here, that I should have mentioned, viz., Richmond. A brother named McCrae, from Cumberland, a blacksmith, having sold out his business, started out to preach the Gospel, and a good number have been converted, and now there is a gathering of about a dozen, where there was none before. I doubt not, however, but that this can be traced back to the faithfulness of a dear old sister, who has been standing all alone for a number of years.—J. O.

Ottawa, May, 1889.

WHAT IS THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT?

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I remember being asked the same question some thirty years ago by B——, in his shop in Paternoster Row, and I can only answer now as I did then, that I judge the unity of the Spirit to be *what* was divinely set up at Pentecost, but I may add, *as* it was set up.

Surely our responsibility is to maintain in practical integrity all that pertains to the character of the Church as the Body of Christ on earth. No doubt it is divinely maintained in fact and intact, just as much as it was divinely formed ; but that does not exempt us from the endeavour to maintain it practically in the uniting bond of peace. And it will never do for us to say that, inasmuch as the action of our brethren precludes our doing it in *that* way, responsibility is at an end. We are bound to endeavour to do it in that specific way, but failing that, nevertheless to hold fast the principles and the character of the Church of God according to God, not yielding one iota of what we have learned from Him to be the suited, and I may say the coveted, expression of what it really is to Him who is the Head of His Body, and what that ought to be to the eyes and hearts of His saints as well as before the world.

Surely the Lord is very distinctly raising in our hearts just now the echo of His own words—"Behold I come quickly ; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."—Ever affectionately yours,
June 3rd, 1889. W. R.

WHAT though I have eternal life, I cannot get on without the Word. The example we have of it in Christ shows it to us as a life of obedience, and He Himself used the Word to rout Satan. And I believe the real secret of our little power of walk is in that we either do not know the Word at all, or that it is rusted over in our minds with unbelief and worldliness.

SAINTS forget often that Christ is a great deal more watchful than they are. He said to Peter before he failed, "I have prayed for thee." Directly the heart of a believer recognises sin, it ought to recognise Christ praying for him. This blessed Lord is not only the restorer of our souls, but the One who continually renews the conscious *flow* of affection between the Father and the wandering child.—G. V. W.

JULY, 1889.

THE SALUTATIONS OF PAUL AND HIS BRETHREN TO THE SAINTS AT ROME.

(*Romans xvi.*)

A POSTSCRIPT of touching beauty concludes the epistle to the saints at Rome. Phebe, a servant or minister of the church at Cenchræa, a town in the vicinity of Corinth, is entrusted with the important mission of carrying this precious portion of the inspired word to the Roman capital. The apostle, in addition to his proof of the confidence he reposed in her, added also a letter of commendation to the saints, beseeching them to receive her worthily, as one who had befriended many, and to whom also he was himself personally indebted. With full confidence in their love, he thus introduces this honoured servant.

Many of the saints at Rome were personally known to Paul; and, as he greets them severally by name, he recalls in each or all of them something that is lovely and of good report.

He salutes Priscilla and Aquila as true fellow-workers in Christ Jesus, who for his life had hazarded their necks; to whom not only he gives thanks, but also all the assemblies of the Gentiles. He greets also the assembly at their house.

With affectionate remembrance he salutes his beloved Epænetus, the first-fruits of his labours in Asia for Christ.

He salutes Mary, who had laboured *much* for the saints. How vividly must former scenes of joy and sorrow have crossed his thoughts, as he thus acknowledged these varied services of love.

As he salutes Andronicus and Junia, his kinsmen and fellow-captives, who were of note among the apostles, he is reminded of the time when he was persecuting the Church of God, and blaspheming; and, esteeming them better than himself, adds, they "also were in Christ before me." Elsewhere he tells us he was "not meet to be called an apostle."

H

Salute Amplias, my beloved in the Lord—a loving and lovable person, no doubt; one of the Lord's hidden ones; better known in heaven than on earth.

Urbane was a *fellow-workman* in the Lord; Stachys was a *beloved* one; Apelles was *approved* in Christ. How much these words convey! Those who belong to Aristobulus and Narcissus, though possibly not known by name to the apostle, receive an assurance that they are not overlooked; neither is his relative, Herodion.

Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who *labour* in the Lord. Salute Persis, the *beloved*, who has *laboured much* in the Lord. With what delicate accuracy these differences are noted!

Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. A grateful and happy remembrance of the maternal care and affection she had lavished upon him. Was she the wife of Simon, of Cyrene, who was privileged to share the reproach of Christ, by bearing His cross on the way to Calvary? It is not improbable, for Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus, and from this special mention of his sons we may infer that they were of the household of faith.

He salutes Asyncritus, and carefully mentions by name many others, and also *all* the brethren that were with them. They were to salute one another with a holy kiss. All the assemblies of Christ saluted them, by the special request of each assembly, we may suppose. A lovely picture of the harmony and oneness of the assembly before the rude hand of man had marred everything. But the ruin was already setting in. Here he pauses. A momentary cloud passes over his brow, as he warns them against some who should disturb the peace of the family, speaking perverse things, causing divisions, and putting stumbling-blocks in the way of the unsuspecting, causing them to err. What were the faithful to do? Mark such; turn away from them; avoid them.

Before closing his letter he adds salutations from

Timothy, and others who were present with him. In a short parenthesis his secretary, Tertius, is permitted to speak for himself: "I, TERTIUS, who have written this epistle, salute you in the Lord." The apostle resumes: "Gaius, my host, and of the whole assembly, salutes you." Paul must have been staying under his roof. "Erastus, the steward of the city, and Quartus, a brother." Who or what was Quartus? He was a brother, and that was enough. Last, though not least, standing by, it might be, as the completed epistle was about to be folded up, he requests that his salutation might also be added. Paul assents: Tertius writes it down, and it now stands recorded in the inspired word, that the brother Quartus, of Corinth, sent a message of love to the saints at Rome!

What divine perfections, what depths of love, are unfolded in these communications, which come to us, we may surely say, from the heart of the Lord Jesus Himself—His own salutations to us by the way. He has an encouraging word for the least of His saints; an assurance that their labour is not in vain in the Lord. He delights to dwell upon their varied excellencies, and to assure them of the hearty welcome that awaits them in His Father's house. With what joy will He confess their names before His Father, and before the holy angels. Services they had long forgotten, rendered to the least of His suffering brethren, a kind word, a kind look, a silent prayer now all carefully written in His book of remembrance: "Ye did it unto Me." Let "the poor of the flock" take courage; in His eyes they are "as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign-aloes, which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters." "They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My peculiar treasure."

In these salutations the Lord is pleased to introduce to us beforehand "the friends that have gone before." Already we have formed an acquaintance with them;

and soon, very soon, we shall hear Him say, "Behold, I and the children that God hath given Me."

" We look to meet our brethren,
From every distant shore ;
Not one will seem a stranger,
Though never seen before.
With angel-hosts attending
In myriads through the sky ;
Yet, midst them all, Thou only,
O Lord, wilt fix the eye !"

J. M.

 THE HEAVENLIES.

THE following are the places where the word *heavenly* occurs in the New Testament Scriptures :—

Thy heavenly Father—Matt. xviii. 35.

Heavenly things—John iii. 12 ; Heb. iii. 1 ; viii. 5 ; ix. 23.

Heavenly bodies—I Cor. xv. 40.

The heavenly man, and heavenly men—I Cor. xv. 48, 49.

The heavenly places—Eph. i. 3, 20 ; ii. 6 ; iii. 10 ; vi. 12.

The heavenly inhabitants—Phil. ii. 10.

The heavenly kingdom—2 Tim. iv. 18.

The heavenly calling—Heb. iii. 1.

The heavenly gift—Heb. vi. 4.

A heavenly country—Heb. xi. 16.

The heavenly Jerusalem—Heb. xii. 22.

How full of divine instruction these nineteen occurrences of the word *heavenly* ! Whoever will be at the pains to turn them up, ponder them in their hearts, and pray over them, will receive a harvest of spiritual instruction and blessing.

THE EYE ON THE GLORY.—We want to have the eye more set on the glory, beloved. It is necessarily hidden as yet, but it is real, waiting for its appointed hour to shine out.

WHAT REMAINS FOR FAITH TO-DAY ?

AS ever, there is a path for individual fidelity.

It is the plain course of the old confession, only to be held with more rigid guard, lest further declension come in.

The love and care of the Lord have kept the feet of a few, and have given escape and success to faith. To His Name alone is all the praise. It is theirs now to go on more lowly and dependently, lest a new snare deceive them, and they be "spoiled."

"Narrow is the way."

The Lord has given no word to widen it.

"Let no man therefore judge you." "Beware of deceitful workers." Shall "a man bring you into bondage?"

Each soul for himself must get more closely to the word, and own ministry only as it leads him to it.

"Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together."

The fewer they are, the more value is "each joint of supply."

Some chief items of the truth are :—

The known possession and enjoyment of eternal life (1 John v. 13).

The present indwelling of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. vi. 19).

The Church of God as God's spiritual house (1 Peter ii. 5).

The relationship of Christ to His saints, as Head of His body the Church; and they members one of another (Eph. iv. 15-25).

The heavenly calling (Phil. iii. 20).

The presence of the Lord with His gathered saints (Matt. xviii. 20).

The Lord's second coming at any moment (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52).

These truths so separated saints from much current

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religion that they were charged with bigotry and exclusiveness.

But their enjoyment of the Lord long kept them steady, though not without trial or without inconsistency.

The claims of these truths have grown, not diminished, in importance by recent testing.

They flow out of the fulness of Christ for us; and as we link them up with Himself our joy in them will grow too, and He will make them effective in us.

They belong to "the apostle's doctrine."

"But they make you so narrow."

They are the Lord's will.

"But you assume too much to yourselves by all that."

Our only assumption is counting on Him for power to obey.

"But it is too high a standard for the present time."

Until the Lord lowers the standard, faith will not.

"But difficulties are vastly greater than fifty years ago."

Were they one hundred-fold more so, "greater is He that is in us, than he that is in the world."

Nehemiah's path on his beast was blocked by the ruins. Did he therefore give up Jerusalem? Nay: his words are, "See the distress, . . . come, let us build," &c. And presently the despised remnant with him kept there the Feast of Tabernacles better than Solomon in all his glory ever did (Nehemiah viii. 17). It was kept in the full energy of the original observance under Joshua!

Why should we (whose stone wall a fox might break down) fail of joy and blessing like to Pentecost?

"According to your faith, be it unto you."

"Put on the whole armour of God," and "be clothed with humility;" this will meet Satan and his devices, "wiles," or "fiery darts."

The claims of the light in which we are, and of the love that set us there, instead of decreasing, grow as the surrounding darkness thickens and its enmity is

felt, while all divine provision is made that we should be more than conquerors.

More devotedness, then; stricter separation from the world; gentler forbearance in love with any honestly in error; but firmer maintenance of the Lord's will in a path increasingly narrow, must mark us if we would overcome in these last days.

Our great High-priest ever liveth to make intercession for us.

Wherefore laying aside every weight let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus.—*Extract.*

THE PRAISE OF THE FATHER.

THE paucity and the poverty of our approaches to the Father in adoration and praise has not unfrequently afflicted the hearts of His saints, and how much more must it have affected His own! That He is the direct and distinct Object of true Christian worship Scripture clearly indicates; yet few can be unimpressed with the fact that but seldom and but partially are our hearts awakened responsively to the claims which His love would ever and anon prefer before us by the Holy Ghost. A feeling of reverence in the soul of a saint induces worship to God; His greatness, majesty, power, wisdom, and the like, fittingly and necessarily inspire it towards God as such. Again, a sense of obligation impressing our hearts as believers leads to occupation with the person and work of Christ, and the fact of our deep indebtedness to Him cannot fail to produce worshipping affections and emotions of which He is the precious object. This is as it should be; none surely can doubt it. But is this all? If God, in the greatness and glory of His nature and attributes, impresses my soul, reverential worship may well issue from my lips; or if the heart be overpowered with a blessed consciousness of the grace that has reached me in and by Him who

has bled for my sins, grateful, abounding adoration may fitly burst forth towards the One who has thus won me for His own glory. In His presence and in the presence of such divinely-wrought emotions, who could withhold the calves of his lips?

But how does this meet the word which He gave to the woman at Sychar's well: "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"? (John iv. 23). Two things are clear: the Father *shall* have His meed of praise, and He *seeks* true worshippers to worship Him in spirit and in truth. It must be obvious to every one that God in His divine and eternal attributes may be before the soul, and Christ in all the grace and glory of His person and work, and yet the Father, in His own distinctive essence, be wholly out of our thoughts. The fact is that it accords with the tendency of our minds to recognise and accept what is inspired by the majesty of God and by the work of His Son, and doubtless foreseeing this, the Lord Jesus spake, and the Spirit of God recorded, that which should preserve us from overlooking what is in a paramount way due to the Father. And if this be slighted, we slight Him who is now the definite object of worship by redeemed saints, as unfolded to us by the Son Himself in the Scripture cited.

It is scarcely appealing to the highest spring of worship to point out the varied grounds upon which the Father is entitled to it from His saints, yet we may well note a few in passing, that our distinct relations to Himself may be established before the soul. "The Father sent the Son, the Saviour of the world." Here is grace in its widest aspect! Again, as to Christ's actual service, the works which were wrought by Him were given Him of the Father to do; they were done in the Father's name, were the works of the Father (John x. 37), and were done by the Father (chap. xiv. 10). The Father draws to Christ, and serves in the

activity of His own grace. The Father's commandment to the Son was not judgment and death, but life everlasting, and while Christ is Himself "the way," it is *to the Father* (chap. xiv. 6). Thus if evangelic facts are needed to draw out our hearts in praise to the Father, they are adequately supplied in the word. Each of these passages indicates how deeply interested was the Father in the work of redemption, and moreover, what a direct part He has in our individual salvation, seeing that each ransomed soul is personally drawn to Christ by Him.

If we advance from this to what is affirmed of Him in His relations to believers, we are met with that wonderful Luke xv., where His own unique joy in receiving and welcoming the prodigal to Himself is revealed in so matchless a way that we do but need to remind the reader of it. But we are reminded by it of another thing, how the Son delighted—as in giving this lovely parable—to reveal the Father where there was an opened ear, and this He found not among the wise and prudent, but among the babes. Accordingly, John could write to the little children because they had known the Father. In His grace they had been given of Him to Christ, and it was His will that none should be lost, and the Father being greater than all our security is established by the fact that we are in the Father's hand, whence none can catch us away; and moreover, we learn from the Father as taught by Him that which attracts us to the person of the Son. But He, seeking to connect our affections with the Father, assures us that the Father Himself loveth us, specially so if we love Christ and keep His word, and He specially honours those who serve Christ. As a painstaking husbandman, He purges every fruitful branch for more fruitfulness whereby he is glorified, and keeps us through His own name. He is the Father of our mercies here below; the Father of glory there above; the Father of our spirits that we may be subject to Him; and the Father of lights, changeless

and shadowless as that new creation in which we are begotten of Him as a kind of firstfruits of His creatures! It is to the Father Himself we have access as saints. The manner of His love has been to make us His children now, and it is His good pleasure to give us the kingdom ere long. In His house our predestined place is already prepared, and soon shall we shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father. Meanwhile he has given us the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry "Abba, Father," and to Abba, Father all things are possible (Mark xiv. 36). The Holy Ghost is the promise of the Father, sent by and proceeding from Him, our Paraclete below; Christ is our Advocate with the Father, our Paraclete on high. Delivered from this present evil world according to the Father's will, He and the world are to be looked at as opposing spheres, the love of one being incompatible with that of the other (1 John ii. 15); and thus while invoking Him, we pass our sojourn here in reverential fear, under His governmental hand who appraises every man's work righteously (1 Peter i. 17). We are beloved in Him individually as saints (Jude 1), and are in Him corporately also as the church (1 and 2 Thess. i. 1) which he greets with grace and peace (Eph. i. 2), and further, we are made priests to Him by the Son of His love (Rev. i. 6). If we approach God in prayer, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is His highest, happiest, and changeless title (Eph. iii. 14). Are we in affliction? It is the chastening of a Father who loveth us (Heb. xii. 9). Do we long for the coming of Christ? The time is known only to the Father. Anticipate we the restoration of the kingdom to Israel? The times and the seasons belong to the Father by right. Does Messiah's reign occupy our thoughts? It culminates in His delivering it up to Him who is God and Father (1 Cor. xv. 24). Or if the final and universal exaltation of Jehovah-Jesus be our aspiration, it will be to the glory of God the Father! (Phil. ii. 11).

Can it be otherwise than deeply interesting to us to

trace how the Holy Ghost has thus in every case filled in the Father's part in these varied ways of God in grace and glory, and which enter indeed into the very structure of Christianity? The blessed fulness of Scripture as to our relations to the Father is thus established, while the special title of "Spirit of adoption" indicates the Holy Ghost's office in making good to our souls the Father's peculiar portion in all that concerns His saints, the beloved children of His family. Who can survey the range of interests we have rapidly traversed without being rebuked at the reticence of our hearts and of our lips in worship to the Father, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? That the Christ of God who has wrought so blessedly for Him and for us should occupy our worshipping spirits, is as fitting as it is frequent. But this "ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

The Father *seeketh* true worshippers to worship Him, and can *that* be otherwise than deeply affecting to us when we consider what He has done in the blessed activities of His own grace to bring us to Himself for present and eternal favour, that we might be objects of joy to His heart for ever? Where is the saint whose moral being could be insensible to such a desire on the part of the Father, or whose heart could be unresponsive to His deep delight in us? Moreover, how grateful to our souls should be His divine solicitude for our blessing and the tender assiduity of His loving discipline for the nurture of His saints as children to Him the Father. But, indeed, the very relationship which we hold to Him in its high and endearing character should suffice, surely, to draw out from over-charged hearts a worship rendered in happy and spontaneous response to His intimate and precious love, brought home to our souls in unction and power by the Holy Ghost!

May we know more of what it is, as the beloved ones of the Father, thus to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

GOD'S "PRECIOUS THINGS."

HARK, my soul, what God doth say !
 To thy gaze in bright array
 Doth He, to thine enraptur'd eyes,
 Disclose the things He most doth prize.

Precious is His Son, the One
Chosen, precious Corner Stone ; 1 *Pet.* ii. 6.
 The person of the Christ of God,
 The Uncreate, Eternal Word !

Precious is *the blood* He shed,
 Being number'd with the dead ; 1 *Pet.* i. 19.
 Though we the work of Christ may prize,
 How much more precious in His eyes !

Precious is the *faith* He gives,
 We shall live because He lives ; 2 *Pet.* i. 1.
 'Tis only faith brings certainty
 About God's bright eternity.

Precious is *faith's trial*, too,
 To the great Refiner's view ; 1 *Pet.* i. 7.
 Therein we cannot suffer loss,
 The fire but purges out the dross.

Precious is the *gospel seed*, *Psalm* cxxvi. 6.
 God's good word for sinners' need ;
 Though weeping we may spend our strength,
 Rejoicing shall be ours at length.

Precious *wisdom*, light of light,
 Gold and rubies far less bright ; *Prov.* viii. 11, 19.
 O may His Name be spread around,
 For he who finds Him life hath found ! *Prov.* viii. 35.

Precious are *the tears* of saints,
 When the heart in anguish faints ;
 For in His bottle treasures He
 What not an eye but His doth see ! *Psalm* lvi. 8.

Precious is a *spirit* meek,
 Ornament for saints to seek ;
 A quiet spirit in His eyes
 Hath beauty He doth greatly prize. 1 *Pet.* iii. 4.

PERSONAL CONSECRATION.

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Precious, also, is *the death* *Psalm cxvi. 15.*
Of His saints, for so He saith ;
 Though earthly things all fade away,
 To sleep in Christ brings full repay.

“ Precious things ” are these indeed,
 God has giv'n for us to read ;
 Because He loves He's spoken thus,
 How precious are *His thoughts* to us ! *Psalm cxxxix. 17.*

By and by, above, around,
Joseph's precious things abound ; *Deut. xxxiii. 13-16.*
 The orbs of heaven, the earthly field,
 To Him their precious substance yield !

Precious, precious, precious Lord,
 Christ of God, belov'd, adored ;
 To Thee, the Church, Thy heav'nly Bride,
 More precious is than ought beside !
Mat. xiii. 46. Eph. v. 25-29.

 PERSONAL CONSECRATION.

PROFESSOR Drummond has told us of a Scotch girl with whom he was acquainted, who had been transformed by some secret power within into the loveliest character—the loveliest sainthood—that could well be seen upon earth. After spending some time in loving service, she was stricken with a fatal disease. In dying, she was asked the secret of the power and of the change in her life. She took from her breast a tiny golden locket, and, handing it to those who asked her the question, said, “ Do not open it until I am gone ; but when I am gone, you will find in that locket the secret of all that I have known or done for Christ.” With reverent hands, when she had passed away, they opened the little locket. There was no portrait there ; there was nothing in the way of relic or charm ; but there shone out the letters, “ Whom having not seen, ye love.” That was the secret.

THE SCHOOLMASTER AND HIS LESSONS.

“Wherefore, the law was our schoolmaster unto Christ.”—*Gal.* iii. 24.

BE assured at the outset, dear reader, that we are not going to write *against* the schoolmaster—the law. Indeed, we shall contend for and uphold his place and authority. Moreover, we earnestly pray that if you have not yet made his acquaintance and learnt his needful lessons, you may soon do so, and leave his school.

There are a great many people who are very much mistaken as to the lessons the schoolmaster teaches. For instance, some think that God gave the law to enable them to obtain eternal life by it, and finally enter heaven. Now, this is a serious, yea, a fatal mistake. Others there are who would set the law aside entirely; telling us, as the ground for their thoughts, that Christ made an end of the law, and now it is dead and buried in His grave. This, too, is very serious, and most unscriptural. Both views set aside the word of God, and the schoolmaster's lessons are missed. Certainly God *did* say, “The man which doeth these things shall live by them” (*Rom.* x. 5). This is the language of the apostle when describing the righteousness which is of the law, both in *Rom.* x. and *Gal.* iii. But this has nothing to do with obtaining eternal life, nor with going to heaven. It simply teaches that those who did the things which the schoolmaster taught would continue to live on the earth, and not be cut off by governmental judgments. This is clearly seen by a reference to *Ezek.* xx.; from whence the words are quoted. The righteousness of the law cut off the man who went on badly, whereas it would allow the man to live who followed its teaching. But going to heaven on the ground of righteousness by law-keeping is foreign to Scripture, and sets aside as unnecessary the death of the Lord Jesus; for “if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead *in vain*” (*Gal.* ii. 21).

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But, remember, no one has ever done those things which the law teaches. *No one! Nor could he!* Therefore we are shut up on this ground. Indeed, Gal. iii. 21 tells us plainly, "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." But instead of being able to *give life*, it is a ministration of *condemnation* and *death* (2 Cor. iii. 7-9). It gives the knowledge of sin (Rom. iii. 20), and puts those who are trying to obtain justification by it *under the curse* (Gal. iii. 10). This, then, is the very opposite of giving life and blessing. Yet these are some of the lessons which the schoolmaster teaches, and which all must learn, however humbling it may be, if solid peace is to be known and enjoyed.

Let us look at this a little more closely. The schoolmaster's first word is "*Thou.*" "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself" (Luke x. 27). Now, my reader, have *you* loved God with all your heart, and your neighbour as yourself? Perhaps you reply, "I have done it as much as I can; I have tried my best." But that will not do! You must do it *perfectly* and *continually*. "Cursed is every one that *continueth* not in *all things* written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. iii. 10). This is very plain and distinct; there is no mistake about it. If you were suspended over a precipice by a chain of ten links, and one of them were to break, it would be as fatal to you as though *all* the ten had broken: so *one* solitary offence is fatal. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, yet offend in *one point*, he is *guilty of all*" (James ii. 20). The least failure, therefore, in keeping *one* command makes you guilty, and the penalty is death. Wherefore, then, serveth the law? Why was it given? you ask. It was given to teach men how bad they are; to show that the very springs of our moral being are all wrong; and that we are neces-

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sarily and entirely cast upon God for deliverance from the awful state sin has brought us into. "It was added because of transgressions" (Gal. iii. 19). It entered "that the offence might abound" (Rom. v. 20). By it "is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. iii. 20). Had it not been for the law, we should not have known that our very nature is opposed to God. Hence the apostle says, "I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Rom. vii. 7). Mark, he is not speaking of *sins*. Every one could take cognisance of sinful *acts*. But he is speaking of the evil nature within us called *sin*, and which governs the man. The moment the law says, "Thou shalt not covet," this evil nature rises at once, and you say, "I cannot help coveting." It is your nature to covet. But this is just the whole point, and shows at once *what you are*; hence unfit for God—a captive to sin which is a master over you, and needing a *new life*, and *deliverance* from this master. And this is a most needful lesson to learn. If you buy goods at a shop, and on their arrival at home you suspect their weight, you do not put them into your scales to make them correct; you do it to *test* their weight. The scales neither make the goods heavier nor lighter; they merely show you their actual weight at the moment. This, then, is the reason why God gave His holy law—to *test man*. And just see what it has proved him to be. You may look very well in your own eyes as you compare yourself with your neighbours; but the moment you apply the law to yourself, and measure yourself by God's standard, you are detected at once, and, like one of old, you can only cry out, "Woe is me, for I am undone" (Isa. vi. 5). This is most solemn and startling.

Possibly you are doing your very best to get life and righteousness by law-keeping, and God is saying in His word that you cannot get either one or the other in that way. And if you would only be honest

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with yourself, and accept the teaching of the schoolmaster, you would soon be most miserable, and seek blessing in another way. God declares, "A man is *not* justified by the works of the law, but by the *faith* of Jesus Christ" (Gal. ii. 16). Surely this is plain enough! Justification is not to be had on the principle of works of law, but by *faith*. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. iii. 13). Paul wrote of those once Jews: "The law was our schoolmaster up to Christ, that we might be justified by *faith*. But after that *faith* has come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Gal. iii. 24, 25). Observe this passage. It expressly declares that those Christians who had been formerly Jews and under law, but who had exercised *faith* in Christ, *were no longer under the schoolmaster*; they had left his school. And now, instead of being in bondage under law, they had received, in common with Gentile believers, the adoption of sons. "We are all the *sons* of God by *faith* in Christ Jesus," and enjoy the liberty and blessing of the relationship of sons (Gal. iii. 26; iv. 1-7). If then the Jews, who were under law, had to give it up and receive blessing on the principle of faith, how very foolish it was for the Gentiles, who were never under it, to try to obtain blessing by keeping it!

The teaching, then, of the schoolmaster is to show how bad men are, and how impossible it is to make themselves better, in order that they may accept both life and righteousness as a *free gift* from God, based upon the sacrifice of Jesus, and thus be justified on the principle of *faith without works* (Rom. iv. 5).

But there are many who, while they acknowledge that they get righteousness without works, yet turn to the law for their sanctification as Christians. But this will not do. Moreover, those who do this only bring themselves into bondage, and do *not* bring forth fruit unto God. The fruit of the Spirit, which alone God can accept, is not produced by law-keeping, but by

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those who are in the liberty of the gospel, and whose power is the Holy Ghost. Besides, we cannot play fast and loose with the law, and apply it to what we choose, refusing it for one thing and using it for another. It is *law*, and it demands obedience, and pronounces its penalties on all those who break it. It curses and condemns *all* who are under it and do not fulfil it—no matter who they are. But, thank God, the Christian is *not* under it, and he learns his lessons in another school—taught by another Master. Remember, the schoolmaster has not died; neither has his school broken up. I only wish more diligent scholars went to it. But the Christian has died to the law by the body of Christ; that he should be married to another, even to Christ raised from the dead, and thus bring forth fruit unto God (Rom. vii. 4). There cannot be any fruit so long as the Christian is at the school of law-keeping, except fruit unto death. But the moment we learn that we *have died* with Christ, and *are delivered from the law* (Rom. vii. 6, see marginal reading; also Gal. ii. 19, 20), then we begin to produce fruit for God; for Christ is our life, and the Holy Spirit the power to produce it. We are in Christ, and Christ in us. And the *life* of Jesus is made manifest in our body, as we bear about in our body His dying (2 Cor. iv. 10, 11).

I repeat this point, for we cannot insist too strongly upon it, that the schoolmaster (law) has not died; neither has his school broken up: but the Christian has died with Christ, and is thus delivered from law *entirely* and *for ever*. This is important. He has left the schoolmaster and his school behind on the other side of death, and he is in Christ risen, not under law, but under grace (Rom. vi. 14), and thus able to live to God. Moreover, Christ is the believer's *sanctification*, as much as He is our *righteousness* (1 Cor. i. 30). Sanctification means "setting apart." The believer is therefore set apart to God, by the Spirit, on the ground of the death and resurrection of the Lord

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Jesus. This is absolute, and done once and for ever. It never can be repeated (1 Cor. vi. 11; 1 Pet. i. 3). Then all believers have to answer to it in their ways here on earth; and as we allow the truth to have its place in our hearts, we are *practically* sanctified (John xvii. 17).

Many souls get timid and alarmed, lest these precious truths should give the Christian license to sin. Now, while we are glad to see any holy jealousy and godly fear of sin, we can assure them that no such results as they fear flow from the acceptance of the truths on which we are dwelling, but the opposite. The Christian who has apprehended by faith in the word of God that he is dead and risen with Christ (Col. ii. 20; iii. 1) has a *new object* to govern him. It is not the restraint of law, with its "thou shalt," and its "thou shalt not;" but he has a *new life* and a *new object*, even Christ in heaven. And as every man is formed by the object before him, whatever it may be, so the Christian is formed and moulded by the new object he has before him, and is thereby practically sanctified and lives to God. Not only so: the same grace which brought salvation to him teaches him to "live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope" (Titus ii. 11-14). And this is certainly the very opposite of license to sin.

What claim, then, has the law over the Christian? None! And what has the Christian to do with law? Only to take heed that its righteous requirements are fulfilled in his walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The end of the law for murder is the scaffold; but if the man is hanged, he is free from law, having died to its claims. So it is with the Christian: he has been made dead to the law, having died to that in which he was held (Rom. vii. 6). Law is not for those who have died, but for those who are viewed only as in Adam; that is, on the ground of human responsibility to get blessing. The Christian is *dead*, and his life is hid with Christ in God. It is not that he *feels*

this, but he *believes* it because God says it, and thus he enjoys it. It is thus the Christian maintains the rights and claims of the schoolmaster, and confesses to the value of his school, but is not in it, being dead with Christ, and he now learns his lessons in the school of grace: whereas those who put themselves under law as Christians really deny its claims, for they break it, and yet refuse the curse it pronounces; and instead of being sanctified, and living for God as they desire to, they are in perpetual bondage and long for deliverance.

Beloved Christian reader, suffer us in closing to urge you not to keep yourself in bondage any longer under law; but to accept the truth which God makes known to you, that you have died with Christ, and are therefore "not under law, but under grace." Free from the schoolmaster and his school—free to live unto God as those who are alive from the dead—governed by a new Object, even Christ in heaven—energised by a new power, even the Holy Spirit—and thus able to serve God in true gospel liberty.

W. E.

FAITH REWARDED.

WITH the story of the Syrophenician woman all readers of the gospels are acquainted. It tells of grace to the undeserving, and of faith to which God responds. It illustrates, too, the importance of comparing the accounts of events in the Lord's life narrated by different evangelists.

Beginning with Matthew's account (xv. 21-28), we read that "Jesus departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon." Was He ever there before during His ministry amongst men? Certainly no evangelist gives us a hint that He ever was there again. If, then, it was His first visit to that region, it was most probably His last; but a visit never to be forgotten, for that Canaanitish woman's faith is known wheresoever in the whole world the gospel has reached.

The fame of the Lord's power and goodness had been spread abroad. In Galilee, in the early part of His ministry, He had healed all that were brought unto Him (Matt. iv. 24). Crowds had thronged around Him, collected from all parts of the land. Now, within reach of the famous Phenician cities, Tyre and Sidon, who would seek His help and prove His goodness? He had come within reach, within call of members of that race who were under a curse (Gen. ix. 25), and had been doomed to destruction (Deut. vii. 2). He was there, the Saviour of the world, as the Samaritans had called Him (John iv. 42), and was able to minister to the greatest need, if there was faith in any one to make it known to Him. By Tyre and by Sidon He would pass, going out from the borders of the former through Sidon—as Mark (vii. 31) most probably really wrote—to reach once more the Sea of Galilee. As He journeyed northward to Sidon, many must have had an opportunity of soliciting His help if they desired it. One only, that we know of, did that, and did not do it in vain. "A woman of Canaan," Matthew tells us, himself an eye-witness of what took place, "came out of the same coasts, and cried, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil" (Matt. xv. 22). A pitiable story. A sore trial to that mother, evidently, who may perhaps have been a widow, for no mention have we of a husband. Be that as it may, the child was her child, and the case, humanly speaking, was hopeless; but she would avail herself of the opportunity of getting relief, if she could, whilst Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. She had an opportunity then such as, probably, she never had before, and might never get again. And if all around in sullen silence allowed the Lord to pass by their coasts without profiting by His presence and proving His goodness, she must speak and solicit His help, for she had that crying want.

Alone, without a friend to intreat for her; a needy

creature with a want, which she believed He could meet, a trial which He could remove, she cried with all the urgency of maternal feeling, "My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." That was the state of matters. "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David;" that was her request. Matthew thus tells us how she first accosted the Lord, who, it is plain, had not previously spoken to her, nor given her outwardly any encouragement. She was a woman of Canaan. He in her eyes was David's Son, Israel's Messiah. She, like the blind men, could perceive in that lowly exterior the Son of David. Mercy she asked for, mercy for herself. Mercy it must be, if she was to receive anything from David's Son. Yet she could not help preferring her request, little knowing, surely, whom she really addressed. "My daughter," she cried. Ah, that spoke of parental affection, and of the strongest form of it—maternal love. To whom did she thus cry? To Him who had implanted that feeling in the breast of that mother.

Would He, could He, be indifferent to such a request? He heard, but He answered not. Had He not said, "Come unto Me, *all* ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest?" (Matt. xi. 28). Was she to be an exception to that? Was she to cry, and not to be answered? Were there limitations to that gracious announcement? Was a daughter of Canaan outside the circle of blessing? Could it not embrace her within its limits? "He answered her not a word" is the record of an eyewitness. Would she be put off? No. Silence might reign outwardly on His part; He might pass on His way *apparently* unconcerned. Be it so; she must follow. That she did, as the disciples attested, who asked the Lord to give her what she wanted, and thus get rid of her: "Send her away, for she crieth after us."

The disciples were evidently troubled (would annoyed be too strong a word?) at the woman's

persistence. They had no daughter possessed by a devil. She had. But, if persistent in her request, if silence did not damp her energy, why not put forth power, heal the daughter, and get rid of her? That was man's thought. But God desires the profit of His creatures. So the Lord answered the disciples, when He wouldn't answer her, and told them why He would not act as they suggested. He was not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Israelites could claim His help as David's Son; witness the blind men of Matt. ix. 27, and those two at Jericho. But none others. Of this the Lord reminds the twelve.

On the Lord evidently went. After Him went that woman. The lack of encouragement had not cowed her spirit; the urgency of her need, and the opportunity afforded by the Lord's presence in that district, stimulated the desire to get her daughter healed. She would not be denied; she pressed her suit.

But here we have to turn from Matthew to Mark; for, whilst both evangelists tell of the relief she got, Mark alone it is who has recorded *where* she got it. Hitherto, for what we have learnt of the history—viz., her cry, the Lord's silence, the disciples' request, and His answer to them—we are indebted solely to Matthew. He alone has told us how she first accosted the Lord, and how He replied to the request of the disciples. To neither had He responded as asked. Now Mark must speak, and the way that he introduces the subject is both interesting, and explanatory, perhaps, of the disciples' request.

“From thence He arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it; but He could not be hid. But immediately a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard of Him, and came and fell at His feet” (Mark vii. 24-25.). The Lord was evidently desiring privacy, hence probably

the reason why the disciples, annoyed, had asked Him to send her away. A little touch of this kind is in harmony with other parts of Mark's gospel, which tells us how He sought often to avoid publicity. Now, omitting all notice of the incidents by the way, Mark commences his history of the woman with the remark that the Master could not be hid, though He had entered into an house. And why? Because she followed Him into it, and at His feet now pressed her suit. She had followed after Him, till she reached Him. But where? Inside the house. No lack of encouragement could repress her. She must enter, because He was there, and at His feet own that she could claim nothing from Him. "She besought Him that He would cast forth the devil out of her daughter."

Would He still turn a deaf ear to her request? Oh, no; her urgency was manifest; her faith was real; and now, for the first time, He speaks to her in answer to her petition. He speaks, but to draw forth the evidence of her faith, and her willingness to receive all of pure grace: "Let the children first be filled; for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs." The children! She was not one of them. She owned that. Was there nothing for her? Surely, whilst maintaining the existence of the middle wall of partition, which was then standing, the Lord held out hope to her in that little word *first*. Dispensationally, she had no place before Him but that of a dog. She owned it; she took it, and asked for the dog's portion, some crumbs which might fall from the children's table. It was true, in common life, that the dogs under the table could eat of the children's crumbs. Were there no crumbs for such as she? Would He deny her?

Faith is precious to God, as Peter tells us (1 Pet. i. 7). Her faith was precious in His eyes; it had drawn her on to follow Him into the house, as the One who *could* heal if He *would*. Now He could respond to

it: "For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter" (ver. 29). She turned, and left Him. His word was enough; He had spoken; she believed Him; she went home, to find it true. The devil had gone out, and her daughter lay upon the bed (30). To Mark, again, alone are we indebted for the statement of that which she found.

Mercy she asked; mercy she got. Her daughter's deliverance she petitioned for, and it was granted. How much she could have got from Him she never knew. All she asked was graciously accorded. It was grace, limited only by her desire, flowing out of a source whose depth she never fathomed. It was faith, tested and proved, to which the Lord responded, the faith of one who deserved nothing, but who could say that she got all she had asked. C. E. S.

HOW DO YOU WORSHIP?—*John* xii. 1-11.

MARY came not to hear a sermon, although the first of Teachers was there; to sit at His feet, and hear His word (Luke x. 39) was not her purpose now, blessed as that was in its proper place.

She came not to make her requests known to Him. Time was when, in deepest submission to His will, she had fallen at His feet, saying, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died" (John xi. 32); but to pour out her supplications to Him, as her only resource, was not now her thought, for her brother was seated at the table.

She came not to meet the saints, though precious saints were there, for it says, "Jesus loved Martha and Lazarus" (John xi. 5). Fellowship with them was blessed likewise, and, doubtless, of frequent occurrence; but fellowship was not her object now.

She came not, after the weariness and toil of a week's battling with the world, to be refreshed from Him, though surely she, like every saint, had learned the trials of the wilderness; and none more than she,

probably, knew the blessed springs of refreshment that were in Him.

But she came, and that too at the moment when the world was expressing its deepest hatred of Him, to pour out what she long had treasured up (ver. 7), that which was most valuable to her, all she had upon earth, upon the person of the One whose love had made her heart captive, and absorbed her affections.

She thought not of Simon the leper—she passed the disciples by—her brother and her sister in the flesh, and in the Lord, engaged not her attention then—“Jesus only” filled her soul—her eye was on *Him*—her heart beat true to *Him*—her hands and feet were subservient to her eye and to her heart, as she “anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair.”

Adoration, homage, worship, blessing was her one thought, and that in honour of the One who was “all in all” to her; and surely *such* worship was most refreshing to Him.

The unspiritual (ver. 4) might murmur, but He upheld her cause, and showed how He could appreciate and value the grateful tribute of a heart that knew His worth and preciousness, and could not be silent as to it.

A lasting record is preserved of what worship really is, by the One who accepted it, and of the one who rendered it.

And now, dear reader, is this your mode of worship; or do you on the Lord's day go to hear a sermon, say your prayers, meet the saints, or be refreshed after your six days' toil?

Oh! if every eye was on the Lord alone, if every heart were true to Him; if we were each determined to see “no man . . . save Jesus only,” what full praise there would be! Not with alabaster boxes now, but our bodies filled with the Holy Ghost—a stream of thanksgiving, of worship of the highest

HEBREWS X. 19-25.

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character, would ascend in honour of the blessed One who now adorns the glory as He once adorned the earth. Be it ours thus to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Amen.—*D. T. Grimston.*

 HEBREWS X. 19-25.

“HAVING made peace through the blood of His cross.” What divine certainty these words convey to our hearts! We who were enemies now reconciled to God by the death of His Son, and now joying in our God through the Lord Jesus, by Whom we have received the reconciliation. Having boldness to enter the holiest by His blood, and having an High-priest over the house of God, let us draw near.

Now, having the knowledge of this, what follows? We are to *draw near*, take our place in the holiest with boldness as purged worshippers, the conscience being set at rest. Now our God, as it were, would bring us into His holy presence, and it is on the ground of this that the exhortation, we find, is based. To those who have regard for the Lord's honour and glory, let me say, Oh, let us hold fast His word, and not deny His name. May we be kept from compromise. We have been made to see what a fearful day we are living in, but He is faithful that promised. Kept by Him we safely stand. Beloved, let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than himself.

Now the contrast we have here to strife or vainglory is provoking one another to love and good works, not fleshly activity (may we guard against it), but the being seen in us that Christ-like lowliness which does not consider oneself before another. How sad it is when we look at ourselves (for we need go no further), to find the lack of this lowliness and gentleness of Christ. Beloved, let the time past suffice wherein it has been so, and let us come together with the desire *in our hearts* for the Lord's glory, and the welfare of

our brethren. "Love seeketh not her own." Has there not been rather the forsaking of the assembling ourselves together? It is indeed a needed word for us at this time. May the Lord give grace to each one. Surely, it is not too much to give the Lord the hour which we set apart. In many cases the legitimate duties may be laid aside, to get a little word from Himself by the way. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

Beloved brethren, may this word find a place in our hearts. How we need exhorting, and *so much the more* as we see the day approaching! Yes, it is the light of the coming day that adds to the weight of the passage. It is time to awake out of sleep. Are we conformed to the world? *All that we have which is not Christ's is of the world!* Beloved saints, ye that shall judge the world and angels, what is your position in the world? The Lord is at hand. Let the thought cheer and separate our heart. He is coming! Are we waiting, or are we drinking in the spirit of worldliness, seeking to get on in the world, and thus giving up our pilgrim character? Let us examine ourselves, and see whether obedience to His word and devotedness to Himself characterise us. "Behold I come quickly." If we have kept the word of His patience, let us hold it fast, that no man take our crown! Then is it joy to our hearts as we think of His speedy return? God grant that it may be increasingly so.

"Oh! hour for which, in patience,
 Thou'st waited through the night,
 Whilst we, Thy saints, were gathered,
 And brought into the light:
 Oh! blessed, coming Saviour,
 Speak, then, the joyous word,
 To which our hearts responding,
 'For ever with the Lord.'"

J. H. I.

AUGUST, 1889.

JESUS AT THE GATE OF THE CITY OF
NAIN.—*Luke* vii. 11-15.

“A DEAD man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.” What a tale of sorrow do these words convey. Who can tell the depths of anguish in that poor widow’s heart? Alas! this world is the place where hearts are easily broken, but never satisfied. There are few things of more common occurrence than a funeral in this sin-stricken world; but here is a scene that has been put on record by God Himself for sorrowing and bereaved hearts to ponder over for their comfort and blessing.

The company with death in its midst meets at the gate of Nain, the company having in its midst Him who was the Prince or Author of life, the Resurrection and the Life; and when He puts forth His power, death must relax his grasp. There is but One who could fathom what the mother’s heart felt, for He it is who made the heart. He is God, and knew what the depths of sorrow were, for He was man also—“a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” He first speaks to her, “Weep not.”

Ah! ’tis easy to utter such words, you may say. Perhaps she thought it. You tell me not to weep, but my heart is broken, the hope of my old age is gone, the object of my widowed heart has been taken away, the ruthless hand of death has robbed me of all I held dear on earth. Thus she may have reasoned.

Ah! but He who said “Weep not,” whose heart was filled with compassion for her, has something more than compassion at His command. He speaks to the young man, “Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.” That voice will one day call forth the dead. “And he that was dead sat up and began to speak, *and He delivered him to his mother.*” If there were depths of sorrow in her heart, there were depths of compassion in His. What a combination of power and tenderness we find in Isaiah xl. He that “mca-

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sured the waters in the hollow of His hand," "that weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance," that same arm feeds His flock like a shepherd, gathers His lambs and carries them in His bosom, and gently leadeth those that are with young. Infinite in tenderness, surely we may say. Well to have such a Shepherd, and know that

"The Shepherd's bosom bears each lamb
O'er rock, and waste, and wild;
The object of that love I am,
And carried like a child."

Little did she think, as she left her house that day for that sorrowful errand, with her heart filled with anguish, how differently she should return; but she had met with Him whose delight it was to heal the broken in heart and bind up their wounds, whose wisdom telleth the number of the stars and calleth them all by their names (Ps. cxlvii. 3, 4). He could weep with Mary at the grave of her brother in truest sympathy; not simply as we sometimes do, while feeling how powerless we are to help; but manifesting that while He felt, and felt deeply, the havoc sin had made in this world, He had at His command a power that death itself must yield to. But Mary beheld His tears ere she saw His power over death and the grave. She learnt His *heart* before witnessing His victory over the last enemy. And so it is now. We learn in this world His sympathy ere we see His final triumph over death and the grave.

"We know Him as we could not know
Through heaven's golden years;
We there shall see His glorious face,
But Mary saw His tears.
The touch that heals a broken heart
Is never felt above:
His angels know His blessedness,
His way-worn saints His love."

W. R. H.

R.

EXHORTATION TO WATCHFULNESS.

“A DOUBLE-MINDED man is unstable in all his ways.” Where there is indecision, lack of purpose—a shifting, aimless, unsettled condition—such a word as Jas. iv. 8 should prove seasonable: “Purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up.” Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of. Trials, temptations, afflictions, necessities are good when exercise is produced; patience under them but strengthens the saint who has a tender conscience, walking in His fear. A double mind proves a divided heart. Not one of us can blame the circumstances, or trace further than from within the lust that led to departure; as His Word says: “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (Jas. i. 13-15).

He, our blessed, adorable Lord, was tempted; but unlike us. He was not a fallen creature, had no evil nature, was not capable of responding to or falling under sin’s dominion. External things might be brought to bear upon Him; and in His circumstances of hunger, humility, and rejection the devil might think to have good material to work with; but He was perfect, pure, spotless, undefiled, separate from sinners.

Whether Satan is active in beguiling and ensnaring or not, there is with us the lust within; ready too often to excuse ourselves, that if it were not for the enemy of our souls we should not do this or that. It is an indication of further departure when such pleas are raised—similar to Adam’s response when guilty

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before God, saying, "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Gen. iii.).

How delightful to have the Second Man to meditate upon—the last Adam, the One from heaven ; He who was obedient unto death, and that the cross, but now at God's right hand, whose Name is above every name, to whom all shall bow ! What a joy to own Him Lord and Christ to God's glory, to be on the Victor's side !

Is it too much to exhort, beloved—"Set your mind on things above"? Have we not a perfect object? What do we esteem of worth, worthy? Where is our treasure? Is Christ that? or is there something else that has come in to displace, or as a rival, presuming to be of value, precious to us? We need challenge our hearts in a day like this, when compromise produces difficulties. They should not, surely, prove difficulties to us, with the Word of God before us, Christ in us, God for us. We need give heed to His Word as new-born babes, and we shall be kept most surely. He will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go ; He will guide thee with His eye. The Psalmist exclaims : "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after : that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in His temple." This is not the expression of an unstable man. There is no indifference here.

Oh ! for God-given desires for oneself and for His loved ones in these times of abounding wickedness. Do we desire prosperity here? Do we lay ourselves open for bargains, and what are called profitable investments? Is it so that the brother of low degree is not content with being exalted, but would prefer to be master instead of servant? How solemn that so ready a response is given to desires to "get on" down here, with the suggestion that if we had more time we could study the Word better ; if we had a larger house

we could entertain the saints. These are delusions. Are we using the moments we have profitably? Do we show hospitality to saints with such as we have? If not, in all probability we should not if we had a mansion. How often we reason thus: "If I had such and such, I would do so and so." We think so; but our gracious God, who knows us altogether, tells us, "Godliness with contentment is great gain." We would count gain godliness, but this is carnal reckoning. "Be content with such things as ye have." "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content." Dear brothers there are who are good workmen, who never would make faithful employers, yet are constantly looking that way. Our sisters have desires in other directions—the well-appointed house, changes of apparel, and such like. These desires need to be searched out, lest they ensnare the heart, and we be found following Him afar off.

Let me not rebel by undue severity, or appear to press what I need to take home to myself; but, dearly beloved, by Him who died to save, by Him who left the glory and was the only obedient One that ever trod this earth, by Him I would plead. If you love me, you should desire to stir up my mind as to the manner of person I am by grace, and exhort and encourage me to walk and do His will, to behave and speak so as to meet His approval.

Think of many who have become involved because of entering business, which was never according to His mind. Think of the absentees from meetings, and say does it speak of their prospering in soul? Alas, how painful is this; and yet we need be gentle, and remind His own blood-bought ones, before entering upon fresh ventures, or making changes, removals, emigrating, using summer resorts, and so forth—we need watch very closely as to whether it is His mind and will, or whether we have grown weary, restless, and desire to please ourselves, allowing our will to work. If we are free to get in His presence, and can

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fully and candidly invite Him to review all we are engaged in and purpose to undertake for Him, then right motives will characterise us, and we shall be kept from falling into many hurtful lusts. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus ii.). "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

We do well to give diligent heed to this teaching of our gracious God; being not hearers only, or those who simply assent, but doers of the Word. "He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." We shall be like Him! Why not the moral likeness now produced by the moulding and transforming, such as obedience to the Word, occupation with Christ, delighting to do His will would effect?

How necessary for our progress to have right thoughts of Him who ever liveth to make intercession for us. For His glory, then, and our good, for safety and keeping in difficult times from snares around and lusts within, let us consider Him and praise Him for past deliverances, and look to Him still to deliver, and let it be our part continually to offer by Him our sacrifice of praise to God. W. B.

THE Lord takes up none but the forsaken,
 Makes none healthy but the sick,
 Gives sight to none but the blind,
 Makes none alive but the dead,
 Justifies none but sinners,
 Gives wisdom to none but the foolish.

THE FAMILIES OF THE SAINTS.

THE aged apostle Paul was drawing near the close of his service and testimony when he wrote his second epistle to Timothy. Therein he terms him his "dearly beloved son," and he lovingly calls to remembrance the unfeigned faith which was in Timothy. This he traces backward in the family genealogy as having dwelt in his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice, adding in lovely grace, "and I am persuaded that in thee also." Later in the same epistle, in his solemn personal exhortation to Timothy to steadfastness in view of the last days, he reminds him of the fact that from a child he had known the holy Scriptures, "which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. iii. 15).

Who can read these features in the recorded domestic history of Timothy without observing what a beautiful picture they present of marked household piety? The faith which wrought in the grandmother had wrought in her daughter, and both Lois and Eunice appear to have had the joy of beholding it working in the youth Timothy, who had grown up at their knees. As you read these divinely-given features of the dear lad's home influences, you cannot but feel that you are breathing the atmosphere of a family circle in which God and His word have their rightful place amply and heartily accorded.

Freely must we acknowledge that hereditary grace is no doctrine of Scripture, and could not be reconciled with the sovereignty of divine mercy, which ever works according to the eternal counsels of God's will. But, nevertheless, abides the word: "Them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed;" and I would appeal to my brethren who are heads of households as to whether the same lovely features, which are evidently so well-pleasing to God, characterise their family circles.

(1.) "Every man's house is his castle" is commonly enough recognised, and there is truth in this beyond its political significance. The child of God should surely seek that it should be the brightest and happiest spot in which he, and the children whom God hath given him, can sojourn on their way home to the rest that remaineth. But this it can never be unless far above and beyond everything else the Lord Himself, so to speak, be domiciled there. Unless God have His unlimited place and His unhindered sway, it lacks the first feature of that which He will approve. Let this exercise our consciences, beloved, that as to all that goes on day by day in our home circles, God should have our first and primary thought, that He may be glorified. Nowhere is walking with God a more real and practical thing—bringing spiritual exercise at every step—than in the domestic circle.

(2.) Then as to the children. How beautiful was the faith of Hannah as to Samuel; she had *asked him of the Lord*, and, when he had been given in answer to her faith, the name he got was the standing recognition of God's gift. Do we thus connect our children with Him? Do we recognise them as gifts from His hand entrusted to us to be nursed up for Him? Every time that Hannah called her darling boy, the name "Samuel," as it fell from her lips, would recall to her heart that God had confided him to her charge, and that in the ways of God the child stood as a link between her faith and Himself, the object of her faith. And when she had weaned him she took him up to the house of the Lord, and they slew a bullock—plainly telling us that which baptism now expresses, that only upon the recognition of the death of Christ can even our children be brought into the house of God upon earth, their privileged place. And upon that ground alone can they be trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. vi. 4). And, remark, it does not say *after* she had weaned him, but "*when*." She did not carelessly and indifferently let

week after week or month after month pass by, as, alas! many saints do now, before she brought him to God's house, but *when* she had weaned him, *then* she took the path of faith and brought him to Shiloh.

(3.) A third thing is the Word of God. How evident is it in the case of Timothy that the Word was from his earliest days brought to bear upon his young heart. He was moulded and fashioned by it, we cannot for a moment doubt. This indicates conclusively that there was habitual reading of the word of God in the family circle. Can this be said of all the families of the saints to-day—that the word of God occupies this honoured place? that it is habitually and diligently read? day by day the members of the family, young or old, gathered together over that word of God which makes, and which alone makes, wise unto salvation? Oh! how the Spirit of God must be grieved where the word of God is constantly neglected. God has plainly said, "Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." What, should we say, will probably be the state of bodily health in any case where a scrap of food is only occasionally taken—perhaps but two or three times a week? But we do not thus neglect our bodies. It is only the soul, that must live for eternity and the God who has redeemed it, and to whom its redemption is precious (Ps. xlix. 8), that we so dishonour! Alas that we should have to confess this before Him!

(4.) A fourth thing is the positive obligation laid upon parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. vi 4.). There is no plainer precept, no more distinct charge given in the word of God than this. There is no ground for having two minds about it. God expects the children to be for Him, and as such Himself addresses them. They are made objects of the tender consideration and care of the Spirit of God. They have, as such, a place in the house of God upon earth, and are as much enti-

tled to occupy it as we. This place having been formally given them, as it should be, they are to be nurtured and disciplined for God. This task devolves upon their parents, and godly parents should lovingly fulfil it. To relegate this duty to Sunday school teachers falls far short of a fulfilment of that which is enjoined. Where children have no godly parents, or can not have the benefit of their personal ministry, the school very properly comes in to supply what is lacking, but should never be used to exempt parents from that which God has, in His infinite wisdom and love, given *them* to do, and which should be done as a coveted service to their dear ones in an act specially pleasing to Him. What could be a greater joy, what could be a deeper privilege for a parent's heart than the leading a tender child to learn the Name, the character, the ways, the work and the glory of the Lord Jesus? Surely if parents rightly understood the privileged character of such a ministry towards their beloved children, and that the Lord has specifically entrusted them with it unto His glory, it would be the very last thing they would feel disposed to relegate to others. In connection with this we may point out the testimony God gave to Abraham, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." How different was that to throwing up the reins, and leaving the headstrong and self-willed to follow their own bent, to the ruin of godly order in the family.

(5.) There is, lastly, the privilege of family prayer. It surely ought not to be possible that one should find it necessary to bring this before the saints as a matter often seriously neglected. How lamentable it is that in some families of saints the children are actually *never* assembled in prayer before God: the husband and the wife *never* together before the throne of grace! What a positive neglect of an inconceivably blessed and holy exercise! How dishonouring to God; how

grieving to His Spirit! What a comfort, what a cheer should it be to the hearts of parents to bring all their family cares and interests as to their children, and as to themselves, unitedly before God in common supplication. In the hour of trial casting it upon Him; in the time of joys and mercies bringing multiplied thanksgivings to Him; in the periods of perplexity seeking divine light and guidance at His hand. Oh! what a resource is the throne of grace, and what an incomparable time is the hour of prayer, when all the varied circumstances of the family are brought before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Where is the family that can neglect this divinely-given privilege and expect to prosper spiritually? Do they not rather appear to bring down upon themselves a dearth of blessing, which must needs carry deadness and darkness of soul in its train? How can God honour those who dishonour Him?

One other word I might perhaps add to the foregoing, viz., the propriety and the comeliness of saints bringing their children, as early as practicable, with them to the meetings they have the privilege to attend; accustoming them thus from early days to spiritual influences and associations; fostering in their minds and hearts a fitting sense of the presence and favour of God, to be begun as early as is possible, and to be continued so long as gracious and godly control is exercised by them, and which God will in His mercy strengthen their hands in maintaining if they have faith in Him for it.

May the Lord lead His saints into exercise of soul as to these things, that they may amend their ways. Alas! in not a few cases there is great occasion for deep humiliation before God. May He give us a fuller discovery of what He seeks for Himself, as due to His own character and claims, in the families of His saints.

W.R.

“WAITING FOR THE LORD.”

“Ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord.” (Luke xii. 36).

I WISH to help you, my readers, by noticing a few precious truths in God’s Word, hoping you will turn to them and read them; and I trust that the Lord will interest you in His own truth, and give you to search the Scriptures *carefully* and *prayerfully* to see whether these things are so (Acts xvii. 11). Only you must believe the Scriptures, no matter how much they may clash with your previous thoughts. Let *your thoughts* go to the winds. *Believe God’s Word. Obey God’s Word.* Then I am sure the Lord will be glorified, your soul will be blessed, and the object of this paper accomplished.

There are two things which stare every man in the face, and which need to be met before he can have settled peace—his GUILT and his STATE. Every man is born a sinner, that is his *state*; but, besides that, he has got his own sins, that is his *guilt*, and they, too, have to be met. His SINS are but the fruits of the tree, SIN. The cross of Christ meets both. Now it is the privilege of any one who believes the gospel, to look back to the cross and see his sins met and put away for ever by the blood of Christ, “who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification” (Rom. iv. 25); and, “being justified by faith, we have peace with God” (Rom. v. 1). Thus our GUILT is met.

But more. Romans vi. 2; vii. 4; Gal. ii. 20; Col. iii. 3 shew we have died with Christ to sin—law—and the world. The evil nature, too, which produced the sins has been dealt with by God. (Rom. vi. 6). And thus our STATE is met. Moreover, we are “alive in Christ Jesus.” Christ is our life. (Col. iii. 4). We are in Christ, new creation (2 Cor. v. 17).

Thus we no longer look for improvement in the flesh, but believe the truth of Rom. viii. 7, that it is

incurable ; that " God has CONDEMNED SIN in the flesh " (verse 3) ; that we are no longer " in the flesh, but in the Spirit " (verse 9) ; and so can live to God, not by trying to keep the law, but by " reckoning ourselves DEAD to SIN, and alive to God, in Christ Jesus " (Rom. vi. 11). Not only so, we have the Holy Ghost dwelling in our bodies (1 Cor. vi. 19), the power to enable us to live to God (Eph. iii. 16), and also the earnest of our inheritance (Eph. i. 14) ; while " that blessed hope " of the Lord's speedy return is what we *look for*, and it cheers us on and practically separates from the world, while we wait for the Lord to come and take us to the Father's house.

Paul's gospel used to separate men from the world when they believed it. How little of that is seen now in those who profess to believe the gospel. Instead of a clean break *with*, and separation *from* the world, we find Christians hand in hand with it, helping it on, helping that world that crucified their Lord. You can scarcely tell a Christian from an unconverted man ; how sad to see them endeavouring to make the best of both worlds. Reader ! if you have believed the gospel, " BE YE SEPARATE " (2 Cor. vi. 14-18).

What a beautiful picture we have in 1 Thess. i. of the effect of the gospel Paul preached. Even their enemies showed what entering in the apostle had among them, and how " they turned *to God* from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to WAIT for His Son from heaven " (1 Thess. i. 9, 10). They separated from the world, and waited for the coming One, who delivered them from the coming wrath.

Reader ! perhaps you have believed the gospel so far as to know your *sins forgiven*, but are you waiting for God's Son from heaven ? In fact, did it ever occur to you that the Lord is really coming back ? Perhaps it is new to you ; you may not have heard it or read it before. You may have heard, and believe that the Lord is coming to judge the world at the *last*

day. But perhaps you have never heard that He is coming at least ONE THOUSAND YEARS BEFORE THE LAST DAY, to take His saints away to *live* and *reign* with Him. Yet it is true. Read Rev. xx., and note specially verses 4-6. Yes, the Lord is coming back in person to receive those He loves; coming to take them according to His promise in John xiv. 3, to His Father's house, to be with Him where He is for ever. I ask, did this ever occur to you? Or have you been like so many, drifting on in the mists for years, with the thought that everybody must die, and when you die, that is Christ's coming for you? If so, dear reader, it is all wrong. Death is not Christ's coming, IT IS YOUR GOING (Phil. i. 23). But how sweet to know that He is coming Himself, and when He comes, the saints who have died will rise first, then the saints who are alive will be changed; they *will not die*, but be *changed*, and all caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, and be for ever with the Lord (1 Thess. iv. 15-18). The unconverted never saw Christ after He was taken down from the cross; His disciples did. The world will not see Him when He comes FOR His saints; never again shall they see Him till He comes in judgment WITH His saints; then every eye shall see Him, when He cometh with clouds (Rev. i. 7, and xix. 11-21).

Yes; the *Lord Himself* is coming. "*This same Jesus*" (Acts i, 11); not another one; not some one sent to fetch us. No, no. The same Jesus who died for our sins on the cross (1 Peter ii. 24), who lives to keep us, and bears our sorrows on His heart on the throne (Heb. iv. 15; ix. 24), is the One who is coming to take us into the glory (Phil. iii. 20, 21; Heb. ix. 28; 1 John iii. 2). O, does not this cheer your heart? He may be here as you read this; then you will not die, but be changed in a moment, and caught up to be for ever with the Lord. And as you hear Him saying in Rev. xxii. 20, just as He is closing the book,

“Surely I come quickly,” does not your heart respond,
 “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

“Christ the Lord will come again,
 None shall wait for Him in vain.”

How blessed! He may be here to-day. While your eye is running from side to side of this page, He may come. There is nothing to be fulfilled ere He comes FOR His saints, according to 1 Thess. iv. 16, but much to be fulfilled ere He comes WITH His saints, according to 1 Thess. iii. 13; Col. iii. 4. Are you ready? Are you looking for Him?

O! how little this blessed truth of the Lord's coming is known among Christians, how few are found obeying the apostle's injunction in 1 Thess. iv. 18, “Comfort one another with these words.” Yea, how many ridicule the idea of His coming before what they call “*the day of judgment.*” Yet it is true; unbelief does not make it untrue: “Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry” (Heb. x. 37). Oh, do read the Scriptures as to this; do not listen any longer to men's thoughts; never mind what you have been brought up to believe. “Search the Scriptures;” read them *carefully* and *prayerfully* for yourself; believe them for your own profit, because they are the Word of the Lord, and then you will be able to rejoice in, and look for “that blessed hope” (Titus ii. 13). You will be one of those who are waiting for God's Son from heaven.

Perhaps there are deep desires in your heart to know more of that blessed One who “gave Himself” for you, “who is able to keep you from falling,” and who means to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy (Jude 24). You wish to be more consecrated to Him, more like Himself. Well, these are blessed heaven-born desires. And oh! what a sanctifying truth the Lord's coming is, how it separates us when it really gets into our hearts! We must not simply have it in our heads as a doctrine, but hold it in our hearts as a fact, for it is

a glorious fact. The Lord is coming, and if you have it in your hearts that He may be here at any moment, if you are really waiting for Him, looking for Him, longing for Him, you will not want to be found mixed up with anything not sanctioned by His Word. You will be saying, I cannot go here or there, I cannot indulge these thoughts, I cannot keep this or that company. Why? Because the Lord may come and find me thus engaged, and I should be ashamed; and thus the effects will be seen in your life, you will be *separated*.

Now just one thing more. As you are separated from the world, the world will *hate* you. They can bear with you so long as you go on with them, and recognise them, but so soon as you take sides with Christ and leave them, and give them to feel that you are not *of* them, nor *with* them (John xvii. 9-16), then you may expect the same treatment as your Master received (John xv. 18-20). "For they that will live *godly* in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. iii. 12). May we be found waiting for the Lord, separate from the world; and when He comes we shall enter into rest (Heb. iv. 3). In the meantime let us WORK, WAIT, and WATCH.

Reader! if you are still unsaved, oh, close with Christ at once, lest He come to-day; then you would be left for judgment, manifested at the great white throne, judged for your sins, and then pass into the lake of fire. If you will not believe God's truth now, the day may come when you will believe Satan's lie and be damned (2 Thess. ii. 11, 12). The Lord Jesus said on the cross, "It is finished" (John xix. 30). Could anything be more simple? All finished, 1,800 years ago. Finished by Him. No need to wait till it is done. He has done it, and now sends you the news that you may lay hold of it by faith. Eternal blessings are held out for your *faith*, not your *feelings*. Will you still hold out and put works or feelings in the place of faith? or will you trust Him at once? Listen

“BY GRACE ARE YE SAVED.”

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to His dying words, “It is finished ;” and may the Lord enable you to believe them and live.

“ ‘ A little while’ the Lord shall come,
And we shall wander here no more ;
He’ll take us to His Father’s home,
Where He for us is gone before—
To dwell with Him, to see His face,
And sing the glories of His grace.”

W. E.

“BY GRACE ARE YE SAVED.”

YE ransomed souls, break forth and praise
God’s matchless love and sovereign grace ;
Ye rescued wand’rers, now brought nigh,
Your Lord and Saviour magnify.

Did we not tell what He hath wrought,
The very stones might well cry out ;
Did we not glorify His name,
We well might blush for very shame.

When we were ruined, lost, depraved,
And, worst of all, would not be saved,
He sought us, found us, brought us nigh,
And made our home with Him on high.

Eternal life is ours through grace,
And we shall see Him face to face ;
We soon, as sons to glory brought,
Shall magnify Him as we ought.

Meanwhile to Him we now would live,
Who all hath given that love could give ;
Would testify to all around
The God and Saviour we have found.

FAITH never makes what is in my heart its object,
but God’s revelation of Himself in grace.

IT is the love that there is in God, and not any love-
liness in the creature, that accounts for the extravagant
liberality of his reception through Christ.—J. N. D.

S A L T .

SALT is of great importance to man. It makes savoury what without it would be insipid. It checks the growth of nature in the vegetable kingdom; it preserves, too, from corruption and decay what belongs to the animal kingdom. Of its savoury properties Job speaks (vi. 6). To its power in destroying the growth of nature Moses and the prophets bear witness (Deut. xxix. 23; Jer. xvii. 6; Ezek. xlvii. 11); and Abimelech's action in sowing the city of Shechem with salt (Judges ix. 45) shews us that Israel were well acquainted with its influence on vegetation. But not less marked is its action on that which belongs to the animal kingdom, preserving what is subject to its influence from that corruption to which otherwise it would assuredly turn.

Now as salt acts in the realm of nature, so does grace in spiritual matters. It savours; it checks the outflow of nature from man. It is preservative, too, in its action from corruption.

Under the law the meat-offering was to be salted, typical of the Lord Jesus in His life on earth, in whom grace acted constantly (Lev. ii. 13). With all their offerings they were to offer salt. Hence "a covenant of salt" was a term Israel well understood (Num. xviii. 19; 2 Chron. xiii. 5); meaning that such a covenant should never be broken, no element of corruption should enter into it, for it would last for ever. Of that character was the provision God made for the support of Aaron and his house. Of that same character was the Lord's engagement to David and his sons.

In the New Testament, the figurative meaning of salt, as illustrative of grace in its savouring and preserving action, is met with more than once. The disciples were the "salt of the earth" (Matt. v. 13); but, as the Lord reminded them, salt is useless if once it has lost its savour, so they would be of no use as salt unless grace was really in them. What, then, man

in nature has not ; what the earth, viewed morally, does not possess, that the disciples were, and should be careful to continue to be. They were not only salt *for* the earth, but the salt *of* the earth. And having salt in themselves, the working of nature would be checked, and they would have peace one with another (Mark ix. 50). Moreover, that preservative and savouring character of grace would be felt, if their speech was always with grace, being seasoned with salt (Col. iv. 6). They would know how to answer every man, and no corrupt communication would proceed out of their mouth, but only that which was good to the use of edifying, that it might minister grace to the hearer (Eph. iv. 29). Moreover, the preservative character of grace would characterise all God's people, "for every sacrifice shall be salted with salt."

But there is another statement of the Lord, preserved only in one gospel, that of Mark ; and the statement to which we now draw attention is one the most solemn in its character and universal in its application : "Every one shall be salted with fire : " for as salt preserves things in the animal kingdom, so the fire of judgment will act on men. It will not consume them so as to terminate their existence, but, burning up all that is perishable of men and their works (1 Cor. iii. 13-15), will leave that which can never decay.

To have one's works tried by fire is a solemn consideration for God's saints. To be salted with fire is a dreadful prospect for the wicked. And in connection with these latter, it should be remarked, the Lord brings in, "Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched ; *for* every one shall be salted with fire" (Mark ix. 48-49). Even in the things of nature, in the animal frame, there is a residuum which the fire does not consume ; but after burning up all that is consumable, the fire dies out. Now it will not be so in the other world. All that can perish will assuredly perish ; but the wicked will never die, and the fire will never be extinguished.

C. E. S.

SHEPHERD THE FLOCK.—*Acts xx.* ; *1 Peter v.*

HOW beautiful and appropriate are the closing verses of chapter xx. of the Acts ; warning words given by the Holy Ghost, and for our learning. The great requisite is to have ears to hear. When we think of the untiring, persistent reminders given by the apostle, day by day, for three years, reminding them of what was ahead, how individual it was, and should be turned to often when boasts are made of great ones arising—pretentious ones professing to be sent of God, claiming apostolic succession, doing cures of bodily maladies, and claiming insight and ability in interpreting prophetic portions difficult to the young and slothful student of the Word to understand ; nay, the very book withheld in many cases, lest they should search and see if what is so affirmed is so. No misunderstanding this God-given servant of Christ, directed and having power from, on high. He gave gifts. It was Himself made known to Paul, One in the glory—speaking from there ; so we have continually told out to us by this servant things above, where He is.

Sending to Ephesus for the elders, he rehearses to them what he had done, his manner and bearing ; told of his surroundings, the lying in wait by Jews to kill him ; he kept back nothing ; spoke to them publicly and privately. The close of his course is before him ; he would finish it with joy. He was able to tell out all this and more. No censure could be raised. It might seem immodest and bold, but what he recounted was to the praise of His grace. Bonds and afflictions await him, but he has received commission of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God. Nothing would deter him ; what he had done he would still do. No foolish boast is here. For this very thing he had been picked up.

How is it with us, beloved ? Why are we here ? Is

it not also to testify the gospel of the grace of God—to make known the fact that God is taking out a people for His Name—declaring the counsel of God—there is to be a bride for Christ as well as an inheritance for the saints? Needful for the Lord's people to know this, not for the sake of intellectual knowledge, but to enable us, in face of suffering and difficulties, to walk patiently and unflinchingly in a path impossible to flesh, but in a path He gives the needed grace for to redound to His praise, and that He might have pleasure in those sanctified, soon to be glorified.

Just listen to this now, how full of warning: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock; also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. . . . Now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." What encouragement in spite of all the solemn outlook. May both reader and writer take this cheering, precious, encouraging word. What does it speak of? Mark it well. How welcome it must be. It tells you, dear child of God, that His Word is able to build you up. Pastors, shepherds, elders, overseers will ever use it, dividing it aright for the help and instruction of those whom the Holy Ghost, taking that Word, has taught them to bestow care upon. But there are hirelings, infidels, tare-sowers, perverse speakers, who endeavour to corrupt it. There will be little turning to it by these. Tradition is more their boast, high-sounding words and other expedients resorted to, in order to get disciples to applaud and honour them.

I feel assured, however, that such words hinted at

above, His Word "is able to build you up," will be all the more acceptable when we remember from whence we have fallen, the time being short, our need being urgent; and oh! the grace that gives encouragement, at junctures like these; to rally, respond, and desire it, that we may grow and gather strength. How can we refrain from hungering after and feasting upon that which refreshes and sustains; enabling those who heed it to produce fruit that abides; telling us of Him, the grace and glory of His person, what He is doing, of an inheritance reserved, and He preparing a place for us?

Such a word should have a very general as well as personal application. But to shepherd the flock is more a special charge to men fitted of God for such service; and by those who are cared for in this way there should be subjection to such, who are but carrying out the directions of Him who is Chief Shepherd, for their lasting benefit and His glory. It would seem that a life-time of varied trial and difficulty is but the schooling for wondrous service, as here shown, that God through the riches of grace deigns, yea, delights, to use. No matter what difficulty may arise, the thought should not be encouraged to care for oneself, or be ready to take advantage because of the wondrous trust of such valuables as the flock of God.

Peter, who had not long been in company with the blessed Lord, was tested at a very critical time in his history; yet at this time, when all seemed against him as regards his reliability for such wondrous service, he is bidden, "Feed My lambs," "Feed My sheep." Later on he will add to the sweet and surely welcome words of Paul, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." A crown of glory that fadeth not away at the hand of the Chief Shepherd, is the reward for such service, requiring as it does, self-

denial continually, untiring devotedness, patience, endurance, faith.

Who shall say but the very crookedness and simplicity that marked the early days of Peter was part of his schooling to teach him his need of constant care? His lesson learned, to care for sheep as erring as himself, knowing not that constant straying leads beyond the green pastures and still waters, knowing hunger and thirst and not knowing the way back.

What short of intimate knowledge of the heart and mind of God opened up in His own precious Word, telling of grace and glory, of Him who saves and satisfies, could induce any here to assume such responsibilities as the care for sheep of His pasture? Would any thought from us ever give a hint at such privilege being allotted man to feed His lambs and sheep, beset by adversaries as the roaring lion and grievous wolves; adding these to the fact of their helplessness, stupidity, and other traits belonging to sheep to show their dependence and constant danger?

Are you impressed with the love that shines through all the exhortations given? The glory of the Person in the glory—shall not your hearts bow with deepest adoration, and require no further spur than that He has spoken? And we know what obedience is to Him. Perhaps we know better what obedience is by knowing all the ill wrought from Adam until now through disobedience. We can well afford to act without hesitation when it is for Him. Still there needs be the remembrance of what the apostle Peter witnessed, the sufferings of Christ, and spoke in no uncertain manner of being partaker of the glory to be revealed. This, then, is the ballasting for the man of God, for no service requires such heart and such skill as caring for the flock of God.

You see it is not such special ones as you may think. Peter was prepared of God. Moses was prepared of God. Christ's interests will not permit of indifference, instability, unjudged ways, place-seeking,

selfishness. If He is all, His Word is welcome and your delight. Look to Him; He may appoint you under-shepherd to care for His own loved ones. He has a controversy with shepherds in Ezek. xxxiv. Will you care for His own, for Him, for His Name's sake? The thought of serving Him is joy itself. How constant His care of us. The Lord give grace and add His blessing. W. B.

BETTER STILL.

"IT is a blessed thing," said one, "to be able to take all one's troubles to Christ."

"Yes, that is good," answered another, "but it is better still to go to Christ with all your troubles."

In the first place Christ is known as a Refuge; in the second, He is known as a Dwelling-place. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Ps. xci. 1).

To be abiding in Christ is to be found with Him under all circumstances of life. The cares, difficulties, perplexities and temptations of each day find you in your home, panoplied in the divinely-provided shelter. You are there protected and satisfied—you are kept safe and loyal. The enemy without cannot touch you; your heart within has no desire to wander.

Your soul finds within the circle of Christ's presence all it needs—it overflows with the fatness of God's house; it drinks of the river of God's pleasures. There abiding, the believer goes forth without anxiety. He can say from actual experience, "Thou art my hiding-place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance" (Ps. xxxii. 7).—*Extract.*

GOD does shew us what we are, but He brings us what we want in that state.—J. N. D.

“TRY HIM WI’ A TEXT.”

MANY a time has Satan succeeded in his efforts to overcome frail humanity ; but in no case could he have done so if always and ever his victims had known how to use the “sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” “*It is written,*” said our Saviour in the wilderness ; and “Satan departed from Him.”

“What’s wrang wi’ ye noo? I thocht ye were a’richt,” said one Scotch boy to another, who had recently been converted, but who was still disquieted and desponding. “What’s wrang wi’ ye noo?”

“Man, I’m no richt yet,” replied the other ; “for Satan’s aye tempting me.”

“And what dae ye then?” asked his friend.

“I try,” said he, “to sing a hymn.”

“And does that no’ send him awa’?”

“No, I’m as bad as ever.”

“Weel,” said the other, “when he tempts ye again, *try him wi’ a text* ; he canna staun that.”

This is the great remedy for temptation ; and we can only conquer our adversary the devil by the Word of truth. Friend, “try him wi’ a text.”

FRAGMENTS FROM J. N. D.

EXODUS XXXII. 31-33 ; ISAIAH XLIII. 25.—Grace makes righteousness rest on the obedience of another, and so now it is not the sinner who is blotted out, but his sins, let them be never so vile. If I say I’ve sinned, and perhaps He will blot me out of His book, I am standing on law ; but the moment I understand Christ is my righteousness, the ground is altered altogether, and I find God occupied with me constantly, and I say, “Go with me, for I am a poor stiff-necked, rebellious creature.” What a God we have ! No wonder if God can be with me when I am walking with Him ; but to know that He is occupying Himself with my failings, well may we “joy in God.”

CHRIST has taken the fruit of my doing, and I have got the fruit of His.

THE conscience follows the throne. If God's will be unanswered, the conscience is not perfected ; if His demands or will be answered the conscience is perfected, and we are sanctified.

WE make a mistake about the apostles ; we often think of them as if they were eagles soaring above all. Paul says, "I was with you in weakness, and fear, and much trembling." There were great people at Corinth. Paul was a blessed vessel, but the vessel must be made nothing of. What we have to learn is being nothing, that Christ may be everything. If a person is humble, he does not want to be humbled ; but if he is not humble, he must be. Are we content to be nothing ? Are we content to walk in the secret of God ? The Lord give us to learn practically what it is thus to pass through this world. You can get neither the Christian nor the Church in a state that Christ is not sufficient for. The Lord give us to know our nothingness.

THE rending of the vail marked four things :—(1) That Judaism of the past was over ; (2) that man had consummated his guilt ; (3) that God had disclosed Himself in perfect grace ; (4) and the sins of the believer were swept away by the same stroke for ever. The vail being rent, I see the holiness of God ; but the very stroke that rent the vail, and thus unvailed the holiness of God, has put away the sin that hindered me from standing in the presence of that holiness ; God coming out to me, and I enabled to go with Christ into the rest of His holiness. The more the eye of God scrutinises and searches us, the more it brings out the blessed truth that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. The light shews the whiteness of the robe that has been washed in the blood of the Lamb.

IN the day of judgment God comes to claim what man owes, but in Christ He comes to pay it ; and if one comes to pay all my debts, I'll take care that there is not a single debt I don't tell him of.

LETTERS OF INTEREST.

R——, 1858.

DEAR——,— We must have Christ as the kernel and substance of earthly relationships, unless we are prepared to sink in the slough of worldliness. But if He is there, they become the channel of *divine affections* through His precious grace. I would add this, that the most sweet natural affections, if there is nothing more, break down in walking with Christ. This is true of believers also, in as far as Christ is not the link, or rather the power, of their love to each other.

Our hearty congratulations to——and——. God grant them to be more with Christ in the word and prayer and fellowship and meditation than with one another, for the former is the spring and power and stability of the latter.

J. R.

R——.

DEAR D——,—I write a line now, just to thank you for your letter, as I do God for His grace towards you and in you, for all things are of Him. All you say I enjoyed much. The Psalm (xliv.) is most touching ; looking back in the beginning to the first deliverance, and then in ver. 4 praying for present salvation ; in ver. 5, in faith joying in the assurance of victory ; in verses 6, 7, and 8, prophetically celebrating it. Then comes the touching spreading out of their present sad condition, their cry to God to help for His mercies' sake. As you say, all the while accepting their low estate as from the hand of God, whilst yet upright before Him. Ezekiel xi. 15, 16 gives most beautifully what is before you, if I have rightly appre-

hended it. Those who left the now-judged and rejected sanctuary at God's bidding, and in bowing to His righteous judgments, would find Him to be *Himself* a sanctuary in all places whither they should be driven.

One thing I got clear before me, the other morning—viz., three elements in practical power as Christians:—1st: Alive from the dead—*i.e.*, the position in which I can serve. There is no service, and can be none, until I am free from every other yoke or claim; only in resurrection is there this.

Then 2nd: I must not only be free to serve, but have a motive powerful enough to make it my joy; it is the hearty, willing devotedness of one who lives for another. Well, the person of Christ has this power, and His love (2 Cor. v.), where every other motive is set aside but that one, the love of Christ, holds us.

Then 3rd: I must not only be free to serve, and be drawn to do so only by love, but I need power, and power belongeth to God; and this I get in the presence of God.

J. R.

R——, 19TH DEC., 1861.

DEAR D——,—I am feeling more and more the blessedness of being *God's* in the world, and am seeking the full joy and power of it.

Yielding oneself to God, as His through redemption, brings into great peace: you are then another's, and the will is checked from working. We serve Him by *His will*, and not by ours.

I do seek to remember you all, and pray that you may be wholly sanctified. We are as much Christ's and He ours as if in heaven: why should we not live in the truth and joy of this relationship? Here comes in the priesthood of Christ. He judges with His eye, and He restores when cleansed, and indeed cleanses too.

J. R.

SEPTEMBER, 1889.

THE DISCIPLES AND THE EVIL
GENERATION.—*Luke xi.*

THE disciples are here beholding the Lord in prayer; and when He had ceased, in response to their entreaty He taught them to say, "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done, as in heaven so on earth. Give us day by day our daily bread," &c.; thus leading them on to the ground of faith and dependence. Further He teaches confidence in prayer, even to importunity, and shews them that their midnight application for bread would be as effectual as their daily prayer, and would be answered from within by a supply of as many loaves as were needed. Another thing, as associated with Jesus in rejection, was wanting, viz., the Holy Spirit which they were to receive from their heavenly Father, and for this He bids them ask. This same Spirit would also be the link, as dwelling with them and in them, of present communion with the Father and the Son, when Jesus should have actually taken His place above, and reached His higher and heavenly glories by the Mount of Olives, and the pathway of His own sufferings. In the interim, and during this little while, they would have the Holy Spirit to abide with them, and their heavenly Father would give it to them that asked. And now Jesus has in this gracious way connected them morally and spiritually with Himself, in every relation and place which He personally has accepted in heaven and upon the earth. Yet necessarily in testimony, for He has still His decease to accomplish at Jerusalem, on which these changes hang. The enmity of the world has also to reach its own height, and only waits to accuse Him before finally it rejects and crucifies Him.

"And He was casting out a devil, and it was dumb;" and "some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils. And others, tempting Him, sought of Him a sign from heaven."

J

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All the powers and things above and beneath are coming out into crisis and collision. The kingdom of God brought nigh to them, and they not in it; the kingdom of Satan exposed, and they cling to their father, the devil. Nor is it merely kingdom against kingdom, but the strong man and his house against the stronger than he, who has entered into it to spoil his goods and take away his armour wherein he trusted. Satan has come up again as the roaring lion because he realises "the finger of God" upon his palace in casting out this devil from the dumb man; for after all it is but "the finger," before the time when the strong hand and the great chain do their work in binding the armed man and shutting him up in the bottomless pit for a thousand years. In the meanwhile, the house, and the palace, and the kingdom are in peace, because Christ is rejected; and all the energies and activities of modern civilisation occupied in sweeping one and the other, and in garnishing each according to their respective pretensions, and as suited to the mind and will of the occupant.

How little do the servants think of their employments, whether as sweepers or garnishers, in these busy days of Christendom, when philanthropy and social science, with their handmaidens, have contracted for the work! For what can any be doing who refuse to be associated with Christ in His own rejection by the world, or in His present acceptance in heaven by the Father? What are any about, who refuse to take away the goods, and spoil the house, or expose the man and the armour in which he trusts? How telling are the words of Jesus as to the kingdom, and its palace, and the house—and as touching Christ and the devil, the finger of God and Beelzebub: "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth." In love, He seeks thus to separate any who have the opened eye to see Himself in the grace of His rejection, and come out to be wholly *for Him*; and any who have the anointed ear, to

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gather around Him, as the only centre of God on earth or in heaven, and test their activities by those little words, "with Me."

How easily would the nature of the work and the character of the workers be determined were those self-same words, "with Me," accepted as the test by which to judge of scattering or gathering. Who is a scatterer, and who is a gatherer with Christ? are solemn questions for each. What indeed is the Apocalypse but the record of a palace and kingdom thus swept, and garnished, and made ready, so that Satan and the Antichrist enter in and dwell there? Upon what do the thunders, and the seven trumpets, and the seven vials spend themselves, but upon the seat of the beast, after whom all the world shall wonder, and say, "Who is like unto the Beast?" The destruction of the great system of Babylon is pronounced by God, and they cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city? that was clothed in fine linen and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls; for in one hour so great riches is come to naught. The last end is worse than the first.

"And it came to pass as He spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice and said unto Him, Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps which Thou hast sucked." She would justify Him as prophet, as wisdom had before been justified of her children; but how can she do this upon the ground she takes of the mother, and the babe, and the swaddling clothes? He has long since passed it, and the time is come "that He should be received up," therefore He says, "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." Upon this footing He had likewise put the mother who bare Him, and His brethren and sisters after the flesh. In spirit Jesus is upon the other side of the cross, and none upon earth can justify Him

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now ; only God can do this, and He waits to justify His Son by resurrection from the dead. As we have observed in this chapter xi., the house, and the palace, and the kingdom are judicially given over to the armed man, who enters in and dwells there, with seven spirits more wicked than himself. Jesus is linked by them with the prince of devils, but He would not resist them. Their own sons should be their judges.

“And when the people were gathered thick together, He began to say, this is an evil generation.” He on His part refuses this generation for their unbelief and rebellion, as the earlier generation of the same flesh and blood had been cut off in the wilderness by Jehovah, under the leadership of Moses. They have turned the sojourn and presence of the Messiah amongst them into a provocation, as did their fathers, when Jehovah went before them in the desert, by day in the pillar of cloud and by night in the pillar of fire. It is “an evil generation” still, demanding signs from heaven to accredit Jesus Emmanuel, which is, being interpreted, “the Saviour, God with us.” They compel Jesus to change His voice, and, like Joseph with his brethren, to speak roughly to them. Then *began* Jesus to say, “There shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet ; for as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of Man be to this generation.” There He personally was in their midst, having done nothing but signs and wonders all the days of His ministry ; what other sign could they rightly want to accredit such an One ? The Ninevites repented at the preaching of Jonas, and they had not, but went about to kill Him. Moreover, a greater than Jonas was here ; therefore, the Ninevites shall rise up in the judgment against this generation and condemn them. The queen of the south shall do the same, for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon ; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here. In either case, it is the greatness of

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His person and of His personal testimony as a prophet, as well as the glory of His person and of His wisdom, that they refused to own and welcome.

The decree of the king of Nineveh and his nobles must condemn them, for it commanded that "neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing; let them not feed, nor drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not?" A greater than Jonas was in *their* midst. In righteous judgment, the sackcloth, and the fastings, and the cry to God of the Ninevites must condemn them. The acknowledgment by the queen of Sheba of Solomon's wisdom and greatness, when she said, "Blessed be the Lord thy God which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel; because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made He thee king to do judgment and justice," must rise up to condemn them; for the Messiah, "a greater than Solomon," was passing before their eyes, and transfigured on the mount, but they saw no beauty in Him that they should desire Him! Before, however, He accepts the final ministry of the prophet, and utters "the woes" against the people and their rulers, He shines out as the light, under the similitude of the candle, if so be any may receive the light while it shines, and escape out of the present darkness and the coming judgment, which stands at the very door. He puts His hands upon their eyes, and bids them look inward for the moral reasons of this double blindness towards Himself and their Jehovah who had sent Him, and of which He made them their own judges, by the queen of the south and the sign of the prophet Jonas. How graciously He spreads the ointment, that they may see and believe. "The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single thy whole body also is full of light; but

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when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness." Can they see the light on the candlestick *now*, and be corrected by Him as Jonas, and attracted to Him as the queen of Sheba was? If there be still any lingerings and unreadiness for these exercises, He drops a word of exhortation, saying, "Take heed, therefore, that the light that is in thee be not darkness." Then follow His encouraging assurances to the opened eye that has got Him in full view as its object, "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." How blessed to let Him have His way of love with us, whether it be to anoint the eye that may not be bright and single enough for His intimacy; or to come to us with the basin and towel, to wash the feet that may not be clean enough for His company and a closer walk with Him.

"And, as He spake, a certain Pharisee besought Him to dine with him: and He went in and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that He had not first washed before dinner." But the light in the candlestick can only convict; in a Pharisee's house and ways there is no single thing that can accept it or reflect it; and so it quickly proved, for "the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness." The body, in this house, is not found to be a fit vessel for the light, "having no part dark," but on the contrary, the light detects the body to be inwardly full of ravening, and refuses to occupy the vessel. Nor is the world, or the men who compose it, greatly changed as to this wonderful doctrine of the greater than Solomon, but to this day the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom, and have not found what they want, because they know not Jesus, in whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" and if this be true as to wisdom, what can be said of men morally

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touching the sign of Jonas or the Son of Man *now*; and again, what of the lighted candle, or acceptance of the whole body, as a fit vessel "having no part dark;" or what of its refusal on account of inward "ravening"? How little are people acquainted with the real state and condition of man towards God, or of man to his neighbour, or of the palace and the kingdom, notwithstanding it is outwardly so swept and garnished; how little use do they make of the candle and its light in its searchings "within," or for its approvals "without" in a gathering "with Me;" and therefore how unprepared to own the word, "The last state of that man is worse than the first!" His own ministry passes away from conviction to condemnation at this point, and expresses itself in woes. "Woe unto you Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God;" and what are tithings, and "uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets" to the eye of Jesus, but "as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them." They have "passed over judgment and the love of God," which express what He is in the world which He formed, and into which Christ came that He might declare them, and finally establish them in the earth, and in the heavens too. What must all else be where these are passed over, but what Jesus said to them? "Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto Him, Master, thus saying Thou reproachest us also. And He said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne," &c. "Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and . . . bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers." "The Wisdom of God" declares, "I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation." "Woe unto you law-

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yers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." Three or four especial sins lie at their door, and upon which these "woes" rest, which we may gather together in conclusion of this part of our Lord's ministry before it changes its character still further, viz.:—They had passed over "judgment and the love of God," which comprise both His grace and His glory on behalf of men, whilst they were as graves, which appear not, over which men stumble and fall; they had also laden men with heavy burdens, and would not help with one of their fingers. Moreover, God had sent prophets to testify to men of what they had "passed over," but they honoured them in their death, and not in their life, by building their sepulchres, so that their blood, and the blood of the apostles (which the Wisdom of God said would yet be sent) should be required of this generation. Lastly, they had taken away the key of knowledge. "And as He said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge Him vehemently, and to provoke Him to speak of many things: laying wait for Him, and seeking to catch something out of His mouth, that they might accuse Him."

In faithfulness as "the Wisdom of God" He has now passed through the kingdom of Satan, and exposed the palace of the strong man; He has gone over, historically, the length and breadth of his dominions; and as the true prophet, come down to the altar and the temple to convict them of the blood of Zacharias, He quits the range of the devil's seat, and passing out at the door, drops a warning voice as to "the key of knowledge" that opens into other regions. Jesus and that generation part company after this testimony, leaving all in the hands of the righteous Judge, to be weighed and determined at the rising up of the queen of the south and the men of Nineveh!

J. E. B.

THE LORD'S TEACHING: ITS ORDER
ILLUSTRATED.—*Matt.* xxiv. 45—xxv. 30.

“THERE shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down” (*Matt.* xxiv. 2). In these few words the destruction of Herod's temple was foretold by the Lord. Now it was God's house; the Lord had owned it twice as that. On the first occasion He called it His Father's house (*John* ii. 16); on the second He called it His own (*Matt.* xxi. 13), applying the words of the prophet Isaiah, who had written of it as Jehovah's house, the God of Israel (*Isa.* lvi. 7). He, then, who predicted the complete overthrow of that structure to which the disciples had called His attention, claimed to be, and is, Jehovah, and the Father's Son as well. What power could prevail against God? Who could overthrow His house? None could do that without divine permission. Strange, then, it may have sounded, that God's house, about which the Lord had specially cared, should be levelled with the dust. But though God's house, He had not dwelt in it since the captivity of the nation.

In proof of this we must turn to Ezekiel, who witnessed in vision God leaving His house, and also God returning to it. He left it (*Ezek.* viii. 4; ix. 3; x. 18, 19; xi. 22, 23) in the days of that prophet; the Shechinah, or cloud of glory, at last going up from the midst of the city to the mountain which is on the east side of the city, *i.e.*, the Mount of Olives. He will return by the way He left, never again to leave it (*xliii.* 2, 4, 7). But that day is still future. Meanwhile, He who will then return entered Jerusalem by the same route, and entered the temple too, when the King of Israel rode into the city on an ass's colt, and received for a brief moment the homage of the crowd. For a moment, we have to say, for the next morning He hungered, no one of that crowd having thought of ministering to His need. Rejected then by the

people, though coming by and by in power to reign, He left the temple for the last time, as Matthew tells us, having told the Jews, after weeping over the city, that their house was left unto them desolate; for never had the cloud of glory illumined the innermost sanctuary of the then existing structure.

Foretelling as He did the desolation of that house, the disciples—really it would seem but four of them—(Mark xiii. 3) asked Him privately, When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the age? These questions the Lord took up, and in Matt. xxiv. 4-44 answered, and in answering them carried on His questioners to a time still future. But He did not leave them there. He gave more than they asked, but not more than was needed. More than they asked, inasmuch as He sketched out the character of things on earth from His departure till His return, not as regards the world, but as regards those who would bear His name, disciples professing to own Him whilst still rejected by the world.

Three parables describe this, severally related in chap. xxiv. 45-51; xxv. 1-13, and 14-30. The first speaks of ministry in the word; the second of watching for the Master's coming; and the third of working for Him in His absence.

Now ministry in the word, such as the first parable speaks of, is a marked feature of Christianity. God gave the law to Israel by Moses. He raised up prophets to recall the people to its observance when they had disobeyed it, and by them often foretold the future. Christian ministry, however, has for its object the *perfecting* of the saints (Eph. iv. 12). By it the Body of Christ is edified, and each saint is instructed as he is able to receive what is ministered. Such a service would then be carried on amongst God's people in the Master's absence. There would be faithful and wise servants, made by their Lord rulers over His household, to give them meat in due season.

Had the people under law always kept it, the prophetic ministry raised up to recall them to its observance would never have been needed. But *Christian ministry was called for in the palmiest days of the Church's history*, for the household then, as now, required meat in due season. The institution of the school of the prophets was subsequent to and consequent on the failure of the people, and when the original channel of communication between God and them—priesthood—had become, as it were, choked up by the evil courses of the priests. Hence with Samuel it is, and not before, that the school of the prophets had its rise. But had Christians fully and continuously responded to the Lord's desire for them (John xvii. 21), Christian ministry would still have been needful. The household wants feeding at all times.

Of this the Lord speaks in the first parable, and of the responsibilities of those to whom such a service is entrusted. Of course, such responsibility concerns those appointed to feed, and not the household in general, though failure on the part of the former must affect the well-being of the latter. That there would be failure on the part of some we here learn, and the reason for it. The evil servant would say *in his heart*, "My Lord delayeth" (xxiv. 48). That which witnesses to God's long-suffering (2 Pet. iii. 15) he would make an excuse for giving the reins to his evil desires. He would smite those who were faithful, *i.e.*, his fellow servants, and eat and drink with the drunken. Judgment, however, would overtake him, for his Lord would return. At an hour by him unsuspected the Master would appear, final dealing with him would take place, his portion would be with the hypocrites, and that in endless, deepest woe. "There," adds the Lord, "shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. xxiv. 51). He who could declare the future on earth could also, and has done it, unfold secrets of hell. Weeping and gnashing of teeth is a descrip-

tion only applied to those who have abused grace in one way or another (Matt. viii. 12 ; xiii. 42, 50 ; xxii. 13 ; xxiv. 51 ; xxv. 30 ; Luke xiii. 28). How terrible must their condition be in the future ! He who would save men from it has declared it. Of the faithful servant He has also spoken. He will set him over all that He hath.

This life, then, is not the duration of man's existence ; nor does service for the faithful terminate at death or the rapture. They will enter into God's rest, indeed ; the rest that remaineth is theirs (Heb. iv. 1-11), but "His servants," we read elsewhere, "shall serve Him" (Rev. xxii. 3) ; and those who faithfully use their opportunity now will rule, to quote the language of another parable, over cities in the future (Luke xix. 17-19). The faithful and unfaithful servants, on earth in the closest outward association, *professing* here the same faith, bearing before men the same name, will then be for ever separated, the former still serving his Master, the latter for ever bewailing his folly !

To feed the household was their professed duty. It is by ministry of the word that souls are instructed. The right effect of that will be, that *watching* and *working* will characterise saints. To these characteristics of Christian life are we next turned in the two parables which follow. There is an order then, a method in the Lord's way of instructing. He begins with those who should minister for the perfecting of the saints, and then goes on to touch on that which should *really* characterise every Christian, and will in measure all who are truly such.

He begins with the watching. The hope of Israel is to see Messiah on earth, and to be blessed under His rule. Hence, till He returns to reign, that cannot be. He must come to them. The hope of Christians is to be with Him, where He is. Hence to heaven, not to earth, are they turned, and so can be viewed like virgins who *go forth* to meet the Bridegroom.

This is a feature of Christianity. All professing Christians nominally profess this; heaven, not earth, they professedly own is to be their home. But alas, when the solemn moment shall come, some will be found who, professedly embracing this hope, never really made it their own. Looking on to that hour, the kingdom of heaven, we are told, will be like to ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the Bridegroom. A portion only of the whole company of Christians will be on earth at that time. That is plain, for thousands, aye, ten thousands of them have already left earth. Hence we take it that *ten*, not *twelve* (a perfect number), is that which is here selected.

It is a parable of the kingdom of the heavens, so includes all professors, and describes^q that which ought to be true of all, but will only be so of some. All go forth, all seem outwardly alike, virgins with lamps; all make the same profession—going forth to meet the Bridegroom. He tarried, so they slept; but awoke at midnight, by the cry, “Behold the Bridegroom!”* they all arose, and trimmed their lamps. Then the foolish are manifested. The wise had taken oil in their vessels with their lamps; the foolish had taken none. They had never owned their need of a supply. In a word, they had been all the time strangers to divine grace. The opportunity for rectifying such a mistake was then lost, and lost for ever. The mistake was a fatal one. The need was discovered when too late. They proclaimed their own folly. Their profession was worthless, unreal, and the Bridegroom when He comes disowns them.

To watch for the Lord's coming should characterise His people (Luke xii. 37). The Thessalonian saints were converted to wait for God's Son from heaven (1 Thess. i. 10). The saints at Philadelphia kept the word of Christ's patience (Rev. iii. 10), and what that

* “Cometh” should be omitted. The omission gives force to the cry.

is 2 Thess. iii. 5 teaches us. May this conduct be true of both writer and reader.

But does watching imply idleness? The next parable, that of the talents, shews what the Lord expects from His servants during His absence. He expects them all to work. Hence He spake a parable of "a man travelling into a far (or, another) country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents; to another two; to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey" (Matt. xxv. 14, 15). *Ability* should be remarked. He gave to each according to his ability. He only looked that each should do what he could, and gauging, and that rightly, the ability of each, he gave to one five talents, to another two, and to another one. The one who got five justified the master's judgment of his ability: he gained other five. The one who had two gained other two. He who had but one turned it to no account; he just hid it in the earth. On the master's return, the servants were summoned, and each had to render an account. Not one of them complained that he had been over-rated, or unjustly burdened. And the man condemned was condemned as *slothful*, and could raise no plea of injustice on the part of his master.

So will it be when the Lord comes. There will be evil servants to be cut asunder, foolish virgins to be shut out, and slothful servants, who, deprived of what they had, will be cast into the outer darkness; whilst the faithful and the wise will rule, will enter into the joy of their Lord, and go in with Him to the marriage. And surely, though He has told us how some—alas, how many!—will turn out Christians only in name, His very warnings indicate His desire that all professing Christians should be Christians in truth.

Were that the case, ministering to the household would be faithfully carried out by all those professing to do it. Watching for the Master's return would

characterise all His own, and activity in service, trading with talents, would be displayed by each and all. In the parables, in each case, those who fail in what they profess to be or do are self-condemned, and are dumb when the Master speaks. Reading them, may we not be reminded of, and admit the force of, the apostle's injunction, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. xv. 58). And, if hearkening to that, we may observe and admire the moral order in which the instruction is conveyed to us. Ministry in the word is first mentioned, and then the proper effects from it, which those ministered to should manifest, are set forth in the parables which follow.

And further, since all truths of divine revelation are parts of one great whole, it is not enough, in order to be sufficiently instructed, to take them up just abstractedly. We need to mark their relation one to another. Was it not in this that those Thessalonian saints failed, who, it would seem, embracing the hope of the Lord's return, became idle and busy-bodies. Apostolic teaching (2 Thess. iii. 6) they had not considered and conformed to. Whether they were acquainted with the parables of the virgins and of the talents it is not for us to say; but learning in what they failed, it is for us to remember the teaching of the Master, and to mark for profit the order in which He set it forth. Invert it, and we should lose; keep to it, and the connection of the teaching becomes both manifest and instructive. Put the parable of the virgins after that of the talents, then the need for activity in service whilst waiting would be in danger of being ignored. Put the first of the three after either or both of the last, and the lesson of the right effect of ministry which they illustrate would be lost to the reader. There is design in the order in which they are set forth.

C. E. S.

TILL HE COME.

TILL He come, whose right it is
 O'er a ransomed world to reign ;
 Till He come, and all be His
 That He gave Himself to gain ;
 Till He come, and pain and woe
 Flee like night before the day ;
 Till He come, and all things go
 That unworthy are to stay ;
 Till He come, whose hand alone
 Can arrest the flow of tears ;
 Till He come, whose tenderest tone
 Shall dispel our latest fears ;
 Watchful let us work and pray,
 Hastening the joyful day.

Till He come—so runs the line—
 Marking off the term of ill,
 Darkest hour of powers malign,
 Never more an hour to fill ;
 Till He come, the might of hell
 Still against the saints may rage ;
 And, beneath the tempter's spell,
 Men in strifes and sins engage ;
 Till He come, wrong may prevail,
 And the right be done in vain ;
 Truth's confession still entail
 Toil, and obloquy, and pain ;
 But our hope can brook delay,
 Waiting such a glorious day.

“Till He come !” 'tis sorrow's sigh,
 Upward borne by hope in tears.
 “Till He come !” 'tis faith's reply
 To a thousand doubts and fears.
 “Till He come !” it is the groan
 Of creation in her pangs.
 “Till He come !” on this alone
 Earth her expectation hangs.

SIMPLICITY OF FAITH.

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“Till He come!” the words return
Echoing from the world again,
Where the weary nations yearn
For a righteous King to reign.
For Thy glory, Lord, we pray,
“Haste, oh! haste the joyful day.”

J. F. B. T.

SIMPLICITY OF FAITH.

THE Saviour said that one must become as a little child in order to enter the kingdom of heaven; and when we witness the clear and unwavering faith of childhood, believing God's promises, notwithstanding great difficulties which seem to be in the way of their fulfilment, older persons may receive admonition and instruction from their example. Can anything be more beautiful than the following record of childhood's faith?

“What do you do without a mother to tell all your troubles to?” asked a child who had a mother of one who had not—her mother was dead. “Mother told me who to go to before she died,” answered the little orphan. “I go to the Lord Jesus; He was mother's friend and He is mine.”

“Jesus Christ is up in the sky; He is away off, and has a great many things to attend to in heaven. It is not likely He can stop to mind you.”

“I do not know anything about that,” said the orphan; “all I know is, *He says He will, and that's enough for me.*”

God never sends a sorrow
Without the healing balm;
And bids us fight no battles
But for the victor's palm.
Yet we, by earth's mist blinded,
Knew not this holy will,
Till o'er the troubled waters
His voice said, “Peace, be still!”

H I M S E L F.

THERE are no words which can adequately express the fulness contained in that word "Himself" in connection with the Lord Jesus. No matter what blessings we are brought into, yet the thought of Himself is far more exceedingly precious to the heart of one who desires to grow in the knowledge of Him. Whether we think, beloved, of Him taking the servant's form, or exalted far above all heavens, He is the same person; the same grace must flow from Him.

Witness the presentation of Himself to the woman of Sychar. The Sustainer of all things asks for a drink of cold water, so that she may have some claim upon Him; but how blind, ah! how blind she is. Her heart is set on the waterpot, a poor thing of the world. Alas! an occurrence which happens too frequently with us, beloved. He says, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and *who it is that saith unto thee*, Give Me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." "I," He says, "am meek and lowly in heart." Beloved, if we want rest we shall only find it in Himself.

Witness, again, those poor disciples of His on the Sea of Galilee in the storm, how terrified they are, and then He Himself comes and presents Himself with "*It is I*, be not afraid." They are happy now He has come, and they *willingly* receive Him into the ship. I feel sure as we think of Him our hearts adoring bend.

Look how He gets down to His disciples' feet. We have only to think of who He was, and then see the position He had taken—a position, beloved, which He will never give up. "*If I wash thee not*, thou hast no part with Me." We may trace the love, too, which led Him to offer Himself, the willing Victim. And is it not a joy to Him to reveal Himself now?

Picture the two wandering ones journeying to Emmaus. "Did not our heart burn within us?" What a glad message He sends to His disciples on that resurrection morn: "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God;" and ere the day had passed away He stands in their midst. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.

But ere He reaches the cross, we see His desires for His own expressed; that which He has earned He will have them share with Him, culminating in that wondrous desire—and oh! beloved, do we let it hold and govern us?—"Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which Thou has given Me; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world."

Presently we shall indeed be with Him; but, beloved, let this mind which was in Him be in us. Is it too much He asks of us, that we should be entirely His? Do we let Him have undivided sway in these hearts of ours? Blessed be Thy precious Name, Lord Jesus! Thou dost still, in Thy rich grace, condescend to take Thy place in the midst of the twos and threes gathered to Thy Name.

Can we settle down in this hostile scene where He is not? We need to challenge our hearts as to this. Only as we behold the glory of the Lord can we expect to be changed into the same image, from glory to glory. Are we glad to think of the moment, the twinkling of an eye, when we shall be caught up? Does the thought of it unsettle us at all; or when Jesus comes, will He find us watching? How soon—and, beloved, we know not how soon—we shall see Him face to face; the moment, too, when we shall view the chosen few, no more by selfish strife divided, but drink in peace the living grace which gave them hearts united. Till then may we keep in our hearts our blessed Lord's desire: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory." J. H. I.

EXTRACTS FROM J. N. D.

EXODUS xxiv. i-9.—Moses, on the ground of the revelation of the grace of God to himself, gives as a reason for God going with them the very reason which God had given why He could not go up, and so, as soon as I have learned what grace is, the very evil I find in myself is the very reason for pleading with God to be with me, because I am stiffnecked. - Have you got over your stiffneckedness? No, you have not. Will you ever get over it? No. Well, then, you must have God with you. Have your hearts entered into this, to be calling on God because you are so bad? If not, you don't know grace.

ALL the perfect savour of the sacrifice of Christ is all that is now between me and God.

IT is part of God's righteousness to put me in the glory. How so? Because Christ earned me in giving Himself for me.

THE nearer you get to the greatest man on earth the more you find out his foibles, and the nearer you get to God the more you find out His greatness.

THE world which was made by Him knew Him not, but He carried a secret, the secret of the grace of God to sinners, deeper than all the thoughts of man. A stranger indeed He was upon earth, but the revelation of this secret to poor sinners had power to make them strangers with Him. "The world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not."

IT is one of the greatest comforts to me, that I shall not need a conscience in heaven. There is no evil there; I can let my heart go out. Here I dare not; I must watch and pray. I shall not need that in heaven. There my heart can go out and roam as it will; there is nothing but a paradise to roam over, a paradise where sin can never come, and my heart will never go wrong.

“JOY UNSPEAKABLE AND FULL OF GLORY.” 273

FAITH is not trusting one's own heart, but God's word.

I COME to Christ as a Saviour, and I find the sins I should have been judged for have all been judged already ; when I come before Christ on the judgment-seat, I find there as the Judge the very One who has put them all away.

IF I have got the best robe on me in the house I shall not be thinking whether I am going fast or' slow to get to the house. The best robe formed no part of the younger son's share, it belonged to the treasures of the house which he had no right to by inheritance. The prodigal had the father on his neck while in his rags, and he had the best robe with which to enter the house. It was the joy of the father to have him back there. Such is the God revealed in Christ.

“JOY UNSPEAKABLE AND FULL OF
GLORY.”

SING, my soul ; thou should'st be singing,
Faith should set her joy-bells ringing ;
Thou art passing to thy rest,
To thy Saviour's loving breast ;
He will meet thee ; He will greet thee,
With Himself shalt thou be blest !

Sing, my soul, the golden morrow,
Faith may from the future borrow ;
Christ will bring a cloudless morn,
Everlasting day will dawn ;
Alleluia ! Alleluia !
Sound aloud what He hath done !

Sing, my soul, th' eternal story,
Joy untold and full of glory ;
In thy living Lord rejoice,
Raise thy song with cheerful voice :
“Thou art mine, Lord ; I am thine, Lord ;”
Yea, I will, I will rejoice !

THE BIBLE IN CANADA AND IN CHINA.

ONE day I was sitting in my room, and on turning round I saw about ten or a dozen Indians. An Indian never knocks at the door. If he does not find the door of a dwelling open he will put his fingers on the latch and go in without knocking, and if you don't get up early in the morning you may find him coming into your bed-room after you. On that occasion I rose up and shook hands with them, and said, "What cheer? what cheer? what do you want with me? I don't recognise you; what place do you come from?" They replied, "Very far away." I said, "How far?" and they replied, "Thirteen nights!" The Indians estimate distance by the number of nights that they sleep away from their homes. These fellows had travelled all day and slept all night, and they had, it appeared, been travelling fourteen days. I said, "It must be something of great importance that has brought you so far?" They replied, "We have come for you." I looked at them, and they were such stalwart fellows that I thought within myself, "If you have come for me I had better surrender," for I should certainly have had no chance in resisting them! I said, "Why have you come for me?" They said, "We have got a great book, but we don't know what it means; can you read the book?" I replied, "Oh, yes;" and I took down my Indian Bible. I was incredulous when they told me where they lived, for I felt pretty certain that no missionary had ever gone to that land. I opened my Indian Bible, and I read, "Jesus said I am the way, the truth, and the life," and I found that they had heard of this before. I was amazed, and said, "Why, you have had a missionary down in your land." They replied, "You are the first missionary that we ever saw." I said, "You have had a teacher." They replied, "We never saw a teacher—what is a teacher?" I got interested at hearing these people reading the Word of God and at their telling me their story, and I asked, "How did this happen?"

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They said, "A hunter came down to our country to hunt for marten, beaver, and other animals, and we used to go to him and talk with him. We found that he had with him a great book, and as we lay round the camp we listened to what he read, and the words were very sweet. We went to him one day when he was not hunting, and he read to us from the book." On hearing this I said, "Would you like to read the Bible for yourselves?" and they replied "Yes." I then got some burnt bark, and taught them to read "ma," "ne," "too"—God—and before they left us they could read pretty well.

Connected with the factories of the Hudson's Bay Company there were Indians who showed the strongest wish to read the Bible. Some copies they had, but the book was to them like a musical instrument that they could touch here and there, but they could not combine the parts so as to produce music. "Will you come," they said, "and explain it to us?" I could not go to them until the next winter, but I then harnessed my dogs and with my faithful Indians I went far into the interior. At last I found myself among people who had never seen a missionary or a teacher. But in the wonderful way which I have described, they acquired the art of reading the Word of God. It was the story of the Ethiopian eunuch over again. I had to travel about 450 miles to reach my destination, the temperature being from 40 to 50 below zero.

I contend that what I have mentioned appears to be one of the strongest arguments that could be used in favour of scattering the Word of God far and wide. The fact that these people have the Bible in their own language and are able to study it for themselves is one of the grandest barriers that could be erected against the prevalence of evil and sin amongst them.
—*Rev. E. R. Young, Missionary in Canada.*

WHILE the service was going on, a man came in, and he stayed while the preacher was preaching. Look at

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this man for a moment. He was a most dissipated man—a man upon whose face vice was set, a man whom no influence in all China could make better. He was an opium smoker, and had been for years. His lands had dwindled away ; his wife was in poverty and sorrow ; he was a man in the lowest ebb of life even in China. He came in, and he stood listening to what the preacher said. You can tell by his long dress and an indescribable something about him that he is a scholar ; and you might say to him, “ Now, why don't you be a man, and give up your opium ? Your wife is starving ; your land is gone ; your house is in ruins. Why not be a man ? ” “ I dare not,” he replies ; “ I am afraid if I attempt to give up my opium I shall die. I cannot.” “ But you are a Chinese scholar. You have read the books of Confucius.” “ Yes ; I know them from one end to the other. I can repeat them.” “ Do you never, when you read these Confucian books, say, ‘ I must be a man, and live a different life ? ’ ” “ No, never,” he says ; “ I dare not give up my opium. I am afraid I should die.” This is the impression, unfortunately, of every opium-smoker in China—that in the course of giving up the opium he will die, and he says, “ I dare not.” But after the service a conversation was begun, and the scholar was told of the worship of the God that Confucius mentions—the God of China before Confucius lived. “ Perhaps you would like to look at one of our books.” The Old Testament was put into his hands, and he was told to read the first chapter of Genesis. And he read it. He said, “ I am amazed at the beauty of that first chapter, at the majesty, at the wonderful power of that chapter.” When he had read that first chapter, unconsciously to himself he had taken the first step to God. He came again and again, and heard the Gospel and read the Bible, and the result was that one Sunday he said, “ I am going to be a Christian. I am going to give up all my Confucianism, but the first thing I am going to do is to give up my opium.” The preacher said to him,

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“ Well, we are very glad of that, but you will have to be very careful. Do it gradually. It is a very serious business.” He said, “ I know it is, but I am not going to do it gradually. It is wrong, and from this moment I will never touch opium as long as I live !” He was employed as a tutor by a rich merchant who was a great opium-smoker himself. By-and-by his employer said to him, “ Come away to your opium.” “ No,” he replied, “ I am never going to smoke it again.” The rich merchant smiled sarcastically, and said : “ Before midnight comes you will want it. When you do, here it is on the tray. Here is the opium, and here are the lights.” Midnight came and found this man in intense agony. Every bone in his body ached, and forced an indescribable wail from him. Sleep fled from his eyes as though they were never intended for sleep. As night went on the pain increased, and he felt as though the outsideworld were in terrible conflict with the influences that made up his own individuality. In the next room was the opium all ready ; but he never took a step towards it. He and the opium were separated for ever. There was a new force in his life. No ; he would not move, although it seemed that the night would never end, and that the Chinese sun was shining in his eyes all through. No ; he would suffer, but he would not take the opium as long as he lived. That was the same power that evoked the martyr’s spirit. This Chinese scholar was being brought among those whose names have stamped themselves upon history. For years this man has been one of our chief workers and one of our best pastors, a man whom the Chinese can look up to. I often hear him pray. His prayers are mainly “ Christ and Him crucified. Christ my Saviour.” And as I listen I am not listening to any theological statement, for I know that the man is going back upon his old life of sin and of opium, and that it is passing vividly before his mind as he says, “ Christ has saved me.”

You ask that man if the Bible is inspired. Ask

him! He will look with pity on you. You say, "But what evidence have you?" He says, "My life. Everything is changed!" Dear friends, hold on to the Bible—don't give it up for all the noise and din of criticism. I have gone to places where there was only heathenism, dark, intensely dark, and to-day there is light there. I have baptised hundreds of converts, and it is all by the power of the Gospel.—*Rev. J. Macgowan, Missionary in China.*

TEMPLE WORSHIP; OR, WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH—WHICH?

It was the Lord's-day morning; and as I lay on my sick bed, I fell into the following train of thought:—

Loud and noisily ring the bells of Profession; careless multitudes respond to the summons. They throng those stately temples which rear their steeples to the skies, and whose proud turrets are so pleasing to sight and sense. Inside! surely the Jewish tabernacle or temple has been the pattern of what I see before me! The priests—the robes—the altar—all enclosed and fenced off from the people.

The priests perform certain rites and ceremonies, of which the people are spectators. But hark! the high swelling music now breaks upon the ear. The people are listeners, for they take no part in that either.

Everything to please the eye—the stained glass windows, the lofty pillars, the fretted roof. Is the Name of Christ professed here; or is the law of Moses their guide?

But listen! I hear something about a "wicked man turning away from his wickedness." Then I see the priest rise and pronounce absolution.

Is this the worship of *saints*? Is it all, then, an error that believers *have* forgiveness of sins? Is it, after all, a mistake to suppose that *all* our sins were put away on the cross? Or do we need a new forgiveness every week on some other ground? I had thought that Christ was our only priest and intercessor with God. Do I now learn that I ought to return to the types and shadows of the Law? That a human mediator is now required?

But listen further! They call themselves "miserable sinners," and are sending up cries for mercy.

Where am I? What do I hear? I am more and more perplexed. They beseech God to "deliver them in the day of judgment," and from "everlasting damnation." I have read in my Bible that believers "*have* everlasting *life*," not "everlasting *damnation*." I have read in the same place that they shall not come into judgment, and moreover that they "*have* passed from death unto life." I am a believer. Then how can I join in this worship? I think I should make God a liar if I did. I think every worshipper under this roof does, though they may not know it. O believer, believer (if there is one here), dost thou know what thou art about? Has thy God done so much for thee, and is this thy repayment? "He has *had* mercy on thee," and yet thou criest for it as if thou wert on the brink of hell instead of being "seated in Christ in heavenly places."

Thou sayest thou wilt arise and go unto the Father, and forgettest the hour He fell on thy neck, and kissed away thy fears, and replaced thy rags with the "best robe." Art thou not still in the Father's house, the very place He brought thee into—then why forget this and place thyself outside? Why this outcry for deliverance from judgment and everlasting damnation? Turn to the fifth chapter of John, in your Bible, and let the words of the 24th verse for ever silence such utterances as these.

But the priest is speaking again. Can I hear aright? "*Thou shalt*," "*Thou shalt not*." It is the "ministration of death written and engraven in tables of stone." Alas! alas! they are "fallen from grace." Terrible, terrible, and fatal error. Every syllable of that Law pronounces death to the hearer. God cannot accept such worship, because they have stepped down from their position as saints assigned by grace; and brought themselves in once more as sinners. Christ has become of none effect to them. They have withdrawn themselves from under the cross only to behold the lightnings and hear the thunderings of Sinai!

But now my thoughts took a different turn. In silence is gathered a little band to worship God. What denomination? None. No! they bear neither the name of a country, nor that of an individual, nor of a doctrine. This is strange, is it not? Yes, it is strange, because it is

according to the simple Word of God, which sternly rebuked those who would range themselves under the names of even Paul, or Cephas, or Apollos, or even Christ, as a party name. The members of this little flock are simply *Christians gathered together unto the Name of the Lord Jesus*. For the Good Shepherd hath said, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name there am I in the midst." These "two or three," then, insignificant as they may appear in the eyes of Christendom, are gathered in the recognition of the "Church of God," which is His body. Sight and sense may search here in vain for something to feed upon. Attractions are here found only by those who by faith see Jesus in the midst.

Instead of cries for mercy, I now hear praises ascending to God. They thank the Lord that His is a "finished work;" that He has magnified the Law in His death, and abolished it for them. They see its dread curse all laid on the crucified One, and rejoice that they are risen with Him, and are in Him. Law, curse, death, judgment, here give way to endearing expressions of love to the great Deliverer. He tells them the Church is His Bride, and they rejoice. The Spirit reveals "deep things" to them, and they talk of the future glory. The Spirit shows them "things to come," and the Bride waits for the royal Bridegroom. She now longs to see her Lord face to face.

Patience! Patience! Only a "little while." F. B. W.

"IT would take me a long time to recount the different ways in which the Lord seeks. Can you lift up your hand and say that the Lord God never sought *you*? I do not believe that there is a man or woman in the whole city who could do it."—*D. L. Moody*.

IF Christ came to show God's love to man in his sins, so that his heart might be won, and have confidence in God, He came to take away those sins by taking them on Himself.—*J. N. D.*

I COMMEND Christ and His love to your seeking, and yourself to the tender mercy and rich grace of our Lord.—*S. Rutherford*.

OCTOBER, 1889.

THE LEVITES VIEWED TYPICALLY.

MANY and varied are the ways in which God views and speaks of His people ; and it is well for us to learn to distinguish between them, or much profit and blessing will be missed. I need not enumerate any of these as found in the New Testament ; most readers are aware of some of them at least. But I desire to notice a little the history of the Levites, as being full of instruction for us to-day in *our* Levitical character ; for we must not forget that we are both priests and Levites, though we cannot, of course, act in both characters at the same time. Still, both things are absolutely true of all Christians. Therefore the historical facts in the case of the Levites will admit of being spiritually applied to our own histories now as Christians, and may furnish us with spiritual food for our own souls.

First, then, God came in sovereign grace and chose the Levites and their cattle, instead of the firstborn of man and the firstlings of cattle belonging to the people of Israel (Num. iii. 12, 13, 41, 45). This was the sovereign act of God. He had a right to do so. Who could question it? *All* the firstborn were His, both *man* and *beast* (verse 13). Besides His creatorial rights there was this, that He had devised the means to screen them from judgment on that memorable night when He passed through Egypt as a judge (chap. viii. 17). All were therefore His ; He alone had rights over them ; hence His claim on these Levites instead of the firstborn. "The Levites shall be Mine." "Mine shall they be." It was no merit in them or superior ability over the rest of the tribes that gave them this great privilege. No ! "From one month old" tells its own tale, and speaks to us in unmistakeable language of the sovereign and electing grace of Jehovah. They were numbered before Him in their weakness ; the helpless babe equally with the strong man in that specially favoured

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tribe. Separated from the whole congregation, they were forbidden to be numbered amongst them (chap. i. 47-49). Thus the Levites were to be set apart from all others for this specially privileged place, and for a special service.

The application of all this is easy. Worldlings have no privileged place before God. Grace has not laid hold of and blessed the world as such. They are not separated, and called, and privileged "to serve the living and true God" (1 Thess. i. 9). Yet it is *from* such, and not from angels, that God in sovereign grace separates and calls His servants who are privileged to serve Him. And now that God is dealing with souls on the ground of faith, ~~it is~~ *believing* ones—those who have believed the gospel, and are what Scripture calls saved ones (2 Tim. i. 9). These are the true Levites—separated to God—"wholly given to Him"—in the riches of His grace numbered up before Him, while in all their weakness and helplessness. No merit have they; nothing in themselves to make them differ from others; but "redeemed by the precious blood of Christ" (1 Pet. i. 18), they stand before God as His, to serve in His appointed *way*, in His appointed *time*, and in His appointed service (Mark xiii. 34).

There is another thing which must not be overlooked; they were cleansed for their service and set apart for it on the ground of sacrifice (chap. viii.); and offered as an offering of the children of Israel to the Lord for His service (verse 11). First, they were sprinkled with water of purifying; then they shaved their flesh, and washed their clothes, and so made themselves clean (verse 7). Then they brought their burnt-offering, meat-offering, and sin-offering (verse 8). After that was done, the children of Israel put their hands on the Levites; and thus fully identified with the people, or, we might say, taking the place of the people, they were offered to the Lord to execute His service (verses 10, 11). Then the Levites laid *their* hands on

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the heads of the bullocks, and atonement was made for them. They were now the Lord's, wholly set apart for His service (verses 14, 18), and given to Aaron and to his sons (verse 19).

All this is of the deepest interest and importance to us, for in like manner are we set apart for the outward service of God. I say *outward* service; for *priestly* service is what I should consider *inside service*. As the apostle says in Heb. x., "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to *enter into the holiest*, . . . let us draw near, &c." Indeed, the epistle to the Hebrews is occupied with how we are cleansed and fitted for the worship and service of the sanctuary. We are sprinkled with the water of purifying—the *word* is applied to us. Then there is the practical cleansing of ourselves; the sacrifice of Christ being the basis of all, as He answers to all the offerings. There could be no fitness for such service apart from that perfect sacrifice, and our identification with it so as to stand before God in all its atoning value. But thus identified with it, we are set apart for the service of God. We are given to the true Aaron for the true Levitical service.

There is another beautiful touch in connection with the service of the Levites, in Num. xviii. 2-6. They were *joined* to Aaron in connection with the service of the Lord in the tabernacle (verse 6). They were not separated *from* the priest, *but joined* with Aaron. They did not do *priestly* service (verses 2 and 3), but they kept the priests' charge (verse 3). This is a beautiful connection. They are given to Aaron as a gift for the Lord and His service, though guided in that service by the priest and joined to him in it. How perfect the connection, yet how distinct the service of each!

We come now to a second numbering of them; but this time it is for service (iv. 3). From thirty years old and upward, until fifty years old, were the set times for them to begin to war the warfare of the tabernacle,

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and to cease that warfare (see verse 23, margin ; also viii. 24, 25). God would not have any one in His service to do Levitical service except full-grown men. How could babes bear such burdens ? They had their place, and stood before God redeemed and separated to Him for His service as much as the full-grown men ; but for service, and such service, it was the men God wanted ; hence they were numbered up before Him from thirty to fifty years of age. The children were thus exempt until they reached that age, and were therefore capable of bearing the burdens which they were called upon to bear.

When the people were in the wilderness, the service of each was appointed him by God (chap. iv). None could choose for himself. Gershon had the curtains, hangings, coverings, cords, &c. (iv. 25-28) ; Merari had the boards, bars, pillars, sockets, pins, cords, &c. ; while Kohath had all the inside furniture, &c. There could be no clashing in such a service. It was God who appointed it ; they had simply to obey the commands given. How simple, yet how beautiful ! How impossible to clash if simple obedience characterised each. God is not the author of confusion ; He is the God of order. And how divine and perfect the order here given. God never appoints any of us to a service which we cannot perform, nor will He impose upon us burdens we cannot bear. See how beautifully this is seen in connection with the Levites in chap. 7. He knew the heavy burdens that Gershon and Merari would have to carry, and He put it into the hearts of the princes to bring as offerings waggons and oxens, and these were given to Gershon and Merari for their service ; whereas Kohath had to carry their burdens on their shoulders (verse 9). In all this we see the thoughtful care of God for these His servants, while His people were wandering in the wilderness. The burden was measured and meted out to each, and ability given to each to bear that burden according to the purpose of Him who loved His people,

and who thought of all *their needs* as well as His own glory.

Again, when the people are not only established in the land, but we reach the close of David's life, and the carrying service was about to end, we see that Levitical service does not end (1 Chron. xxiii). The ark had entered into its resting-place at last, and the people were installed in *their rest* (verse 25); but the service of the Levites was still required. The details of their service we learn from that chapter (1 Chron. xxiii). Two new services here begin, which may account for David's altering the age at which they commenced their service (compare Num. iv. 3 with 1 Chron. xxiii. 3, 27), viz., the starting of the house of God—the temple (verses 4, 5); and the musical service with instruments which David made to praise with (verse 5). This would necessarily call for more men than when they were in the wilderness and only had burdens to bear, as they carried about the tabernacle and its furniture, and did the service which pertained to it. We see, therefore, that this kind of service would cease, but ministering in the sanctuary as well as the service of song would surely continue. In all this the young men could have a part.

It is very blessed to notice, at this point, that the children of Korah, the grandson of Kohath, the Levite, perished not (Numb. xxvi. 11), when the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the rebels who murmured against Moses in the wilderness (Numb. xvi.); and from this same family we have one or two of the sweetest songs in the book of Psalms (see lxxxiv. and lxxxv.). How wondrous the ways of God in His grace! We can only say, as sometimes we sing:—

“Thy ways of grace we love to trace,
And give to Thee the glory.”

Another point of interest we may notice here. The Levites were not to have any inheritance among the children of Israel. The Lord was to be their inherit-

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ance (Num. xviii. 23, 24 ; Deut. x. 8, 9 ; xviii. 1, 2) ; but all the tithes were to be theirs (Num. xviii. 21). Moreover, they were to share in the spoils of war (xxxi. 30, 47). At the same time, while God made them dependent on the people for the tithes, He likewise expected them to be *givers* as well as *receivers* ; consequently they had to give a tenth of what they received. And in so doing, it had not to be the worst, but the *best* of what they received ; and it was counted unto them as the corn of the threshing-floor, and the fulness of the winepress (xviii. 26-30).

What lessons may be here learnt by us. Now that we are no longer under law but under grace, shall we do less than they did in giving their tenth ? Methinks if we did *even that much* as Christians, there would be much more to spend in the service of God than there is. But are we only to accept their standard ? Surely not ! God would teach us the truest generosity and the greatest liberality, giving us as an example none other than the blessed Lord Himself, who, "though He was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. viii. 9). And our gifts must not be measured by a mere tenth ; but *as God hath prospered every one, so let each one give* (1 Cor. xvi. 2). Not grudgingly, nor of necessity, but cheerfully (2 Cor. ix. 7).

Much more, doubtless, may be gathered up from the history of the Levites, but enough has been said to awaken interest which may lead to further search ; which, if done in dependence on the Lord for the teaching of the Holy Ghost, will end in deep and lasting blessing.

W. E.

"HE had no prestige in Jerusalem, nor any influential committee meetings. He was simply John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness ! . . . He asked no favours ; he talked plainly ; and called things by their right names."—*D. L. Moody*.

OCCUPIED WITH CHRIST.

IN the little company at Bethany, that we read of in John xii., the Lord Jesus is the central person. A glance at the second and third verses would show that each one was conscious of this. Speaking of them collectively, we read, "There *they* made *Him* a supper." We do not read here that Lazarus or Martha made Him a supper, but *they*—it was the privilege of all, and it was indeed a privilege. Now look at them individually. At the supper Martha served, and, as she served, may we not suppose that the thought of who she was serving would be very present to her mind, and that her eye would rest upon Him in her service? The presence of Lazarus, and the fact that he had been dead and buried, but was now raised and with them, would this not give colouring to her service, and energy in it too? A needful lesson for us in a day of restlessness and activity of nature; a day, too, when the Lord would have us up and doing, serving in the power and energy of the Spirit in a new and risen life. But Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him. The company was not a large one, but the Lord favoured them with His presence; and to-day, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."

"Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair." Dear reader, ponder these words. Is not this the fruit of a worshipping heart? The heart of man was about to be told out; it would say, a crown of thorns is suitable for His head; but here we have a heart touched by His grace, bestowing this "very costly" ointment on His feet. This is worship indeed. It is not said here that Mary called the ointment her own; and may we not say, of Thine own we give unto Thee; for every right thought and every bit of praise and worship is of Himself, to

His praise we own it. Nor have we Mary's estimate of the worth of the ointment. The object of her worship was a great and precious one. Absorbed in thoughts of Him, and her vision filled with Himself, the cost of the ointment did not concern her, though it was the very best she could offer.

But what must the Lord have thought of this act? What would His estimate of her offering be? "Very costly," we read. What a thought for us, He accepts and values worship. Dear reader, just think, "And the house was filled" with the odour of the ointment. Have we not had times around the Lord's table, so gladdened by His presence, and the sense of who He is and what He has done, so ready for the moment when the overflowing of the heart would rise to Him, and "By Him . . . offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to His name" (Heb. xiii. 15), offering "up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. ii. 5)? I say, have we not had such times as would be well described by those words, "And the house was filled with the odour of the ointment"? With such an object, and at such a moment, may we expect to be unmolested? No, dear brethren, this is just the moment when the enemy would seek to turn our attention in another direction; this is the moment for Judas' suggestion. What about the poor and needy, the sick and afflicted, this service and that responsibility, this trial and that difficulty, yet all to be attended to in their time and place? O for that word, "Let her alone."

As the house was filled with the odour of the ointment, others must have been benefited by it, and have felt it was good to be there. But let us remember we go to give back to Him, not to receive, though we do receive. She anointed His feet, a becoming occupation, and so suited to the thought of worship now, and not unlike the occupation we have described in Rev. iv. 10-11: "The four and twenty elders fall

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down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power : for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are, and were created ;” and ch. v. 14, “ And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever ;” then in bodies of glory to praise Him as we would !

“ Grateful incense this, ascending
 Ever to the Father’s throne ;
 Every knee to Jesus bending ;
 All the mind in heaven is one.”

J. P.

 JOY IN SORROW.

ASSEMBLED at the Lord’s table to show His death, we meet to take part in a service designed to be eucharistic in character. The Lord in instituting the supper *gave thanks*, and that was all, thus teaching us in what light He viewed the results of His death for God and for His people, and, by consequence, in what light we should view them likewise.

The service was new and peculiar. It was new, for it had respect to His death, an event then still future. It was peculiar, for nothing in the Mosaic ritual could be cited as a parallel to it, though, in common with the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, it spoke of redemption. At the Red Sea it was redemption by power ; at the table we remember redemption by blood. And in that upper room, for the first and only time, both of these interventions of God in goodness were brought before the disciples ; the former of them as they partook of the feast in the land of Israel’s inheritance ; the latter as they partook of the supper just then instituted, in reference to that which would so soon be an accomplished fact.

But in what sorrow were they as they reclined

around that table! The Lord knew it, and told them He knew it. "Because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your hearts" (John xvi. 6). Never before had they been called to keep that feast in circumstances so adverse to the outflow of joy. Thinking of their immediate future, they might well be sad, for they were about to suffer bereavement through the death of the Lord—a bereavement, a sorrow such as we have never known, nor can ever know. Now it was at such a time, and in such sorrowful circumstances, that "when they had sung an hymn, they went out unto the Mount of Olives."

It is the evangelists Matthew and Mark that tell us of this (Matt. xxvi. 30; Mark xiv. 26). Those two, in whose writings we have the darkest picture of the cross and its surroundings, are just the two who have recorded this instructive fact. Doubtless the Master raised the note of praise. Who else could have been free in spirit then to do it? But they all joined in it, all of them in the midst of sorrow sang praises to God!

How incongruous, some might have thought, and might have quoted the words of the preacher: "As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to a heavy heart" (Prov. xxv. 20.) On ordinary occasions this would be true; but the Master could make no mistake. Clearly it was right, it was fitting that they should sing to God. But why? They were celebrating redemption by power, accomplished of old by the arm of Jehovah. The joy and thanksgiving in remembrance of that was for the time to override all personal and present sorrow.

The Lord knew that they were sorrowful. He did not condemn it; He did not rebuke it. But He taught them, and surely would teach us, that, when engaged in the remembrance of redemption, the joy of that is to override personal sorrow. It was so with them. How truly they loved Him, Thomas has

taught us (John xi. 16). Yet they sang ; not the Lord only, but all of them together. So surely, when at the Lord's table, it is for us to remember what they did ; and like them, to learn from our common Lord and Master in what spirit we should remember and celebrate that most wonderful intervention of God in grace, redemption by blood.

On another occasion, six weeks later, we see the same company once more in circumstances naturally calculated to distress them. Their sorrow, consequent on the Lord's death, had been turned into joy, when they had Him again in their midst as the Risen One. Then, having accompanied Him to the Mount of Olives, they had seen Him ascend heavenwards, and they were returning to Jerusalem without Him. Surely, some might have thought that was the moment for weeping and depression. Not so with them. "They returned to Jerusalem," Luke tells us, "with great joy" (Luke xxiv. 52). Now, at that moment they were without the Lord in person on earth, and without the abiding presence of the Spirit, for He had not come. Again are they found in circumstances in which no Christian can ever be here below, yet they rejoiced. Why this seeming incongruity? It was not the laughter of fools, but the joy of earnest, sober, thoughtful men. What could have made them rejoice at such a moment? Was it not the words of the men from heaven, who assured them of the Lord's certain return?

At His death they had lost all hope. On the occasion of His ascension, they could re-enter the city animated with the hope of His certain return. The remembrance then of redemption, and the hope of the Lord's return, did act, we see, in this way on them. It is surely to be the same now. We never can be in the circumstances in which they were. A dying Christ we can never know. We cannot, like them, be deprived of His presence, nor can we know this earth without the Holy Ghost dwelling in the House of

God. If they then were to sing, and could rejoice on these two occasions, no sorrow that we can know, it is plain, should stifle the strain of worship, due from us to God, as we sit around the Lord's table, where we look back to the past, and look onward to the future, the retrospect and the prospect alike demanding a note of praise.

C. E. S.

HOW DO YOU WORSHIP?—*John* xii. 1-11.

SHE came not to hear a sermon, although the first of Teachers was there; to sit at His feet and hear His word (Luke x. 39) was not her purpose now, blessed as that was in its proper place. She came not to make her requests known to Him. Time was when, in deepest submission to His will, she had fallen at His feet, saying, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (John xi. 32); but to pour out her supplications to Him, as her only resource, was not now her thought, for her brother was seated at the table. She came not to meet the saints, though precious saints were there, for it says, "Jesus loved Martha . . . and Lazarus" (John xi. 5). Fellowship with them was blessed likewise, and, doubtless, of frequent occurrence; but fellowship was not her object now. She came not after the weariness and toil of a week's battling with the world to be refreshed from Him, though surely she, like every saint, had learned the trials of the wilderness; and none more than she, probably, knew the blessed springs of refreshment that were in Him. But she came, and that, too, at the moment when the world was expressing its deepest hatred of Him, to pour out what she long had treasured up (ver. 7), that which was most valuable to her, all she had upon earth, upon the person of the One whose love had made her heart captive, and absorbed her affections. She thought not of Simon the leper—she

passed the disciples by—her brother and her sister in the flesh and in the Lord engaged not her attention then—“Jesus only” filled her soul—her eye was on *Him*—her heart beat true to *Him*—her hands and feet were subservient to her eye and to her heart, as she “anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair.”

Adoration, homage, worship, blessing was her one thought, and that in honour of the One who was “all in all” to her; and surely *such* worship was most refreshing to Him.

The unspiritual (ver. 4) might murmur, but He upheld her cause, and showed how He could appreciate and value the grateful tribute of a heart that knew His worth and preciousness, and could not be silent as to it. A lasting record is preserved of what worship really is by the One who accepted it, and of the one who rendered it.

And now, dear reader, is this your mode of worship, or do you on the Lord’s day go to hear a sermon, say your prayers, meet the saints, or be refreshed after your six days’ toil? Oh! if every eye were on the Lord alone, if every heart were true to Him; if we were each determined to see “no man . . . save Jesus only,” what full praise would there be! Not with alabaster boxes now, but our bodies filled with the Holy Ghost—a stream of thanksgiving, of worship of the highest character would ascend in honour of the blessed One that now adorns the glory as He once adorned the earth. Be it ours thus to worship Him in Spirit and in truth. Amen!—*Extracted.*

“SURELY it is as much *of God* that our lot is cast in these days, as that Paul’s lot was cast in his days. And the works prepared for us to do are as much prepared of God, as were the works prepared for Paul. Let us take heart, strengthen ourselves for God and do His present will.”—J.

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How sweet is liberty—freedom from the thralldom of sin and Satan, the world and all in it, ourselves especially included—to walk in newness of life, and serve Him, our blessed Deliverer, who burst our bonds. Well might we be apprehensive when on the watch we find many things that are apt to ensnare us ; and glad indeed should we be to sound out a cry of warning and tell of danger, when we see His liberated ones made captives again, or in danger of it.

There is such a thing as liberty in worship and in service. Both are so important ; but worship is of the first importance, although activity in service might seem to be ; yet His own redeemed ones, whom the truth has made free, will respond most readily and sing in honour of the Lord, our Redeemer. Let me have your attention, your interest ; for it is that His portion may be fuller, and necessarily your joy increased, that I would ask you to lay these matters to heart. What then, let us ask ourselves, would detract from Him to grieve the Holy Ghost, so that spiritual praise is not forthcoming—to entangle and interrupt a stream of thanks flowing to Him, so worthy of homage and of praise? Shall we not be jealous of His glory? Our blessed God is ! What would mar the firstfruits ; our best being offered and accepted of Him? We remember that member that cannot be tamed, and flesh that cannot be made better. Self-judgment most unsparing is called for, and then occupation with Him who went to Calvary and got glory to God, and has been raised to His right hand—the only One without spot or blemish, perfect in all His parts, inward, outward ; His word, His walk, His work ; holy, pure, perfect. Uninterrupted gaze by faith on Him whose memorial He has left us, will most assuredly be productive of heart-felt, grateful praise ; there will then be liberty in keeping the feast with unleavened bread in sincerity and truth.

Beloved, is there any room, think you, for fleshly display when together on the first day of the week to break bread? Would you revive that which caused Him agony, woe, shame, suffering, death? If so, the object God has by the Holy Ghost in gathering out a people to His name is defeated. We should be there to praise Him, not to put Him to shame. Do ye despise the assembly of God? Let us look further: perhaps the evil is not so much on the surface as deep down; but wherever it may be, if discovered let it be judged promptly. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to purify us from all unrighteousness (1 John i. 9).

Neglect of the Word is one of the fruitful causes of barrenness and blundering. If there is no appetite for it, yet we have for other things, surely this should call for self-judgment. Do not suppose, dear brother, that your offering goes up as sweet odour, or is the outcome of the Spirit's promptings, if such is the case. Be not rash with thy lips in the presence of God; better no utterance escape than words offered in the energy of the flesh to break the silence, for the flesh will feel very restless in the presence of God; but where there is communion, a pause will not be found irksome, but joyous, as there is meditation upon Him. The more we know of the Word, the truth, the more humbled we shall be, frequently on our faces supplicating with thanksgiving Him for grace to get glory to His name. The Spirit uses the Word, and our reading should be done with deep reverence, considering whose Word it is—not as a duty, not as a task, a quantity to be got over before we start out on our several duties, or retire for the night, but going to it as a precious, cool spring in a desert, and drinking heartily and thankfully, and in the strength imparted go on, giving out as opportunity arises, or making opportunities to tell of Him unfolded there, a real Person, who will have reality, whole-heartedness; and where pretension, sham, or hypocrisy exists, His Word exposes and condemns.

But we are not to take for granted that the portion we enjoy so much is the portion suited for others—to take to meeting and introduce there. The Holy Ghost knows how to distribute to suit the varied needs of His people, and dwell upon such portions as bring our adorable Lord into prominence when gathered to Him. Consider well what a centre is Christ. Would you honour Him? Surely your heart must rebound with delight at the thought of so high and holy a privilege. Think, then, of this provision made, with all barriers removed, where He alone is the pre-eminent One, and you have liberty to worship in Spirit and in truth. Worship God! if not so, it amounts to creature-worship, seeking honour of one another, liking to be heard of men; taking advantage perhaps of your new position, as a poor man under bondage so long; you assert your rights, or try not to be behind another. Alas! this is bondage still, and dishonouring, not God's order. How often the temptation comes; it was well-known among the learned Corinthians, who desired to speak with tongues; self coming in again—pride, intellectual pride. How different from edifying others. Can we glory in self? Do we like to hear ourselves speak? Let us only glory in the Lord. Would we yield to other temptations: they are readily suggested. We are so few. So-and-so is away. How shall we get on? It may be the hymn-book is turned over, a favourite selected, or a portion meditated on, so as to have something to say; may feel ashamed of silence. But shame and confusion of face should be ours when it is broken by any formalism, or preparation, not trusting the Holy Ghost. It takes faith and grace to tread His paths; but how joyous, what liberty; and if we would continue in them to His glory, we need watch against these fleshly intrusions and suggestions that are not of Him.

“What is it then, brethren? Whenever ye come together, each has a psalm, a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things

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be done to edification" (Cor. xiv). This is not commendation. We need lay these words we hear to heart, and give heed to them; the principle applies to meetings professedly where the Spirit has liberty. Liberty to worship Him—very narrow this; no room for old things, for self. Shall we not regard God's order? We are so slow to learn. We go not to get a good time, but to give Him the best, the costliest, and consider it all too small; but poor return for such love as He displayed by dying, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God. Have you any thing reserved from Him? Annanias and Sapphira had. What folly, what loss! Would you enjoy anything all to yourself, apart from fellowship with Him? If so, you enjoy not liberty. Think of those He delights to record who bestowed all upon Him, and thought it but an atom, a mite.

There are other ways of looking at things that come in so frequently to drag down and reduce to ashes that which should be most fragrant to Him; but it seems to me, where He has the first and last place in our hearts all other relationships and service connected will be in place. Sorry spectacle when His servants lord it over His own, and there is not strength or discernment to detect; but when motives are right, love in activity, clamorous sounds, show, and noise are esteemed little worth. May there be more regard given to the Word, that the Person of Christ may be before us, that our hearts may be right, that there may be singing with the spirit and the understanding. A babe will not be deterred from lisping out to Him its thanks, or a simple one withhold his "amen," at real, heartfelt giving of thanks; this should be deep, full of meaning—not shallow, hollow, empty. Oh, may our hearts expand in grateful praise to Him who is worthy; then shall there be portions carried to our brethren who are still in bonds and know it not. What joy, if we had but desires and hearts to enter into it. The poor sinner

would not be left without in misery ; but the servant, in touch with the mind and will of his Master, would go and tell of Him, mighty to save.

Beware of activity. Service apart from Him is but a plaster for a bad conscience. How much activity there is. Worship aright—in Spirit and in truth—your service will be as an overflowing vessel ; no effort to make known His worth, requiring no set-offs or blast of trumpets to manifest He saves and satisfies. Man's school spoils the children of God for usefulness ; enter it not, desire no place for yourself, let your one aim and object be to please and honour Him. To sum up, then. What is so important for us to consider is, whether we can trust the Holy Ghost to lead out our hearts in worshipful praise to Him, or for a word to speak to edification ; if so, we shall not be authors of confusion ; but those whom He uses (what bliss to be used of Him !) will be channels of supply and refreshment to one or a multitude, as He directs. God grant His own precious Word may have its own place and power over each.

“ How is it then, brethren ? When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let ALL THINGS be done unto EDIFYING.” W. B.

DISCIPLINE AS IN I. COR. V.

EXCOMMUNICATION, as the word implies, affects the person's rights, which as a Christian he has in common with others. By it, he is put away from the company of the saints till such time as he repents ; and the assembly, judging that he has repented, restores him to his privileges in common with them. What, then, is to be the character of the carriage of the saints towards such an one ? 1 Cor. v. 11. is explicit, and 2 John x. agrees with it. It is not only that the offender cannot be received, but those who have had social intercourse with him on Christian grounds must

abstain from it. Are there not instances where from ignorance of Scripture rules, and perhaps a mistaken desire to manifest brotherly love towards the guilty one, the discipline of the assembly, so far as it relates to ordinary friendly intercourse, has been entirely set aside, to the detriment of the offender, and to the loss really of all? The action of the assembly becomes thereby enfeebled, and a party feeling is in danger of being encouraged. If saints looked at the question in this light, "Can I have ordinary Christian friendly intercourse with one whose presence at His table my Lord refuses to sanction?" would not the right way of conducting themselves towards such be seen at a glance?—*Extracted from "Bible Herald."*

THE SHUNAMMITE'S SON.—2 *Kings* iv.

THERE'S beauty above, in the bright blue sky,
 On earth is the reapers' glee,
 'Tis harvest time in Jehovah's land,
 And the corn by the breeze is gently fann'd,
 Like the waves of a golden sea.

But sorrow shall wait on the reapers' mirth,
 The lord of those fields shall sigh ;
 One only boy
 Was his father's joy,
 The boy that day must die.

For the sun has looked forth in his morning pride
 On the child with a scorching ray ;
 " My head, my head !"
 'Twas all he said,
 'Twas all the child could say !

And see, they are come, they have borne him home,
 And he sits on his mother's knee ;
 But who can tell
 How her countenance fell,
 Her altered boy to see !

He knows her not with his dull fix'd eye,
On her bosom he pillows his head ;
 When the sun shines bright
 From his noontide height,
The boy on her knee is dead.

But faith within the mother's breast
Shall calm her agony ;—
 “The God who gave
 Is the God who shall save,
And give back my boy to me.”

Though sad be her heart, the bright lamp of hope
Shall light up its innermost cell ;
 The son lies dead
 On the prophet's bed,
But the mother can say, “ It is well.”

* * * * *

'Tis well with the mother, 'tis well with the boy,
His breath and his life are restored ;
 The child is awake,
 Let her hasten and take
To her arms this new gift from the Lord.

And I know it is well with the children of God,
Naught them from their stronghold shall sever ;
 Whether Christ shall soon come,
 Or they're laid in the tomb,
'Twill be well with His people for ever.

They fear not the arrow that flieth by day,
Nor the plague which walks forth in the dark ;
 The sun shall not smite,
 Nor the moon by night,
Those who shelter in Jesus the Ark.

They fear not to die, for the deep, dark grave
Is a bed where their Saviour has lain :
 They sink not to hell,
 But with Him they shall dwell,
For He's coming to raise them again.

—*Sir Charles Brenton, 1855.*

GETHSEMANE AND THE CROSS.

THE Lord was completely heard and delivered, as regards the trial of Gethsemane, before leaving the garden, and on the cross before His giving up His soul. And these two trials seem to be quite distinct.

The prince of this world came, and though he had nothing in Jesus, still He had to go through what death was as the power of Satan to alarm and destroy confidence in His Father. "This is your hour and and the power of darkness," said the Lord. Satan had sought to meet Him, and pervert Him as a living Messiah, the Son of God, but the Lord had put him aside, and conquered him with the Word, as the obedient Man; for this was needed for man too. Satan had then sought to divert Him from the path by attractive temptation.

The strong man was bound, and, as a living Man, He spoiled his goods—cast out devils, healed all that were oppressed by the devil (as a living Man), "for God was with Him." But man was incapable of being blessed in this way, or delivered, for he was a sinner, and morally under Satan's power.

Then the Lord had to meet death, which stood in the way, as sole means of blessing. He must be a dying Saviour, and not a living Blessor, for man could not meet the blessing else, and death came in necessarily, and so he that had the power of death came in, in a new form. He is to exercise his full power in hindering the Lord from going through with this dreadful necessity, in which, as Satan, he would exercise the full power that he had against man, and this rested on Christ in Gethsemane. He was looking forward to death, wrath from God was not yet upon Him, though He was looking forward to it, but "He was sorrowful even unto death"—"His soul poured out like water," and the full power of death on it, to the extent of Satan's empire—every human help failing in every way, and treachery

and malice hemming Him in, but, above all, Satan's power besetting Him. But He takes nothing from man, nor from Satan, nor complains like Job. He prays—gives Himself to prayer. The effort of Satan to hide God from His soul, to get in between, as he does sometimes with believers, was useless. The distress drives Him to God, being the true sign of the link of the soul with Him. "Being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly." And the effect, for the cup (through grace, mighty grace!) could not pass, that He receives it wholly and solely from His Father's hand.

The subject of His fear—this dreadful judgment, in which Satan had his power, becomes His glorious obedience, and He presents Himself in the calm of all His life, and with such an evidence of divine power accompanying it, that they go backward and fall to the ground. He delivers Himself up according to the Father's will. Satan is just for nothing in it. This was most glorious. Gethsemane, that place of sorrow, but well-spring of delight and deliverance for us dug in the depths of Christ's soul, was passed.

But another scene was to come—more dreadful, no doubt, but quite different—the judgment of God. It has another character. It is not conflict, and that with the power of evil. It is holiness, justice—dreadful, infinitely dreadful, but not in its nature the terrors and power of Satan. He, who alone could, felt what God was against sin, but nothing—no! nothing—between Him and God. Nothing screened His soul from the judgment of God, before whom He was made sin. It was the immediate judgment of God—dreadful thought!—against sin.—*Notes and Comments*, J. N. D.

A GLANCE AT A WASTED LIFE.—"Lot was one of those men determined to die rich. . . There is many a man determined to be rich, even though he has to take his children into temptation."—*D. L. Moody*.

“HAVE SALT IN YOURSELVES.”

Mark ix. 49, 50.

THOSE who were consecrated to God, whose life was an offering to Him, should not lack the power of holy grace, which binds the soul to God, and *inwardly* preserves it from evil. Salt is not the gentleness that pleases (which grace produces without doubt), but that energy of God *within us* which connects everything *in us* with God, and dedicates *the heart* to Him, binding it to Him in the sense of obligation and of desire, rejecting all *in oneself* that is contrary to Him (obligation that flows from grace, but which acts all the more powerfully on that account). Thus, practically, it was distinctive grace, the energy of holiness, which separates from all evil; but by setting apart for God. . . Now this sense of obligation to God which separates from evil, *this judgment of all evil in the heart*, must be *in oneself*. It is not a question of judging others, but of placing *oneself* before God, thus becoming the salt, having it *in oneself*. With regard to others, we must seek peace; and real separation from all evil is that which enables us to walk in peace together.

In a word, Christians were to keep themselves separate from evil and near to God in themselves, and to walk with God in peace one with another.

The believer may be called to deny himself for the precious service of his Saviour, in things that are not bad in themselves, but this act is accomplished *inwardly*.

Devotedness is inward. It is a secret between His servant and Himself, though the external effects are seen by others.

Let us beware, in ordinary things, of the first step that would separate us from *inward holiness*. Let us keep ourselves from any lack of obedience to the word

of the Cross, whereby we are crucified to the world sin, and the law.

Moral nearness to God separates from the world, and gives that quietness of spirit which, finding its strength in God, can overcome and drive away the enemy when God leads into conflict, by the plain revelation of His will.

Nothing is more perilous than the service of God when the conscience is not pure ; however, let us ever recollect *that we are under grace.*—J. N. D.

THE VESSEL AND THE LIFE.

THERE are two things, as to believers, connected together : the earthen vessel, and the eternal life. The result of the earthen vessel being connected with the eternal life, is the consciousness of weakness inside and of difficulty outside. We see both brought out in Paul's experience (2 Cor. xii. 7-12). The Lord was anticipating certain evils—results connected with the earthen vessel which would impede the work of the treasure, the eternal life, contained in it ; and what was the thorn in the end to Paul ? How was he (a potsherd of the earth, picked up by Christ to be a servant) to know what he was to do ? Was he to be driven hither and thither like a slave ? No ; but to be a vessel in the hand of the Potter, saying, " I want the God who gave me life to direct me in everything ; not only do I want to find stepping-stones to show me where to walk, but I want the spirit of obedience to fulfil His word, to take it up in obedience." The Lord would have Paul as His servant, to have the same mind that He had ; and the way He took to make this man a follower in his own footsteps was by bringing this cripplement inside and out. The Lord could say, " My mind and will never went forwards but by My Father's will, but yours does ; and if I take away that thorn, you will go forward without

perfect and realised dependence on Me.” Not that Christ was in anything the same as Paul—He who was God incarnate, Son of the Highest !

Was there ever a will so perfect in strength as the will in Christ ? but what was so remarkable in it was that it was never exercised on any object but the will of God : “Lo I come to do *Thy* will, O God.” His will was ever in perfect intelligent subjection to the will of God—a life of communion with the Father. Paul could not say he was perfect as regarded the vessel. No ; Paul had a will of his own which did not like entire dependence on God. Christ used the thorn to make him know fully that the eternal life He had given him could be guided by Himself alone, and He had to hinder anything in the earthen vessel that would impede it. Before Paul takes his place as a heavenly man, the Lord gives him what would bring his own energy to a close.

There is something exceedingly beautiful in Christ’s first putting the life into the vessel, and then taking care of it ; saying, “That eternal life is a thing you cannot keep yourself. I must give power to spend it and guide it in a way to make you feel that the eternal life you have is as dependent on Christ as your life was dependent on God.” This new life cannot make a day’s journey without the sense of the two things—“My strength made perfect in weakness.” The eternal life flowing into the vessel is one thing, and power to let it flow out of the vessel is another thing. Life flows from us only as it is under the guardianship of Christ. The believer has it sentiently because it takes in every thought and feeling to be occupied with Him who gave it. Paul might say, “Was there ever such a cripplement ! ah, but the hand of Christ is under me.” The earthen vessel was carrying the life which Christ had put into it, and Christ said, “I must carry the vessel in My hand to give right guidance to the life.”

G. V. W.

PRAISE AND BLESSING.

“All Thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord ; and Thy saints shall bless Thee.”—*Psalm cxlv. 10.*

Oh, praise Him in the morning,
The calm, soft, dewy hour
When nature's fresh adorning
Proclaims His grace and power,
And trustful hearts awaking
To greet the rising day,
In all His grace partaking,
Their grateful homage pay.

Oh, praise Him in the sunshine,
When all things sing His praise,
The hum of busy insect,
The lark in joyous lays,
The shimmer of the foliage,
The glancing of the stream—
Come, join the gladsome chorus,
Our hearts His praises hymn.

And praise Him when the rain-
clouds
Come glooming o'er the scene,
The parched earth new dressing
In robes of living green.
How soon the earth would languish
Were storm and shower denied !
How oft through tears of anguish
God's name is magnified !

And when the day is closing,
And nature sinks to rest,
Like weary child reposing
Upon its mother's breast,
Then we, too, calmly resting
In perfect peace with God,
Give thanks for every blessing
Procured by Jesus' blood.

For Satan's usurpation
Had blighted all the scene,
Defacing God's creation,
Which else so fair had been ;
But Jesus, mighty Victor,
In death o'ercame the foe,
And for His great redemption
Shall praise unceasing flow.

'Tis only through redemption
That God's long-suffering grace
Can linger still in mercy
O'er man's rebellious race,
Winning from thence His trophies
To join—a glorious throng—
With all restored creation
In universal song.

H. S.

PSALM XI.—How different, we may observe, is the world which faith apprehends from that which sense or sight converses with. The world seen is here declared to be all out of course—the wicked prospering, the righteous oppressed. But faith apprehends a scene where God is in all the sanctity and calmness and power of a throne and a temple, His soul loving the righteous, hating the wicked, and preparing judgment for them when the trial of the righteous is over. Such were the two scenes or worlds opened at the beginning of the book of Job. In the seen or felt world, the adversary was doing his pleasure ; in the unseen place, the God of all grace was sovereignly preparing blessing for His saint. Moses walked as “seeing Him who is invisible.”—J. G. B.

LETTER OF INTEREST.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I was very thankful my introduction on the chapters of John furnished, through the grace of the Spirit, food for holy affections during your delay at Syra. I had put it all there, that whatever dry criticisms they might be forced to read, they might have some positive food. It is a great thing to have developed affections. Some are much more demonstrative than others ; but it is not merely this, but the development of the affections within themselves by what is in the object of them. Still, it comes to my mind that it is a great thing to have concentrated affections, Christ forming them, so that in having Him in our heart we may know what is in His ; and what a blessing that is. Concentrated means practically personal, so that I get at His heart, and know what is there, and that there is that personal affection there. As regards this, there is the sense that we belong to Him, but then there is development, the sense of what the exercise of that affection towards us is ; interest in our circumstances, thoughtfulness for us, bearing our sins, and drinking that dreadful cup, even making part of His own happiness in glory summed up in knowing Him in what His affections are ; but, then, how infinite in this case this development is. And, after all, He loves us personally. But He loves us perfectly in this, that whatever He enjoys He brings us into the enjoyment of. Then it is divine which stamps its character on all the details. That chapter is greatly the expression of it, as putting us in the same place as He is in Himself ; but we must know Him to know what His love is, and it will suffice for ever. But this joy, dear brother, in His love, which now we know to be unchangeable, is by the Holy Ghost, and we are dependent on grace for it, so that it will be connected with all our life here.

I have been interrupted again and again since I began, so you will only have desultory thoughts. Happily, the foundation of it is in John xvi., and always there for the Holy Ghost to use. It is a known love, yet passes knowledge.—Your affectionate brother in Christ,

J. N. D.

WE cannot be too much confounded about our sins, and we cannot trust God too much about the putting them all away.—J. N. D.

I WANT no change of circumstances nor removal of trials to enable me to serve Christ. I only want to know practically the truth of 1 Cor. xii. 9, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." The sense of weakness in myself is essential to the display of Christ's strength. A man may feel his hands always dirty in the world's service, yet leaning on Christ's grace, sufficient for him, he may have his heart always clean for the enjoyment of Christ and for His service. He serves Him in his daily toil; and if he cannot be always reading and praying, he may, nevertheless, be always in communion. A mother who has half-a-dozen children, who occupy her through the day, and often keep her awake in the night, cannot serve Christ as she sees others do; but if she owns Him in her circumstances, and hangs on His grace, while she rocks the cradle of one with her foot, and mends the clothes of another with her hands, may have her heart fed by the hidden manna from His own hand, and serve Him whom she loves more effectually than if she had all her time to herself, and felt less the need of the injunction, "Gird up the loins of your mind; be sober, and hope to the end."—*Girdle of Truth.*

NOVEMBER, 1889.

THE NATURE AND UNITY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

BELIEVERS know that all who are born of the Spirit have substantial unity of mind, so as to know each other and love each other as brethren. But this is not all, even if it were fulfilled in practice, which it is not, for they were *so* to be all one, as that the *world* might know that Jesus was sent of God; in this we must confess our sad failure. *True unity is the unity of the Spirit, and must be wrought by the operation of the Spirit.*

Where two or three are gathered together in His name, His name is recorded there for blessing; because they are met in the fulness of the power of the unchangeable interests of that everlasting kingdom, in which it has pleased the glorious Jehovah to glorify Himself, and make His name and saving health known in the person of the Son, by the power of the Spirit. In the name of Christ, therefore, they enter (in whatever measure of faith) into the full counsels of God, and are *sunergoi Theou*. Thus whatever they ask is done, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. But the very foundation on which these promises rest is broken up, and its consistency destroyed by bonds of communion, not formed on the scope of the purposes of God in Christ

Our duty as believers is to be witnesses of that which we believe.

Unity is the glory of the Church; but unity to secure and promote our own interests is not the unity of the Church, but confederacy, and denial of the nature and hope of the Church. Unity, that is of the Church, is the unity of the Spirit, and can only be in the things of the Spirit, and therefore can be perfected only in spiritual persons. The Lord give us grace to walk in His ways.—Nature and Unity of the Church of Christ, J. N. D., 1834.

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THE LOVE OF CHRIST TO HIS OWN.

“THE love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.” It was the desire of the Spirit of God, expressed by Paul (Ephes. iii. 19), that Christians should know this love.

Now there are just two writers in the New Testament who treat of it; they are Paul and John. Paul had proved it in a marked way. John had for long and especially enjoyed it. The manner in which they severally speak of it is instructive, and most encouraging.

The Lord Jesus Christ loves the saints, and loves the Church. His love to the latter Paul alone has set forth in plain language. Of Christ's love to saints both the above-named apostles have written. To this subject we desire in the following pages to direct the reader's attention. Christ's love to the Church has been often dwelt upon by others elsewhere, as well as in the pages of this periodical; but His love to His saints, we think, is a theme which has been less handled than the other: hence to it we turn.

And first, let us see what the apostle Paul can tell us of it. In the Galatians (ii. 20) we read, “Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” He, then, was individually an object of that love which passeth knowledge. But who wrote these words to the Galatians? One who, in his ignorance, had thought that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth (Acts xxvi. 9), and had done them, breathing out, as the historian of the Acts describes it, threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord Jesus (Acts ix. 1). His pitiless hostility is thus stated, for pitiless it was, as that little word “yet,” in ix. 1, unmistakeably indicates. In such a way any onlooker might have described it. Nor was that judgment a harsh one. Paul's own words, descriptive of his feelings at that time, indicate its sobriety and truthfulness. For, many years later, when standing before Festus and Agrippa, he let all know that,

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before his conversion near Damascus, he was exceedingly mad against the followers of the Lord Jesus (Acts xxvi. 11).

Hatred to the Lord had filled his heart, and had taken possession of him. Love to him, as he afterwards found, was in the heart of that One whose disciples he was persecuting even unto death; nor could his mad career and determined opposition quench it, or even check its outflow. Clear, then, was it that the love in that heart to Paul, of which he wrote to the Galatians, was not engendered by his previous devotedness to the Lord. The love was there, and was manifested before ever he became acquainted with the Saviour—thank God for that—yet, till converted, Paul did not know of it, nor could he consciously have enjoyed it. Evidently he did not deserve it. Who, indeed, ever did, or could? Thank God, we may again say, that love had not only Paul for its object, but embraces every saint who, like him, has been turned from darkness to light. Every one such is privileged to say, “Who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*.”

This takes us back to the past, and recalls Christ's death for us on the cross. We cannot think of that love without remembering *His death*. “Gave Himself for me,” wrote Paul. How he rejoiced in that love, and in the proof of it which he mentions. Christ gave Himself for Paul as much as for Peter or for John; and, if He gave Himself for such an one as Paul, the chief of sinners, who is there, if he turn to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, who can rightfully say, I can never share in it? Encouraging, then, is the way Paul speaks; for, after all his course of hostility to Christ and His people, he could write of himself as being consciously an object of that love. Would conscience remind us of our past history? Be it so; still we may, as believers, appropriate that love to ourselves, and rejoice in the manifestation of it on the cross. Paul never forgot what he had been, yet never,

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after he knew it, doubted the continuance of Christ's love.

For this we have Scripture authority, both in regard to him, and as it concerns us. To the Ephesians and to the first epistle to the Thessalonians let us turn, two witnesses to establish this. Addressing the former, Paul classed himself among them, many of whom had doubtless been "worshippers of the great Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter" (though he himself had never fallen into idolatry), and exhorted them to "walk in love, as Christ also," he added, "has loved us" (or, as some read, you), "and hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. v. 1, 2). Writing to the Thessalonians, but recently brought out of heathen darkness, he describes them as "beloved of the Lord" (2 Thess. ii. 13). The Ephesian saints were reminded of the death of Christ in the past as a proof of His love; the Thessalonians were assured of the unchangeableness of that love. They were, and would continue to be, "beloved of the Lord." Love surpassing knowledge it was, yet one who had been the vilest sinner might share in it, and come to learn of its manifestation in the sacrifice of Christ on his behalf.

It is unchangeable and inexhaustible. In pursuance of our subject we must next turn to the writings of John to learn more about it. He, too, reminds his readers of the proof of it to which Paul points: "Hereby perceive we the love, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John iii. 16). Of brotherly love the apostle John is here writing. The motive for it is furnished by the remembrance of God's love to us (1 John iv. 7-11). The proof to which it might be put, if called for, is illustrated by the love of Christ, shown in dying for us. That, of course, takes us back to the past. Of the present he also speaks, as he wrote, "Unto Him that loveth us"

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(not loved us); for death could not quench it, nor did the Lord's exaltation to glory weaken it. For it was years after the ascension that he penned those words. In this, then, John agrees with Paul. The death of Christ is the crowning proof of that love, which continues, they remind us, to flow out to His own, and ever will whilst Christians are upon earth.

But a difference in the way of speaking of it must be marked. Paul can speak of it with reference to himself—"loved *me*;" John only speaks of it as shared in by others as well—"loveth *us*." Now if ever there was one who, according to human thought, could never have looked to be an object of it, that one was Paul; if ever there was one who might have gloried in being a special object of it, that one was John, the disciple whom Jesus loved. John, however, evidently delighted in the thought that others had part in that love which was so precious to him. Paul gloried, and well he might, in the grace which permitted the former persecutor of the Church to share in the love of Him who is the Head of it. Now how, and when, will that love be still shown? Let John, in his writings in the New Testament, furnish us with the answer.

Far on in his gospel must we read before we have distinct mention of it. The first occasion on which the evangelist noticed it was when Lazarus was sick (John xi. 5). Now the sisters well knew it, for they sent that touching message in their anxiety, "Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick" (ver. 3). The Lord had let them know it. All knew that He loved John. Martha and Mary knew that He loved Lazarus; and the evangelist tells us that He loved all three: "Jesus," he writes, "loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." Was Martha the eldest of the three? Perhaps so; we know not. He loved them all. And though Martha was rebuked on one occasion (Luke x. 41), yet the Lord still loved her, and the evangelist, by mentioning her first, for what

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special reason we know not, indicates that the love of Christ to her had not declined; nor was she, in consequence of deserving a rebuke, relegated to a second place in His affections. Whatever contrast we may draw between her and her sister, in favour of the latter, Martha clearly had not an outside place in the Lord's affection. "He loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus."

Had they counted too much on His love? How could they? They knew, others knew, that He loved them. Now, then, was an opportunity to give proof of it. What did He do? He heard that message; He received it; yet abode in the place where He was two days longer. Many would have gone at once to the house of sickness; He did not. Were they mistaken as to the strength, the depth of His love? He staid where He was because He loved them, and desired their best interests. He staid till all hope was extinguished in the breasts of those sisters; He staid till Lazarus was dead. Often had He raised up from sickness, and had done it too by the exercise of His power, even when at a distance from the sick one. He could therefore have healed Lazarus had He pleased. He could have stilled the sisters' anxiety, and have checked their tears. Now, had He healed their brother, as He had done others, they would have rejoiced; but they would have been losers, and we should have been losers likewise; and, what was first with Him, it would not have been for the glory of God (ver. 4).

Losers they would have been, for they would not have known His love and His sympathy as they must have done, when Lazarus was again with them alive from the dead. His death was needed for that. The Lord abode, therefore, two days where He was. "Then, after that, saith He to His disciples, Let us go into Judæa again" (ver. 7). No fresh message had reached Him from Bethany. It was not a yielding to importunity that apparently made Him change His mind.

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He had loved them, He did love them, and, we cannot doubt, was thinking of them all the while that He remained where He was. But now the time had come for Him to show His love, and for God to be glorified. Unsolicited, then, afresh, He prepared to revisit Judæa to awaken Lazarus out of sleep, for He knew that he was dead.

They returned to Bethany, and found that he had been dead four days already. What a time it must have been, when hope of recovery was being extinguished in those sisters' hearts. Anxiously, surely, they had watched and waited for some intimation of coming help; but none came. Death came, and burial quickly followed. Nothing but sorrow seemed destined for them. Then the Lord appeared, and Martha went and met Him. Mary afterwards, at her sister's summons, went to Him, while He was still outside the town. And now, beholding her weeping, and the Jews which came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. Were they aware of that groan? Was it audible? We know not; but we see in it a proof of His tender pity for, and sympathy with those two in sorrow. The Lord of life, He who is the Resurrection and the Life, conscious of His power, of which He had already spoken to Martha, groaned in the spirit and was troubled. How deep, how real was His sympathy with them, creatures born in sin, who as sinners were only suffering what such might expect. Yet He, the Holy One, did not stand apart as unconcerned; He did not look on unmoved, and remind them that they deserved it. He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, as He beheld their trouble. Now He speaks. "Where have ye laid him?" was the question. "Lord, come and see," was the immediate answer. And the evangelist tells us, what all men saw, that "Jesus wept." Those tears the Jews understood; it was the outward manifestation of His love (ver. 36).

Power He was about to put forth—the power of

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resurrection. He is the Resurrection, and He would prove it by calling Lazarus from the grave. He is the Life, and He will manifest it by and by, when He calls up His living saints to be with Him without their passing through death. For He explains His words: "I am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (for He will raise him up); "and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die." Such will be caught up alive. But ere His power should be displayed, all were to have proof of His love. They saw Him weep, and they understood it. Groaning again within Himself, He approached the grave, and called forth its occupant; and Lazarus stood among them again, a living person, alive from the dead.

Surely those sisters must have felt that they never had known His love as they learnt it that day. It was love manifested in their darkest hour, when suffering that against which, as sinful creatures, they had no right to murmur. It was love, but not that of one like themselves, who might be plunged into similar sorrow at any moment. It was the love of the Holy One to His own, the sympathy of the Sinless One with His sinful creatures. In their darkest hour that was shown. In our darkest hour we can count on the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. No sorrow too deep, no bereavement too heavy, for it to be known as a comfort for the heart of a poor distressed creature. How did the Lord spend the rest of that eventful day? We know not. What we do know is that His love was shown to the sorrowing ones in a way all could understand.

Events rolled by, and the crucifixion approached. In another, and in a most unexpected way, the love of Christ was shown. With the twelve in the upper room on the night of His betrayal, and whilst Judas was present, the Lord Jesus, having loved His own which were in the world, loved them unto the end (xiii. 1); and He showed it by washing their feet, an

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act symbolical of the service He would do for them when He should be in glory, and they still upon earth. The effect of such grace on one then present, displayed in that lowly service on that evening, Peter's exclamation makes plain: "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?" (ver. 6). Peter's surprise was great that the Master would stoop to do such a service to the disciple. "Thou shalt never wash my feet," was his next exclamation. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me," was the Lord's quiet rejoinder. He would wash Peter's feet in that outward way then, the gracious intimation that He would wash them in a spiritual way, and wash ours also, that Peter and we might have part with Him; for, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end. It is a service of love, needed by the disciple whilst passing along down here. It is a service which He in glory will not fail to render as needed, that we may have part with Him. It is a lowly service indeed. What can be more lowly than to wash another's feet? And remembering who does it, the grace of it shines out most brightly. He who sits on the right hand of the Majesty on high stoops to do this for each one of us. Had we only to record that He *had* thus stooped, it would be grace indeed; but He *stoops*, as it were, to do it, though seated at the right hand of God.

No sorrow too great for His love to be known, the record of that visit to Bethany can attest; no service too lowly for Him to render to His people, the history of John xiii. declares. In such ways can He, does He, show His love; for love, it has been said, delights to serve. How true! What a proof of that does the Lord Jesus Christ give to us—His own, *His own*. We must emphasize it; for one was present, and witnessed the service of Christ that day—nay, shared in it outwardly—who was never to have part with Christ. Judas had his feet outwardly washed, in common with the rest. Never, surely, will he forget that, for memory survives death (Luke xvi. 27, 28).

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But never did he really share in the service thus symbolised.

We pass on in the history of that memorable night. Judas left the company of Christ, never again, professedly even, to be with Him. Once more on earth they did meet; Judas then in his true colours, but the Lord unchanged from what He had been throughout His ministry amongst men. Ere, however, that last meeting took place, and after Judas had gone out (ver. 30), the Lord in plain language told the eleven that He loved them. He could do it then. He would assure them of it. He spoke of it in that chapter (xiii. 34); He reiterated it later on (xv. 9); and He expressed His desire twice over for their enjoyment of it (xiv. 21; xv. 9, 10). What a relief, speaking with reverence, must the traitor's departure have been to the Lord Jesus. He could then unbosom Himself to the eleven, who were really His own. Does the outflow of such love depend on our obedience, then? No; it did not in the past; it does not in the present. His death for us, and His washing our feet, place that beyond the reach of question, though our abiding in that love is dependent on our obedience. What creatures we are that He loves, creatures who contract defilement by the way, and so need this ministry of the Word on the part of the Lord; for it is by the Word He does it.

Yes, we need that love! In sorrow, and in feet washing, and in circumstances of trial we prove it. It is unchanging. John evidently was enjoying it in his exile at Patmos. He might be shut out from companionship with other saints, imperial power might restrain his liberty, and banish him at its will, but it could not deprive him of the love of Christ. His words which we have quoted, "loveth us," tell their own tale. Christ was ministering of His love to His apostle and confessor in that little island in the Grecian Archipelago. His brother apostle, Paul, who had suffered much more, doubtless, even than John,

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confirms the fact that no human power can deprive the saint of the love of Christ. "Who shall separate us," he triumphantly asks, "from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom. viii. 35-37). That love does not always screen its objects from suffering. It ministers to them in it. A smooth path we must not expect. The world is unchanged; the flesh in man is unchangeable; the devil has not ceased to oppose God's people. But the love of Christ in trials or need we may count upon; and a day is coming when enemies, who have treated God's saints as a ball to be tossed about at their will, or as dung to be trodden under foot, will have to own that Christ loved those who experienced their bitter enmity, and, it may have been, their relentless opposition in this world. How sweet those words to the angel of the assembly in Philadelphia: "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee" (Rev. iii. 9). Opposed by the professed people of God, conscious of weakness, not able to boast of great things, all that might be true of them, yet in this way would the Lord encourage them. They were objects of His love, who is coming in millennial power and glory. Who in that day will think lightly of His love, which can be shown to such people? An opened door those saints were to have; but before they could enter into it and labour, of Christ's love were they assured. He loved them in all their weakness.

Not alone, however, for them was that written, as the announcement at the end of that epistle declares: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit

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saith unto the churches" (Rev. iii. 13). What does He say? He acquaints us with this, amongst other things, that conscious weakness and opposition from others form no barrier to the outflow of Christ's love. Despised, hunted, persecuted, oppressed, their names cast out as evil, it may be; but He whose they are will never forget them, will never disown them, and will not be ashamed of letting the whole universe know that He loves them. What favour to be objects of His love!

But again the Lord speaks of His love, when addressing the angel of the assembly in Laodicea. A very different state of things was found there—a company professedly Christian, but without anything that should characterise Christians. Rich, and increased with goods, and having need of nothing they thought themselves. Wretched, and miserable, poor, blind, and naked the Lord knew them to be. He speaks in severe language. Were they to be surprised? It is the language He uses to those He loves. Love on His part prompted such rebukes. But, mark: He does not authorise them to say they were objects of His love like those in Philadelphia. Divine love moved Him thus to act; for He was willing—how willing—to minister to any one in that assembly who would receive it, gold, white raiment, and eye-salve, all of which they were lacking. Satisfied with themselves, the Lord was not satisfied about them; but if any one responded to His knock, and opened the door, He would go in to such, sup with him, and he with Christ. But the opening the door to the Lord would be a confession on the part of the individual of two things—first, of his own state till then; and next, of the state of those with whom he was in professedly Christian association. His response to Christ would be an acknowledgment that he had been hitherto destitute of gold, white raiment, and eye-salve; in other words, that he had been hitherto a *mere lifeless* professor; and further, that the company with which

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he had been in association were, like himself, without these things that were essential for the Christian. For, be it remembered, the Lord is seen outside that assembly, though ready and desirous to enter, to have intercourse with any one who would open to Him. They were satisfied without Him !

We know the use which has been and is made of the epistle to the angel of the church in Laodicea, to justify separation from other Christians, with whom the separatists were once in happy, real Christian fellowship. It is quite a mistaken use of the passage, in more ways than one : for, first, there is no thought in any of the seven epistles of faithful ones leaving the assembly in which they are found ; and, next, the application made of this Scripture would tell on those who misuse it in a way they little expect. For if they would act on it, they must admit that hitherto they had been but *formal, lifeless* professors, content to be where Christ was not ; and also, that those, with whom they formerly had real fellowship, were mere professors likewise. We presume such a judgment of themselves these would be the last to accept, and probably they would shrink from characterising those they had left, as the angel in Laodicea is described by the Lord. Yet if that epistle is pressed into their service, they must admit all this to be true. But on this we will not now enlarge.

Of love that epistle does speak—love on the Lord's part, desirous, if possible, to arouse any within (if only one) from mere formal, lifeless profession. It does speak of love, that He could desire to sup with any there who would hearken, and open the door ; for, mark, He would then go in to them, not they come out to Him. But if any were awakened there—though of that we have no hint even—such would have thereby confessed that hitherto they had never been Christians in truth. There is a right application of this Scripture. What we have referred to is clearly a misuse of it.

Here we must close. What a mercy it is to be objects of the love of Christ! Such—His own—He loves unto the end, and shows it as circumstances call for it.

C. E. S.

ON PRAYER AND WORSHIP.

“Seek ye My face; Thy face, Lord, will I seek.” — (*Psalm* xxvii. 8; *see also* cv. 4.)

IN prayer I have not only to ask for things, but *to realise the presence* of Him to whom I speak. The power of prayer is gone if I lose the sense of seeing Him by faith. Prayer is not only asking right things, but having the sense of the Person there. If I have not that, I lose the sense of His love, and of being heard.

When the Holy Spirit leads us into real spiritual worship, it leads us into communion with God, into the presence of God, and then, necessarily, all the infinite acceptability to Him of the offering of Christ is present to our spirit. We are associated with it, it forms an integral and necessary part of our communion and worship. We cannot be in the presence of God in communion without finding it there. It is, indeed, the ground of our acceptance, as of our communion. Apart from this, then, our worship falls back into the flesh; our prayers (or praying well) form what is sometimes called a gift of prayer, than which nothing often is more sorrowful—a fluent rehearsal of known truths and principles, instead of communion and the expression of our wants and desires in the unction of the Spirit; our singing, pleasure of the ear, taste in music, and expressions in which we sympathise, all a form in the flesh, and not communion in the Spirit. All this is evil; the Spirit of God owns it not; it is not in Spirit and in truth.

. . . . The Lord keep us nigh to Himself to judge all things in His presence, for out of it we can judge nothing.

J. N. D.

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.

A GREAT revolution is taking place in the minds of many of the Lord's people. There is a craving awakened both for spirituality and communion of the saints, which existing systems, whether from their worldliness or exclusiveness, cannot meet. There is a growing cleaving to the Word of God, as the Word of God and only balance of the sanctuary. There is a felt power of truth on the part of these, a very small portion indeed of the Lord's people, and a conscious weakness on the part of those who defend systems, so much so, as to be forced to abandon the Word. The high standing of God's elect Church, as the light of the world, is being practically asserted in separation from the world, and that a Christian can only be a Christian in any time, place, or circumstance. In a word, it may truly be said, that the controversy is again renewed between Christ and the world; it is not doctrines, but practical holiness which the world hates. It has been fearfully made manifest that doctrines may be held, and the world served; but Christ cannot be loved and the world served,—“If ye *love* Me, keep my commandments;” “if any man serve Me, let him follow Me.”

One word to those who have separated from any existing establishment; let them remember that obedience is their only security, even keeping the word of the patience of the Lord; let them be content to remain weak, and learn what it is by *patient continuance* in well-doing to seek for glory, honour, and immortality. If any have acted on impulse and not principle, the trial of their faith will soon force them back to the leaning on men. It is most important to know that separation from evil is separation into felt and acknowledged weakness, that which is so contrary to the flesh. But their little strength is real strength, because of the Spirit. Let all, then, count the cost, whether they are content to leave even the Lord's people, ostensibly, for

the Lord's sake. It is from the Lord's people leaning upon man that they must expect the hardest trial, so that only cleaving to the Lord with purpose of heart will really avail, and much need will they have of the Lord's grace in sending them those who may confirm their souls and exhort them to continue in the faith, and that they "must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God."—*Christian Witness*, 1834.

PARTING WORDS.

WE naturally love to linger over the parting words of those who have loved us and left us. It were unworthy of them and of us did we not do so. Such words are usually what may be termed "heartfelt" words—words which carry the affections of the speaker to the affections of the hearer, to be deeply felt and to be long remembered.

If this be so in ordinary cases, how much more so when the speaker is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of the Father, and the words those which fell from His lips and welled forth from His heart under the foreshadowing of His condemnation and His death, events the effect of which would be to scatter His beloved disciples, to whom they were spoken, as sheep without a fold and without a shepherd.

"*As the Father hath loved Me I also have loved you : abide in My love*" (new translation—John xv. 9). Precious, powerful panacea for the impending blow! They were objects of a divine and an infinite love; *as the Father had loved Him, so had He loved them.* In this eternity and infinity of love they were to abide. Could the Father's love to the Son, as Man, ever cease to flow forth from His heart? Could it ever weary of its object? Could such love ever be impoverished or impaired? If not, neither could the Lord's love to them. Heaven and earth might pass away, but His love—never! Observe: in the Old Testament God commands our love, but never got

it; in the New Testament He commends His love, and thereby raises responsive love in our hearts.

His love responsive love doth raise!

“If ye shall keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love, as I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love” (ver. 10.). We have here the co-relation of love and obedience. They are of no conflicting character, but, on the contrary, are found harmoniously and beautifully maintained in the highest and most endearing of relationships. Children to their parents, the wife to her husband, find obedience compatible with, and conducive to, the strengthening of love. By obedience as a Man had Christ Himself abode in His Father’s love, and in like manner by obedience do we abide in the love of Christ, that love which passeth knowledge.

“I have spoken these things to you that My joy may be in you, and your joy be full” (ver. 11). What the Lord distinctively speaks of here as His joy was the joy that filled His heart while experiencing the Father’s love in His pathway here. His path was ever that of confiding love; of real, self-surrendering dependence; of unquestioning, unhesitating obedience. Therein He found the smile of His Father, the light of His countenance, and He had fulness of joy in His service and testimony—albeit He was the refused and the rejected of men! The same love, for it was divine, was His for them—His loved disciples; and by obedience they should abide in it, and thus His joy should be in them—the same in essence, divine joy; and their joy, born of His, should be *full*; His joy ever was, and never could have been otherwise.

Here we may notice the force of *abiding*, the thought which is so frequently presented, and which carries the sense of communion. How precious to know that our beloved Lord, in leaving us—for surely we may take kindred place with these disciples—

introduced His own to communion with Himself; communion with His death, in the supper; communion there with His body and His blood. And here communion with His love, with His obedience, with His joy! Surpassingly blessed thus to have fellowship—fellow thought, fellow feeling, fellow participation in His pathway here in those things which were His portion while treading it; to which may be added the same Word of God and the same Spirit of God by which He walked, and worked, and witnessed here below.

“This is My commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, that one shall lay down his life for his friends” (vers. 12, 13). Brotherly love is here pressed, with the Lord’s personal authority and example, even as He has loved us! The germ, surely, of that teaching which this same apostle who records the Lord’s word gives, when he says that we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren (1 John iii. 16). Too little, truly, do we recognise the Lord’s words in this place. How we fail in brotherly love, and habitually fail! Our brethren are entitled to our love, and we may not, we must not, withhold it. We are entitled equally to their love, and may not, must not, make light of it. We do our brethren an injustice when we check or chill their love to us, as much as when we restrain the outflow of our love to them.

“Ye are My friends if ye practise whatever I command you. I call you no longer bondsmen, for the bondsman does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things which I have heard of My Father I have made known to you” (vers. 14, 15). How blessed a thing to have the friendship of Christ! How much more blessed to be constituted His friends! This is no matter of sentiment, but one of an entirely practical character. We should say that obedience belongs to the bondsman, but the Lord teaches us that because we are no

longer bondsmen, but are constituted His friends, He counts upon our obedience. He has befriended us, not that we should befriend Him, but that our obedience might be freed from every element of bondage, and be made the simple and suited expression of happy service ; obedience to His will in holy liberty, as rendered to One who has entrusted to us the knowledge and furtherance of His interests on earth.

“Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and have set you, that ye should go, and that ye should bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide, that whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He may give you. These things I command you, that ye love one another” (vers. 16, 17). Fruit-bearing is seen here to be desired by the Lord from His saints. The tree is to be known by its fruit. Trees of the Lord’s planting are to bear fruit to the Lord’s pleasing ! And with this is another thing, closely connected and equally practical—answers to prayer. The Lord desires fruit from us for His glory ; and the Father desires to answer our prayers, which He will delight to do when such fruit is found.

“If the world hate you, know that it has hated Me before you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own : but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, on account of this the world hates you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The bondsman is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you ; if they have kept My word, they will keep also yours. But they will do all these things to you on account of My name, because they have not known Him that has sent Me” (vers. 18-21). He here gives us His place as to the world. Its hatred and its violence should be the marks of our being His, and of our being here for Him.

“If I had not come and spoken to them they had not had sin ; but now they have no excuse for their sin. He that hates Me hates also My Father. If I had not done among them the works which no other one has done, they had not had

sin; but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father. But that the word written in their law might be fulfilled, They hated Me without a cause" (vers. 22-25). Here are four things to which the nation was obnoxious—the Person of Christ and the Father, both seen and both hated; the Lord's works and God's law, both witnessing against them.

Lastly, there is adequate, nay, overwhelming, testimony. "*But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who goes forth from the Father, He shall bear witness concerning Me: and ye, too, bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning*" (vers. 26, 27). How cheering is this; the Lord Jesus, His Father and the Holy Ghost, each engaged with and for the saints. From the Father, and by the Son, is the Holy Ghost, that other Comforter, sent to us, and of the risen, the ascended, the glorified Christ is He the divine witness. Nor does He alone bear witness; the disciples were His witnesses also. He puts them in the place of privilege and of office. It was expedient for them He should go away—profitable unto them.

Lesson upon lesson does He thus minister to them, and in these valedictory words how clearly does He indicate the precious place we occupy in His heart, objects as we are of His undying interest, His present and eternal love!

May His parting words be graven on our hearts unto His present and eternal glory.

"As the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool" (Eccles. vii. 6). Thorns at first blaze under a pot as if they would give out a mighty heat; the flame soon goes out, and the water remains cold; such is worldly joy. Herod was gorgeously arrayed, but was soon devoured by worms (Acts xii. 23); Jezebel was a beautiful queen, but was eaten by dogs (2 Kings ix. 36); so Belshazzar's enjoyment soon vanished away (Dan. v. 6, 30).—*Extract.*

“WHO LOVED ME.”—*Gal.* ii. 20.

LORD, I am thine !
Justly I'm claimed by Thee,
And most of all for this—
Thou gavest Thyself for me.

A rebel I—
Thou camest from above,
But not to terrify—
Thou camest down in love.

Sin weighed me down ;
Thou wast the Victim made,
And all my heavy load
Of sin on Thee was laid.

The work is done ;
Thy precious blood did
flow ;
Obedient unto death,
The mighty foe laid low.

God raised Thee thence,
That holiness might stand,
And righteousness, and hence
A place at His right hand.

That place is Thine !
Thy glory there I see ;
And (what a portion mine !)
Thyself Thou givest me.

O wondrous gift !
I cannot tell nor know
How such great love should
be ;
But Thou hast made it so

That I am Thine,
And also Thou art mine,
And for Thy glory too !
But, sure, 'tis all divine.

H. S.

“ALL THINGS ARE YOURS” (1 Cor. iii. 21).—Every possible glory indeed is ours. The blessedness that is in God Himself, as far as it can be communicated, for we dwell in God and God in us. Relative blessedness, for we are children. Associated blessedness, in union with the blessed One, for we are the bride. Official nearness and glory, for we are kings and priests. Human blessedness, for we shall be perfect men, after the image of the last Adam. Corporate blessedness, for we shall have joy together. Individual, for we shall have a name given which no one knows but he that receives it ; and we shall have the fulness of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, unhindered by these poor bodies ; yea, clothed upon by a vessel suited to the power of the divine inhabitant, so as to be able in full largeness of heart to enjoy all this.—J. N. D.

GOD IS LOVE.

WHILE visiting among the poor this summer at S——, I saw an aged saint of 84. I had often seen her before, and had been refreshed by her evident love of the Lord and delight in conversing about Him. She was a solitary old soul, having lived by herself the greater part of her life.

In the course of conversation, I remarked how wonderful it was that God should love such poor, wretched creatures as we are.

“Wonderful! my dear!” was her quick reply, “not at all; no, no!”

“Well,” I said, “I think it is, when we remember what *we* are.”

“Ah, my dear, it is not wonderful when we think that it is God, and remember what He is.”

I could not help thinking what a true apprehension she had of the love of God. She fully allowed it was wonderful for man to love under such circumstances; but God is love.—*Extract.*

THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD TO COMFORT.

DR. GREGORY relates the case of a poor and afflicted man, whose infirmities were such that he was unable even to occupy a chair without being supported by bands attached to the ceiling. In this helpless condition he had been for several years, unable to move a limb, while suffering the whole time extreme bodily anguish.

As soon, says Gregory, as I recovered a little from my surprise at beholding an object which appeared a living image of death, I asked, “Are you alone, my friend, in this deplorable condition?”

“No, sir,” said he, in a tone of hopeful resignation, while nothing but his eyes and lips moved as he spake; “I am not alone; my God is with me.”

On advancing, I discovered the source of this unspeakable comfort. A Bible lay at his knees, open at a favourite portion of the Psalms. In this way he was enabled to read for himself the words of eternal life.—*Christian Treasury.*

ANCHORED TO THE ROCK.

A SCIENTIFIC writer gives a description of a marine plant which rises from a depth of one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet, and floats on the surface of the water in the midst of the great breakers of the Western Ocean. The stem of this plant is less than an inch through ; yet it grows and thrives and holds its own against the fierce smitings and pressures of breakers which no masses of rock, however hard, could long withstand. What is the secret of this marvellous resistance and endurance ? How can this little slender plant face the fury of the elements so successfully, and, in spite of storms and tempests, keep its hold, and perpetuate itself from century to century ? The answer has leaped to every lip : it reaches down into the still depths, where it fixes its grasp, after the fashion of the instinct that has been put into it, to the naked rocks ; and no commotion of the upper waters can shake it loose.

Oh, how secure, how safe, how strong is the soul that clings to the Rock of Ages ! The storms and the tempests of sin may rage and try us ; but the Word of God assures us :—“BLESSED IS THE MAN THAT ENDURETH TEMPTATION.”—*Extract.*

DELIGHT IN THE WORD OF GOD.—A very poor woman in Edinburgh, who was so nearly blind as not to be able to read her Bible, and could get no one to read it to her, was greatly distressed to live day after day without the comfort and direction of the blessed Book. She thought of many plans, and made many inquiries, but in vain. At last she made a bargain

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with another woman to read her a chapter every night, and for this service she paid her a penny a night out of her scanty pittance.—*Whitecoss.*

 THE ALARMING GROWTH OF RITUALISM.

It is stated that the new church at Clumber (Nottinghamshire), recently dedicated, is decorated with a crucifix over the rood screen, with images of the Virgin and of St. John, with a baldachino over the "high altar," and a crucifix on the re-table, with a tabernacle for the reserved sacrament, having a silver lamp suspended in front of it, and with other Popish emblems. The service of the Holy Communion was conducted, according to these reports, with the formalities observed in the Roman Catholic service of the sacrifice of the mass—formalities condemned by the Courts of law—and it is further reported that no person whatever communicated with the celebrant. The procession into the church was headed by a crucifer, bearing a large crucifix, and a thurifer, bearing a censer containing incense. Two handsome banners were carried aloft, the first being that of the blessed sacrament and the second that of the Virgin Mary, on which were inscribed the remarkable words, "*S. Maria Mater Dei.*" It is further reported that about 50 "priests" took part in the procession; that the Bishop of Lincoln walked in this procession, dressed in a cope of cloth of gold; that he was followed by the Bishop of Southwell, wearing a gorgeous cope, on the back of which was depicted in brilliant colours a representation of the Madonna and Child—the Madonna crowned, the Child uncrowned.

"BUT ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. . . . Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen."—*Jude 20, 21, 24, 25.*

 DECEMBER, 1889.
