

# WORDS IN SEASON.

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“A WORD SPOKEN IN DUE SEASON, HOW GOOD IS IT!”

—*Proverbs xv. 23.*

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ABERDEEN: MRS. MACDONALD, 44, CHAPEL STREET.

BRISTOL: E. R. WILLS, 80, PARK STREET.

EDINBURGH: J. S. FERGUSON, 23, SCOTLAND STREET.

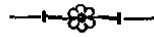
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## THE GROUND OF GOD'S DEALINGS NOW.

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SIN is the groundwork of *all* God's dealings now. Is not judgment in respect of sin? So much so that there could be none without it; hence *in itself* it can only be condemnation. If God judges His own workmanship as it came out of His hands, He is judging Himself, not the work, or, if you please, in the work. But if it has departed wilfully into rebellion, judgment as such must be condemnation. If man had never fallen, there was nothing to judge, speaking of human nature: all was then as God made it. If man has abandoned God, and gone into sin, I repeat judgment must be condemnation; and this is the ground Christianity goes upon. Christ comes to seek and to save the lost. And so every divinely taught soul says: "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord; for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." But I pursue my theme a little.

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

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

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

I look around. What can I say? Heathenism—men worshipping stocks and stones ; Christendom—what would often disgrace a heathen ; yet goodness and wisdom evidenced in the midst of it all. What can I think? All is confusion. The goodness and wisdom I see lead me, in spite of me, to God, and the thoughts of God confound me when I see all the evil. Philosophy, poor philosophy, would justify the evil to justify God. But when I see Christ the riddle is gone ; I see perfect good in the midst of evil, occupied with it and then

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suffering under it. My heart rests : I find one object that satisfies all its wants—rises above all its cravings ; I have what is good in goodness itself ; I see what is above evil which was pressing on me. My heart has got rest in good, and a good which is such in the midst of and above evil, and that is what I want ; and I have got relief, because I have found in that One what is power over it.

But I go a little further and I get a great deal more. I follow this blessed One from whom all have received good, and who has wrought it with unwearied patience, and I hear the shouts of a giddy multitude, and I trace the dark plans of jealous enemies, man who cannot bear good ; I see high judges who cannot occupy themselves with what is despised in the world, and would quiet malice by letting it have its way, and goodness the victim of it. But a little thought leads me to see in a nearer view what man is : hatred against God and good. Oh ! what a display ! The truest friend denies, the nearest betrays, the weaker ones who are honest flee ; priests, set to have compassion on ignorant failure, plead furiously against innocence ; the judge washing his hands of condemned innocence ; goodness absolutely alone ; and the world, all men, enmity—universal enmity—against it. Perfect light has brought out the darkness ; perfect love, jealous hatred. Self would have its way and not have God ; and the cross closes the scene, as far as man is concerned. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." But oh ! here is what I want. Oh ! where can I turn from myself ? Can I set up to be better than my neighbours ? No, it is myself.

The sight of a rejected Christ has discovered myself to myself, the deepest recesses of my heart are laid bare, and self, horrible self, is there ; but not on the cross. There is none. And the infinite love of God rises and shines in its own perfection above it all. I can adore God in love, if I abhor myself. Man is met, risen above, set aside in his evil, absolute as it is in

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itself when searched out. The revelation of God in Christ has proved it in all its extent on the cross. This was hatred against love in God ; but it was perfect love to those that were hating it, and love when and where they were such. It was the perfect hatred of man, and the perfect love of God doing for him that hated Him what put away the hatred and blotted out the sin that expressed it.

There is nothing like the cross. It is the meeting of the perfect sin of man with the perfect love of God. Sin risen up to its highest point of evil and gone, put away, and lost in its own worst act. God is above man even in the height of his sin ; not in allowing it, but in putting it away by Christ dying for it in love. The soldier's insulting spear, the witness, if not the instrument of death, was answered by the blood and water which expiated and purified from the blow which brought it out. Sin was known, and to have a true heart it must be known, and God was known, known in light, and the upright heart wants that, but known in perfect love, before which we had no need to hide or screen the sin. No sin allowed, but no sin left on the conscience. All our intercourse with God founded on this—grace reigning in righteousness.

It is a wonderful scene. There is, in truth, nothing like it—nothing in heaven or earth, save He who was there for us. The glory we shall share with Him ; but on the cross He was alone. He remains alone in His glory. Associated there with Him nothing can be, save as it is the expression of the nature which was revealed and glorified in it. That we find ever in God who is thus known. Eternal life is become thus association with God. But, though reluctantly, I must turn again to deal with the effort to supplant the cross, for such it is, by the progress of corrupt human nature—the cross which writes death on corrupt humanity, and brings in a new and divine man risen up out of that death, and a walk in newness of life.

J. N. D.

## WAITING FOR THE SON OF GOD FROM HEAVEN.

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THIS posture the Thessalonian saints assumed on their believing the gospel (1 Thess. i. 9, 10). The apostle seems afterward to strengthen them in that posture, by telling them that from it they were to be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. iv. 17). And again, afterwards, he seems to guard them against being disturbed in that attitude, against being tempted to give it up, by further telling them that that place of *expectation* should be exchanged for the place of *meeting* ere the *day of the Lord fell in its terrors on the world and on the wicked* (2 Thess. ii. 1). And still further, this very posture of waiting for the Son from heaven had induced a certain evil. The Thessalonian saints were neglecting present handi-works. The apostle does not in anywise seek to change their posture, but admonishes them to hold it in company with diligence and watchfulness, that while their eye was gazing their hand might be working (2 Thess. iii.).

Other New Testament Scriptures seem also to assume the fact that faith had given all the saints the same attitude of soul; or, that the things taught them were fitted to do so (see 1 Cor. i. 7; xv. 23; Phil. iii. 20; Titus ii. 13; Heb. ix. 28).

Admonitions and encouragements of the like tendency, that is, to strengthen us in this place and posture of heart, the Lord Himself seems to give just at the bright and blessed close of the volume.

“I come quickly” is announced by Him three times in the twenty-second of Revelation—words directly suited to keep the heart that listens to them believingly, in the attitude of which I am speaking. But different words of warning and encouragement accompany this voice.

“Behold, I come quickly : blessed is he that keepeth



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the sayings of the prophecy of this book" (ver. 7). This warns us that while we are waiting for Him, we must do so with watchful, obedient, observant minds, heedful of His words.

"Behold, I come quickly ; and My reward is with Me, to give every one according as his work shall be" (ver. 12). This encourages to diligence, telling us that by the occupation of our talents now during His absence, on the promised and expected return He will have honours to impart to us.

"Surely, I come quickly," is again the word (ver. 20). This is a simple promise. It is neither a warning nor an encouragement. Nothing accompanies the announcement, as in the other cases. It is, as it were, simply a promise to bring *Himself* with Him on His coming again. But it is the highest thing, the dearest thing. The heart may be silent before a warning, and before an encouragement ; such words may get their audience in secret from the conscience. But this promise of the personal return of Christ gets its answer from the saints. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Thus the Lord, after this various and beautiful manner, does the business of the Spirit in the apostle. His own voice, in their different and striking announcements, encourages the saints to maintain the attitude of waiting for Him.

Great things are a-doing. The Church, the Jew, and the Gentile are all in characteristic activity, each full of preparation and expectancy. *But faith waits for that which comes not with such things.* The rapture of the saint is part of a mystery, a part of "the hidden wisdom." The coming of the Son of God from heaven is a fact, as I judge, apart altogether from the history or the condition of the world around.

J. G. B.

## GOD IN PROPHECY.—SOME WORDS ON PSALM XXII.

To foresee and to foretell belong to God. This He has declared, and has challenged the idols and their votaries to disprove.

Addressing the transgressors amongst the people, He thus appealed to them: "Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is none else. I am God, and there is none like Me." Would they demur to such an announcement? Would they ask for proof in support of this statement? It was forthcoming; it was incontrovertible; "declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times, the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure" (Isaiah xlvi. 9, 10).

Turning to men in general, to whatever country and nation they might belong, the same prophet, writing by the Spirit of God, fearlessly summoned them to settle the question: "Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the peoples" (so it should be) "be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth" (Isaiah xliii. 9).

Then the idols are challenged. "Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together. Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you. I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon My name: and he shall come upon

princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth the clay. Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? and beforetime, that we may say, He is righteous? yea, there is none that sheweth, yea, there is none that declareth, yea, there is none that heareth your words." What answer was there, could there be, to this challenge? We are not left in doubt. "I beheld, and there was no man; even among them, and there was no counsellor, that, when I asked of them, could answer a word. Behold, they are all vanity; their works are nothing: their molten images are wind and confusion" (Isaiah xli. 21-29).

Judgment went by default. No idol, no man had foretold the appearance of Cyrus, and the importance of that as regards Israel. God *had* declared it, and all must confess it. Had this part of Isaiah been written after the event, how easy would it have been to expose the cheat. None, however, appeared in the arena in answer to the challenge, and refuted the claim of our God to foresee and to foretell—proofs that He is God. Yet men would try to persuade themselves and others that prophetic announcements, met with in the inspired word, were not predictions at all. An attempt this is, of course, to discredit the authenticity of Scripture.

To them, foreseeing and foreknowing seem impossible. If such were the case, of course all prophetic announcements must be regarded as delusive, forgeries invented to deceive mankind. If, on the other hand, God can foresee and foretell, it is perilous for the creature to question it, and to refuse to receive predictions as true because they indicate an acquaintance with the future beyond the ordinary ken of men. Admit the possibility of foreseeing the future at all, then the vividness of the picture, or the minuteness of its details, furnish no solid ground for any sober mind to call in question its prophetic character. If God can foresee at all, why not fully? Now the possibility of foreknowledge most men admit. How many would,

if they could, get a glimpse of the future. How many have turned to unhallowed sources to learn, if possible, something which they felt deeply concerned them. Can the future be foreseen and foretold? Yes; by God. And the New Testament places this beyond a doubt, as prophetic words in that volume, put on record in the early days of Christianity, are in the course of time seen to be fulfilled. One turns for a moment to the New Testament in proof of the reality of a prophetic spirit; because there can be no loop-hole for the suggestion that the instances to which we will point the reader, were what might be termed *ex post facto* declarations—*i. e.*, predictions made after the events.

The Lord foretold, as we have it in the Gospel of Luke (xxi. 12-24), the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, which certainly came to pass. St. Paul, too, and St. Peter, foretold a state of things on earth which was not to be developed till after their decease. Of the latter times, and of the last days, Paul wrote; see 1 Tim. iv. 1-3 for the former, and 2 Tim. iii. 1-5 for the latter. Of the end of the days, a still later period, Peter wrote, and described the characteristic of it (2 Pet. iii. 3, 4). Who will say that these fore-shadowings have been falsified?

But not only does Scripture foretell events; it at times expresses the thoughts, and also furnishes us with the language in which they would be clothed by the speakers, who were not to appear on the stage of this world till centuries after the prophet had been laid in his grave. This need not surprise us, who can look back to the period of the Lord's ministry in humiliation. In the Old Testament we read, "He knoweth the secrets of the heart" (Ps. xliv. 21). In the New Testament it is said, "All things are naked and opened (or, laid open) unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. iv. 13). Men proved this when the Lord Jesus at times answered their thoughts, which they had not ventured to clothe with

language (Matt. ix. 4; xii. 25); and the disciples confessed it (John xvi. 19, 30), and expressed their confidence in Him as knowing all things, because He had read and answered the thoughts of their heart. For us to be told of the thoughts and intentions of the creature, centuries before they would be formed in that creature's mind, need surprise no one. The past and the future are as the present with God, all under His eye. So in Rev. xii. we are made acquainted with the feelings and purposes of the devil, after, in a yet coming day, he shall have been for ever cast out of heaven. Another instance of the same kind is furnished us by Ezekiel, who, having foretold the invasion of Israel's land by Gog, under circumstances which since the days of that prophet have never existed, has also announced beforehand the thoughts which will at that time come into the invader's mind (Ezek. xxxviii. 3-12). No one can dispute the existence of these prophetic announcements previous to the date of their fulfilment. We have them now in black and white. Nor can one say such predictions are impossible. The history of the Lord's life on earth settles that for any not wilfully incredulous. The ground thus laid on a good foundation, let us turn to Ps. xxii., to look at it in the light of a prophetic utterance.

It professes to be a Psalm of David, and therefore to have been in existence for one thousand years before the cross. And both John (xix. 24) and Paul (Heb. ii. 12) refer to that which they quote from it as prophetic announcements fulfilled in connection with the Lord. Would any, then, refuse to admit that which we unhesitatingly accept, that the Psalm was penned by David, they cannot deny that it was in existence, and held to be part of divine revelation, before any verse of it received its fulfilment. Relegate it, if any will, to the days of Isaiah or Jeremiah, this must still remain that it was known, and held to be part of God's Word written before the appearance

of the Lord upon earth ; and that two New Testament writers, whose words are inspired, call attention to it as prophetically referring to Him.

It begins with words with which every Christian is familiar : " My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? " No reader is there, surely, of the Gospel of Matthew or of Mark, but is acquainted with the utterance of the Lord on the cross, spoken in Aramaic : " Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, " and interpreted by both of them in Greek (Matt. xxvii. 46 ; Mark xv. 34). Now, in whatever measure David may have thought his words could apply to himself, in their fulness they could only apply to the Lord. David was delivered out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul (2 Sam. xxii. 1). The One of whom the Psalm speaks in fulness was *not* delivered on this side of death (Ps. xxii. 15-21) ; and He draws a contrast between the fathers and Himself. They, David included, had been delivered ; He was not (vers. 4, 5).

Now, who is the speaker ? From whom came those solemn words, " My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? " He was the Son of God, and those words prophetically set forth the awful circumstances into which He would come. He would be forsaken by *His* God. The One who always pleased the Father, who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth ; the only One of men who did not deserve this rejection, is *the* One of whom in their completeness those words were true. But who of men could have conceived that He should ever be found in such circumstances ? The once blind beggar of John ix. only expressed that to which men in general would subscribe : " If any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth " (John ix. 31). Here was One, the One, who delighted to do His will, and had always done it, and was doing it at that very time, yet could say, and did say, " Why hast Thou forsaken Me ? " And more, He justifies God when

doing it. "But Thou art holy," are His words, "O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel" (ver. 3).

Why He should be forsaken, and not delivered on this side of death, is here left wholly unexplained; for prophecy does not always give the connecting links, that those living before its fulfilment may understand fully its meaning. But like mountaintops, which may appear clear and distinct in outline against the sky, whilst the lower part of the chain is enveloped in clouds, the tops being seen, but the connecting part obscured from view, so prophetic announcements often stand out on the sacred page, distinct in statement, though unaccompanied with explanations, by which alone their full meaning can be grasped, and the whole harmonised. And surely we must admit it was so in this case. A Man forsaken of *His* God, and not delivered on this side of death, feeling it, too, most keenly, declaring that no saint had ever been in like circumstances, and, withal, justifying this dealing on the part of *His* God—what explanation was there of all this? Centuries had to roll by ere the key to the enigma was supplied. But then it was seen, how all came true in the crucifixion of the Lord; and how really this Psalm had a prophetic character, putting, as it does, words into the mouth of the speaker, to be used in all their awful depth of meaning by One person, and One only, but who would not come to utter them till ten centuries had run their course; and that person—the holy, obedient Son of God! No creature could of himself have foreknown that *He* would be forsaken of God; no creature could have conceived that God would forsake the One who was perfectly doing His will (Ps. xl. 8).

But let us proceed. We meet lower down with the language of others about this One: "All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him,

seeing He delighted in Him" (Ps. xxii. 7, 8). Rejection by men, and their bitter taunts, this One was to experience as well, and their very language is given us as if the scene was present to the eye of the writer. *As if*, shall we say? Who was the writer? David? He himself has told us, in figurative language, that his tongue was the pen of a ready writer (Ps. xlv. 1); and speaking in words divested of metaphor, plainly declared that the Spirit of the Lord spake by him, and His word was in his tongue (2 Sam. xxiii. 2). The real writer of the Psalm had the future before Him, as distinctly as if the events were actually taking place. The Lord Jesus, who was forsaken of God on the cross, was taunted in this very way by men who witnessed His death.

By whom? Not by the ignorant rabble; not by the centurion, or the soldiers under him; but by the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders, as Matthew informs us, and he alone. The Aramaic utterance of the Lord to God, Mark as well as Matthew has recorded. To the special taunt of the chief priests, scribes, and elders, foretold by the psalmist, Matthew alone draws attention (xxvii. 43). Now, who would have pre-supposed it possible that the educated classes, the religious teachers amongst God's people, would thus act? Was it simply callousness to human suffering? No, had that been the case, would the thieves not have been taunted likewise? They deserved to be reproached. All, however, it seems, was reserved for Him who had done nothing amiss.

Here we see that all was not foretold; but that makes the fulfilment of what had been predicted all the more striking. The language of these people who would not appear on earth for a thousand years later is foretold, though who they would be was carefully concealed, till in the bitterness and enmity of their hearts to God, and to His Son, the chief priests, &c. showed they were the very ones to whom the Psalm



refers. Those who from education and religious profession would naturally have been thought the last so to act, are the very ones who fulfilled the prediction. Can we escape from the conclusion that it was a prediction, and what they should do was foreknown and foretold? Enough is foretold for us to recognise the prophecy, yet some things were kept all those years concealed which, when the prediction was verified, would only tend to establish beyond reasonable doubt that the whole scene had been before the eye of the real author.

We can go further. In ver. 18 we read, "They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture." Does not this language, too, read as if the scene was under the eye of the writer? In truth it was. Before its fulfilment, any reader of the Psalm might have supposed that those who would deal with the garments would be the same as those already referred to. The fulfilment of the prophecy, for John, who must have witnessed what passed, tells us it was fulfilled, was effected by soldiers, and not by the Jews. Each man of those four present was intent on profiting in a pecuniary way from the death of the Lord, and so sought a share of His garments. The garments were divided among them, but the coat was not, for, woven throughout in one piece, to have divided it would have spoiled it. For that, then, they cast lots.

All this was natural. But everyone, it would seem, did not wear a coat woven throughout. Josephus tells us (*Ant.* iii., vii. 4) that the high-priest wore a garment of the same construction, *i.e.*, woven throughout, which thus differed from that of the common priests. Who could have foreknown that the Lord, who was not high-priest, would have had a garment of that construction? Why lots should be cast for the vesture was concealed till it took place. When the soldiers cast the lot, it must have seemed a perfectly natural act on their part so to deal with the coat, so differently from their dealing with the rest. And

they certainly were wholly unconscious that by their acts that day, perfectly reasonable as they seemed, they were fulfilling the divine word, which had been recorded in writing a decade of centuries before they were on duty at the cross. The chief priests, &c. might have been familiar with the Psalm, but no one in his senses could suppose that they planned to fulfil it. The soldiers, doubtless, were in perfect ignorance that their dealings with the garments had been described long before the foundation of Rome, with that circumstantial minuteness of detail one could only expect from an eye-witness. There was an eye which beheld it, the eye of the All-seeing One, the Omniscient One!

But more. The One who was to utter that cry of the opening verse, whom men were to taunt, and whose garments were to be thus dealt with, was at length to die; death was to terminate His sufferings (ver. 21), but not His service, among men. For He proceeds, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee" (ver. 22). That this refers to the Lord Jesus the Hebrews (ii. 12) distinctly declares. That it refers to Him after His death the Psalm distinctly intimates, as, starting with this verse, that wave of blessing is prophetically described which, resulting from His death, will spread in God's own time far and wide, till it reaches the utmost bounds of earth. The reader will see this is true, for His death, mentioned in ver. 15-21, is not mentioned again. In truth, it was henceforth viewed as past. But who, we may ask, before the Lord appeared, had been known to minister amongst men after passing through death? Of Him that was true, as Luke xxiv. 25-51; Acts i. 3-9 describe; and His message by Mary Magdalene (John xx. 17), and also by the other women (Matt. xxviii. 10), confirm. Of Him alone has it ever been true.

What a collection, then, of prophetic announcements have we in the Psalm. The speaker was to be

forsaken of God. He was to be taunted as forsaken by those witnessing His sufferings. His garments were to be divided amongst a number, who would also cast lots for His vesture, and after death He would minister to His brethren upon earth. We say *prophetic* announcements, because this Psalm was certainly in existence, and known to be in existence, centuries before the cross. To this the Septuagint version bears witness, made probably about 280 B.C. So by no possibility can its existence before the birth of Christ be called in question. Then both St. John and St. Paul, as we have seen, refer to it as part of the Scriptures of truth. Of whom does it speak? Not of David, for he did not minister to his brethren after his death, nor when dying were his garments dealt with as he by the Spirit of God had described. To One, and One only, can all its prophetic statements referring to the past be found to apply, viz., to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then may we not ask who of men could have pre-conceived how this portion of the Word would be fulfilled? Who could have supposed that He, in whom the Father was well pleased, would be at the close of His life of faithful service forsaken by God? Who could have thought, too, that the chief priests and scribes, and elders would have treated their Messiah as was thus predicted, and history has recorded? Who could have foreknown that the child of a poor carpenter's wife, as men regarded Him (Matt. xiii. 55), and a carpenter Himself (Mark vi. 3), would have worn that seamless vesture for which the soldiers cast lots? And who, if desirous of being believed by his fellows, would have stated beforehand that One forsaken of God should, after death, declare God's name to His brethren? Such a collection of events to be found in the history of one person no sober mind would have invented. Now, in the history of the Lord in connection with His crucifixion and resurrection, all these are found one by one fulfilled.

## THE FAITHFUL PROMISER.

17

Besides this, we have a good illustration of that which the prophetic student should always bear in mind. Taking what is plainly said by the prophet as really meant, it may be that all the attendant circumstances of an event are not developed in the prediction. That was the case in this Psalm. Who would utter that cry was not foretold. Who would taunt the sufferer was kept in reserve. Why lots were to be cast for the vesture was a matter then unexplained. Graphically enough was the scene described, and quite in character with that which an eye-witness would relate. But some things were kept in reserve till the predictions were fulfilled, and so served to confirm in the fullest way the fact that the Psalm was prophetic.

Surely then, with this one Psalm before us, till its composition can be fixed at a date posterior to the cross, and that is impossible, it is folly to deny the possibility of prophecy, or to take the ground that the prophet's acquaintance with details is sufficient to assign a time to the supposed prediction, subsequent to its assumed fulfilment. No; God does foresee. He can foretell. Foolish, aye, more than foolish, are those who deny the one, or refuse to credit the fruits of the other.

C. E. S.

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 THE FAITHFUL PROMISER.
 

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SCEPTICS may scoff and infidels may deride as much as they please; but the experience of Christians to-day proves that the God of Elijah still lives! He who "commanded the ravens" to feed the prophet by the brook Cherith interests Himself in the affairs of the humblest believer in His Son.

He has promised to His own children, "Thy bread shall be given thee; thy water shall be sure": and the promises of God are never broken. Humanly speaking, the manner in which they are fulfilled is remarkable; but God has numberless ways of carry-

ing out His designs, and only those who have had personal dealing with the living God can possibly understand His ways with the children of men.

But He is faithful to His word. "Heaven and earth shall pass away," said the Saviour, "but one jot or tittle of My word shall not pass away till all be fulfilled."

At George Yard, Whitechapel, a few months ago, a prayer meeting had been held, when the gentleman conducting the meeting had urged the people to take God at His word; to take to Him a promise He had made, and to expect a fulfilment of it. At the close of the meeting, a poor woman waited on the gentleman, and said, "Mr. C., God does fulfil His promises. Let me tell you how He cheered our hearts a few days ago.

"We had come to the last penny, and knew not where the food for the next day was to come from. At about three o'clock in the morning my husband woke up—I had been awake some time—and called me. He said, 'Mary, God has given me such a grand promise; and it is this: "My God shall supply all your need."'

"'Why, John,' said I, 'those are just the words I have been thinking of for some time.' And making a pillow of that glorious promise, we calmly fell asleep.

"On rising, we felt sure that God was interested in our welfare; and trusting in Him, we rejoiced and were glad. By-and-by a letter arrived; and I was summoned to attend at the school at which my children are placed, and it was with great joy that I received the intelligence that the committee had granted to us the sum of two pounds! You should have seen my husband when I took home the news!"

Surely the God of Elijah still lives, and is not far from any one of us.

Dr. Krummacher, in his excellent work, "Elijah, the Tishbite," relates the following touching incident which occurred in his own village. These instances

are not rare in the experience of Christians ; but comparatively few of them are ever made known to the wide, wide world.

“ And this God,” writes Dr. Krummacher, “ still liveth—a living Saviour, who is always to be found of them that seek Him, and is nigh unto them that call upon Him, and whose delights are with the sons of men. About His servants and handmaids is encamped a mighty host : and when He saith, ‘ Come ! ’ they come ; or, ‘ Go ! ’ they go ; and there has been no end to His wonders, even to this day.

“ Who else was it but the God of Elijah who, only a short time ago, in our neighbourhood, so kindly delivered a poor man out of his distress ; not indeed by a raven, but by a poor singing bird ? You may be acquainted with the circumstance. The man was sitting, early in the morning, at his house-door ; his eyes were red with weeping, and his heart cried to Heaven—for he was expecting an officer to come and distrain him for a small debt. And whilst sitting thus with his heavy heart, a little bird flew through the street, fluttering up and down, as if in distress ; until at length, quick as an arrow, it flew over the good man’s head into his cottage, and perched itself on an empty cupboard. The good man, who little imagined who had sent him the bird, closed the door, caught the bird, and placed it in a cage, where it immediately began to sing very sweetly, and it seemed to the man as if it were the tune of a favourite hymn—

‘ Fear thou not when darkness reigns ’ ;

and as he listened to it, he found it soothe and comfort his mind.

“ Suddenly some one knocked at his door. ‘ Ah, it is the officer,’ thought the man, and was sore afraid. But no, it was the servant of a respectable lady, who said that the neighbours had seen a bird fly into his house, and she wished to know if he had caught it.

“ ‘ Oh, yes,’ answered the man, ‘ and here it is ; ’ and

the bird was carried away. A few minutes after the servant came again.

“‘You have done my mistress a great service,’ said he; ‘she sets a high value upon the bird which had escaped from her. She is much obliged to you, and requests you to accept this trifle with her thanks.’ The poor man received it gratefully, and it proved to be neither more nor less than the sum he owed! And when the officer came, he said, ‘Here is the amount of the debt; now leave me in peace, for God has sent it me.’”

“There is no want to them that fear Him.”—*Extract.*

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## PRAYING AND WORKING.

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“We will give ourselves continually to *prayer* and the *ministry* of the word.”—ACTS v.

The vail is rent. Thou now mayest enter in;  
 No flaming sword of cherub bars thy way;  
 He who without the camp once bore thy sin,  
 Appears within the holiest “*to-day*,”  
 And intercedes for all who come by Him to pray.

His blood is sprinkled on the mercy-seat,  
 His blood is sprinkled, too, before the throne,  
 Where'er ascend the clouds of incense sweet;  
 The work of reconciliation all is done:  
 He lives, our great High Priest, who did for sin atone.

Head of the church, behold His glorious face,  
 His members all accepted in their Head;  
 In Him all fulness dwells of truth and grace  
 To meet His people's ever-varying need;  
 Draw nigh, by Him, to God without one pang of dread.

Prayer is the breath of faith in God's own ears,  
 Prayer is the open mouth He waits to fill;  
 Prayer is the voice our heavenly Father hears,  
 That brings down blessings from His holy hill;  
 Wisdom to learn, and strength to do His gracious will.

First *pray* : then *work*. No work can e'er succeed  
 That prayerless wit and will to do combine ;  
 All prayerless strength is but a broken reed,  
 A wither'd branch that's sever'd from the Vine ;  
 No fruits, or works of such, shall heaven-recorded shine.

Faith always prays, and praying works by love ;  
 God's chronicles record the power of prayer ;  
 His heroes, servants, martyrs, from above  
 Drew all the sap that made their lives so fair ;  
 There is your full supply if you like fruit would bear.

“Praying and Working,”—life words, full of light,  
 Prayer without ceasing leads to ceaseless toil ;  
 Not toil that wearies, for His yoke is light,  
 Who feeds the lamp He trims with golden oil ;  
 And His dear workman's strength renews with heavenly  
 spoil.

*Wellington, Dec., 1868.*

J. G. D.

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“THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD WHEREIN  
 YE STAND.”

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GOD is made known to us as the “*God of all grace*,” and the position in which we are set is that of tasting that He is *gracious*. How hard it is for us to believe this, that the Lord is *gracious*. The natural feeling of our hearts is, “I know that Thou art an austere man ;” there is the want in all of us naturally of the understanding of the *Grace of God*.

There is sometimes the thought that grace implies God's *passing over sin* ; but no, grace supposes sin to be so horribly bad a thing, that God cannot tolerate it : were it in the power of man, after being unrighteous and evil, to patch up his ways, and mend himself so as to stand before God, there would be no need of *grace*. The very fact of the Lord's being *gracious* shews sin to be so evil a thing, that, man being a sinner, his state is utterly ruined and hopeless, and nothing but *free grace* can meet his need.



We must learn what God is to us, not by our own thoughts, but by what He has revealed Himself to be, and that is, "*the God of all grace.*" The moment I understand that I am a sinful man, and yet that it was because the Lord knew the full extent of my sin, and what its hatefulness was, that He came to me, I understand what *grace* is. Faith makes me see that God is greater than my sin, and not that my sin is greater than God. . . . The Lord that I have known as laying down His life for me, is the same Lord I have to do with every day of my life, and all His dealings with me are on the same principles of *grace*. The great secret of growth is, the looking up to the Lord as *gracious*. How precious, how strengthening it is to know that Jesus is at this moment feeling and exercising the same love towards me as when He died on the Cross for me.

This is a truth that should be used by us in the most common every-day circumstances of life. Suppose, for instance, I find an evil temper in myself, which I feel it difficult to overcome; let me bring it to Jesus as my Friend, virtue goes out of Him for my need. *Faith* should be ever thus in exercise against temptations, and not simply my own effort; my own effort against it will never be sufficient. The source of real strength is in the sense of the Lord's being *gracious*. The natural man in us always disbelieves Christ as the only source of strength and of every blessing. Suppose my soul is out of communion, the natural heart says, "I must correct the cause of this before I can come to Christ:" but *He is gracious*; and knowing this, the way is to return to Him *at once, just as we are*, and then humble ourselves deeply before Him. It is only in *Him* and from *Him*, that we shall find that which will restore our souls. Humbleness in His presence is the only real humbleness. If we own ourselves in His presence to be *just what we are*, we shall find that He will shew us nothing but *grace*. . . .

It is Jesus who gives abiding rest to our souls, and not what our thoughts about ourselves may be. Faith never thinks about that which is in ourselves as its ground of rest: it receives, loves, and apprehends what God has revealed, and what are God's thoughts about Jesus, in whom is *His rest*. As knowing Jesus to be precious to our souls, our eyes and our hearts being occupied with Him, they will be effectually prevented from being taken up with the vanity and sin around; and this too will be our strength against the sin and corruption of our own hearts. Whatever I see in myself that is not in Him is sin; but then it is not thinking of my own sins, and my own vileness, and being occupied with them, that will humble me, but thinking of the Lord Jesus, dwelling upon the excellency in Him. It is well to be done with ourselves, and to be taken up with Jesus. We are entitled to forget ourselves, we are entitled to forget our sins, we are entitled to forget all but Jesus.

There is nothing so hard for our hearts as to abide in the sense of *grace*, to continue practically conscious that we are not under law but under *grace*, it is by *grace* that the heart is "established;" but then there is nothing more difficult for us really to comprehend than the fulness of *grace*, that "*grace of God wherein we stand*," and to walk in the power and consciousness of it. . . . It is only in the presence of God that we can know it, and *there* it is our privilege to be. The moment we get away from the presence of God, there will always be certain workings of *our own* thoughts within us, and our own thoughts can never reach up to the thoughts *of God* about us, to the "*grace of God*." . .

Anything that I had the smallest possible right to expect could not be pure, free *grace*—could not be the "*grace of God*." . . . It is *alone* when in communion with Him that we are able to measure *everything* according to *His grace*. . . . It is impossible, when we are abiding in the sense of God's presence, for anything, be what it may—even the state

of the Church,—to shake us, for we count on God, and then all things become a sphere and scene for the operation of *His grace*.

The having very simple thoughts of *grace* is the true source of our strength as Christians ; and the abiding in the sense of *grace* in the presence of God is all the secret of holiness, peace, and quietness of spirit.

The "*grace of God*" is so unlimited, so full, so perfect, that if we get for a moment out of the presence of God, we cannot have the true consciousness of it, we have no strength to apprehend it ; and if we attempt to know it out of His presence we shall only turn it to licentiousness. If we look at the simple fact of what grace is, it has no limits, no bounds. Be we what we may (and we cannot be worse than we are), in spite of all that, what God is towards us is LOVE. Neither our joy nor our peace is dependent on what we are to God, but on what *He is to us*, and this is *grace*.

Grace supposes all the sin and evil that is in us, and is the blessed revelation, that through Jesus all this sin and evil have been put away. A single sin is more horrible to God than a thousand sins—nay, than all the sins in the world—are to us ; and yet, with the fullest consciousness of what *we* are, all that God is pleased to be towards us is LOVE.

In Rom. vii. the state described is that of a person quickened, but whose whole set of reasonings centre in *himself*. . . . He stops short of grace, of the simple fact that, whatever be his state, let him be as bad as he may, GOD IS LOVE, and only love towards him. Instead of looking at God, it is all "I," "I," "I." Faith looks at God, as he has revealed Himself in grace. . . . Let me ask you, "Am I, or is my state, the object of faith?" No, faith never makes what is in *my heart* its object, but *God's revelation of Himself in grace*. . . .

Grace has reference to what GOD is, and not to what we are, except indeed that the very greatness of our sins does but magnify the extent of the "*grace of God*."

At the same time we must remember, that the object and necessary effect of grace is to bring our souls into communion with God—to sanctify us, by bringing the soul to know God, and to love Him; therefore the knowledge of grace is the true source of sanctification.

The triumph of grace is seen in this, that when man's enmity had cast out Jesus from the earth, God's love had brought in salvation by that very act—came in to atone for the sins of those who had rejected Him. In view of the fullest development of man's sin, faith sees the fullest development of God's grace. . . . I have got away from grace if I have the slightest doubt or hesitation about God's love. I shall then be saying, "I am unhappy because I am not what I should like to be:" *that* is not the question. The real question is, whether *God* is what we should like Him to be, whether Jesus is all we could wish. If the consciousness of what we are—of what we find in ourselves—have any other effect than, while it humbles us, to increase our adoration of what God is, we are off the ground of pure grace. . . . Is there distress and distrust in your minds? see if it be not because you are still saying, "I," "I," and losing sight of God's grace.

It is better to be thinking of what God is than of what we are. This looking at ourselves is at the bottom really pride, a want of the thorough consciousness that we are *good for nothing*. Till we see this we never look quite away from self to God. . . . In looking to Christ it is our privilege to forget ourselves. *True humility does not so much consist in thinking badly of ourselves, as in not thinking of ourselves at all. I am too bad to be worth thinking about.* What I want is, to forget myself and to look to God, who is indeed worth all my thoughts. Is there need of being humbled about ourselves? We may be quite sure that will do it.

Beloved, if we can say as in Romans vii., "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no *good thing*," we have thought quite long enough about ourselves; let us

26      THREEFOLD VIEW OF ETERNAL LIFE.

then think about Him who thought about us with thoughts of good and not of evil, long before we had thought of ourselves at all. Let us see what His thoughts of grace about us are, and take up the words of faith, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

J. N. D.

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THREEFOLD VIEW OF ETERNAL LIFE.

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I. ETERNAL LIFE—A PRESENT POSSESSION.

Acts xiii. 46.—Unworthy of everlasting life.

Acts xiii. 48.—Ordained to everlasting life.

John iii. 16.—Shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

John iii. 36.—Believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. (John xx. 31.)

John v. 24, 26, 39, 40.—Sent Me hath everlasting life . . . from death unto life.

John vi. 40.—Believeth on Him may have everlasting life.

John vi. 47.—He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life.

John xii. 50.—His commandment is life everlasting. (1 John iii. 23.)

1 Tim. i. 16.—Them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.

John x. 10, 28.—I give unto them eternal life—they shall never perish.

John xvii. 2, 3.—Should give eternal life—this is life eternal.

1 John v. 11, 12, 13, 20; Rom. i. 17.

II. ETERNAL LIFE.—A CONTINUOUS GROWTH.

Heb. x. 38.—The just shall live by faith. (Gal. iii. 11.)

John iv. 14.—Springing up into everlasting life.

THREEFOLD VIEW OF ETERNAL LIFE. 27

John vi. 33.—Giveth life unto the world.—35-48.  
Bread of life.

John vi. 51.—Eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.

John vi. 52, 53.—Eat flesh, drink blood, hath no life.

John vi. 54.—Hath eternal life.

John vi. 56.—Dwelleth in Me, and I in him. (John xv. 4.)—Abide.

John vi. 57.—Eateth Me, shall live by Me. Gal. ii. 20.—I live by the *faith*.

John vi. 58.—Live for ever.

John vii. 38.—Flow rivers of living water.

Col. iii. 3, 4.—Life is hid . . . Christ who is our life.

Rom. viii. 12, 13.—Mortify deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Gal. v. 25.—If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

III. ETERNAL LIFE.—A FUTURE REWARD.

Matt. xix. 30.—And shall inherit life eternal.

Luke xviii. 30.—In the world to come, life everlasting.

John vi. 27.—That meat which endureth unto everlasting life.

John xi. 25, 26.—Yet shall he live . . . Believeth in Me shall never die.

John xiv. 19.—I live, ye shall live also.

Rom. vi. 8.—If dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.

Rom. vi. 22.—Holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Gal. vi. 8.—Reap life everlasting. Rom. v. 17-21.—Reign in life.—Reign unto everlasting life.

John iv. 36.—Gathereth fruit unto eternal life.

Rom. ii. 7.—Who by patient continuance . . . eternal life.

2 Cor. v. 4.—Mortality swallowed up of life.

1 Tim. vi. 12.—Lay hold of eternal life.

2 Tim. ii. 11.—If dead with Him . . . shall live.

Rev. ii. 7.—Tree of life. (Rev. xx. 2.)

2 Tim i. 1.—Promise of life. (Titus i. 2).—Hope of eternal life.

Titus iii. 7 ; Jas. i. 12.—Crown of life.

Jude 21 ; 1 John ii. 25.—Promised everlasting life.

## ALARMING GROWTH OF RITUALISM.

LYING IN STATE OF A CLERGYMAN.—The body, which was attired in full clerical clothing—cassock, alb, amice, girdle, stole, maniple, and chasuble—was placed in the chancel over-night, and at eight o'clock this morning, a private communion service was held in the church, conducted by the Rev. F. Utterson. The coffin itself was of polished English oak, with brass handles, the lid being surmounted by a Latin cross, bearing the text, "Jesu Mercy." At the foot of the cross was written in old English characters the inscription, "William Hope, born December 23rd, 1822 ; died December 8th, 1889." [DERBY.]

ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF A CLERGYMAN.—A solemn requiem for the repose of the soul of the late Rev. A. H. Mackonochie was held on Tuesday last, at St. Alban's Church, Holborn, being the second anniversary of his death. In the centre of the chancel was a temporary catafalque, consisting of a bier covered with a magnificent violet pall, with a huge white cross and the monogram of the deceased gentleman in large letters. On the papers distributed among the congregation was the appeal, "Of your charity, pray for the soul of the Rev. A. H. Mackonochie. R.I.P."

But what says Scripture? "Being justified by faith, *we have* peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

JANUARY, 1890.

## “BEHOLD THE MAN.”

1 *Sam.* ix. 17 ; xvi. 12 ; *John* xix. 5.

ELI the priest was old and blind, and his sons were wicked men. Israel had trusted in the ark itself to save them from the Philistines before whom they had been smitten, instead of the God of Israel who “dwelt between the cherubim;” and God allowed His glory to be delivered into the enemy’s hands. Then the ark was taken, and Eli’s two sons were slain. The tidings of such a terrible disaster was too much for the aged priest, and he fell backwards and broke his neck. It was fatal news to his daughter-in-law also ; but ere she departed, she acknowledged the true state of her nation in the name she gave to her son, Ichabod—the glory is departed from Israel (1 *Sam.* iv. 21). Alas, how true ! But God vindicated His own glory in the enemy’s land. If Israel failed in this, He would care for it Himself, and the god Dagon fell before Him. Those of the Philistines who kept the ark were plagued and died, and wherever it was sent amongst them it carried ruin and death, until at last they returned it to its people.

“God is known by the judgment He executeth,” and the Philistine priest and diviners might well teach us an important lesson in this our own day, when they said, as they discussed sending it back again, “Give glory unto the God of Israel,” though they could only add, “*Peradventure* He will lighten His hand from off you,” &c. (1 *Sam.* vi. 5). But even then, ere it found its resting-place, carried back by the kine against all the instincts of nature under the guiding hand of Jehovah, death ensued to the men of Bethshemesh upon their temerity in looking into it. God cared for His own glory whether amongst friends or foes. Thus disaster followed disaster, until at last Israel was brought to self-judgment before the Lord, the point where He can meet and bless sinful men ; then they find Him on

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their side, and they raised their stone, calling it Ebenezer.

Next we find that Samuel grew old, and we learn that prophets can make mistakes and fail as much as priests or kings; Samuel made his sons judges, and they turned out wicked men. Dissatisfaction now deepened in the people's minds, and the wickedness and oppression of Samuel's sons culminated at last in Israel's demand for "a king to judge us like all the nations" (chap. viii. 5). They rejected the Lord Himself as their king (verse 7). The solemn protest was given against such wickedness, but their desire was granted, and the character of the king shewn, and the consequences unfolded to them.

At last the day came when the man whom God knew they would choose arrived in the presence of Samuel. Notice too, at this point, how God allows circumstances to work out His purposes in a natural way. The whole history is most instructive in this aspect. God wrought no miracle. He allowed the asses to be lost, and Saul to go in search of them, and thus meet Samuel. It is all so simple and natural; and it is thus God works to-day. Often we forget this, and, in our gazing to see something quite supernatural, we miss His workings and our own blessing. God had told Samuel the previous day that He would bring the man to him who was to be king: for, He said, "I have looked upon My people because their cry is come unto Me" (chap. ix. 16). What a contrast to their cry in Egypt when Jehovah looked, heard, and delivered. Now He looks, hears, and lets them have their own way. "He gave them a king in His anger, and took him away in His wrath."

When, therefore, Saul presented himself before Samuel to enquire about his way, the Lord said unto Samuel, "Behold the man whom I spake to thee of." What a splendid specimen of a man! No finer could have been found in the realm! Higher than any of the people; towering head and shoulders above all others;

this certainly was *the* man! No wonder the people were in raptures, and shouted "God save the king."

But, after all, *was* this the man? *Did* he fight their battles? *Did* he command their respect? Nay, he was the first to show fear and dismay at the approach of the giant of Gath (chap. xvii. 11-24). He was man's man, but not God's man; the people's choice, but not the man after God's heart, and who should fulfil all His will (Acts xiii. 22). No! God's man was still in obscurity, passing through his studies in the school of adversity. Alone with God, he was learning his lessons by meeting and slaying the lion and bear; preparing thus to meet either Philistine champion or Philistine hosts. Ah, that is the school where all successful Christian warriors learn their lessons and secure the certainty of their successes—alone with God.

Again we hear God addressing Samuel, "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?" (ch. xvi. 1). Poor Samuel's heart was broken over Saul. He was a failure, and God had rejected him. The people's choice was incapable of carrying out the mind of God. Was therefore the whole thing to fail and the government to go? No! God had *His* man in readiness, and Samuel's ears were greeted with the cheering words, "*I have provided Me a king.*" What wonderful words! How full of grace! How fruitful in blessing to His poor, foolish people!

Here, too, we see that Samuel was tested, and mistook the splendid and manly forms of Jessie's elder sons for the man of God's choice. What a common mistake! How often are we deceived by mere outward appearances! What a lesson for us. But when the youngest son was brought in from the field (for the first shall be last, and the last first), Samuel again hears the voice of the Lord, saying, as it were, "Behold the man." "Arise," said the Lord, "anoint him, for this is he" (chap. xvi. 12). Observe here the

description given of God's chosen king: "Ruddy, of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to." Well may *we* say, "Behold the man."

The stream of time rolls on, it waits for no man. On it rolls, fulfilling the purposes of God. At last, when Israel was without a king, and under a foreign yoke on account of their sin, appeared the

"Fairer than all the earth-born race;"

the true David; David's son, yet David's Lord; the Man of God's purpose; the One of whom prophets and singers alike had both prophesied and sung. He was come.

Need we follow His holy, spotless life on earth? Page after page of the New Testament tells its own blessed tale, and fulfils the typical teaching of the Old Testament; while towering far above and eclipsing in divine perfection and majesty all *mere* types of Him as it sets Himself before us. The Man after God's own heart, and who should fulfil all His will, had come at last. The Lamb for the sacrifice; the King for the throne. Blessed be *His* holy name for ever and for ever more.

Wise men from the East came to seek Him at His birth, saying, "Where is He that is born *King of the Jews?*" (Matt. ii. 2). Strangers owned Him, but His own rejected Him (John i. 11). The born King must needs die before the kingdom could be established in power, and peopled by a willing and obedient nation. The corn of wheat must die ere the harvest of ripe grain could be gathered. Thus rejected and despised He was delivered over to the Romans to be crucified. During His mock trial, He was led forth from the judgment-hall wearing a crown of thorns, and a purple robe, and presented to the people as *the* Man. "Behold the Man," said Pilate; and again, "Behold your King" (John xix. 5, 14). What reply was given to such an announcement? Was it the unanimous cry of "God save the King?" Alas! no! "Away

with Him! away with Him! crucify Him! . . . .  
we have no king but Cæsar" (John xix. 15), was the wild shout of the infatuated and deluded people.

Need we follow Him further? "Behold the Man" nailed to the cross, a spectacle for angels, men, and demons—the holy Sufferer—"the Lamb of God." He bore our sins, and the judgment of God due to us on account of those sins. In His death we see the condemnation of our evil nature. He died. By that sacrificial death the glory of God was secured, and the deep, deep needs of our poor hearts were all met. Every claim was discharged, and every question was answered which could arise between a poor penitent, believing sinner, and a holy and righteous God. The throne of God was reached and met, and the conscience of the believing sinner put in tune and harmony with that throne. What a Victim! What a Sacrifice! What mighty and eternal results hung upon it!

And where is He now? Risen, ascended, seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens (Heb. i. 3; viii. 1); all power in heaven and in earth committed to Him (Matt. xxviii. 18); the One who has sent down the Holy Ghost to dwell in and lead on His saints till we hear the summoning shout which will call us up to be "ever with the Lord;" the One who is coming to take to Himself His great power and reign. Yes! the One born King shall yet sit on the throne of His father, David. Yea, the kingdoms of this world shall yet become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, for "He must reign till all enemies are put under His feet" (1 Cor. xv. 25). Meanwhile, for us who believe there is an opened heaven into which we look, and see on the throne the object of faith for the sinner—the object of worship and adoration for the saint—Jesus, the glorified Son of Man. And only as we are occupied with Him in the power of the Holy Ghost who has come to glorify Him, shall we escape the snares that

we see others have fallen into, and the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ be glorified in us, and we in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. i. 12). How important to "Behold the Man!"

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

*New Zealand.*

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 PEACE.
 

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AT the birth of the Lord, the earth was saluted with words of peace. "Peace on earth" the angels proclaimed in the fields of Bethlehem. This, however, was but a salutation. It was not the authoritative pronouncement of peace. It was the word which the Lord afterwards put into the lips of His twelve, or rather of the seventy, in Luke x., when sending them out, for He told them then, into whatsoever house they entered first to say, "Peace be to this house." This was a salutation, a wishing well, the proclamation of good-will towards the house, not an authoritative pronouncement of peace; *that* would rather follow on its being found that the Son of Peace was there. Upon the resurrection of the Lord, however, we have the other thing. "Peace be unto you," the risen Saviour said to His disciples, when returned to them; and when He said that, He showed them His hands and His side. He gave them to read their title to peace. Peace was now not merely wished, but authoritatively pronounced, conveyed to them, because He had already made it for them. And this is the peace that we, who are in it, may testify of to our fellow sinners. We do not merely, like the commissioned seventy, say, "Peace be to this house," as saluting it, or wishing it well, but we proclaim to them the sure, settled, purchased peace, which sinners have title to in the blood of the cross.

J. G. B.

## ANGELIC PRAISE.

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WE know but little about the angels, and that knowledge is all derived from the Word of God ; for we conclude that none of our readers have seen one, or have held direct intercourse with any of them. No book have we which treats at all of them authoritatively but the written word of God.

They are creatures, that we know ; and they were created by the Second Person of the Trinity (Col. i. 16), the Eternal Son. Of their number we have no account, though we read of ranks among them, called principalities and powers (Ephes. iii. 10). Of two classes does the word speak—the elect angels (1 Tim. v. 21) and the apostate angels (Jude 6) ; for we here leave out of account that order of beings called demons, of whose origin we believe we know nothing. The *elect* angels are in heaven ; the *apostate* ones are kept in dens of darkness reserved unto judgment (2 Pet. ii. 4). Hence what creatures those are which, under the similitude of locusts, will come forth from the bottomless pit, we are equally in ignorance about.

With the *elect* angels is this paper concerned, so all reference to Satan's history is necessarily excluded. Higher naturally in the scale of created intelligences than man (Ps. viii. 5), they are greater in power and in might (2 Pet. ii. 11) ; yet they serve men, representing little children before the Father (Matt. xviii. 10), and ministering to those who shall be heirs of salvation (Heb. i. 14). Around the throne of God they stand : but there are intelligent creatures who will be nearer that throne than the highest archangel ; we mean heavenly saints, who will reign with Christ, and are symbolised by the twenty-four elders. As yet that blissful company has not got its destined place in the court of heaven ; God's full purpose about that court, to speak after the manner of men, still awaits its accomplishment (Rev. v. 11 ; vii. 11).

The angels are God's servants, His ministers, excel-

ling in strength, doing His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word (Ps. ciii. 20), and, as deriving their being from Him, are called sons of God (Gen. vi. 4; Job i. 6; ii. 1; xxxviii. 7). Differing in nature from us, with neither marriage nor death have they to do (Luke xx. 35, 36); so are neither increased nor diminished in number, as far as we know. Now ministering whilst concealed from the gaze of men, they will by and by come forth and carry out the will of God in judgment on impenitent men, and on the devil likewise (Matt. xiii. 41, 49, 50; Rev. xx. 1-3).

Possessed of great intelligence and power, of course as creatures their intelligence and power are limited, though man as such can cope with neither the one nor the other; yet the angels can learn; desirous of old to fathom the meaning of the prophetic word (1 Pet. i. 12), and now apprehending by the Church the manifold wisdom of God (Ephes. iii. 10). Spectators, too, they are of that which goes on upon earth (1 Cor. xi. 10). Attendants on God, they were present at Sinai, though unseen, we suppose, by the people of Israel (Deut. xxxiii. 2; Ps. lxviii. 17; Acts vii. 53; Gal. iii. 19); and they will come with the Son of Man when He comes to reign (Matt. xxv. 31). Yet men have seen them. Jacob met God's host at a place he named *Mahanaim*\*—*i. e.*, two camps, recording thereby that his camp and that of the angels were found together at that spot (Gen. xxxii. 1, 2). The shepherds at Bethlehem beheld a multitude of them (Luke ii. 13) on the night of the nativity. Daniel (Dan. vi. 22), Peter (Acts xii. 7-10), and Paul (xxvii. 23) told of angelic ministry to them; whilst the women at the sepulchre (Matt. xxviii. 5), the eleven near Bethany (Acts i. 10), and Cornelius in his house at Cæsarea (Acts x. 3, 30) received timely instruction from some of them. Of old the powers of evil sought

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\* Some would explain the word *Mahanaim* of the angelic hosts encamped on Jacob's right hand left to protect him. The text, however, gives no hint of this.

to hinder their service to saints on earth (Dan. x. 13); but in the coming days of conflict with the devil and his angels they will under Michael, the archangel, be victorious (Rev. xii. 7, 8).

We have said there are different ranks, or hierarchies, among them. There are also different classes, or kinds, among them, as the seraphim and the chief princes, of which last Michael is one (Dan. x. 13), and he with Gabriel are the only angels with whose names the Bible has made us acquainted. The seraphim Isaiah beheld in his vision of the Lord, in chapter vi. of his prophecy, and he heard them proclaiming the holiness of God; and the posts of the door of the temple were moved at their cry. Angelic interests, however, are not confined to that. The glory of God and the furtherance of it in other ways deeply concern them. Of that we have several proofs. Let us turn to them.

Called into existence before man, they witnessed those purposes of God being gradually unfolded which have for their aim, not only the glory of God, but, in a marked way, the glory of His Son, with which is bound up the final blessing of men. On the Son Himself they gazed when here in humiliation (1 Tim. iii. 16), and to Him some ministered in the wilderness and in the garden (Matt. iv. 11; Luke xxii. 43). Now, as an order of beings so different from us, we could know nothing of their mind on any subject, unless we had heard it directly expressed, or had learnt about it from the Scriptures of truth. To the last are we in these days turned to find out the interest they have taken, and will take, in the gradual fulfilment of God's eternal purposes. On four occasions, widely separated from each other in point of time, they have given expression to their minds in no indefinite manner.

God's purposes of love were to be displayed in connection with a fallen race—that of man. That race must, therefore, be created, and a dwelling-place



in some part of the universe be assigned it as an habitation. The earth was selected for this; given, as we read, to the children of men (Ps. cxv. 16). In the earth, then, the angels took an interest. This little globe moving in space, not by any means the smallest, *but far, very far* from being the largest, even of our solar system, interested them; and we learn of that from the One competent to reveal it. The Lord God, who witnessed their interest, told Job about it (Job xxxviii. 7). Doubtless it was till then unknown to Job, and must have remained unknown to men, unless it had been revealed. "Whereupon are the foundations thereof (*i.e.*, of the earth) fastened? Or who laid the corner stone thereof, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" More, surely, could be revealed about this; but the Word is silent. It was a joy to them to look on the earth bearing the impress of divine workmanship. That is all we know.

Ages rolled by before we hear of angels uttering a note of praise. But suddenly, at midnight, there was seen by shepherds, watching over their flocks near Bethlehem, a multitude of the heavenly host, whose voices were heard in praise, and what they said was in a language which men could understand: "Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace among men in whom He is well pleased" (Luke ii. 14, R.V.) What called this forth? No new globe had appeared to garnish the heavens. A wonder, however, greater than that had come to pass. He by whom the worlds were made, and whose handiwork had called forth a shout of joy from the angels in the distant past, He had taken upon Him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men (Phil. ii. 7). There was to be found in a manger at Bethlehem a new-born infant, who was Christ the Lord, but whose goings forth had been from of old, from everlasting. Another stage in the divine purposes had been reached: the Saviour of sinners had been

born. Glory must flow to God from that, and men—those in whom God is well pleased—would benefit by it. God's glory, and man's blessing—in these the angels rejoiced.

But the incarnation was not all. Humiliation is not victory. A step in the divine procedure was not the end of the divine purpose. Centuries must roll by, ere the full results of the incarnation could be displayed. Meanwhile those heavenly beings, whose voices the shepherds of Bethlehem had heard, are not unconcerned about the future, nor slow to apprehend the great links in the chain of events. Yet since that night at Bethlehem their voices have not by men, we suppose, been heard in praise. The resurrection too, and entrance into heaven by the Lord, were, for all that we know, witnessed by them in silence. But again will their praise be heard, as we see in Rev. v. The Lamb will take the book to open the seals thereof. Saints will then praise Him; and well may *they*, who are so closely concerned with His death and that which flows from it. But the angels too will praise. They could not, it would seem, keep silence at such a time. And though that to which we refer is future, with the terms in which they will express themselves are we already made acquainted.

The Lamb takes the book to open the seals thereof. The near approach of the kingdom in power is thus declared. The One who is to take its power is the One who was slain. His humiliation is over; the day of His triumph before all approaches. Indifferent to that they could not be. They had seen Him on earth, in the wilderness, in the garden, and on the cross; and the place of His tomb was no matter of unconcern to them. Now the Lamb having taken the book, and receiving the homage of the twenty-four elders, the angels cannot remain silent. So the voices of many angels round the throne must be heard, the swelling notes from a chorus such as earth has never seen must sound forth, and from ten thousand times

ten thousand and thousands of thousands accents of praise will reverberate through the vault of heaven. In one harmonious strain, animated by one desire, occupied with one object, their pealing notes will go forth, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. v. 12). Saints will for ever remember His death. The angels have not forgotten it. The work of God as they beheld it ere man was created, made them shout for joy. The glory of God, so bound up with the incarnation of His Son, called forth their midnight carol. The humiliation and coming glory of the Lamb will cause them to make heaven resound with their praise.

And yet once more will they tell out their joy, and manifest an interest in that which God has done, when the great tribulation is passed, and the saints amongst the Gentiles, preserved through it on earth, shall stand before the throne and before the Lamb (Rev. vii. 9, 10). From that company of all nations, too numerous to number, the cry will go forth, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Their troubles are over. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat" (ver. 16). On earth, where they were outcasts, hunted, proscribed, they will dwell, enjoying millennial peace, and distinct and distinguished blessing from the ministry of the Lamb. We have reached then, in the world's history, the commencement of that time for which earth has waited so long—the true Sabbath rest and peaceful enjoyment by God's earthly saints of the rule of the Prince of peace.

Then afresh will angelic praise wake up. And this time it is the full company—all the angels in heaven. Then standing round about the throne, and the elders, and the four living creatures, they will fall before the throne on their faces, and worship God. In that attitude of adoration, and with hearts full, their ascrip-

tion of praise to God will be heard, saying, "Amen : Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen" (ver. 12). With Amen they will begin, and with Amen will they end.

With that closing Amen their strain of praise ceases. For never again in the stream of time, that has yet to run ere the eternal state begins, does the Word call our attention to angelic praises. Rejoicing as they did, when beholding the earth on which man was to dwell, they subsequently, but after the lapse of many ages, celebrated the advent, in humiliation, of the woman's Seed, who was to bruise the serpent's head. From that day, the day of the nativity, till now the angelic chorus has, for all that we know, as above remarked, been silent. But afresh will it wake up, when the Lamb takes the book to open its seven seals. And then, still later, when the earthly saints, kept steadfast throughout the tribulation, shall strike their note of praise, angelic voices will again be heard in melodious harmony, pouring forth a strain with which heaven will resound.

With God are they seen occupied in chap. vii. With the Lamb is it in chap. v. If we scrutinise their language we find that, with one exception, that which they ascribe to God is fitted, they own, to be ascribed to the Lamb. Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and honour, and power, and might they ascribe to God. Power, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing they ascribe to the Lamb. Is the Lamb, in their eyes, inferior to God? How could that be, seeing that what can be ascribed to God is fitting likewise to be ascribed to Him? It is true there is one exception, and that a characteristic one. Speaking of the Lamb, who is Man as well as God, riches, the angels acknowledge, are His who was slain; whilst in addressing God, their God, thanksgiving takes its place. They here discriminate, and justly. But glory, honour, might, wisdom, and strength, unlimited and

unqualified, they give equally to the Lamb and to God. He who is the Lamb thought it not robbery, or a prize to be grasped at, to be equal with God, for He is God. The angels know that well, and attest it by the terms of their utterance. What is proper for God is proper likewise for Him. What must angels think of those who would deny the deity of the incarnate and crucified One? Their God they speak of in chap. vii., jealous surely for His honour and glory. Would they ascribe to a mere creature what fittingly belongs to their God? Ah, no! Jealous for God, we see what they think of the Lamb, what they know of Him, what they own He should properly receive. His manhood and Godhead they gladly acknowledge. As a Man He receives, but being God, it is that which belongs to God.

Are they biassed, prejudiced witnesses, with some private ends to serve, that they speak in these terms of the Lamb? No one for a moment would say that. Men in their blindness and folly stumble at the incarnation. Angels witnessed it, and saw what none of us have seen—the Lord in the wilderness when hungry, and in the garden when ministered to by an angel. If ever the Lord's humiliation could have justly led creatures to doubt of the Godhead, it would be natural that those most fully acquainted with the former should be the first to doubt the latter. In this, however, they might teach man a lesson. The humiliation of the Son of God is no real stumbling-block in the way of confessing His deity. Those who watched His path here, as no man ever did, proclaim, and willingly do it, that what is fitting for their God is equally fitting for the Lamb, for He is God. Are there two Gods? No. There is but One. Men may try to mystify their fellows; with angels all that is clear. One God, yet different Persons in the Godhead. This they own. This the Scriptures of truth teach us we must own.

C. E. S.

## THE THRONE OF GRACE.

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IN Hebrews iv., we have, at the end, three great and important principles for going through the wilderness—the Word, the Priesthood, and the Throne. This is very instructive. The Word searches the thoughts and intents of the heart—all that is working in the mind (desire) and will—as the eye of God. The Priesthood sustains, in grace, in every infirmity, and in difficulty and trial. The Throne is perfect grace, but it *is* a Throne—absolute sovereign power, positive government though in grace, and according to the character and majesty of Him who sits there. We go there “boldly,” for all is grace, and the great High Priest is for us with God. Still the Throne rules according to its own principles, though I am sure to find mercy and help there, for He who sits there is sovereign goodness, and can bless righteously and graciously because of the Priest. Our privilege is to go there, but it acts as a throne when we do not, still in connection with the Priest.—*Notes and Comments*, J. N. D.

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### “HE ONLY.”—*Psalms* lxii.

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IT is no little thing when in real exercise of soul we reach the point which the above words indicate. *Who can say he has attained to it?* The Psalm in which they are found has this for its key-note in the first verse. Its initial word is “Only” (see margin). What a remarkably significant note is here struck by the sweet singer of Israel: *Only* doth my soul wait upon God, the source and the spring of my salvation. Then in the second verse, He *only* is my Rock and my Salvation; my Defence. The issue is, I shall not be *greatly* moved. Following this, that the picture may be practically true and life-like, is the contrast which is found in the enmity of the wicked, who are here exposed and their judgment foretold. *Only* evil are they, and their condemnation is pronounced irrevocably. But

the psalmist afresh turns to God, "My soul, wait thou *only* upon God." Surely this is the fitting aspiration of saints in every dispensation. "My expectation is from Him," or as the Septuagint reads, "Of Him is my patient hope." As every opening flower, and bud, and blossom turns to the sun, and, so to speak, stretches its neck towards the orb of day, so do the babes, young men, and fathers in the family of faith turn to God, their expectation being from Him, for of Him is their patient hope.

Have we not a kindred expression in Lam. iii. 26, "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for *the salvation of the Lord*"? How beautifully come in these two things, patiently hoping and quietly waiting, whether it be in respect to present deliverances or future glory. God may not be hurried in what He doeth. The mills of God work very slowly, but very surely: let us patiently hope and quietly wait, for "in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." What a prospect, beloved, is before us; yet how little, alas! are we moved by it. The very thought of it ought to thrill every fibre of our hearts; that cloudless morning, that day without a night, that rapturous transformation into the likeness of the Lord, wrought and tempered in a moment by His own surpassing power, working in grace and unto glory! that marvellous up lifting in the twinkling of an eye, to meet the Lord in the air, at His coming as "a Saviour" (Phil. iii. 20), "and unto salvation" (Heb. ix. 28), which we may truly say is "the salvation of the Lord." Again, we say, beloved, how little we are moved by these divine verities; how much they are practically ignored, as though they were outside, and beyond, and above present consideration and practical application: as though they were mystical and visionary, rather than practical, and designed of God to elevate and form the soul now. Yet there is not a more practical word in the inspired volume than 2 Cor. iii. 18. "But we all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are

changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

But to return to our Psalm. We have an evident advance upon verse 2 in the 6th verse. In the former it is, "I shall not be greatly moved," but in the latter it is the bold and unqualified statement, "I shall not be moved." It will be seen that herein is a distinct advance in the path of faith. It is one thing to be able to say, I shall not be greatly moved, but quite another to say, I shall not be moved. And what an advance, too, is seen in the next verse, "In God is my salvation and *my glory*; the rock of *my strength* and *my refuge* is in God." Not only God in everything which is blessed, truly, but everything in God, which, truly, is much more blessed. Beloved, can you and I say that we find our everything in God?

And then the psalmist turns to all around, "Trust in Him at all times, ye people, pour out your heart before Him. God is a refuge for us." It is no longer me and my, but ye and us. It is the grace that goes out to others. "Freely ye have received, freely give" (Matt. x. 8). "Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared. For the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh. viii. 10). Again comes in the contrast of the wicked, high and low alike weighed in the balances, and found lighter than vanity; *alike lighter than vanity*. Warnings follow concerning oppression and robbery, and the snare of riches. Lastly, God is again before the soul, in majesty and in mercy. "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God." God speaks *once* and it is enough; but twice the psalmist hears! His voice *echoes* in the soul, power is of God. "O sing unto the Lord a new song; for He hath done marvellous things: His right hand, and His holy arm, hath gotten Him the victory" (Psalm xcvi. 1). "Power is of God" (Septuagint). The 12th verse completes this beautiful Psalm. "Also unto Thee, O Lord,



belongeth mercy: for Thou renderest unto every man according to his work." Jehovah reveals His mercy because He is going at length to execute judgment. Because man is what man is, every man's work being evil, God will be what God is, one of whose attributes is mercy. "Mercy is Thine, O Lord." (Septuagint).

Here we close our meditations. It is "He only," beloved, from first to last. His mighty hand upholds us. His loving heart embraces us. "A hand of infinite power; a heart of infinite mercy." Well may we say, as by and by we shall surely discover, "He only is my Rock and my Salvation. He is my Defence: I shall not be moved." For "the Lord hath made known His salvation," and "hath remembered His mercy" (Psalm xcvi. 2, 3). To His holy name be glory and praise for ever and for evermore.

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### THREE SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE.

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YE also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (1 Peter ii. 5). To offer spiritual sacrifices is the high and holy privilege of all who are born again; and the character given to those engaged in this service is an excellent one, worthy of the office and the service—"an holy priesthood"; and being Godward it must be holy, answering to Himself. It is not the intelligent and advanced only who are able thus to render to God, but those also whom the apostle tenderly exhorts as "new-born babes"; having tasted that the Lord is gracious, and taken God's thoughts about Him who indeed was "His choice," though by man disallowed, despised, and rejected; having thoughts in common with Him about One who was "chosen of God and precious." How good that the next verse comes in as an outlet to the heart brimming over; and this being the fruit of His grace, how acceptable by Jesus Christ! We may well praise

## THREE SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE.

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God and extol His goodness. It is said that love begets love. God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. v. 8). Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins (1 John iv. 10). We love Him, because He first loved us (ver. 19); remembering we were sinners and afar off, having no hope, and without God in the world but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ (Eph. ii. 13, 14), brought to God. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God (1 Peter iii. 18). And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation (Rom. v. 11).

And now with the psalmist we will praise the Lord; for it is good to sing praises unto our God, for it is pleasant, and praise is comely. To speak well of Christ, to remember with gratitude what He has done, to contemplate the greatness and glory of the Person who has accomplished so great and glorious a work, we bow in the presence of such wondrous grace, and worship and adore.

“With adoring hearts we render  
Honour to Thy precious Name;  
Overflowing with Thy mercies,  
Far and wide Thy worth proclaim.

“Praise Him! praise Him! praise the Saviour!  
Saints, aloud your voices raise!  
Praise Him! praise Him! till in heaven,  
Perfected, we sing His praise.”

II. In Rom. xii. believers are exhorted by the mercies of God to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. He has shewn sovereign mercy, and all that He has done is in perfect consistency with all that He is in Himself, to His praise be it said. Mercy and truth have met together,

righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth ; and righteousness shall look down from heaven (Psalm lxxxv. 10, 11). Now He has saved us and made us His own ; for ye are bought with a price : therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's (1 Cor. vi. 20) ; that I might live unto God ; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me (Gal. ii. 19, 20). In serving an earthly master, it is only right that we should serve him faithfully : how much more should we serve God, yes, live to and glorify Him, who has so richly blessed, and shewn such free, unmerited favour to us. This is not asking too much from us ; it is no unreasonable demand, but our reasonable service (Rom. xii. 1). We must never lower the standard because we fail to come up to it. Of ourselves we can do nothing, "but He giveth more grace." "My grace is sufficient for thee : for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. xii. 9). This is not in order to get salvation, but is an acceptable sacrifice from those who are eternally secure, and who desire while down here to shew forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light : which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God : which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul (1 Pet. ii. 9-11). It is the privilege of the believer to live a life of praise. Without this presentation, the sacrifice of praise could not have weight and worth. What gives such liberty, joy, and holy boldness, when gathered for worship, as having had Himself before us day by day, feeding upon Him, and in the strength of such blessed food going on in communion with Himself? Conformity to the world would not give us this liberty, joy, and holy boldness, but would despoil us of this. Then love not the world,

neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever (1 John ii. 15-17). But be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

“ O blessed Saviour, is Thy love  
 So vast, so full, so free?  
 Fain would we have our thoughts,  
 Our hearts, our lives engaged with Thee.

III. We have another sacrifice acceptable in Phil. iv. 18. This epistle gives us true Christian experience; and the last and crowning fact recorded of the Philippian saints is their interest in the Lord's work, and their care for His servant. Their offering is not received by the apostle as desiring a gift, as an expression of natural kindness, of admiration of himself; nor does he accept it as meeting his pressing necessities, though he had known what it was to be abased, to be hungry, and to suffer need—"for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content;" he had no desire to shut up their bowels of compassion (1 John iii. 17); but he would receive it at their hands as an offering to the Lord, the Lord accepting it, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God, fruit abounding to their account, treasured in the heavens, that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Luke xii. 33, 34).

Dear reader, are we not apt to forget these Scriptural examples, and slow to act upon these practical truths? In these matters, the first thought is often the right thought; and if we reason much, unbelief

steps in where faith would promptly act. There may be carefulness, but lacking opportunity. The apostle writes, But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again: this going up, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Phil. iv. 18-20).

J. P.

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FRAGMENTS.

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WHEN I am in the truth of the place that Christ took for my sins in atoning death, under the just judgment of God, I get into the truth of the place that God has given Him for my justification in risen glory. It was God's righteousness to give Him that place for me; and it is God's righteousness to give me that place in Him by faith—shall I say, for faith? *i.e.*, it is the answer to faith. He thus makes me *His own righteousness* in Him.

“Continue in prayer,” &c. (Col. iv. 2). How sweet to think of God as the speaker of these words! “Keep on praying, I mean to give you the blessing; faint not, but pray.”

How needful for one to carry with him the sense of God's presence as a shield and garrison. 1st, That I may walk in the truth of my actual state with Him before men; 2nd, That thus I may be kept from all reflexive thoughts of my own self as if better than another, but on the contrary, may be meek and lowly in heart; and 3rd, To walk in love, as manifesting what He is to those dear to Him.

I shall be with Jesus in glory, there is no doubt nor uncertainty about *that*; well, when that has got the heart, it draws in conformity with it, and I serve Him now, who died for me that I might be with Him.

As to *justification*, I cannot have it except from God directly. It is GOD that justifieth—God, the living God ; for He is a living person with whom we have to do. He justifies, or reckons righteous, the believer—the believer in Jesus—the believer in His blood. He justifies the ungodly freely by His grace, the ungodly one who believeth in Jesus.

As to communion, my dealings with God are no less direct. If justified, *I am brought to God* ; but brought to Him to be with Him, brought to Him to be kept near Him, *in conformity* with His nature and glory.

What a difference between the faith which rests on understanding and experience, and that which rests on the *testimony* of God ! For both understanding and experience are things in us—divinely wrought, it may be, yet short of Christ for us, which is the object of *faith*. The former is not faith, but in truth only feeling.

J. R.

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I call that man free who has done with questions between himself, God, and Satan.—J. N. D

The gospel of our peace is the spring of joy to Him who planned and accomplished it.

The true basis of peace is a full Christ for the heart, and the true secret of happiness is a whole heart for Christ.

Thy ways, O God, with wise design,  
Are framed upon Thy throne above,  
And every dark and boding line  
Meets in the centre of Thy love.

Neither our peace nor our joy is dependent on what we are to God, but on what He is to us ; and that is grace. I have got away from grace if I have the slightest doubt or hesitation about God's love.

The fuller your hold of grace, the higher will be your maintenance of holiness.

J. N. D.

## “ME AND MY WORDS.”

*Mark* viii. 38; *Luke* ix. 26.

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IN 1 John v. 3 we read, “This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.” So also in 2 John 6, showing that the commandments of the Father and the commandments of the Son are identical—the words of Christ and the words of God. Thus, speaking of Jesus, the Baptist cried in the wilderness of Judea, “He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God” (John iii. 34).

In John xii. 46, Christ declares that at the judgment day, rejection of His words will be deemed equivalent to a rejection of Himself: “He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not *My words*, hath One that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.” So in Mark viii. 28: “Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of *My words*, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.” Again—“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but *My words* shall not pass away.” “There are men foolish enough to say,” writes Stier, “heaven and earth will never pass away, but the words of Christ will in course of time.”

You will note, it is *His words*—His definite sayings—His articulate teachings. Elsewhere He speaks of His word, “He that heareth *My word*.” “If ye continue in *My word*, then are ye My disciples indeed.” “Ye seek to kill Me because *My word* hath no place in you.” Because the Jews lightly esteemed the words of Christ in the Old Testament Scriptures, they became the murderers of their Messiah. So now, to despise the words of Christ is to crucify Him afresh. He does not then speak of His word only, His one indivisible word in the verse before us, but of *His words*—not His doctrine, as elsewhere, but of His several teachings which make up what the beloved

apostle calls the "doctrine of the Christ," and which, if a man transgress, go beyond and abide not therein, "he hath not God." Here is progress, but it is progress away from God, because it is going onward from the teaching of Christ. It is in truth *retrogression*, a going back.

Do you ask where these words are in which we are to abide? With the Bible in your hand, rather ask where they are not? It is true that "at sundry times, and in divers manners," God "spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets," whilst "in these days He hath spoken to us by His Son," yet the "words of Christ" are not confined to the four gospels, but sparkle in every page of the inspired volume. Not only did the Old Testament "saints rejoice to see His day" (John viii. 5, 6), and to bear His "reproach" (Heb. xi. 26), but they heard also the voice of Him who Himself said, "Before Abraham was I am." If not in the same sense and degree, yet they heard the "words of Christ." In John v. 46 our Lord identifies His words and Moses' writings, and declares that the belief of the one is incompatible with the disbelief of the other, implying, I think, not only that Moses wrote of Him, but that *He wrote through Moses*. Of the prophets that prophesied of the grace that was to come unto us, we are told that it was the Spirit of Christ in them which did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory which should follow. This agrees with that word in the Revelation, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. xix. 10).

Certainly he has not read aright who has not heard the greater David, not only spoken of, but *speak*, in the Psalms. Take, for example, the fortieth Psalm, where He cries, "Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; Mine ears hast Thou opened. . . . Lo, I come, in the volume of the Book it is written of Me." Hear Him again, directly speaking through the prophet Isaiah, "The Lord God hath given Me the



tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." Then there are His direct utterances as the ascended Head of the Church, as recorded in the last book of the sacred Canon, appended to which is the solemn warning, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Again, we have His "words" as they fell, in His name, from the lips and pen of His apostles, to whom, according to promise, He had sent the Comforter to bring to their remembrance all that He had told them when on earth.

If the apostles' words had not been the words of Christ, they could scarcely have said, "We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (1 John iv. 6); or "We have received not the spirit which is of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, which things we speak not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." Again, "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit" (1 Cor. ii. 13, 14). Nor could the Lord Himself have said of the apostles, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Neither would He have said to the Father, "I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me" (John xvii. 8). Nor again would the apostle Paul have dared to write, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are *the commandments of the Lord*" (1 Cor. xiv. 37). Yes, I have no doubt that in the words of the apostles we have the "words of Christ." His words in their fullest sense are, of course, to be found in the gospels which contain the direct utterances of the Son of God. This it is that makes the testimony of the evangelists so precious: it contains His wonderful and wonder-working words, the words of Him who "spake as never man spake;" wonderful indeed, winning their way into our poor hearts, and wooing us from sin, the

world, and ourselves—words as great and glorious as they are *gracious*—"life-words" indeed—"Spirit and life" He called them, and this the first disciples felt and confessed them to be; for when the Lord appealed to the twelve, "Will ye also go away? Will ye, because of the harshness of some of My sayings, go back and walk no more with Me?" Peter, as spokesman for all the rest—grand old Peter, with all his blunderings and backslidings, he was sound at the core in the faith of the Gospel—"Lord," he cried, "to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of *eternal life*." Oh, brethren, what say we? Shall *we* go away? Shall we give up the words of Christ? What is left to us if we do? Some of them may, by their very majesty and profundity, stagger us, but give them up, *never, never*, for in so doing we shall be giving Him up who spake them, and then where are we? True, as the time of the end draws on, we may be in the minority, but let us hold fast that which we have received. More than ever let His words abide in us—*all* His words, not *some* of them only, but *all*, for all are "faithful and true." Some, especially those which relate to the future, are terrible, but, tender or terrible, they are all true; therefore let us hold them fast, not only for the grace of salvation, but for guidance in every-day life,—hold them fast for the government of our whole being, and the girding of ourselves for the battle against sin and error, to which He is so loudly calling us just now.

Time fails me. I sum up all my heart in this matter with seven words of earnest entreaty, and in them I speak especially to believers, to those who acknowledge and recognise the "words of Christ;" who, as His sheep, have heard and are still hearing His voice.

1. *Receive them meekly.* Not idly, yet meekly; not as fools, but as wise.

2. *Examine them reverently and patiently.* Stand

in awe of them ; they are the words of the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Counsellor. "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh, for if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from Him who speaketh from heaven."

3. *Extol them highly.* Protest earnestly against the endeavours which are being made to lower them to the level of the words of mere men, or even to the words of an angel.

4. *Obey them instantly and constantly.* In a word, *keep them.* Remember it is not enough to have them. This may be but our condemnation. *We must obey them.* Here is our glory, and our gladness too, to show that to us they are "not grievous, but pleasant"—"sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb."

5. *Express them plainly and fully.* Not by the lip only, but in the life. Be not content to wear the golden bells of a sound profession, but take care your hourly walk is fringed also with the pomegranates of a holy practice.

6. *Scatter them widely and hopefully.* The world needs them ; they are "spirit and life"—the very "power of God unto salvation."

7. *Contend for them earnestly and lovingly.* Remember we are set for the *defence* as well as the propagation of the Gospel.

The last time I was in this building was the occasion of a marriage. Luther used to say he was "married" to the epistle to the Galatians—it was his Catherine Bora. We are married, not to the epistle to the Galatians only, but to all the words of this Book ; let us, like Luther, be willing rather to lose life and limb than give up a single fraction of the "genuine Word of God."—*Rev. F. H. White.*

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FEBRUARY, 1890.

## THE BODY, THE SPIRIT, AND THE FLESH.

*Rom. viii. 10; John xi. 25; Gal. v. 24.*

IMMENSE as the difference is between being in Christ and not being in Christ, the former does not alter the fact that the body is dead because of sin. The pains and penalties of being in possession of a sinful body fall equally upon the believer and the unbeliever. How conclusive is the word, "So death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." The redemption of our souls we have already, and we are already as to the soul quickened unto newness of life in Christ Jesus. But for the redemption of our bodies we wait the Lord's return; and when He returns He will quicken, whether we have fallen asleep or be alive and remain, our mortal bodies, because, or on account of, the blessed fact that His Spirit even now is dwelling in us. In the verse before us (Rom. viii. 10) we are met, then, with the solemn statement, "The body is dead because of sin," and, as I judge, there is no difference as to the fact. But is there not a serious difference as to its application? The unbeliever may recognise the fact as merely something beyond his power to remedy. His body is a prey to weakness, sickness, disease, and death; all he can do is to ward off these things as long as he may. But the one who knows the blessedness of being in Christ, carrying God's sentence of death fully recognised, will rejoice to keep under his body, and to make it a vessel whose very infirmities shall become the occasion of glorifying Him who has bought it with a price already, and will by and by glorify it with His own communicated glory. It is he alone who gives full force to the fact that the body is dead on account of sin.

Then, on the other hand, how blessed the contrast, "The spirit is life on account of righteousness." Nor need we here determine whether a large or a

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small "s" should be used, for are we not one spirit with the Lord (1 Cor. vi. 17)? Who can make demarcation between the Holy Ghost objectively and subjectively? Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. And those who have received the free gift of righteousness shall reign in life by Him. Blessed is the contrast throughout; body and spirit, death and life, sin and righteousness. But surely this has its practical side also. Which then, we may ask, are we manifesting—the body of mortality, judged on account of sin, or the spirit one with the Lord, in the power of life on account of righteousness? a righteousness accomplished and subsisting on the divine side, which is practically reproduced in the walk and testimony of the saint when, as alive from the dead, he yields his members as instruments of righteousness unto God (Rom. vi. 13).

II. In John xi. 25 the Lord tells Martha that He is Himself the Resurrection and the Life; the Resurrection for those who have died, the Life for those who are alive at His coming. Then will there be saints who though dead shall live, and other saints who living shall never die. Blessed summary this of all such saints; those who have believed, have died, and who are raised by Him who is the Resurrection; and those who have believed, are living, and shall never die, because changed by Him who is the Life.

III. Lastly, in Gal. v. 24, have we the flesh with its affections and lusts, not dead but crucified. It can scarcely be necessary to say that the flesh here is the principle of sin within us. Its affections are carnal affections, and its lusts are fleshly lusts, which war against the soul (James iv. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 11). Utterly intolerable to God, should they not be equally intolerable to us? He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption (Gal. vi. 8). The alternative is given us here (v. 24); they that are Christ's, or in Christ, bringing us back to Rom. viii. 10, have cruci-

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fied the flesh and all its motions. The cross alone can effectually deal with the flesh. Unless it be *crucified*, it will bring untold sorrow upon the saint. The believer is not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, and the Spirit is in him. The unbeliever is not in the Spirit, but in the flesh, and the flesh is in him. But the believer also has the flesh in him, and this will continue so long as we are in the body. Nor can we say it is dead, far from it; but, thank God, we ought to be able to say it is crucified. It was judged at the cross; sin was there condemned in the flesh. And from the Scripture before us (Gal. v. 24) we learn that God looks to us that, as a practical thing, we should on our part bring the cross in all its solemn, and searching, and holy character to bear upon the flesh; nailing it, so to speak, to the cross of Christ, as convicted and condemned in its character and in its fruits. "But now being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Rom vi. 22).

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 ON SERVICE.
 

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OH, my fellow Christian workers, have we got access? I do not mean into the fellowship of a church, or even into a pulpit, or into the ranks of a Sunday school teacher, but into His very presence. I wonder how many of us have any right to be where we are. What if the great Master of assemblies were to issue an edict that no professed servant of His was to enter upon his or her service next Lord's day who was not full of the Holy Ghost, who did not answer to that description of a true servant in the second epistle of Timothy, who was not "a vessel meet for for the Master's use?" In other words, that no unanointed man or woman (the Lord Himself being the judge) was to teach, or preach, or visit, or engage in any one of the manifold services of the

day. How many of us would be employed? Yet of what use are we if we are not anointed with the Holy Spirit? If our Lord Himself was anointed in order to preach His own Gospel, how much more must we! Of what avail is it that we are earnest, or eloquent, or erudite, or ever so well equipped in other respects, if we are not anointed with the Holy Ghost? God forbid that we should limit the Holy One of Israel, that we should say that He cannot use even an unregenerate man, or that He shall not, in spite of our cold-heartedness and infidelity, speak by us even though we lack this anointing! "He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." He is sovereign, and "greater than man," and "giveth not account of any of His matters." Oh, brethren and sisters, let us away with all substitutes for the presence and power of the Spirit of God.—*Rev. F. H. White.*

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LESSONS FROM THE LORD'S LIPS.—*Luke xii.*

JESUS takes entirely an outside place, and unreservedly gathers to Himself, not only as rejected, but as really in a heavenly position, and to connect His testimony with the heavens, as the new starting point, and not from the earth which had refused Him.

The twelfth chapter begins thus: "In the meantime, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, He began to say unto His disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." He has brought away "the key of knowledge" with Him, and now bids them not to bring the corrupt manners and the deceitful workings of the far country with them. For He says, "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known." Hypocrisy had been detected where they had been, and "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," had been

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sounded in their ears, and left upon the consciences of their rulers. But now with Jesus, and upon this new ground where He had brought them, everything must be in the light, and a light far beyond the candle on the candlestick to give light to those that are in the house. "Whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness," He says, "shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops;" and thus He brings them morally out of the darkness into the light of God's own presence, and from the closet in the house to the housetops. This is their first new relation to Himself and to the Father, in holiness and light, as leaving the altar, and the temple, and the synagogues of these scribes and Pharisees, and entering upon Christian ground with Christ.

Their next lesson with Jesus is deliverance from man, and all fear of men. For the world would be against them and this new testimony to its evil, and which therefore gathers men out from it unto heaven. "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; but fear Him, who after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him." He encourages them, and plants confidence in God, by "the five sparrows" sold for two farthings; and takes away their fears by the assurance that "not one of them is forgotten before God;" yea, even the hairs of your head are all numbered; and puts "value" upon them according to a new standard.

Their next lesson is the confession of Christ before men and the world, which hated Him and them. "Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God. But he that denieth Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God." For the heavens would henceforth keep the record,



and receive the men whom the world cast out and killed. Their names should be added to the register of those "of whom the world was not worthy."

He then teaches them of their relation to the Holy Ghost, in this new testimony to the Son of Man, and the kingdom of God transferred to the heavens, as its new centre, in the rejected One of the earth. "Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven. And when they bring you to the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer or say: for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say." All these blessings describe the sphere of their relations to God, and to Himself as Son of Man, and to the Holy Ghost, into which Jesus has carried them. And this Scripture likewise shows the character of their testimony before men, and its result elsewhere between Jesus and "the angels of God." They are fairly now in their new position with Christ as to the earth, under the guardianship and protection of God, even to the hairs on their heads; and with the presence and directness of the Holy Ghost in the hour of the world's enmity, when like Stephen, "full of the Holy Ghost," arraigned before magistrates and powers for his testimony to Jesus, "the whole council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel."

And now Jesus, on His part, refuses every other place than the accepted One of the Father in heaven, and brings its light to bear upon the covetousness of men in their ways below. "One of the company said to Him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And He said unto him, Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you?" But His work and relations are not now of this kind. What God is, and what man is, are the deep matters brought to light by the rejection of Jesus below, and

His acceptance on high. And He said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." A man's life is in question towards God, not as regards external prosperity, but as to his own soul. And He spake a parable unto them, and made them take the place "of judges and dividers" upon themselves, in relation to the present and the future; or if they could, between His first and second coming into the world, as the two events which gave new data, and another standard by which to estimate losses and gains, and wisdom or folly. He brought His doctrine within their reach by the parable of the ground that "brought forth plentifully," and the fruits, and the barns, and their pulling them down to make room for greater, with an assurance to the soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." *Did a man's life consist in this?* Nay, for "God said unto him, Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" What spoiled this abundance, and made it of no value to the man who possessed it? the relation of the soul to God, and His requiring it. What does life consist in, therefore? Being "rich toward God" is the answer given by "the Wisdom of God." He takes occasion, as one standing at the spring-head and fountain of eternal blessing, to turn the whole current of human life round another way, according to Christ and His position as the heavenly Man. He says to His disciples, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body than raiment;" and turns them away from the providential mercies bestowed upon a man, or a nation even in Canaan, to laying up treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust can corrupt, and where thieves cannot break through and steal, as their present object. He had written covetousness and

folly on the great barns, and "Thou fool" upon the man who said, Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry (which things were a law and a statute to Israel), and was not rich towards God.

And what was this new doctrine of riches to the eye and heart of the great Teacher, and towards God, but going outside the camp to Jesus, bearing His reproach? "Ye are they that have continued with Me in My temptation; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as My Father hath appointed unto Me." God would Himself be with them as one with Christ in rejection, and He leads them unto this place of confidence in faith, telling them to consider the lilies how they grow; and the ravens, which have neither storehouses nor barns; and God feedeth them: "how much more are ye better than the fowls?" He wins them away from the national hopes, and from the days of Solomon in all his glory (for that was conditional, and had been forfeited), to behold the lilies around them in their naked and unforfeited beauty, for their glory depended upon the faithfulness of God. And this was where Jesus had brought them in connection with Himself and the unchanging counsels of God, although by a present rejection by Israel after the flesh, and out of the world that knew neither the Father nor the Son.

Likewise, He leads them into the place of dependence, saying, "Seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after; and your Father knoweth ye have need of these things." No earthly considerations of progress and prosperity, nor even the possession or division of the inheritance, any more than bodily wants or cares, were to be the objects of their daily life, but "rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." They have lost

nothing by coming out to follow Jesus ; how could they or any else? for where has the path of the rejected One led Him? And it is in the sense of this, and the joy of present association with Him as the accepted One in heaven, that He bids them "sell that ye have, and give alms ; provide yourselves bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not ;" for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. He is presently going up into "the sanctuary which the Lord pitched and not man," and their hearts are to follow Him there, where the treasure is already. He has been estimating old and new, life and the soul, lilies of the field and Solomon, themselves and the fowls, in those balances, and weighing out their value to Him, according to the weights and measures of the holiest of all. He has thus put them in relationship with heaven and earth, after the new order and pattern of heavenly men, with Him who, when He has actually been "received up," will be absent from them, to gird Himself and enter upon other services as the great High-priest, before He comes forth a second time to take His glory, and majesty, and kingdom, after the figure shown on the mount !

What remains further for Him to say to them in the confidence of love, but to put them into the place on earth of waiting for Him when He shall return? And this He does. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning ; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding ; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately." He is no longer to be known by them as maintaining a mission which, if accepted, would have gathered the twelve tribes of Israel to a Messiah on the earth, and in connection with the kingdom of God in Jerusalem. This had been proposed, and presented by the sending out of the twelve apostles, whom He named ; and again by the seventy. But this is over, for Israel

would not own its Shepherd. Nevertheless, the kingdom of God is not given up as respects its testimony; only that is now preached, in reference to the rejected King, on the right hand of God above, as its appointed Head and centre, and can only be manifested in its proper form on earth when the Lord, as its King in glory, shall take to Himself His great power and reign, at His appearing again.

Further, His coming is presented as a continuous expectation, that their faith and hope may not be little or doubtful, as to the fact itself, nor their hearts' affections cooled down by the thought of delay, but that they should "be ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." He has told out His own portion to them, as still holding the key of knowledge and the keys of the kingdom, and treated them as His friends in all besides that He has communicated for their guidance in the place where He has put them during His absence, and how He would like to find them when He comes; as men that wait for their Lord, and ready to answer the knock. He has yet some instructions to give them in the character of servants, as well as encouragements and warnings; and first, "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching; for He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and come forth to serve them"—and so as to the second watch and the third watch. Doubtless, if the good man of the house (whoever this may be) had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. "Then Peter said, Lord, speakest Thou this parable unto us, or even to all? And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward whom his lord when he cometh shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom the lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, He will make him

ruler over all that he hath." The faithful and wise steward is made ruler over all ; and here we are not only upon Christian ground with Jesus and His disciples, but passing into the kingdom responsibilities, as to faithful or unfaithful service during the rejection of the King, and reward or advancement therein, when He comes again, having received the kingdom.

Perhaps *this* is not so much the object, in this chapter xii., as to carry forward the question, what "life does consist in," and what it is to be "rich toward God." The answer to both these enquiries, or statements of divine truth, can only be found in the person and devotedness in service of Christ ; and He works them out in application to the disciples, and to ourselves, as one with Him by grace and calling, by these blessed associations with Himself in rejection, and separation of heart from all that is below ; and by acceptance with Him in the Father's love, where the Lord now is.

There is a solemn word of another kind remaining : "But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink with the drunken ; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers." One shall be beaten with many stripes ; and another with few stripes, "if he knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes." There is an important moral difference between these two, for the former would be beaten with many stripes "if he prepared not himself," and yet knew his Lord's will. It is the distinction drawn, and maintained, between knowing and not preparing one's self, and knowing not. The coming of the Lord is made to be the one great standard of conduct, and test of the heart ; for it must take these forms, and do this work in judgment, where the coming of the Lord fails to be the attractive power that draws the affections up

to Him, and satisfies the heart, and keeps it bright and expectant; yea, devoted in its service for Him, till He does come. Treasure was not in the barn, or in outward mercies, but in heaven with Christ, and with Him on the earth; not scattering, but gathering "with Me," as Jesus had said, and the heart would be with the treasure, putting the faithful steward into the duties "of giving meat to the household," and into the very attitude of one who, "with girded loins," waited for his Lord.

The "Wisdom of God" has recorded for us in this chapter, by His own example and doctrine, and by the blessed hope of His coming, how in a period of the world's enmity, and of Christ's rejection from the earth, His followers can be "rich towards God;" likewise, "what treasure is, and how to be laid up, and where," so that the heart may go away out of the world after it; and lastly, "what life (during the Lord's absence) consists in," which gives birth to nothing but joys and hopes, in present communion with Himself, which will all be crowned at His coming. Other things beside these, which apply to ourselves in relation to God, and which are thus settled, come forward; things which were announced from the heavens, by the multitude of the angelic hosts, in connection with the birth and life of Jesus, but which the world has refused and lost by rejecting Christ.

What has become of their word, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men?" Are these things forfeited too? and must they travel back with a rejected Christ to the heavens till the day of His power? Hear what Jesus says, as to this transition too: "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three." And again He says: "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?" And still further, as to Himself,

and the earth, and peace: "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" All these great changes and transitions, and transpositions of the angels' utterance as to glory, and peace, and good pleasure between God and men, carry out this mighty revolution into the heavens and the earth, which we were following out in the former part of this Scripture, in the smaller circle between man and God, in reference to treasure, and life, and riches, and what they now mean, and where they are! Not peace on earth, but fire; not good pleasure, but division; not the glory, but the baptism, are before the feet of Jesus in the appointed path of His decease at Jerusalem, and thither He is journeying.

Peace, and glory, and good pleasure must not, and never can be, separated from Him in whom they were given forth; but if men refuse them at His birth, and afterwards in His life, the heavens must receive them back with an ascended Christ, that they may be published afresh from the Son of Man in glory, and be established in a new order, and witnessed by the Holy Ghost. The heavens once waited upon the earth, but in vain; and now the earth and its inhabitants must wait upon the heavens. In the meanwhile, "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other," by "the baptism" of which Jesus speaks. In accomplishment, too, for those who are one with a rejected Christ, and united to Him as the accepted One on high, our greeting from the heavens is inscribed "to the beloved of God, called saints. Grace to you, and *peace*, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." These are our new connections and blessings through the baptism and the received-up Son of God. Nor can our benediction from above vary in character or style from our salutation and greeting; nor does it, for it expresses itself thus: "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good



comfort, be of one mind, live in peace ; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. Greet one another with an holy kiss. All the saints salute you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen."

Nay, let the world, and the princes, and the wise men say and do what they like about the angels' greeting ; but glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good pleasure in man have made their home in "the Son of Man" long ago ; and have departed again into heaven, like the angelic hosts who ushered it in ; and are now only to be had and engaged by knowing the beloved One as ours, and ourselves as His. The world has lost all three in rejecting Jesus, and believers in Christ can only have them in communion and present joy by going up to heaven in spirit after Him in whom they are, and in whom they will be manifestly brought back again, when peace shall flow down as a river, and be multiplied as the waves of the sea, and the whole earth be filled with the glory of the Lord. Nothing is lost by Jesus coming down from the mount of transfiguration, but all and much more has been gained, and based upon the sure footing of our redemption and His own resurrection, for His own glory, and His Father's, and the blessing of the Church, and of Israel and the nations.

This mighty circle, and all that it embraced, with its new orders and changes, as well as the ways and means of their establishment, lay on the heart of Jesus when He speaks of the fire and His baptism. Nothing but His decease could make an outlet, and open the door into heaven, where He has beyond all question and gainsaying established "Glory to God in the highest." This position is thus reached and secured, and the new centre of all God's operations henceforth is from the Son of Man "in the highest," the beginning and head of the new creation of God.

Let us return to the effect of this double testimony, of rejection and acceptance above, as Jesus speaks of it below. "The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother," &c. No previous ministry by Moses produced results like these, for they were Israelites by birth, and, therefore, were careful in keeping their genealogies. Nor will any subsequent ministry in the millennium for the like reason, besides which the blessing is to be universal during that period. The Lord has put a date to this exceptional ministry, which began with His own rejection, and indeed takes its character from the divisions which arose about Himself amongst the Jews, by saying, "For from henceforth" there shall be five in one house divided. Thus we are told what the effects would be, even in a household, upon the faithful acceptance of this testimony to Christ, which gathered to Him, in this new position as going away, and coming again to receive them to Himself. Jesus had likewise taught the effect of corrupting this testimony, by those who said, "My lord delayeth His coming," and began to beat the servants, and to eat, and drink with the drunken; and the judgment that should be the portion of those who did so. He would cut them off, and appoint them a place with the unbelievers.

In conclusion, He speaks of those who rejected this testimony; and leaving the parable with them of what they said when they saw a "cloud rise out of the west," or when they "saw the south wind blow," He convicts them "for not discerning this time." The people who rejected Him and His disciples would thus be adversaries to this ministry and to Him, and compel God to be their judge as an adversary to them. Jesus warns them, and exhorts them "to give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him, lest he hale thee to the officer, and thou be

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cast into prison." Alas, they refused even His last warning words, "I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence till thou hast paid the last mite." And rejecting Him as the deliverer, "meeting them on the way to the magistrate," they put themselves governmentally under the righteous judgment of the Judge, and are in the prison; yea, "suffering the wrath that has come upon them" unto this day.

J. E. B.

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A SKETCH FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

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ONE DAY.

IN the gospel of Mark the Lord Jesus is presented as the Prophet or Teacher, whereas in Luke He appears as the Son of Man, and in Matthew as the Messiah. Dispensational teaching, therefore, such as we get in Matthew, we meet not within its pages. Future punishment too, Mark ix. excepted, is, comparatively speaking, rarely noticed; and God is but seldom introduced in the relationship of Father. Many things, however, we find in his gospel not met with in the others; and even things in common are so related as to indicate the perfect independence of the cousin of Barnabas, and companion of both Peter and Paul, for such we believe was the evangelist.

A life of activity in service was that of the Lord after He began His ministry. He slept in the storm (Mark iv. 38). He was so pressed by the multitude, that they could not so much as eat bread (Mark iii. 20). He withdrew with the apostles to a desert place, north-east of the lake of Galilee, that they might rest after their mission on which He had sent them; for again we read that they had no leisure so much as to eat (vi. 31). To Mark we are indebted for this information on both occasions. Activity characterised the Lord in life. He came to minister, and, while it was day, He worked the works of Him that sent

## A SKETCH FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK. 73

Him (John ix. 4). To an illustration of this we would call the reader's attention, found in Mark i. 21-39, which gives us an account of just one day in the Master's life of service on earth.

It was a Sabbath day, and He was at Capernaum, after His rejection by the people of Nazareth. He entered, we read, into the synagogue, and taught. "And they were astonished at His doctrine; for He taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes." What He said is not here recorded, only the effect of it on the hearers is stated. It was so different from that to which they had been accustomed. He taught as one who had authority. Clearly it was nothing merely traditional, nothing conventional, no cold formal utterance as a scribe might have enunciated it. The speaker, they *felt*, had authority. We know He had, for He was the Prophet of whom Moses had written, and He was the Son of God as well.

But not only did He teach that day. For a man was there with an unclean spirit, as Mark states; a demon, as Luke calls it. If the congregation listened to the Lord in silence, struck by His teaching, that man would not keep quiet. He attracted the Lord's attention by speaking to Him in a language all could understand—the language of man, yet giving utterance to the thoughts of the demon within him: "What have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus the Nazarene? Art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God" (i. 24). The demon would bear testimony to the Lord; but the Lord would not receive it. What that spirit made its victim utter was all true. The Nazarene was the Holy One of God, and He will deal in judicial and almighty power with that spirit in a future day. Testimony, however, from such a source He would not accept, so He rebuked the demon, saying, "Hold thy peace, and come out of him" (ver. 25). The unclean spirit obeyed, and came out, having first

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torn the man, and having cried with a loud voice. Demoniacal possession is a reality. There was no illusion. That spirit's power was displayed, and its voice heard ; but the power of the Lord was greater ; and however unwilling to leave its victim, at the word of Christ, "Hold thy peace, and come out of him," it came out.

The effect on all present was marked, and has been recorded, and our evangelist has depicted the astonishment which reigned in the synagogue : "They were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this ! a new teaching ? With authority He commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him " (ver. 27). The demon obeyed the word of the Holy One of God. Men witnessed what passed, but did not intelligently understand it.

Teaching such as none heard from the scribes (Mark alone mentions them) they had listened to, and power, such as mere men did not possess, they had witnessed, and both in exercise for man's blessing. A memorable Sabbath that must have been.

Now, leaving the synagogue, the Lord entered Simon's house in company, as Mark alone tells us, of James and John ; besides, doubtless, that of Simon and Andrew, who were brothers. His purpose in entering there was perhaps for refreshment and retirement. But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon, *i.e.*, immediately, they tell Him of her. Hearing of the sickness, the Lord thought of the fever-stricken one, and "He came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up ; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them " (ver 31). "He touched her hand," writes Matthew ; "He took her by the hand," writes Mark. How perfectly independent is Mark as a narrator, though recounting the same history. Simon's mother-in-law was healed at once. She passed through no stage of convalescence ; for the fever left her, and she ministered

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to them. Astonishment had reigned in the synagogue ; joy must have pervaded that house.

The day declined, the Sabbath drew to a close, the shades of evening began to lengthen, when that house became a centre to which people might have been seen conveying with them sick and those possessed with demons. The city was astir, alive, for the Sabbath was over. But why was the fisherman's abode the point to which all directed their steps? The Lord Jesus Christ was under that roof. Both Matthew and Luke tell us of the same scene, but Mark alone has informed us that "all the city was gathered together at the door." And now the happy quietness, which had surely reigned within, was broken in upon by the troops of people with their sick and afflicted. To their call He was not indifferent, "for He healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many demons ; and suffered not the demons to speak, because they knew Him" (ver. 34). Activity in blessing to men characterised that day from morn to night. All flowed from One—the Holy One of God ; yet, withal, the Nazarene who, as Peter afterwards described Him, "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him" (Acts x. 38).

Darkness settled on the city, night asserted its sway, and quietness reigned in the streets of Capernaum. All went to rest. But how many must have lain down that night, some with hearts thankful to overflowing, and others with bodies at ease from racking, torturing pain. The morning came, and inquiries were made about the Lord ; for even Simon, under whose roof He had been, did not know what had become of Him. Unknown to them all He had gone forth. But whither? He had passed beyond the city's precincts and went unto a spot alone. For we read : "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (ver. 35).

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Again have we to record our thanks to Mark for telling us how He was engaged. He who had shown such power was found as a man in the attitude of dependence on God. He had cast out demons, and healed diseases in His own name; He spake, and it was done. But now He prayed. The exercise of power, however wonderful, should never make a man renounce his position of dependence. If that could have been rightly done by any, it might have been by Him. But He has set the example of the opposite.

Sought after by Simon and those that were with him, the Lord was found; and they tell Him of the favourable impression His works had made: "All men seek for Thee." The tide of popular favour ran high in His behalf on that day in Capernaum. To one who courted it, it would have been the moment to have returned to the city; and all the more, since, as Luke informs us, "The people sought after Him, and came unto Him, and stayed Him that He should not depart from them" (Luke iv. 42). If possible, they would constrain Him. But neither Simon, nor those with him, nor the people knew *what* the Lord was. What He could do they had witnessed. What He was had yet to be learnt. His answer to Simon brought this last out: "Let us go elsewhere," He said, "into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth" (ver. 38). Popularity He did not seek. Indeed, Mark frequently notices His retiring character (i. 44, 45; iii. 12, 19; v. 43; vi. 32; vii. 17, 24, 33-36; viii. 23, 26; ix. 25, 28, 30, 33; x. 10). Popular favour, so alluring to men, did not divert Him from His mission. He would pursue that. Dependent, perfect, obedient: that is *what* He was as a man.

What He could do on men's behalf, we have said, had been seen in the city. What He was, Simon and others learned outside of it. He taught, and He delivered; taught, and delivered as no one had done, or could do. But He was found, after all that display of power to be a *dependent* Man, for He prayed; a

“TILL HE COME.”

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*perfect* Man, for popular favour did not attract Him, nor guide Him in His service ; and an *obedient* Man, for He steadfastly carried out the mission He had undertaken upon earth, for “He preached,” we read, “in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out demons” (ver. 39).

We have thus had described about *twenty-four hours* of the Lord’s life on earth, commencing with the morning of one day, and going on to the morning of the next. What a day it was! Astonishing to those who witnessed it ; instructive to us who read about it.

C. E. S.

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“TILL HE COME.”

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HE is coming ! Oh, what glory  
 Circles round that promised word ;  
 Hope, the hope of all the ages,  
 Jesus Christ the Lord.

He is coming ! May that message  
 Of the Master’s sure return  
 Cause His servants’ hands to labour,  
 And their hearts to burn.

He is coming ! Then the sorrows  
 Of life’s dark and cloudy day  
 Shall be like the clouds at even  
 In the sunlit ray.

He is coming ! Oh, how swiftly  
 All these passing hopes and fears  
 Fade like dreams when morn awaketh,  
 After night of tears.

He is coming ! Then our loved ones,  
 Who from us have gone before,  
 We shall meet ; with them, with Jesus,  
 Live for evermore.

He is coming ! Come, Lord Jesus ;  
 Come, O come, thou longed-for day,  
 Dawn on us, and let all others  
 Swiftly pass away.

J. H. S.



## CONVICTED, YET CONFIDING.

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I READ this little sentence as though it might be the common motto of all the saints. It tersely describes us, and is God-glorifying and sinner-humbling. It is also the experience of faith. Let us engrave it on our spirits, and read it out as our confession. "Convicted, yet confiding." The great houses of the earth have their several devices and mottoes, memorials of family distinction. This may be the family motto of the saints, not distinguishing them one from another, but each and all of them from a world that seeks to maintain its own character, and to keep its own good opinion, not knowing the secret of confidence in Jesus. That confidence, the confidence of a sinner in a Saviour, is what God proposes to Himself for the glory of His great name in this revolted world. Having exposed us under the law, He says to us (as another has said), as in the Gospel, "I find I cannot trust you, you must now trust Me." God claims our confidence, and He has graciously entitled Himself to it. He has accepted the death of Christ for sinners. He is *just* when He forgives, because of the work of Christ, and because of the glory of the Person of Him who did that work. It is not *mercy* that forgives the believing sinner, it is *righteousness*.

Grace provided and gave the Son. That is so indeed—mercy unfathomable, inestimable! But it is righteousness which accepts the Son, and what the Son has done and perfected for sinners. We lean our souls and our hopes upon *facts*, not upon gleams of sunshine in our spirits, nor upon promises in the Word, nor upon help from God. Mere help would not do for them that are already under condemnation; promises to us would not answer God's demands upon us. It is upon facts, upon transactions counselled, accomplished, and accepted as between God and His Christ, and as for us, we rest ourselves—an anchor of the soul sure and steadfast. "Convicted,

yet confiding." Yes, it is a fitting motto for the family of believing, ransomed sinners. We must be convicted, or we should not know ourselves. Confidence may be firmer and more perfect in some quickened souls than in others, and so conviction may be in different measures of intensity. Scripture illustrates these things, and experience proves them every day. Still, the blessed God, in the gospel of the blood of Jesus, has entitled Himself to fullest confidence, and claims it; and surely we sinners have to submit to conviction, and this the believing sinner may take, and surely will take, as his motto, as that which emblazons his condition and memorializes his character—"Convicted, yet confiding."

*Adam* knew this condition as soon as he came forth from his hiding-place, and "submitted" his naked body to be clothed with the coat which God's own hand had made for him. And so we all know the same condition to be ours, when, as sinners, we by faith submit ourselves to the righteousness of God (Rom. x. 3). *Patriarchal faith*, which took knowledge of death in ourselves, but likewise took knowledge of God as a quickener of the dead, did the same. *Israel*, putting the blood upon the lintel, to shelter themselves, in God's provision, from the death that was abroad in the land, did the same. All *the prophets taught* the same; but *Israel*, *Ezekiel*, and *Daniel* are put through the *experience* of it, and *Israel*, as I may say, through the *history* of it. And now, it is the *characteristic of the Gospel* to publish this fact, and to invite sinners, by faith, to take this condition, to adopt this very motto, as I have called it, as their own, the expression of their state, and that which tells what they are—"Convicted, yet confiding." It is illustrated in the quickened souls of the New Testament, in *Peter*, and *Paul*, and the *Samaritan*, and the *three thousand*, and the *jailor*, and *Nathanael*, and all beside; and each of us to this day, and all till the last sinner be saved, as I may speak, pass through

the same history in spirit, or in the experience of our souls. Precious is this unity, this common light and intelligence, this oneness in the nature we have all received in Christ. We are all one, as standing in this condition.

But among all the cases which illustrate or set forth this condition, none at present more strikingly gives it to us than David in 2 Sam. xxiii. David had involved his conscience beyond, it may be, what any saint of God had ever done. The scarlet, crimson colour of his sin was deep indeed. We need not rehearse the particulars of it, and deeply indeed he had been convicted. Many of the Psalms may tell us this, and much of the history which we get in chapters preceding this. And in "his last words," as he calls his utterance here, we may see the same, that he had been thoroughly convicted. For he owns that his house was not with God as it ought to have been, and this was the fruit of his own sin. He had himself brought a sword into it, that was never to be sheathed till he had given up that house to another. But, though thus convicted, thus taking knowledge of the judgments which had overtaken him, he yet confides and utters his confidence in these "his last words," in very blessed language indeed. He talks of future and everlasting blessedness, perfect in its character, clear and certain in the title he had to it. It was, as he says, "ordered in all things and sure," and he can speak of the judgment of "the sons of Belial."

This is very striking. In the day of his sin he had been called by this very name. "Come out, thou bloody man, thou man of Belial," Shimei had said to him, and he would not answer Shimei. He rather owned that God had given him his commission thus to charge him. Sons of Belial might, therefore, say he was as bad as they. But in the face of all this, he is not afraid, nor does he hesitate to pronounce their judgment, confident that in the riches of grace,

## GOD IS LIGHT.

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however they might convict him, God had separated him from them ; as Peter can face and challenge the Jews as *deniers* of the Lord, the Holy One and the Just, though he truly had been, literally and simply, a denier of Him himself, and Paul can condemn his own nation for the very things that had distinguished his own guilt (1 Thess. ii. 15). This was a wonderful utterance of a man "convicted, yet confiding." It was a voice heard from the realms of *the restored*. David was not merely a sinner then, looking forth from his sinfulness to the God of salvation. He was a restored backslider, looking from amid the terrible ruins which he had brought upon himself, and out of which he was never to escape while he lived, to Him who was his in bonds that would hold for eternity ; and this gave to his utterance eminent peculiarity. It is a voice heard from the realms of the restored.

J. G. B.

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"GOD IS LIGHT, AND IN HIM IS NO  
DARKNESS AT ALL."

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THE apostle John would have every child of God in happy fellowship with Him ; and truly he says, Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ : the Spirit of God expressing through him the desires, too, of our blessed Lord to associate us with Himself. In order to make this good, he declares that which he has seen and heard of the Word of life. "This, then, is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that *God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.*"

What a message ! and what perfect rest and peace it gives us, as we know that all things are *naked and opened* unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. How can we sufficiently value the perfectness of such a work which has glorified such a God ?

We must start with this thought, that God's

character has been glorified, and we have been brought to Him who is light and love too. And how does this declaration affect us, beloved? God said, "Let there be *light*; and there was *light*." As in the beginning, so now, in the new creation, "The entrance of Thy word giveth *light*." And now we, who were sometime *darkness*, are *light in the Lord*. We are brought into this blessed fellowship, that we might *reflect the nature* and character of Him who hath called us *out of darkness* into His *marvellous light*. The Revealer of the Father came, the light shone in darkness, but the darkness comprehended it not. As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, to them that believe on His name: so that he that believeth is *not* condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already. And this is the condemnation, that *light is come into the world*, and men loved *darkness* rather than *light*, because their deeds were evil. For all things that are reprov'd are made *manifest by the light*: for *whatsoever doth make manifest is light*.

We see an illustration of this in the woman taken in adultery. When the light was focussed on the consciences of those who would condemn her, it reprov'd themselves, and they went out condemned. Thanks be unto our God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, who hath in His great mercy *shone into our hearts* to give the *light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ*.

And now, beloved, we are to walk as children of light—to *walk in the light as He is in the light*; to renounce the HIDDEN things of dishonesty, and by *manifestation of the truth*, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the *sight of God*; for he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.

In this light, beloved, we shall see light. How do we stand as regards this? Now let us put it to ourselves. How far do we find it true of us? We

see Christians dropping down to the ordinary light of men. See how many have not a bad conscience, perhaps, in their daily walk, just because they have not broken the moral law, which is all very nice, of course; but, beloved, this is no rightful measure by which to judge ourselves: and yet if we were to look at ourselves in the heavenly light, we should very often detect that we were not in Christ's light all through the day. BELOVED, THIS IS NOT FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM. Do we desire it? I trust we do. How much, ah, how much, He desires it. May it indeed be our earnest desire to be found in fellowship with our Lord and Redeemer; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent; the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the *works of darkness*, and let us put on the *armour of light*; let us walk honestly, as in the day.

The apostle Paul teaches us that our "Saviour" is also our "Lord"—a doctrine which secures the honour of the same indestructible truth, that "God is light," for it teaches that the hand which has *rescued* us is ever *asserting its dominion over us*; and we know that it is a *clean and a holy hand*. But the Holy Ghost not only through the apostle teaches us this, but He dwells in the saints now, and He dwells in those temples as a *holy Spirit, grieved by any contradiction and practical contravention of the truth that "God is light."*

Oh, beloved, let us see to it we are reflecting His light. Amid the darkness we have *His word*, which is a *lamp* unto our feet and a *light* unto our path. Let your light so shine before men that they may *see* your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. With a single eye for His glory may we tread the path marked out for us, remembering that if our eye be single, our whole body shall be full of light, for the light of the body is the eye. May our hearts be cheered as we all with open face, *beholding* as in a

glass the *glory of the Lord*, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. And let us ponder this over, that it is the *light of the knowledge of the glory of God we behold in the face of Jesus Christ*.

In such a position, our loins are sure to be girded and our lights burning, and we like to men that wait for their Lord. Then when He comes, beloved, what joy! what rapture! as we find ourselves brought into *light which surpasses the light of the meridian sun*. Then shall we not be *amazed* that anything down here could have occupied our hearts for a single moment?

“ But who that *glorious blaze*  
*Of living light shall tell,*  
*Where all His brightness God displays,*  
 And the Lamb’s glories dwell ?”

And there shall be no night there ; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light ; and they shall reign for ever and ever.

“ As the eagle that on lofty wings mounts to the purer air,  
 Leaving far behind earth’s dangers and cloudy atmosphere :  
 And with a clear, strong eye that can, undimmed by noon-  
 day brightness, gaze

*Upon the sun when other eyes are dazzled by its rays :*  
 So to the soul that waits on God shall constant power be  
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To live above the world : while here to have his heart in  
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*To follow Christ, and walk in light, illumined by His ray,*  
*That on his path shall brighter shine unto the perfect day.”*

J. H. I.

## LIFE ETERNAL AS PRESENTED IN SCRIPTURE.

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I. IN what does life eternal given unto us consist, as distinguished from the Life Eternal which from all eternity Christ *is*, in His own Person?

John xvii. 3.—“This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.”

I John v. 11, 12.—“God hath given to us life eternal, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath (the) life.” Ver. 20: “We are *in Him* that is true, *in His Son* Jesus Christ. He is the true God and Life Eternal.”

Note.—Life eternal connects itself with both the Father and the Son, and underlies our relation to each (No. IV., at end, and VII.).

II. Are “life” and “life eternal” one and the same? Is there any distinction between life as “eternal” and as “everlasting”?

John v. 24.—“He that . . . believeth . . . hath life everlasting, and doth not come into judgment; but is passed from death unto (that) life.” Vers. 39, 40: “Search [or, ye search] the Scriptures: for in them ye think ye have life eternal. . . . And ye will not come to Me that ye might have life.”—See also vi. 47 and 54.

Luke x. 25.—“What shall I do to inherit life eternal?” Ver. 28: “This do and thou shalt live.”

Note.—“Life” in this connection is invariably qualified, if at all, by the same Greek word, which fact indicates that “everlasting” is merged in “eternal” for adequate expression of the range of grace. In a notable passage, I John iii. 15, where Wesleyans and others would have preferred “everlasting” in support of their views as to grace, “eternal” as a translation maintains its ground. Moreover, no words that have exclusively the sense of “everlasting” (see, for example, Jude 6) and the like are used of *life*.

III. Who are they that are brought into realised contact with God and Christ for soul-blessing, and how is that effected?           D



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John i. 12.—“*As many* as received Him, to them gave He title to become *children* of God, to them that believe on His Name.”

Chap. v. 24.—“He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath life everlasting.”

Chap. xvii. 20.—“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also that shall believe on Me through their word.”

I John v. 13.—“These things have I written unto you (that ye may know that ye have life eternal) who believe on the Name of the Son of God.” (Severally classified as “little children,” “young men,” and “fathers.”)

Gal. iii. 26.—“Ye are *all* God’s *sons* by faith in Christ Jesus.”

Chap. vi. 6.—“Because ye are *sons*, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, whereby ye cry, Abba.”

Ephes. i. 13.—“In whom also after that ye believed [or, on believing] ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit.”

General note.—(1) Exercise of faith in Christ, His Word and Name; (2) sonship effected by new birth; (3) the Spirit imparted to sons, with lively sense of such sonship.

IV. Is life eternal shared by every believer as a divine gift from the time of his or her new birth; or is it something developed (as High Churchmen maintain), dependent upon walk, an element of advanced knowledge and action, a spiritual atmosphere breathed by some, but practically unknown by other Christians?

John i. 16.—“Of His fulness have all we received.”

2 Pet. i. 3.—“His divine power hath given unto us *all things* that pertain to *life* and *godliness* through the knowledge of Him that hath called us,” &c.

I John i. 2-4.—“We report unto you that Life Eternal, which was with the Father and was manifested unto us . . . that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship [is] with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.”

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Chap. ii. 14.—“The word of God abideth in you.”  
 Ver. 20: “Ye (see ver. 18, “little children”) have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.”  
 Ver. 27: “The unction abideth in you. . . .” Chap. iii. 9: “His seed remaineth in him.”

Chap. ii. 24-25.—“If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue (remain) in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that He hath promised us, (the) life eternal.”

General note.—(1) Until we see Him as He is, then to be like Him (1 John iii. 2), He, the Life Eternal, is portrayed to us in *Scripture*; (2) continuance in the Son and in the Father carries with it the promise of full fruition; (3) for past, present, and futurity of timeless life, of and from God, see Rev. i. 8: “He who is, and who was, and who is to come,” comparing xxii. 13: “I [am] the Alpha and the Omega, [the] First and [the] Last, the Beginning and the End;” (4) for present enjoyment of life eternal, see No. III.; (5) for such life constituting a promise, not merely being something promised, compare “Lay hold of the eternal life” (No. VI.).

V. What may, and should be, acquired and realised by growth?

See Rom. vi. 22; Phil. iii. 12-14; Col. i. 10.

1 Tim. vi. 12: compare *eternal* life here with “that which is *really* life” (ver. 19). As to the promise, see No. V.; see also 2 Pet. iii. 18.

VI. What is set forth by *Christ in us*?

John xv. 4.—We have to abide in the Son and (1 John ii. 24) in the Father. Such abiding in Christ is accompanied by His continued indwelling; the one a counterpart of the other.

Col. i. 27.—“Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Compare 1 Thess. i. 9-10: being converted to wait for the Son of God from heaven. Such is the Gospel.

VII. What is to be the circle or “sphere” of the Christian’s sentiments and impulses?

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Col. iii. 2-3.—“Set your mind on the things above. for . . . your life is hid with Christ in God, When Christ, our life, is manifested, then shall ye be manifested with Him.”

Note.—Christ Himself is the very measure and content of the life in which we participate. Every believer, we may here remind the reader, is a member of His body, which is the fulness of Him that filleth all in all (Ephes. i. 23).

VIII. Is the phrase “before God” of a merely “abstract” character, so as to be inapplicable to the scene of Christian experience and testing?

Acts xi. 33.—“Now, therefore, are we all *here present before God.*”

1 John iv. 17.—“As He is, so are we *in this world.*”

Note.—That which has been called the “mixed condition” of the Christian, looked at as alive in the world, does not render Augustine’s explanation of 1 John iv. 9 mere “dogma” as regards the divine nature in the believer, any more than as regards the flesh. Appearances may afford but feeble display of the operation of life eternal (James iii. 2), but this is not merely ideal or potential: it is a fact, attaching to every believer positively by the twofold (respectively “subjective” and “objective”) witness of God. There is the voice of the indwelling Spirit (1 John v. 10), and there is the voice of the written Word (ver. 13). Thus, if challenged by his fellow-man as to the efficacy of the alleged inward witness, the saint, be he tyro or elder, is able to vouch the written Word, which Jehovah hath magnified above all His Name.

IX. Does John, like Paul, ever present life eternal in its future aspect?

Compare 1 Cor. ii. 13, John iv. 14, 36, and vi. 27, with Rom. v. 21, for an identical set of words: “Unto life eternal.” Thus the first passage does not admit of being used for the theory that life eternal is an *aftergrowth* in the soul of a believer, between his conversion and the close of his earthly career.—E. E. W.

## “FOLLOW RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

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VERY often we need reminding of what goes on around. We may at times trace within a marked resemblance to what goes on without. What confusion and apparent contradiction in 2 Tim., yet how full of solid instruction ; seasonable then, as much so now. May we be teachable, and receive with delight directions and exhortations, so needful if we would progress and have Him lead on. This exhortation comes with very distinct force to such as are sensible that the sum total of Christianity does not consist only in my salvation—though believing on the Lord Jesus Christ I am the happy possessor of eternal life. He is my Lord. There is food given me—the sincere milk of the Word. I am expected to walk, to contend ; and this following righteousness supposes discernment through the precious Word ministered, and purpose of heart to be obedient—He supplying grace for all He exhorts and encourages to do for His glory. The Master would use the vessels He has chosen. We are not vessels appointed to destruction, but prepared for every good work. What mercy ! One might well be overcome with ecstasy before God for such a revelation of God’s sovereign grace, who could dispense with all such puny, failing creatures as we. Yet no ; He would give life, and teach His children to walk so that He is glorified in them—the bearing should be all in a piece with the life He gives. Christ He will have reflected through His own, to tell of Him in time, and to praise Him for all eternity. No change of scene or circumstance now ; the pollutions go on—religious corruptions, the worst corruptions, and all the easier to see such do not answer to the eye and heart of Him we call Father. So plain the instruction. Vessels differ here—some wood and earth, gold and silver ; vessels of mercy, vessels fitted to destruction. “ If therefore one shall have purified himself from these in separating

himself from them, he shall be a vessel to *honour*, sanctified, serviceable to the Master, prepared for every good work :” to stand for Him, to please Him, to be used of Him.

A vessel of honour does not mean success here as we are accustomed to think of it—to have applause, to expect every one knows my purpose, that for His glory I do this or that ; instead of commendation, hardness to endure here, suffering as a good soldier, watching out against entanglements, sharing in the afflictions of the gospel, and it may be much bodily suffering permitted, a thorn in the flesh—not to hinder but to help, knowing the preciousness, that no virtue attaches to the vessel, that the excellency and power are of and from Him, His grace sufficient. Do we know what it is to follow righteousness? Have we with those who name the Name of the Lord withdrawn from iniquity? Have we counted the cost? For the encouragement of His own He tells of a crown of righteousness, but only crowning and rewarding from His hand for service done with single eye and undivided heart. If we enter the race for an incorruptible prize, we must run according to rules directed by unerring wisdom. We need know the Person better and the wealth of grace available, or we might well hesitate before starting.

Righteousness some think sounds hard, cold, demanding ; but not so. See in Rom. v. : “Law came in in order that the offence might abound : but where sin abounded grace has over-abounded, in order that even as sin has reigned in the power of death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Rom. vi. : “Neither yield your members instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but yield yourselves to God as alive from among the dead, and your members instruments of righteousness to God : for sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace.” In Isaiah xxxii., again, so sweet and convincing that no legality

## FOLLOW RIGHTEOUSNESS.

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or bondage is entailed : "And the work of righteousness shall be peace : and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever."

Righteousness is not that which will lead me to gird up my garments and exclaim, "I am holier than thou ;" no selfish exclusion. Self-righteousness is just as hateful as God's righteousness is precious ; but we don't find ourselves alone through obeying our Lord's directions. "Youthful lusts flee, but follow righteousness, faith, love, peace with those that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart." Thus we get into company, the right company, as we pursue our course through this scene, having different objects and aspirations to those of the world, seeking a city that hath foundations, whose builder and founder is God ; identified with Him who has been rejected, who triumphs not by spear, bow, sword, or stave : so our weapons are not carnal either. Wondrous grace has reached us ; we have submitted to the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ. How much activity there is to-day, zeal of God, but not according to knowledge, endeavouring to fit them by service for the presence of Him who is holy, holy, holy ; as though He did not fit with beauteous dress those who in grace He saves. What calm, what leisure, when we have done with self. Either we deplore or commend self in some way. Why not remember our end was death, the sentence sustained by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? Our glory should be in the Lord, in that we live to live unto Him.

"Who is wise and understanding among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be



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entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (James iii). In the fourth chapter much is told out as to the why and wherefore of strife, envy, lust. May we count on Him in an evil day; not limiting Him or using His word unskilfully, finding our sufficiency in Him. The hard pressure, extreme difficulty, perilous times should teach us to prize highly the help He gives for our edifying. May all this tend to energise us to hold fast His word and not deny His Name. W. B.

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A SKETCH FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

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EFFORTS TO HINDER.—*Mark* iii. 20-35.

THE Lord's presence amongst men had a marked effect on people. If without in desert places, unable openly to return to Capernaum, because that leper whom He had healed could not keep silence, yet people went to Him from every quarter (i. 45). After some days returning to Capernaum, it was noised that He was in the house.\* Immediately many were gathered to it, "insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and He preached the word unto them" (ii. 1, 2). From the house He went forth to the lake side, and all the multitude resorted to Him (ver. 13). Accepting Matthew's hospitality, He met a large company of publicans and sinners at his table, added to which there were Pharisees and scribes looking on (ver. 15).

Entering the synagogue on another Sabbath day, many eyes were on Him, watching to see if He would heal a man there present with a withered hand. The synagogue service was probably little heeded by His enemies; the Lord was the One with whom they were occupied. He healed the man, having first challenged

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\*The house probably in which He dwelt.—*So. Meyer.*

## A SKETCH FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK. 93

His observers about it. Opposition was stirred. Such an attack, as they deemed it, on their traditional teaching must be resented. So the Pharisees, with whom, as Mark tells us, the Herodians were here associated, took counsel to kill Him; but, as we know, such counsels had to prove abortive, for it was not possible that a prophet should perish out of Jerusalem.

Leaving the synagogue, the Lord withdrew with His disciples to the sea. Still was He the object, the centre of attraction. And now a great multitude followed from Galilee, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumæa, and from beyond Jordan, and they of Tyre and Sidon even went after Him, and swelled the crowd. His popularity seemed unbounded. And so great was the concourse that the Lord, as we may learn from our evangelist, in order to prevent pressure from the crowd, made His disciples procure a small boat to wait upon Him (iii. 9). For, having healed many, they pressed upon Him for to touch Him, as many as had plagues. And unclean spirits, when they saw Him, fell down before Him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. But He straitly charged them that they should not make Him known (iii. 11, 12). He declined such aid.

Rejected by the Pharisees and scribes, God's work was not to languish for lack of labourers. So the Lord proceeded to call the twelve, both to be with Him, as Mark tells us, and to go out and preach, when He should have commissioned them (iii. 13-15). Leaving the mountain on which He had called them, He was found again in a house, and, as before, the multitude congregated there, so that He with His disciples was not able even to eat (ver. 20).

Such was the interest that His presence excited! No one in Galilee could be ignorant of it. And however much He sought retirement, He could not ensure it, for the crowd pursued Him, whether to the wilderness, the lake side, or into the house. Those who had need of healing rejoiced evidently at

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the power which He could put forth, and sought it earnestly. But everyone was not sick, or possessed by an evil spirit ; so it was not all that witnessed what was passing who understood what a time of blessing it was. Some of those then would fain interpose to check, as they would view it, such uncalled for excitement. Of course there might be that which is mere excitement ; but, if God is working in power, no wonder could it be that such a movement as has been referred to was witnessed. To allow it to go on, and probably gather power, would not do. An enemy there was, and is, too watchful and wily to allow of that without attempting to stop it, or at least discredit it. Of efforts in that direction the evangelist Mark now informs us.

Of the counsel of the Pharisees and Herodians we hear no more. It was not the purpose of God that Herod should deal with the Lord as he did with the Baptist. The time for the Lord's death had not come, so all plans with that in view must for the time fail. Other means must be found to stop, if possible, the Lord in His work.

And, first, there were those who doubtless thought themselves calm, sober judges of the situation, men who would not allow themselves to be carried away by passion, nor by the excitement of the moment. Such men came forward. And the historian, Mark—and he alone has recorded this attempt—introduces them to his readers as friends of the Lord. Probably they had known Him for long, when yet He was the carpenter's son, and knew Him as a carpenter Himself, previous to His commencing His ministry in Israel. Who was such an One, to become the centre and cause of such excitement? No time to eat! He must be beside Himself! Friendliness dictated their course. They must stop this, so they went out to lay hold on Him (iii. 21). But in vain. What they said to Him, if they ever reached Him, is hidden from us. The Lord, it would seem, did not interfere with their

## A SKETCH FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK. 95

judgment. Perhaps He ignored it. They might say He was beside Himself, they might go out to check the movement, yet it went on. Beside Himself! Had they asked the cleansed leper, what would He have said? Had they questioned those who had been restored to health, and those delivered from demon power, what would have been their judgment of Him? Had they taken counsel even with those whose households and whose families had been gladdened by their sick being healed, would they have agreed that He was beside Himself? No. The judgment of His friends told a tale; for it was a convincing proof that none of them in their persons, or in their families, had known the blessing of His healing power.

They went out to lay hold of Him. Evidently they must have returned having failed in their self-imposed mission. Another attempt then was made. If the enemy could not stop the Lord by His friends, he would do his utmost to have Him condemned in the eyes of the people, and for this purpose his tools were selected from the teaching class, the scribes, and scribes from Jerusalem. Now we all know the effect on plain people produced by the judgment of those viewed as men of reputation: how it carries weight. To such a class were people now directed. Their judgment is given. The work was Satanic. His miracles none could dispute, but the power by which He worked them was another matter; of that they had no doubt. "He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils (or demons) casteth He out demons" (ver. 22). Such was their recorded judgment. And they were scribes, and from Jerusalem too! Ignorant Galileans might be taken in; they, scribes as they were, learned in all Jewish wisdom, could see it all at a glance. It was Beelzebub working, and not God. An awful, awful statement!

Hitherto the Lord had apparently taken no notice of the efforts to stop Him. Now He speaks, and

## 96 A SKETCH FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

demonstrates the folly of those would-be wise men. "How can Satan," He asked them, "cast out Satan? And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house" (Mark iii. 23-27). The Lord's answer was conclusive. None answered Him. The folly of those scribes He made evident; and, may we not suppose it, even to themselves? If they acknowledged He did the miracles, and that they could not deny, the power by which He worked them was not of the prince of the demons. The educated scribes were foolish indeed.

How foolish! What had the demons expressed in the most public way, and in the most public places? It was no secret what had been uttered in the synagogue. "What have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus the Nazarene? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God?" (i. 24). Again, when the Lord was surrounded by the crowd of people collected from all parts, to which we have referred above, we read that "unclean spirits, when they saw Him, fell down before Him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God" (iii. 11). Now, though Mark alone, it would seem, has preserved a record of this last quoted testimony to His Person, yet it must have been well known. It was not a thing done in a corner. How foolish, then, were those scribes! The testimony of the demons refuted their awful assertion. To what egregious folly will not men stoop in their attempts to oppose the work of God?

But it was more than folly. Such a course as they had embarked on would imperil the salvation of their souls, and cause them to be in danger of eternal sin. Of this the Lord now warns them:

## A SKETCH FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK. 97

“ Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin” (rather than condemnation). And to make it clear what the Lord referred to as blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, Mark, and he alone, explains it: “ Because they said He hath an unclean spirit” (iii. 28-30). Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, an unpardonable sin, consists in attributing the power of the Spirit to evil agency. How many an one with a morbid conscience has been troubled, thinking it has committed that sin. A simple reference to Mark iii. 30 would at once have set the person at rest.

Another attempt to stop the Lord in His work has now to be recorded ; but, like the others, its failure to effect the purpose intended was as signally manifested. Friends had found they could do nothing. The scribes from Jerusalem had been silenced. Perhaps His mother and His brethren might be able effectually to interpose. That was next attempted. A wily plan, surely, of the enemy. Family relationships the Lord as Creator had originated. How could He disown them? How could He disregard the claims which they might justly have on Him? We know He could not, and would not in their right place disown them. Of that there is proof; for, as He hung on the cross, He provided a home for His mother with her nephew, John the evangelist (John xix. 26, 27). The Word, too, exhorts us to recognise them. Woe be to him who ignores them.

If, then, His mother and His brethren came to Him, He must, it would be thought, give heed to them. But on this occasion natural claims were put forward to take precedence of the carrying on of God’s work. That He would not admit. “ There came,” we read, “ His brethren and His mother, and, standing without, sent unto Him, calling Him.” The house was full ;

## 98 A SKETCH FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

they could not enter it (Luke viii. 19). So standing without, they sent unto Him to come out to them. Had He done that, He must have paused in His work, for a multitude sat about Him, and He was talking to them (Matt. xii. 46). "They say unto Him, Behold Thy mother, and Thy brethren, and Thy sisters (so some read) without seek for Thee" (Mark iii. 32). Family influence it was sought to bring to bear upon Him to get Him out of that crowd around Him. Either, it would seem, He must stop in His work, or disown the claim of natural ties. It seems like an artfully concocted plan of the enemy, in which His mother certainly was an unconscious instrument. What did He do? His answer silenced His mother and His brethren, as He had just before silenced the scribes: "Who is My mother and My brethren?" Then, answering His own question, He said, after looking round on those which sat about Him, "Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother, and My sister, and mother" (iii. 33-35). Natural ties there are, but there are spiritual ties as well. Those who did God's will were evidently born of God; so He would regard them in the light of His mother, sister, and brother. Sister, He said; for Mark, as we have noticed, very possibly mentioned them as coming with His mother and His brethren.

Did these without think they should be heeded because of their relationship? Relationship was the ground He would take for continuing His work within. He owned the existence of a spiritual relationship with those who did God's will; and elsewhere we read that He is not ashamed to call them brethren (Heb. ii. 11).

All these attempts failed; but were they isolated efforts? Surely, as we see them brought thus together by Mark, we must admit that the whole looks like the conception of one master mind. It was a skilful plan, devised by Satan to neutralise the Lord's influence

with the people. We all know how the populace can be swayed by a cry of the moment. What an appeal to make to them! Why, His friends, who have known Him for long, agree that He is beside Himself. Who will follow such an one? Then the scribes from Jerusalem, competent judges, have declared that He is working by demon power. Who would listen to such an one? And last, but not least, His nearest relatives, His mother, brethren, and sisters, desire to stop His strange career. Who would put their judgment against that of His friends, the scribes, and His relatives? How plausible that might have sounded, and much weight it might have had, if the Lord had not silenced the scribes, and replied to the request of His mother and His brethren as He did.

C. E. S.

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 EBENEZER.
 

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“Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.”—I *Sam.* vii. 12.

Hitherto! then murmur not;  
 He thy portion and thy lot,  
 He hath brought thee hitherto;  
 Even more the Lord will do!

Hitherto through weary way,  
 Hitherto through changeful day;  
 He the blest, unwearied One,  
 He the ever changeless Sun!

Never hath He left thy side,  
 Never hath thy love denied;  
 He is with thee all the way;  
 Thou with Him shalt rest for aye!

Hitherto His word fulfilled;  
 Hitherto thy hands upheld;  
 Hitherto thy strength renewed;  
 Hitherto each foe subdued!



100      HOW SHALL A MAN ESCAPE? &C.

Hitherto each danger past,  
We shall soon the anchor cast ;  
Soon shall enter into rest,  
Then with Him for ever blest !

Hitherto ! then doubt no more ;  
We shall gain a golden shore ;  
We shall hear His welcome given ;  
We shall share with Him *His heaven !*

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HOW SHALL A MAN ESCAPE FROM THE  
JUST CONSEQUENCES OF HIS SINS?

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THE Scripture answer is that given in Rom. iii. where the apostle says, "Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God . . . that He might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." I ask your attention for a few moments to two questions : first of all, "Why is a propitiation for sin needed?" and secondly, "What is required in propitiation for sin?"

First, then, why is a propitiation for sin needed? It is not needed to procure for us the love of God. Socinians charge us with teaching that to the death of Christ we owe the love of the Father. They charge us with representing the Father with a horrible Siberian aspect, as a wild beast thirsting for blood.

It is a wicked and false libel. We represent the Father as eternally loving His creatures and sending His Son to open a way to reconcile them to Himself. Many love to misrepresent the great doctrine of the atonement. But, so far from being indebted to Christ for the love of the Father, we are indebted to the Father for the death of Christ. The death of Christ was not intended to compel an angry Judge to

forgive us, but to permit that righteous Judge to righteously pardon us. God loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. We entreat you, therefore, not to allow some lingering fear that, notwithstanding the atonement of Christ, there is yet enmity in the heart of God against you to keep you back from God. Believe that He loves you, and because He loves you, sent His Son to be the propitiation for your sins.

Second. But, if propitiation be needed, what is required in it? He who reconciles must be God and man. He must be human to give it application, and He must be divine to give infinite preciousness to the propitiation, and give power to exhaust the cup of wrath which it would take all creatures all eternity to finish. Where can you find such a one? Only in the infinite resources of God Himself. The eternal Son, God Himself, took into union with Himself human nature apart from sin, and so prepared Himself to bear the stroke of God's wrath. As the representative of man who deserved that extremest wrath, the God-man was able to concentrate it on Himself, and to sustain and exhaust it. Thus the righteousness of Jehovah's government was secured, wrath was exhausted, justice vindicated, and God, while just, was able to become the justifier of the ungodly that believe in Jesus. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. The only begotten Son of God took upon Him our flesh, born of a woman, born under the law, that the chastisement of our peace might be upon Him, and that with His stripes we might be healed. He came not merely as a great example, not merely to overcome Satan, but to be chastised, scourged, spit upon, and to die in our stead, to give His life a ransom for, or in the place of, many. Thus He vindicated the outraged law, satisfied the claims of divine justice, and made our peace at the price of such chastisement, that forgiveness may be extended to believing sinners.—*Rev. T. Greaves.*

## COURAGE.

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“Add to your faith, courage.”—2 *Pet.* i. 5.

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ONCE in Northern India, a detachment of soldiers were led against a band of robbers who had intrenched themselves in a strong position at the head of a narrow gorge. The troops were marching along the valley between the steep sides, when a sergeant and eleven men separated from the rest by taking the wrong side of the ravine. The officer in command signalled them to return. They, however, mistook the signal for a command to charge. For a moment they looked up at the rocky height, and saw their enemies above the ramparts. Then, with a ringing cheer, they clambered up the steep sides. At the top were seventy robbers sheltered behind a breastwork. It was a desperate encounter, but against such odds it could not last long. Six fell on the spot, the rest were hurled backward into the depths below. Now, it was a custom in that nation, when any of their bravest men fell in battle, to distinguish the most valiant by a thread tied round the wrist; a thread of red or green silk, red denoting the greatest courage. Some little time after, the English troops found the bodies of the twelve men stark and gashed, but round the wrist of each was tied the scarlet thread, the distinction of the hero. So, even amongst a wild and savage robber-horde, bravery, the bravery of an enemy, is a thing to be revered and honoured. I ask you to-day to come and pledge yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ, *because it does need courage*. Not because it means peace, but because it means war. I do pray you, because it is a high and noble call to a valiant life, this day kneel and pledge yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ, in His strength, in everything, and everywhere, to be His faithful soldier and servant, seeking first of all and always the glory of the King.

—*Mark Guy Pearse.*

## E A S E.

SMOOTH things are much in demand to-day ; a time of itching ears for something new, novel, attractive ; the thought of His coming desired to be in the far distant future. "My Lord delayeth His coming ;" such language is but the outcome of a heart that is not ready, that would eat and drink with poor, blind, infatuated ones. The goodman of the house has taken a long journey. The spirit of all this pretension that goes on during this little while, we are in danger of imbibing, if we have not already done so. It makes a fair show in the flesh ; it helps one to keep a tolerably good conscience ; it looks like doing something. So much easier to keep pace with the times, than to walk with God. Are we really afraid of being thought slow, behind the times, out of date, by those who have no thought as to God, or desire for His glory, His truth ? Let us see to it that what so-and-so is doing stir us not to do likewise, but to be imitators of Him as dear children. We have had a long time of ease ; is it not time to awake out of slumber and care for one another ? loving one another as He gave us commandment ; encouraging to feed upon His Word, to test "precious" ministry by it, proving what is of God and what is merely human leaven alone ; that there might be a naturalness and reality marking the doings and sayings of His redeemed people. The prophets prophesied falsely in former days. All seemed outwardly circumspect perhaps, but the lie sooner or later was discovered. Easy to say, "Peace, peace," but that did not hinder God in His faithfulness sending famine and a sword to arouse the slumbering consciences of His people, and lead them to confession and humiliation before Him. "My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." Why prefer that which is weighty, a grievous burden, hard to bear ? "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart : and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Excitement, dear fellow believer, will not prove a stimulant for a consistent, abiding testimony for Christ. If you are under impulse, through perhaps being encouraged to do this or that, because you see others witness for Him—when you have no such surroundings to prompt or impel you, your heart not established in grace, your feet unshod—you will fall into that which is the most loathsome, detestable occupation, viz., with what you have done or are doing, thus displeasing Him and shadding the perfection of His Person and work. The man of Gadara out of whom the devils were dismissed; no excitement with him; he is quiet now if he never was before. A word should be enough. The message to him was, “Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.” What restlessness there is, what desire to be anywhere but where He has placed you, or to speak to everyone but those near and dear to you. The heart is deceitful. How many times the suggestion comes to go here or there; if I were only somewhere else! The desire is for ease; the endeavour to get it leads to labour that is weariness, as Martha’s. God forbid that aught else than pointing out dangers should prompt one to speak thus freely and plainly.

May you see in the Word the wisdom of God in keeping us in our place for His glory; not dissolving the marriage tie because either the wife or husband has been saved by God’s grace; no wrenching of children from parents because of being “born again” by the incorruptible seed, the Word of God. The woman in John iv. and the young man in John ix. were no exceptions to this: “Go home and tell what great things the Lord hath done for thee.” The opposite to this we shall find in the clamorous woman, unchaste, never in the house; profession full of pretension, but unreal, false, and that which aids not the furtherance of Christ’s cause, but puts before perishing ones but phantom, shadow, fable, until the

CHRIST A TEST OF THE HUMAN HEART. 105

sceptic cries it is all a farce. "Go home," says the Word : my heart would say, "Go abroad." Our border will surely be enlarged if we occupy for Him where we are. But to confess Him by lip where I am always, with no good works to back up my profession, would soon be proven unreal ; the outcome would be silence very soon. If real, that which could not be dismissed, good works accompanying the confession of His Name, how real ! If we start right, we may make distinct progress in the things of God. We are not left here to commend ourselves. To buy, sell, and get gain should not be our object in life, only as a means to provide things honestly.

Ease comes later for us ; there remains a rest for the people of God. Shall we not lay to heart our great failures ? Have we not been much abroad ? but how neglected the kindred ! What wonder if by those who know us we get contempt, instead of an open ear ! But where there is consistency, "For me to live is Christ," the fear of God before us, consciences will be reached, and men's hearts will fail them for fear. May He arouse and use us in His grace for His own glory.

W. B.

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CHRIST A TEST OF THE HUMAN HEART.

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EVERY Christian is my own flesh and blood ; nay, he is more, for he is one spirit with me. . . The man, whoever he may be, who followeth hard after God, though in his search for Him it be by circuitous ways he journeys, shall be the object of my love. And the measure of my love for a man shall be the degree of sincerity with which he seeketh unto God, or the degree of self-surrender with which he has found Him in Christ.

How is it with our love to Christ and to all those who are members of His body ? Can it be said of each one of us, that we have been brought into so living and personal a relation to the glorified Son of

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God that we can truly say, "Christ is the supreme object of my love; I love Him as He demands to be loved; I love Him more than father and mother?" Are those who are most closely united to Him, even when they are deficient in human gifts and acquirements, nevertheless the dearest objects of your love—those with whom *you* can in all things feel most closely united? . . . What a revelation of the hearts of the children of God in these days is given by the fact, that there are those among us who value more highly the assent to some little article of their peculiar confession, than the indubitable manifestations of a loving heart towards the Lord Jesus. There are thousands ready to cry out when one *goes too far*, as they call it, who yet have not a word of lamentation for those who do not go *far enough*! What a test of the human heart is Christ here also. Yet the present is a time which, above all others, requires that those who love Christ should unite more closely together.—  
*From "Light from the Cross," by Professor Tholuck.*

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 THE WORK OF A CHRISTIAN'S LIFE.
 

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WE have, every one of us, a great, a God-given work to do in this life. . . . All the separate tasks we have to perform in our calling are only so many different opportunities afforded us of manifesting the Name of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. If the love of God be the ruling motive of our daily life, . . . His honour our end, there will rest even upon the dullest and most trivial work we perform a light from heaven to ennoble and to glorify it; for God, who rules in us, will by our actions make Himself known to men. You have not imposed upon yourself the work of your life; it is God who has imposed it upon you. Oh, let this thought never be absent from your mind! Seen in its light, every work in which you engage must appear great, however little in itself it may be. Every task which God has given you to

## THE WORK OF A CHRISTIAN'S LIFE. 107

perform must be a matter of moment to you, for every such task is a token of grace ; it is something that the King of heaven and of earth has chosen you to do for Him. . . . We think an honour is conferred on us when we receive a commission, however small, to discharge for some great one of the earth, just because he who gave it is so great, and we apply ourselves with alacrity and pleasure to the task he assigns us. And shall we not feel it a blessed privilege that it is permitted us to perform the work of God ?

To fulfil the mission which Christ has appointed us is no easy task. If any one of you fancy he is engaged in performing it, and has hitherto found it easy, if he imagine it to be a process that can go on altogether independently of any care on his part, that man has, I fear, never known what his mission really is. . . . The Christian's work is compared to the building of a tower (Luke xiv. 28-30). The work demands great sacrifices, but he must be prepared to make them all. . . . All that remains in us of the old man must be given over to death, that the new man may rise in life. Is not our daily task to surrender unto death our own will, our own wishes, in order that we may receive them back again from God sanctified and made holy ? It is easy to fight when the General himself leads on to the battle. Blessed be God, what belongs to the Head belongs also to the members. His life is mine, His sufferings are mine, and mine, too, will be His victory. —*From "Light from the Cross," by Professor Tholuck.*

The more sincere our desires, and the more earnest our efforts to promote the glory of God and the welfare of man, the more will our love to the Lord Jesus increase. Idle Christians always have lukewarm hearts, which are at once the cause and effect of their sloth. When the heart is fully engaged in God's great work, it will glow with love of the great Son, who was Himself a servant in the same great cause.—*C. H. Spurgeon.*



## GATHERED FRAGMENTS.

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SILENCE, quarrelling unbelief, "I know Whom I have believed." Not in friends though numerous and potent ; for they are men, and not God. Not in riches, for they make to themselves wings. Not in princes, for their breath is in their nostrils. But let God be true and every man a liar. In God do I put my trust ; in His word do I hope. O sure word ! I have not built on the sand of mortality. Let the rain descend and the winds blow ; nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure. His everlasting promises and everlasting covenant are my stay. I am built upon His promises ; let hell and earth do their worst to blow up this foundation.—*Joseph Alleine.*

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I have the entire conviction that, as Christians, we should have constantly before us the doing good to our fellow creatures as the great aim of life ; and that this must consist above all in giving them that truth which we have felt to be very precious to ourselves. But *how* we are to give it is a question that requires very much Christian wisdom and the much maligned *tact*—not the Jesuitical tact that creeps to its end by hidden ways, but the fineness of judgment that can choose time, place, opportunity, and all the while conceal nothing of what we are and believe. The truth is that men soon get to know what our Christianity is when we *live* it. When we have established our position and influence so, our word, when it comes seasonably, comes with power.—*Dr. John Ker.*

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What a poor thing, in the ministry of the Gospel, is the man of great learning, and eloquence, and force of argument, whose preaching wants the vital warmth and spiritual earnestness of a single zeal for Christ and love for the souls of men. Weigh him in the balance of the sanctuary ! Estimate him in view

of the judgment day! Think of him as he will appear when he and all are receiving the fruits of embracing or rejecting the Gospel! Compare him, before God, with the man of far inferior gifts, who to the Master's work unites the Master's Spirit, and does, with all his heart, as though God did beseech men by him, pray them to be reconciled to God. With how many tongues does the latter preach? If any forget his words, none can forget his evident sincerity and solemn earnestness. The sermon from his lips may not be retained, but that preached by the whole spirit of the man, as of one realising the weight of his message and the worth of souls, cannot pass away.—

*Bishop McIlvaine.*

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Some seek a heaven of *rest*,  
 And some an ampler sphere  
 For doing work they cannot do  
 While they are prisoned here.

Some seek a heaven of *song*,  
 And others fain would rise  
 From all articulate utterance  
 To silent ecstasies.

Some seek a *home* in heaven,  
 And some would pray to be  
 Alone *with Christ* beyond the reach  
 Of other company.

But in God's perfect heaven,  
 Our aspirations meet,  
 The longings of our hearts fulfilled,  
 Our souls' desires complete !

—*Dr. Edwin Hatch.*

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The Sunday schools in Norway do not generally assemble in comfortable rooms as in England. We have a school before our mind's eye now as we write. It meets in a peasant's hut ; the floor is of hard dry earth ; a peat fire burns in one corner ; there is no

chimney, and the smoke escapes as best it can ; there are no maps nor pictures, no forms nor chairs, no black-board nor desk. The teacher—who is superintendent, secretary, and teacher all in one—stands as he reads and speaks. Bibles are so dear that only few scholars possess them. Notwithstanding such disadvantageous circumstances, good is being done. A little boy recently died very happy in Christ, and several of the elder scholars meet together for prayer every Tuesday night.—*Extract.*

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It is of infinite moment not to let the eye *rest* on trouble, or sorrow, or sin, or failing in myself or in others. Doing so can only enfeeble or defile. Besides, I have *no* power or grace to meet any of them ; all is in Christ. Then let me look to Him, and bring everything to Him. Thus the heart will be kept in communion, and the bow will abide in strength, whilst He will meet the need when we *turn from it to Him for this end.* Being silent before Him, with the eye up to Him, is ever efficacious.—J. R.

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LETTER OF INTEREST.

R—, JULY, 1860.

DEAR D—,

I can very gladly rejoice in your joy at finding yourselves in a *larger* place than you thought—as we shall increasingly find it to be—for God has chosen it for us, and set us in it in Christ. But how miserable man's imaginings are in the presence of God's revelation—how poor his thoughts ! And this *is* a comfort, as you remark, that it is not even our thoughts or feelings about it, but the thing itself—our thoughts will all come to *an end.* I rest in God's. Ah ! I *would* rest there !—the redemption in Christ Jesus, on which we rest, and which never changes. We have God's revelation of His Son, and of His love to us in

## LETTER OF INTEREST.

III

Him, and of our place before Him in Christ to fall back on, or rather to live on and in, against our thoughts, and Satan, and man. Neither can *reveal God and His grace*. Faith believes God, and has the blessing.

But what I find is that the new wine needs a new vessel, and that the flesh must be allowed in nothing if I am to carry the heavenly treasure. Paul found it no beating of the air, but a really hard, personal struggle with a positive hater of God in his own flesh. But O the liberty of the spirit when we reckon ourselves dead to the flesh! the taste of heavenly food! the consciousness of living of Christ and His fulness! of being beloved of Him! of having His sympathy and His intercession above! But only to live in the comfort of this, that even for my failings and infirmities I have an ever-living High Priest at God's right hand to make intercession for *me*—to speak of *me* to His God and Father—in entreaty when I fail or am in weakness, and in joy when, through grace, I am a fruitful branch, a witness of His being alive above! Dear D——, how little is confidence in Christ's love cherished by us—intimacy of heart with Him without fear or suspicion. Ah! without reflexive thoughts on ourselves? Alas! if we get the joy of it for an hour we go to sleep on the strength of it, or beautify *ourselves* with the grace of it for our own eye or the eye of man, or we in *something* begin to lust, because we fail in our "reckonings," and we cannot do without leaks, or we forget the time when we were naked and bare, and so lose the sense of grace—the present sweetness of the thought that we owe it all to His grace in *death*. He had to *sacrifice everything* that He might bring anything to me. I cannot abide in the enjoyment of the blessing won, which is indeed God Himself, if not in moral separation from the nature that brought Him to death to win it for me. However, it is not thinking of the exercises that will give strength (although knowing God's ways in them does

lift up the hands—Heb. xii.), but living as a part of Christ—my Head in heaven, I a member here to live on His fulness, and be a servant of His happy will on earth.

All this, however, supposes a conscience purged *for ever* by the blood. It supposes one who has before God come to the end of self-strength as well as self-sin, and been by atonement taken out of the body of death by God and planted in Christ, where there is liberty and peace.

I wish for you all this consciousness of dwelling in the secret place of the most High, and the ability in the presence of earth's dryness, and your own utter emptiness of any store of blessing, to stay your souls on the unseen but assured love of Jesus within the veil, whence He *sends us into* the world as a heavenly people; a people who can only feed on manna fresh from God, and whose tastes are not suffered to be vitiated by the food of Egypt. I covet it for myself.

Another great thing is, when we lose the eye and loving smile of Christ, to be able to tell Him we cannot do without it, and to give ourselves to the searching for this as our first and *only* joy. Ah! it is the only joy; for all else is deception.

His face can brighten *any* soul. He can fill with gladness the most desolate and woe-begone heart, and *add* no sorrow. The sun chases away the fogs and the darkness too. "Our Sun by day, our Star by night." Blessed Lord, so cheer us each and all till Thou shalt return!

I just add a line as to 2 Timothy. It is unspeakably precious as divine light and strength for the last days for an individual. You will, however, notice that the whole first part is *joy in grace*, summed up in chap. ii. 1; personal joy in the hidden and unfailing springs of grace in God; eternal life given to us in purpose in Christ Jesus before the world began.

J. R.

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APRIL, 1890.

## THOUGHTS ON LEVITICUS X.

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THERE is a wonderful contrast between the end of chap ix. and the beginning of chap. x. In chaps. viii. and ix. the priests had been consecrated, and the offerings for themselves and the people had been offered. Aaron had blessed them (ix. 22), and Moses and Aaron together had gone *in* and come *out* of the tabernacle—figure of Christ's coming forth as King and Priest (ver. 23); then the fire came down from heaven and "consumed the burnt offering and the fat" before all the people (ver. 24). God thus publicly announced His acceptance and appreciation of the sacrifice which called forth their shout. But in chap. x. the fire is otherwise engaged. It consumed the sons of Aaron—Nadab and Abihu—who dared to offer strange fire before the Lord; but it is the same fire. In the one case it is seen consuming the sacrifice; in the other, consuming the sinners. Truly "*our* God is a consuming fire" (Heb xii. 29).

What terrible wickedness this was, to seek to bring forth the sweet odour of the incense by means of any other fire than that which had come down from heaven upon the altar, and which typified divine judgment. It was false worship, indeed, of the grossest kind. True worship must never be, and *cannot* be, dissociated from the altar of burnt offering, the cross of Christ, where He bore the judgment of God, where "the Son of Man was glorified and God was glorified in Him" (John xiii. 31), and all went up as a sweet savour; otherwise it is an abomination to the Lord, and must be visited with His summary judgment. This is important to bear in mind in connection with our worship in this day.

It would appear as though these sons of Aaron had been intoxicated; and in the excitement of nature, caused by excess of wine, they so far forget themselves and what was due to God as to commit this

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grievous sin. This I judge to be the case from the prohibition in ver. 9.

We have a similar sin in 1 Cor. xi. The saints at Corinth were so far forgetting themselves, and exhibiting conduct so very shameful at the Lord's table, that He had to judge them. Hence we read: "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (ver. 30). Sleep: that is, the Lord took them away by death in His government. Whereas, "if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged; but when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (ver. 31, 32). These Corinthians did *not* judge themselves, they were therefore judged by the Lord.

"Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying: I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace" (ver. 3). This was enough for Aaron. God *must* be sanctified in those who come near Him, or He *must* glorify Himself, and before all, by the execution of judgment. "The Lord is known by the judgment which He executeth" (Psalm ix. 16). Had the sons of Aaron *sanctified* Him in their hearts, He would not have *consumed* them with His fire to maintain His glory.

What a word this is for our own hearts in these days: "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me." We have a very striking word in Isa. viii. 13, 14. The people are warned not to join hands in human confederacies, but "sanctify the Lord of Hosts *Himself*; and let *Him* be your fear, and let *Him* be your dread. And *He* shall be for a sanctuary," &c. What a refuge in time of trouble and banding together of evil, to set the Lord apart in the heart, and find Him to be a real sanctuary! As the Psalmist says, "Oh! how great is Thy goodness which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men! Thou shalt hide

them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man : Thou shalt keep him secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues" (Psalm xxxi. 19, 20). Peter, too, insists on the same truth (1 Pet. iii. 14, 15). The saints were being persecuted and passing through fiery trial, and he says : " Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled ; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts," &c. If this were attended to more by each one of us, we should save ourselves an immense deal of trouble and sorrow of heart. May it be ours from henceforth to practice more of this *sanctification*, so that we may enjoy more of that *sanctuary*.

How very solemn it must have been to the relatives of those priests to enter the sanctuary and witness the effects of the judgment of God ! How it must have affected the people also to see those men carried out in their priestly garments outside the camp ! The very men who went *inside* as worshippers, now carried *outside* as witnesses to all that God will be glorified—that He will maintain His own glory before all, and spite of all. I repeat, it must have been a solemnising sight, the burial of those guilty men ; and also a terrible evidence of the truth of that word, " God is no respecter of persons ! " May we lay it to heart.

It is striking to notice here that God would not allow Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar to defile themselves for the dead, nor leave the door of the tabernacle, though the whole house of Israel had to bewail the burning which the Lord had kindled" (ver. 6, 7). As priests *inside*, and anointed with the holy oil, they must be above mere nature. Their brethren who were not in that priestly place might do that, *i.e.*, mourn ; but not them. It seems to point out that there are things which in our character as priests we must not do, but which as mere common people we may do. If we have spirituality enough, and are near enough to God when some crushing sorrow or trial comes—may be by the hand of God in discipline—



then we rise above it in divine power, because we see God in it. It is not that we are insensible and do not feel it, but we are able to rise above it in our true priestly dignity in the power of the Holy Ghost. If not, then we drop down to the level of one of the congregation. Not that this last is wrong, but it denotes the lack of spiritual energy which carries us above the trial. Surely, then, we should all aim at the higher thing.

To me it is exceedingly beautiful to notice, next, how God immediately turns away the thoughts of Aaron and his sons from the sorrow that was crushing their hearts, to feed on the meat offering (ver. 12). In type, to contemplate His Son and feed on Him in His perfect and devoted life on earth. It seems to set forth the contrast in such a marked way. The imperfect lives of the two priests who had just died for their sin, and the perfect life of the Lord Jesus Christ of which the meat offering was the type. How it shews to us that Christ is God's remedy for every sorrow and every trial that can touch the hearts of His beloved people here. Surely this is taught us in *principle* in this picture! God would ever turn the hearts of His beloved people to Christ. It is what has already satisfied His own heart. We must not forget that in all these offerings God had His part first, before ever the priests could have theirs; so that as priests we feed on Him who has been already a sweet savour to God in life and death, which sweet savour has an *abiding* character by the salt of the covenant of God (Lev. ii. 13). What a wonderful and blessed privilege to have communion with God about His beloved Son in life and death!

But notice, further, not only was it the meat offering which they were commanded to eat because it was their due (ver. 12, 13); there was also the *wave breast* and *heave shoulder* of the peace offering, which was also their due (ver. 14, 15). Thus, in picture, God was throwing them, as it were, back upon Christ, to

receive of His fulness; turning them away from their almost overwhelming sorrow to feed upon Christ, and thus have the almighty strength (the shoulder), and the everlasting affection (the breast) of Him whose life was absolutely perfect, and a sweet savour to God, and thus have that blessed consolation in the time of their sorrow. Of course I am speaking more of what the picture is for us, than of their apprehension of these things, and desire that our hearts may see in these principles lessons which shall be for *our* profit and joy.

Then what more befitting time could have been chosen to turn back to the breast, the affections, of Him whose hand had just dealt such a blow! and likewise receive the benefit of His almighty strength, the shoulder! Surely both were needed at such a moment. God knew this, and therefore in perfect love He reminds them of their privileges. What a blessed and important principle this is! God would not have us *occupied* with evil in whatever form, but in positive occupation of heart by the Holy Ghost with good. At the same time, if evil comes in, and we have to act, we must not hesitate to draw our swords, and forget father and mother, &c. in our zeal for God's glory (Deut. xxxiii. 8, 9); but even then it must be in a spirit of self-judgment, lest we should be merely seeking our own justification, or serving *our* own ends in other ways. We see the same principle, occupation with good, in Phil. iv. 8, 9. And it is only as we study Christ and feed on Him that we are at all competent to deal with evil in a divine way, because morally above it. Like Moses on the mount with God, occupied with good; when he came down he knew how to act with regard to the evil. May this be true of us.

One feels for oneself as for others, that what is needed amongst us more is, when troubles rise—whether individual, family, social, or ecclesiastical—not to leap at once into the warrior's place, and rush

into the battle as though *we* would settle the question speedily! Alas! often such doughty warriors return crestfallen and dispirited; yea, *conquered* instead of *conquerors*; for God rebukes the company of spearmen, and scatters those who delight in war (Ps. lxxviii. 30). But we need to quietly retire into the sanctuary, and "beside the altar." Oh! do we know what that means? "Beside the altar;" what does *it* remind us of? And there, with the absence of *all leaven*, and in true priestly character, feed upon Christ till we are perfectly satisfied with *Him*—filled with His affections—strengthened with His strength—delighted with His perfect life in all its suitability to God. Then we can come out for God to face the evil; but we come out in the spirit of Phil. ii. 1-8, and Col. iii. 12, 13, and Gal. vi. 1, 2. Moreover, it is when in that state, and then only, that we are prepared to do what the priests failed to do—eat the sin offering. That is, we make the sin our own, and bear it before God on our spirits as our own, but in the consciousness that the sacrifice has been offered for it already. Thus it is put away in the fullest sense. This I believe to be true priestly service. We want more *priests*—practically I mean—and fewer *warriors*. Alas! in this day the fighting men seem most numerous! And after all, it is the priest who *knows when and how* to fight, and who is not afraid to do the warrior's work when needed. (See Phineas—Num. xxv.).

Aaron failed to eat the sin offering for the people (v. 16-20). His heart was so crushed with his own sorrow and loss, that he was unable to rise up to his priestly service and take up the sin of others. It was not *sin* on his part, but *weakness*; hence Moses was content (ver. 20). Had it been sin, Moses could not have been silenced. Weakness is the subject of sympathy and succour (Heb. ii. 18 and iv. 15, 16). What a mercy for us that it is so. But sin, if allowed, is judged. There is such a sorrowful strain in Aaron's

reply to Moses in ver. 19, that one feels one's heart moved by his touching expression of sorrowful feeling: "Behold, this day have they offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the Lord; and such things have befallen me; and if I had eaten the sin offering to-day, should it have been accepted in the sight of the Lord?" He could not rise up to it. He felt crushed. "And when Moses heard that, he was content." Aaron is silenced in the beginning of the chapter (ver. 3), and Moses at its close (ver. 20); while God has *His* way all through. He began it with His judgment of death on the sinning priests, and ends it with His grace expressed to the living, even pitying them in their weakness, but turning them to the source of strength and unfailing love. What divine and perfect ways! "As for God, His way *is* perfect. . . . It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh *my* way perfect" (Ps. xviii. 30-32). May we know the joy and blessedness of all these precious things.

*New Zealand.*

W. E.

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## PEACE AND PIETY THE PATHWAY TO PROSPERITY.

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IN one verse in Acts (ix. 34), we have a very effective and interesting summary of the state of the Church of God in a very early period of its history. The divine penman has recorded that the churches throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria had rest and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied! A bright epoch, indeed, it was in the history of God's assembly when this could be written concerning it; for, be it observed, no Gentile assembly had then been formed, so that the whole Church of God at the time is there contemplated. Observe, too, that the threefold division of the land indicates how blessedly grace had wrought in putting Judea,

Galilee, and Samaria all under tribute to the Lord Jesus Christ in supplying stones—living stones—for the Church which He would build according to His word in Matt. xvi. 18, and against which the gates of hell should not prevail.

Judea, the religious, occupied with the temple and the Sabbath, and the observance of Mosaic ordinances, characterised by scribes and Pharisees, who had been blind to the person and the work of the Son of God, and who had put Him to the open shame of indignity and death, had nevertheless supplied its contingent.

Galilee, the rationalistic, the materialistic, the Sadducean; requiring—like modern Christendom—adequate evidence and then yielding intellectual assent, but without conscience and without heart; she also had supplied a contingent.

Lastly, Samaria, the renegade, the corrupt, the defiled! she of whom the Lord had said, "Ye worship ye know not what." She who had no character to lose, and where no miracles were sought for, but where His word reached souls and stirred consciences. She, from her publicans, and her sinners, supplied her contingent also to God's house upon earth.

Here let us magnify the grace of God, that, making no distinction, had thus wrought through the land of Israel everywhere, picking up its trophies, fitly framing them together a holy temple in the Lord, building them together in Christ, in whom the Gentile believers should afterwards be built, for an habitation of God through (or in) the Spirit (Eph. ii. 21, 22).

Notice, also, the order in which these places are named. Not according to their geographical position, which would have set Samaria next to Judea, but in moral connection. "Beginning at Jerusalem" sets Judea first, as doubtless the renegade, the apostate character of Samaria sets her last. "But the last shall be first, and the first last," cannot be forgotten.

Equally, too, we find purposed order in the three things which are so tersely recorded as to the assemblies: then had they (1) rest; (2) edification, the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Ghost; and (3) were multiplied. This, then, is the order: peace, piety, prosperity. The same in principle, we may surely say, is experienced by saints individually. Peace first; the Lord is the giver of rest; both Himself and His work are wanted for this. His work gives rest to the conscience; Himself gives rest to the heart, an object to satisfy it for ever! Then edification follows, accompanied with fear of the Lord—holiness practically pursued, and comfort of the Holy Ghost—or the joys of eternal salvation; joying in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Thirdly, prosperity, fruit unto the Lord, the heart encouraged in labouring for Him under His blessing. It is, surely, the same for every assembly. Long since has this beautiful picture faded away so far as the whole Church of God was portrayed; the peace, the piety, the prosperity, where are they now? But the privileges granted by the ascended One have not been abrogated or withdrawn, nor the corresponding responsibility lessened. Each assembly might fittingly take this verse as its own ideal, as it is surely God's, for its character and condition, if these are to please Him. First, there must be *rest*. Peace, God's peace, the atmosphere of His presence must prevail. The first resurrection word breathed by our risen Lord when He met His gathered saints was, "Peace unto you." And on the following "first day of the week," it was again, "Peace unto you." Unless there be this rest in its best and highest sense, the first element of corporate blessing is lacking. It is absolutely essential to the welfare of the assembly. Says the apostle, "Looking diligently, . . . lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." And in Galatians, "By love serve one another. . . . But if

ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." Again in Thessalonians, "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves." Also in Hebrews, "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." Lastly, as Peter says, "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." That, then, is the first essential of assembly blessing. Secondly, we have edification. "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification" (Rom. xv. 2). "He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification; . . . edifieth the church." . . . "That the church may receive edifying; . . . seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church; . . . let all things be done unto edifying" (1 Cor. xiv.). And accompanying this edification are "walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Ghost." These things are truly practical; the cultivating a becoming sense of the presence of the Lord, walking before Him reverently, as coveting His approval, the consciousness of His smile being upon us, and the inward enjoyment of the succour and comfort of the Holy Ghost accompanying this. As we read in the same chapter (1 Cor. xiv.), "That all may *learn*, and all may be *comforted*." The Lord desires that edification and consolation may be alike ours. Finally, we have prosperity: the churches "were multiplied." He who in Pentecostal times added daily to the assembly's record, His saved ones, could not be indifferent to the subsequent growth of their numbers. But this is not the first, nor the second, but the third consideration. And this was really *God's answer* to the two foregoing things, peace and piety. Says Paul, "I have planted, Apollos

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watered ; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth ; but God that giveth the increase."

If we duly consider this short Scripture, then, we shall find it sheds a flood of light on the condition of assemblies. Why are saints "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth?" Why so little growth "in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?" Why, when they ought to be teachers, do they need to be taught the first principles of the oracles of God? Because they are not at peace among themselves ; some root of bitterness springing up has troubled and defiled them. And again if there be not (1) peace, and there be not (2) practical piety, how can we be surprised if God does not give (3) prosperity?

In conclusion, let our ears be open to the solemn appeal of the prisoner of the Lord, I "beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love ; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the *uniting bond of peace*" (Eph. iv. 1-3).

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A SKETCH FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

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THE APOSTLES AT SCHOOL.—*Mark* iv.-vi. 6.

THE Lord's presence on earth was the beginning of a new order of things. God was speaking by His Son (Heb. i. 2). The kingdom of God was upon earth, and was preached (Luke xvi. 16), and the heavenly calling had begun to be unfolded (Matt. v. 12). Teaching far in advance of that to which the people had been accustomed was now heard (Matt. v.), though all the counsel of God was as yet unrevealed (John xvi. 12, 13). It was evident, therefore, if the Lord meant, as we learn, to send out the twelve to preach (Mark iii. 14), that they must be instructed ere



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they went forth on their mission, both as to the character of the times, and also as to that which God was doing, and would do. That instruction the Lord provided, and in the gospel of Mark we are best made acquainted with it.

In chap. iii. 13-19 we read of His calling the twelve. In chap. vi. 7 we learn that He sent them out to preach, but not before they had been made acquainted with a great deal as detailed in chap. iv.-vi. 6. We may view them, then, as it were, at school ; but at school under the tuition of a wise Teacher, who spake as never man spake, and who was competent to teach, for He spoke of that which He knew (John iii. 11). By parables and by miracles He taught them. The parables opened up the character of the work which was commencing ; the miracles illustrated other things with which the disciples had need to become acquainted. Let us look at this in order.

The kingdom of God was to be advanced not by the sword, but by the Word. Hearts were to be won, and not simply knees bent to render outward homage. Israel had fought under Moses, and under Joshua. David had extended his kingdom by the power of the sword to the limits predetermined by God. God's kingdom, however, was to be advanced in a new and very different manner, viz., by the Word effecting a lodgment in the heart and acting on the conscience. This the parables teach, and though addressed to crowds on the shore by the Lord in the boat, the disciples were evidently to learn by them the character of that work, and some of the effects which had begun to manifest themselves already.

Accordingly, the first parable that we meet with is that of the Sower. In this case it was the Lord. Now the need for such a service indicated the moral condition of men. In them by nature there was nothing which could make them fruitful for God. A field is sown because there is no crop in it. Since, then, the Lord came, and began to sow the seed which alone

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can make anyone fruitful, His coming and service proclaimed the ruin of man by the fall. By nature none of us can be fruitful for God. What is wanted at the outset is the seed, and that must come from without. The seed is the word of God (Luke viii. 11). Nothing short of that will do. Civilisation, training, education, example, all useful in their way, cannot singly or collectively be a substitute for the seed. God's voice must be heard in the soul. Of man's *need* the parable teaches. Would, then, all the labours of the Sower be crowned with success, for clearly there was no adulteration nor lack of germinating power in the seed? Other things, however, must be taken into account in spiritual as in natural husbandry. One has not only to consider the seed, but the ground as well. Hence man's spiritual *condition* must also be taken into account. How many a person freshly converted, and rejoicing in truth for the first time opened up to him, has thought he had only to speak to others, and the effect on them would correspond to that on himself. But disappointment, it may be, after disappointment he has experienced, as he found he was speaking to dull hearts and to deaf ears. He had left out of account an important consideration, viz., that relative to the soil, in which he was trying to implant what he had so gladly received. Now the Lord, we here learn, as the Sower, made no such mistake. He was not disappointed; He knew what was in man (John ii. 25). He knew beforehand, and in the parable indicated it, how little result there would be from His labours. He wished His disciples to understand that. To the question of the soil, then, were they turned, as well as to the nature of the seed.

On four kinds of ground the seed would fall, but only on the last did it in the parable become fruitful. What fell by the wayside never got into the ground at all; the fowls of the air rapidly took and devoured it. There are wayside hearers who hear indeed, but on whom the Word makes no impression. Then the

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enemy, ever on the watch, comes and takes away the seed that was sown. The devil's watchfulness and activity is graphically described. Like birds of the air who, unseen before, rapidly appear and carry off crumbs that may be thrown down, so does the enemy take away the seed sown, because it was uncared for by the individual.

Of the stony ground we next read. There are those who seem most apt in receiving, they hear with gladness; but evidently conscience has never been reached. Hence there is no root; and let persecution arise because of the word, immediately they are offended and stumble. They do not stand; they are like plants where there is no depth of earth, which rapidly spring up, but under the sun's heat are scorched, and wither away. The labour of the sower here, too, comes to nothing.

A third class is likened to ground in which seed is sown, but among thorns. As in nature the latter springing up choke the seed, and it becometh unfruitful, so the cares of this world (or, age), the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things entering in choke the word. The seed was good, it was alive, for it germinated; but fruit was hindered, it was choked in its growth. The word of God, and that only, was the seed. The Sower used nothing else. A lesson this to all. Let it be the word, and that in its simplicity. If labour at times seems unproductive of fruit, it is only what the Master experienced; so we may expect it.

But a fourth class is mentioned. They bring forth fruit to maturity. The ground was good into which the seed fell; the soil, too, evidently was deep enough, and no thorns choked it. It produced fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixtyfold, some an hundredfold. The seed in all cases mentioned was the same. The responsibility, therefore, of each person could not be denied. For of each class we read: They heard the Word, though only by the last class was the desired

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result displayed in fruit being matured, though even in that the yield varied.\*

A few remarks may here be made. The parable was addressed to the multitude in the audience of the disciples. The state of each person, or, to speak in parabolic language, the nature of the soil, was thereby proved. All heard, but how few cared to know the interpretation. An illustration this was of that which would be frequently met with; a justification, too, of the parable just propounded. The twelve did ask for the interpretation; and Mark tells us what the others do not, that there were some who with the twelve asked for an understanding of that which had been set forth (iv. 10). The Lord, willing to teach, opened up the parable at once. There were those *without*—alas, how many—who cared not to know (ver. 11). There were some, evidently but a small number, who, desiring to understand, shewed they were *within*. To such was “given the mystery of the kingdom of God,” as we should probably read verse 11. Great favour was this, but accompanied by responsibility; for the light received was to be manifested. Hence they must take heed what they heard. To those who had would more be given. From those who had not should be taken away what they had (vers. 21-25).

Of the character, and of the manner of working, and of results, the Lord had spoken. Now in a parable peculiar to Mark (vers. 26-29), He intimated that, as there is a time in nature between the sowing and the reaping during which the seed is left to itself, so there would be between His then present labour and the harvest an interval during which He

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\* In Matthew the order of the amount of yield is reversed. There it begins with the greatest, one hundredfold. In Mark it begins with the least, thirtyfold. In Mark the Lord is introduced as the Teacher, so the order there seems fitting, leading on to that amount which *might* be reached. Matthew, whose gospel is more dispensational in character, may suggest the decline in fruitfulness to be expected as the dispensation advances.

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would not directly appear. In other words, He would be away till the harvest. Hence the time for His taking the kingdom in power could not arrive till the field was ready for reaping (Rev. xiv. 15, 16). So this parable is a similitude of the kingdom of God; for parables are thus designated which describe a condition of things in connection with the kingdom, whilst the King is absent in heaven. It was then an important matter. The King was then on earth; but He would leave it for a time, after which He would return to the field—the world (Matt. xiii. 38).

Another similitude of the kingdom follows, describing its outward appearance during the Lord's absence. Since the Messianic hope was not to be fulfilled at that time, He would have them to become acquainted with the outward appearance which the kingdom would assume during the interval. It would resemble "a grain of mustard seed which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: but when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it" (iv. 31, 32).

Many other parables the Lord spoke that day, of which we learn in Matt. xiii. But what Mark gives afforded a good outline for the instruction of the disciples. The Lord stated how the work commenced, and what was to be expected from the seed, considering the different soils with which it would be brought into contact. The seed was the same throughout—the word of God. He used nothing else. Nothing else was to be used. Great results could come from it, though much of it would not be fruitful, and even where it was fruitful the yield would vary much. Then between the sowing and the harvest, which, of course, would await the maturing of the crop, He would be away from earth, and what would appear to outward eyes would be just what we see to-day, that Christendom overshadowing a good part of the earth

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has become a shelter for all kinds of evil to find in it a resting-place. Very full was the outline presented by the Teacher as He sat in the boat. And wise, how wise! was His manner of presenting it. By such a method of teaching He tested everyone in the vast crowd who heard what He said, to see who were desirous to learn. For we read: "Without a parable spake He not unto them;" yet He spake, as Mark alone informs us, "as they were able to hear it" (iv. 33). The profit of souls was His aim, and all who desired it had the interpretation.

Leaving the multitude, the Lord crossed the sea with His disciples. Still were they at school. They had heard much in parables in common with the multitude. The parables, too, had been expounded privately to them. But more was needed for those who were to labour for the Master, and our evangelist now proceeds to shew how by miracles that instruction was conveyed.

Crossing over they experienced a storm, and evidently one of unusual severity. In all the gospel history we read of just two storms on that lake. On this occasion the Lord was with them. On the other (Matt. xiv. 25), the Lord walked on the water to join them. With them, then, but asleep—and here Mark's contribution to the gospel history has to be acknowledged—asleep, he tells us, on a pillow in the stern of the vessel, the disciples awoke Him, fearing they would perish. Their exclamation, "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" (iv. 33) intimates that the storm was not a common one. His words addressed to the raging elements, "Peace, be still," for the knowledge of which, also, we are indebted to our evangelist, shew the perfect command He had over the elements. He spake and it was done. It was the voice of the Creator, and there was instant obedience. The wind ceased, and there was a great calm. It was not a gradual subsidence, but evidently an immediate calm.

## 130 A SKETCH FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

Two lessons surely they were to learn by this voyage, needful for them, and how needful too for us. The one, that in following Him they were not always to expect smooth water; the other, that He has absolute power, and can make, if it please Him, the storm a calm. So with Him in the vessel it was impossible for them to sink. If He is with us, we shall not be overwhelmed. To these may be added another, viz., that we may not always be able at first to see the cause of the tempest. Time and the unfolding of events may be required to make that plain. So, doubtless, was it in this case. As they thought of that voyage afterwards, and remembered what awaited Him among the Gadarenes, they would see plainly that there had been a power at work to hinder, if possible, a safe passage, and thus to prevent the deliverance from demoniacal thralldom of two of the enemy's victims. How different was it on the return voyage! No storm then. The Lord was not going to new ground. All was calm.

Reaching the shore, the Lord was immediately met by the demoniac. There were, Matthew informs us, two of them, though Mark and Luke mention but one. Delivered by the word of Christ, the one of whom our evangelist writes was found by his countrymen sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind. He who had been a terror to the neighbourhood, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass that way, was now quiet, peaceful, and contented at the feet of his Deliverer. The restless spirits which had possessed him, forced to leave him by the word of Christ, had with the Lord's permission entered into the herd of swine, but only to destroy them. The men of the place were alarmed. Their swine were drowned, their property lost. Self, and nothing else, governed them. The happy deliverance of the demoniac was nothing to them. The Lord's presence, they reasoned, had brought that about, so they asked Him to depart out of their coast.

A SKETCH FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK. 131

He took them at their word and departed. A solemn thing for them.

To two requests the Lord had returned affirmative replies. The demons had asked to be allowed to enter the swine. They were permitted to do that. The Gadarenes had asked the Lord to leave them: He consented, and was departing. Now a third petition was presented. The delivered one prayed Him that he might be with Him. That was refused. Happy the man thought it would be to be with his Deliverer. The Lord, however, had other thoughts about him. He was to be a worker for Christ, and where could he be a better witness for Him, than in the country where he was so well known? He would give that man the singular honour of witnessing in Decapolis for the rejected and absent One. The man went his way, we are told, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him, and all men did marvel (v. 20).<sup>\*</sup> The Lord left the country, but the fame of His work and a worker for Him remained behind. He might leave, but the record of His power could not be blotted out.

Later on, we learn (vii. 31), the Lord was found in Decapolis. Then His presence was welcomed. Was this change the result of that man's labour? We know not. But contrasting the reception met with on the first visit with that He found on His second, may we not view them as a little picture of His first and second coming? Where rejected of old, He will be welcomed when He comes back (Matt. xxiii. 39). But to return. A lesson surely there was for the time being in the Lord's reply to that man, teaching the disciples, and us also, that the ranks of

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<sup>\*</sup> We would point in a note to other instances of Mark's minuteness of observation. He tells us that this demoniac was in the habit of cutting himself with stones, and that he saw Jesus afar off. He also let us know the proximate number of the herd of swine, all of whom were drowned; it was about 2,000. And we learn the effect on men of that demoniac's labour for Christ, "All men did marvel" (v. 5, 6, 13, 20).



## 132 A SKETCH FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

true labourers for an absent Lord are recruited by those who have tasted for themselves what it is to be subjects of divine grace.

Recrossing the sea, the disciples were with Him. Nothing exceptional characterised the voyage, it would seem, but a welcome awaited the Lord on His disembarkation. Much people gathered unto Him, and He was nigh unto the sea. And now one with a real want came, and besought His help and His presence in the chamber of sickness. Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue at Capernaum, had an only daughter (Luke viii. 42) who was at the point of death. The father's heart was evidently bowed under the sorrow, for falling at the feet of Christ, "he besought Him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: come and lay Thy hands on her, that she may be healed, and live." He was sure of the result, if only the Lord would go to the house. At once the Lord responded, and went with him.

But the ruler was not the only one who had need of Christ, and who desired to draw upon His resources. A woman, it was found afterwards, was in the crowd that thronged Him, who had urgent need of His healing power. Her disease was of long standing. Her efforts to get healed had all failed. Human skill and human resources were powerless to meet her case. She would now get into contact with the hem of the Lord's garment, and see if virtue from Him could not reach her. Unknown to anyone in the crowd, she did that. She went behind, and touched the hem of His garment, and her cure was instantaneous. Virtue had gone out of Him, and she was healed. She had received from Him; now she must acknowledge it. In secret she got it; openly must she confess it. All will agree that this was but right. Is it not the same now? If we have received yet greater blessing, even life and salvation, and that at the cost of His atoning death, should we not openly confess it? Healed then of grace, the

## A SKETCH FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK. 133

woman was openly to confess it. And for that the Lord generously gave her the opportunity, as He turned and said, "Who touched My clothes?" Here again we note the accuracy of our evangelist. "Who touched Me?" we read in Luke. "Who touched My clothes?" is the question asked in Mark.

A moment of anxiety it now was for her, but only a moment. She had got what she wanted without asking His leave. Would He be angry, and chide her? Fearing and trembling, she had to come forth from concealment. She had gone behind Him; she now had to face Him, and before all to tell the truth. A moment indeed of suspense; but, as we have said, only a moment. She confessed all. He at once set her in perfect liberty before Him. "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague" (v. 34). Matthew tells us that the Lord said, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole." Luke adds to that, "Go in peace;" and Mark, whilst endorsing the correctness of his brother evangelists, adds what they have not, "And be whole of thy plague." How much we should lose had Mark's shorter gospel not come down to us!

Whilst all this had been taking place the daughter of Jairus had died, and some came from the house of sorrow to acquaint the father with the sad news. He heard their tidings, and apparently was silent. The Lord heard them also, and immediately spoke to encourage him, "Be not afraid, only believe." He who could raise the dead would first encourage the drooping spirit. Entering the house with Peter, James, and John, and proceeding to the chamber of death, He in the presence of the parents raised the dead, speaking to her, as Mark informs us, in Aramaic, not in Greek, "Talitha, cumi:" which is, being interpreted, "Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise." The effect on all is noticed: "And straightway they were astonished with great astonishment" (v. 42).

Thus by miracles, instruction was conveyed which concerned the apostles and others, as we have already pointed out. And now it was intimated that the way of blessing was by faith, as the woman found for herself, and Jairus for his daughter.

One more lesson was needed, and that was furnished by the Lord's visit to His own country, Nazareth. They had formerly rejected Him (Luke iv. 28-30). How would they treat Him now? The people there, it was found, remained for the most part unchanged, and the Lord had to leave them. So the disciples were to learn that whilst faith can draw down blessing, unbelief restrains it. "He could do there no mighty work, save (and we are indebted for what follows wholly to Mark) that he laid His hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And He marvelled because of their unbelief, and He went round about the villages teaching" (vi. 5, 6).

The apostles were now sufficiently instructed to be sent forth on their mission. C. E. S.

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TO THE RAINBOW.

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ETHEREAL form, how transient is thy day !

Yet, while thou hast existence in the skies,  
 What thoughts thy presence to the mind gives rise,  
 On that event revealed, when the sway  
 Of waters overwhelmed this world of clay,  
 And brought destruction, midst loud groans and cries,  
 On those who heeded not the word of the All-wise,  
 And by their sins their future cast away !

That time is past, and God's unbroken vow  
 Men should acknowledge when they see thy face ;

For art thou not the token which He gave  
 To mortal kind, that He would no more show  
 His vengeance on the world in its disgrace,  
 By plunging it into a watery grave? —*Altered.*

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Latest and brightest handiwork of God ;  
 The only earthly thing sin hath not marred ;  
 Superb creation, knitting earth and heaven !

## OUR RESOURCE.

135

Behold, saith He, My bow set in the cloud,  
 "And I will look upon it," is His word,  
 Till, like an emerald, it God's throne shall span!

Bright pledge of grace! bright promise unto men,  
 Writ in God's skies by God's omniscient hand!  
 How lovely and how vast His mercy is!  
 Would men that mercy prove? The Ark, as then,  
 Is for their safety. Christ, "the Door," doth stand  
 Waiting their entrance into endless bliss.

—*Added.*


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 OUR RESOURCE.
 

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To have deliverance from self and leisure from circumstances is an immense thing. In Phil. iv. 6 we are told to be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to let our requests be made known unto God. This is by no means a support or hiding-place for a reckless "don't care"; nor does it militate against what the apostle has already exhorted us to in chap. iii. 17: "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample." There is more necessity than ever for vigilance and exercise of conscience as to walk and conversation. But the blessed Lord would have us without anxiety, worry, or distraction. It is not enough that requests be made known, that our trials be rehearsed, our necessities enumerated, and our burdens brought, but that all be brought "*unto God.*" That is, that we have the consciousness that we have the ear of God, that He hears and answers prayer (1 John iii. 22). That we may cast all our cares upon Him, for He careth for us (1 Pet. v. 7). If our requests were confidently made known unto God, there would not be the danger of bringing away the burden, taking up the cares, and coming from His presence with the anxious face; but committing all to Him, leaving all with Him, remembering what has been asked, and not

without thanksgiving, confidently awaiting the answer ; indeed, more. "And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desire of Him" (1 John v. 15). "Fear not, little flock ; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke xii. 32). Upon the stormy sea (Mark iv.), in infinite wisdom, at the right moment the Lord enters the scene : the stormy sea is calmed, their troubles at an end.

To the fearful and trembling in that upper room (John xx.) His presence allayed their fears ; His word enough, "Peace unto you." Also in John xiv. 27 : "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you ; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." How perfectly has He taken into account our many necessities ; meeting God about sin—our sin ; satisfying, yes, glorifying, God about it. Setting our poor hearts at rest about it ; peace with God ; and would have us also possessing another, His own, peace. So we see His all-sufficiency for us in all the changing scenes of life ; we see this, too, under all that may arise through our bearing His name and cleaving to His words, and the crowning and overwhelming proof of His thought about us and sufficiency for us is this, that He has left, as some have called it, a legacy to us—the very peace He Himself possessed.

What has been much upon my heart and is closely connected with, or follows, what has been before us, we see in Phil. iv. 7 : "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." A right apprehension and appreciation of our resource in God is the means by which the heart and mind is kept. No word is needless, being inspired ; heart and mind both need to be kept in Eph. iii. 17, 18 : "That Christ may dwell in your *hearts* by faith ; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to *comprehend* with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height ;" and in Col. ii. 2 : "That their *hearts*

might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of *understanding*, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ." As we take in more of Christ—God's thoughts about Him, His love *in Him*—we shall be kept through Him. We sometimes hear it said of men, his head goes beyond his heart, or his heart beyond his head; and where such is true, what confusion and evil may ensue. Zeal, affection, or indifference might allow or overlook what righteousness would forbid; hence the need for the breastplate of righteousness (Eph. vi. 14). The wisdom of man, his religious inventions or pretensions, can never take the place of knowledge of Christ—who He is, what He has done and will do; hence the need for the helmet of salvation (Eph. vi. 17).

Dear reader, in a day like the present nothing short of the word of God will serve to rest upon, and His faithful love to count upon; and thus our hearts and minds will be garrisoned through Christ Jesus. And, dear child of God, be assured "the Lord is at hand" (is near), when we shall have rest from labour, rest with Him, and eternal Sabbath-keeping. And, suffering one, mark 2 Tim. ii. 12: "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." The soldier, the contender in the games, and the husbandman of 2 Tim. ii. give us much-needed instruction in service for the Lord in our day.

Take thy share in suffering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one going as a soldier entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please Him who has enlisted him as a soldier. And if also any one contend (in the games), he is not crowned unless he contend lawfully. The husbandman must labour before partaking of the fruits (J. N. D's translation).

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. iii. 11).  
 "And behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with

Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. xxii. 12). "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (ver. 20). J. P.

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"THOU . . . HAST REVEALED THEM  
UNTO BABES."—*Matt. xi. 25-30.*

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IT is good to remember that the great feats and achievements of our life are learnt without any lessons. We learn to eat and drink, to talk, to walk, to call things by their names, not as the result of lessons: they come to us without any teacher. Think of some great German professor, master of a score of mysterious matters, author of a dozen prodigiously learned books, and now he sits down to learn this troublesome English language, with its lawlessness of pronunciation. And as he blunders over it, growing angry at such unreasonable variations, think how little it ever cost *us*. The foreigner's lips, and teeth, and tongue have to be drilled to express some of our combinations, and the memory is piled with words like "*cough*," and "*plough*," and "*dough*," and "*enough*." Did we never remember any difficulty? Of course not, you say; it is our mother-tongue! Ah! blessed "of course;" it was revealed unto the babe. That which the German professor finds so difficult, we learnt without any trouble. It came to us, how? By lying in the mother's arms, by looking into the mother's face, by watching the mother's lips. *Thou hast revealed these things unto babes.*

These sublime things—the speech of heaven, the love of the Father, the mystery of trust, the mind which was in Christ, the secret of the true and blessed life, are not learned by hard lessons, they cannot be taught by lecturers and professors; we must come to Jesus and *learn of Him*. It is by listening to Him that we learn to talk; by resting on His love we learn to grow; by holding His hand we learn to

walk ; to come unto Him and to tarry with Him is to learn, and yet it is to forget the difficulty of the lesson in the patience and skill of the Teacher. The Master is lost in the Friend, and the lesson is all love. So do we learn of Him, not by struggling to understand great mysteries, not by desperate efforts, but by looking at Him, until by the law of imitating what we love we are changed by beholding, by trying to please Him in all things. By trying? Nay, the memory so treasures the Example that effort is gone ; by speaking as He speaks, by thinking as He thinks, by feeling as He feels, by willing as He wills. Thus the fuller rest begins.

*Then the rest is ours by service.* "Take My yoke upon you, and . . . ye shall find rest unto your souls." How do we read these words? The picture is that of the Lord standing as a gracious and gentle Master, with the staff of authority in His hand, to guide rather than to smite ; while He points to the yoke as the implement of service, and invites us to come and put our neck beneath it, and then that we two may go on together through life, having one will, one work, one way. That is blessed indeed ; and that is rest—rest in glad submission and steadfast obedience. It is indeed soul rest when His will and our will are one ; when His takes the control of our life, and we seek only to please Him.

This is rest indeed, to find the fever of earth's ambitions die out of the blood ; to find the clamouring claimants for our service silenced and rebuked by the blessed Lord, who only knows us and who alone satisfies us ; to find duty growing into a delight, the yoke made "sweet" for us, as early translators delighted to render it, lined with the soft velvet of His loving-kindness ; to prove the paths by which He leads us pleasantness ; to have no choice but His will, and no desire but His service. This is rest indeed !

But this, all this, is by no means the picture which



we may set before us. *A yoke is never made for one.* The picture is of our blessed Master standing with His neck beneath the yoke of service; and the other side is empty. "Soul," saith He, "wilt thou take this place by Me, and put thy neck beneath My yoke? Then thou shalt find rest." Then is that very yoke the bond of our union and communion. Then, indeed, is life but one work, one way, one will; He gently quickening my laggard steps, and as gently restraining my over eagerness, and by presence ministering to my Lord. His company, His yoke-fellow, His comfort, and His rest. This is the fulness of the blessed rest which He seeks to bestow. Yet is not this all. I had finished my sermon once, and ended here, when a good man came to me and said: "I wish I had known what you were going to preach about, I could have told you something." "Well, my friend," I said, "it is very good of you. May I have it still?" "Do you know why His yoke is light, sir? if not, I can tell you." "Well, because the Lord helps us to carry it, I suppose." "No, sir," he explained, shaking his head, "I think I know better than that. You see, when I was a boy at home I used to drive the oxen in my father's yoke, and the yoke was never made to balance, sir, as you said." (I had referred to the Greek word, but how much better it was to know the real thing.) He went on triumphantly: "Father's yokes were always made *heavier one side than the other.* Then, you see, we should put a weak bullock in alongside of a strong one, and the light end would come on the weak bullock, because the stronger one had the heavy part on his shoulder." Then his face lit up as he said: "That is why the yoke is easy, and the burden is light, because the Lord's yoke is made after the same pattern, *and the heavy end is upon His shoulder.*" "So shall ye find rest to your soul."—*Mark Guy Pearse.*

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MAY, 1890.

## THE CHURCH OF GOD.

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WE read in Matt. xvi. and Mark viii. (nowhere else) of the Lord's being at Cæsarea Philippi, and of what transpired there. The Lord was upon His last evangelising journey, in the most northern portion of the land of Israel. He was the Sower sowing the seed, going forth weeping, bearing precious seed. There it was He asked of His disciples the significant question, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" And there He at length received Peter's memorable confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." There, too, the Lord made answer, "Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." In this divine answer we have the first revelation of the Church of God. Before passing on, we may observe that the word Church has no expressive character in itself. It is synonymous with assembly, used in Acts vii. 38 for the Israelites in the wilderness, and in Acts xix. 32, 39, 41 for a heathen concourse. It derives all its significance from what it is the assembly of, and as to that Scripture has but one answer, it is the assembly *of God*, the Church *of God*. It is never in so many words spoken of even as the Church of Christ, but always of God. It is that assembly of all His saints with which God has connected His own name and glory, the assembly characterised as God's assembly, which not even Israel was ever called.

Now let us first look at its relation to God, next at what it was and is to Christ, and lastly at what it was to Paul, its especial minister.

First, as to God. We have already noticed that it gets its title only from Him; and deeply significant is that fact, for no higher title could it possibly possess. It is that *unique* thing with which both now and eternally God has connected the dignity and the glory of His own name. Supremely and distinctively was Christ the object of God's eternal counsels; but subordinated to that we see in Eph. iii. 9 that the

Church of God as the mystery was an object of those divine counsels, *hidden in God* throughout the ages ; and from Col. ii. 3 we learn that in this "mystery of God" were hidden "all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge." Think of this, beloved, God hiding throughout the ages all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge in the Church, and hiding at the same time the Church in Himself, until the time should come for Him to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the nations. And when the time was approaching for this to be made manifest to His saints, what a price He paid that He might get to Himself the revenue of joy and glory it should yield to Him. So we read in Acts xx. 28 of the assembly of God which He hath purchased with the blood of His own" (New Translation). Here we learn that God's assembly is His "purchased possession ;" it has become His at the mighty cost of the blood of His own Son, whom He spared not, but delivered up for us all (Rom. viii. 32).

From 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17 we learn that the assembly of God is the temple of God ; the Spirit of God dwells there, and the temple of God is holy. In like manner speaks Eph. ii. 19-22. The household of God is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself corner-stone ; the building fitly framed together, builded together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord, an habitation of God through the Spirit (see also 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5). On this head of our subject I will only add 1 Tim. iii. 15 : "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." These Scriptures will suffice (without going into details as to different aspects of the Church) to show its marked and manifest relation to God. In it all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid ! Marvel, my soul. The pillar and base of the truth ! Marvel again, my soul. Such is "the Church of the living God !"

Second, as to Christ. "Upon this rock I will build My Church." Let us recall the scene and the occasion. It was at Cæsarea Philippi. The Lord in His last missionary journey, rich in salvation, had travelled to the source of the Jordan, the northern confines of Israel, the borders of the land; He had journeyed 120 or 130 miles, probably on foot; He had reached the base of Hermon, of the great mountain range of Lebanon; and surely at such a spot, on the borders of the Gentiles, how suitably might any around have exclaimed with the prophet: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation." Its very name, suggests Bengel, might have reminded the Jews that they were subjects of Cæsar, that the sceptre had departed from Judah, that Shiloh had come. Over it, says Dr. Robinson, hangs a vast mountain, and under the mountains rise the springs of the river Jordan. Josephus seems to imply in his Life that many heathens resided there. And the vast castle which dominates the site of the city is to this day the most remarkable fortress in the Holy Land. As the Lord stood on the borders, as we might almost say, of the lands of Israel and the Gentiles, and being about to break down the middle wall of partition to make in Himself of twain one new man; or, to go back to His words spoken on the spot, being about to *build His Church*, how fittingly, looking up, as we may suppose, to the frowning fortress of gigantic strength which, overshadowing the city, was a relic of idolatrous, and a type of Satanic power, did He exclaim, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Turn we again to the Lord's words. At Pentecost the saints had been baptised by Him with the Holy Ghost, thus constituted One body, but there had been no revelation of the truth of the Body. In Matt. xvi. the Lord had expressly declared that He would build His Church, that holy temple which we read about in

1 Cor. iii. ; it was a distinct revelation from Him. In Acts ix. we have another equally distinct revelation, that of the Body, given to Paul. In the former it was "My Church," in the latter it was "Me"—each striking in significance ; but all will see how much further goes the word "Me" than "My." "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME" was a new revelation, disclosing what none had till then ever conceived, even that the saints were Christ's body—part of Himself ; He the Head, and the saints His members. Oh ! how it reveals what the Church was and is to Him—the very members of His body. This is what Paul speaks of in Eph. iii. 3, 4 : "How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery ; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)." Again in chap. iv. : "When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. . . . For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ : till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." But in chap. v. is a still further revelation, in which the Church appears under a double figure, the body and the wife, or bride, of Christ. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it ; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh ; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church : for we are members of His body. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery : but I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

Here then have we fully unfolded the marvellous relation of the Church to Christ. My soul, be abashed in the presence of such marvellous grace! Can it indeed be that He accounts us, yea, has made us, to be to Himself at one and the same time so organically and so integrally one with Himself, so radically of the same structure, that He declares us His body and also constitutes us His bride, by-and-by to be manifested as the Lamb's wife? (see Rev. xix. 7-9; also xxi. 2, 9). In connection with the last Scripture, I may here add a supplementary word on the first branch of my subject (what the Church is to God), that in the tenth verse we have revealed that the Church will, in the millennial day there referred to, be seen as the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven *from God, having THE GLORY OF GOD.* Surely no mortal man would have the temerity so to speak, were he uninspired; but these are some of the words in which God makes known what the Church is to Him.

But I hasten on to those Scriptures which tell of what the Church was to Paul. May he, being dead, yet speak to those who have ears to hear. In 1 Cor. xv. 9 he tells us why he accounted himself the least of the apostles, was not meet to be called an apostle—it was *because he "persecuted the Church of God."* "Beyond measure," says he in Gal. i. 13, "I persecuted the Church of God and wasted it." And so in 1 Tim. i. 15, speaking of sinners, he says, "of whom I am the chief." What other conclusion, then, can we draw but this, that his persecution of the beloved saints of God was so hatefully, so overwhelmingly wicked, because they were the Church of God and the body of Christ, His ME, that he could only regard himself as the least of all apostles and the greatest of all sinners? But turning from this to the other side of the question, what a revelation is given in Colossians of the way in which this wonderful servant of Christ and of His body identified himself with the interests of the Church of God, of which he was emphatically the

minister. Chap. i. 24—ii. 3: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church: whereof I am made minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily. For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God; in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Who will venture to express all that the heart of Paul underwent as here referred to? "Filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church." Would any but he have ever dreamt of so speaking? The Lord could not have thus suffered, for His body, the Church, had no existence in the days of His suffering either in life or in death. To Paul alone was this grace, this signal honour, given. How fully he accepted it his striking words to some extent disclose. What labour, what conflict, what anguish, what agony were his, that the Church might answer to all the eternal counsels of divine grace as the mystery of God, in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge! Other Scriptures might I add; I select but this one; may it speak to us

as the voice of the Spirit of God through Paul: "I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. xi. 2).

Closing then this study in view of what the Church is to God, of what it is to Christ, and of what it was to Paul, let us ask what is it *to us*? What anxiety Paul expressed lest the minds of the saints should be *corrupted* (2 Cor. xi. 3). Next to attacking the person of Christ, Satan's malicious aim is directed against the Church, which is His body—the serpent which beguiled Eve (type of the Church) is seeking to corrupt the saints, and it is only in the power of an ungrieved Spirit that we can maintain the glory of Christ, and hold our true relation to Him as the members of His body.

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## OUR GUIDES.

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THERE is a word used three times in the last chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, not met with elsewhere in the same signification, translated in the Authorised Version by "them that have the rule over you;" or, as the margin more briefly expresses it, your "guides" (Heb. xiii. 7, 17, 24). Evidently the apostle was careful to call the attention of his readers to this class, for a class it really was amongst them, as ver. 24 clearly makes plain. "Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints." "Saints" is a term descriptive of every Christian. "Guides," or "leaders," refers to a class, but a class well known and to be deservedly valued; and it may be, that writing to these Hebrews, who were not part of Paul's special field of labour (Gal. ii. 9), he desired all to see, that he would not in the least seek to draw them away from under the guidance, or leadership, of those who ordinarily spoke to them the Word of God.

His exhortation to salute them proves that they



were well known, and that the Lord, by a certain class among His saints, was accustomed to instruct those who had come out professedly from Judaism. An ordained ministry—that is, a ministry that requires authority from man for its exercise—the New Testament teaching about the Church knows nothing of. The existence of ministers of the Word—that is, those to whom the Lord entrusts such a service—the Word is clear about (1 Thess. v. 13; 1 Tim. v. 17; Eph. iv. 11, 12; 1 Cor. xii. 28, 29; Rom. xii. 7, 8). Of such the apostle writes in this chapter of the Hebrews, distinguishing them from the rest of the saints. Yet he does not write to them, but of them, conforming in this to the apostolic practice. The epistles are addressed either to saints, to assemblies, or to individuals; but nowhere have we an epistle written simply to elders or bishops, and these are only specially addressed when something connected with their service is pressed upon them (see Acts xx. 17; 1 Pet. v. 1-3). No evangelical and apostolic epistles addressed only to bishops have come down to us—certainly none such form part of canonical Scripture.

How fully (and we learn it as circumstances call us to prove it) does Scripture provide for the need of the saints in instruction whilst they are upon earth! And the circumstances of the early Christians, the doctrinal errors which had cropped up among them, with the intimation of the decline of spirituality even before the apostles had left earth—how all this affords real profit to us, who live in the closing days of the Church's earthly sojourn. A widowed Church, as Rome would speak of on the death of her so-called pontiff, there never has been, nor can be. The Chief Shepherd has not deserted His post. The Head has not for one moment severed the connection between Himself and His members. Nor has the Lord Jesus ceased for one instant, throughout the eighteen centuries which have elapsed since His ascension, to provide for God's assemblies on earth. Apostles may

depart; they have all long ere this done that. The earliest teachers, too, have for centuries been with Christ. Eminent servants of Christ have been raised up at intervals, and have at length terminated their mortal career. But Christ cares for the members of His body, and the Holy Ghost still abides in the habitation of God upon earth. Guides, or leaders, there are still in the Church of God, though elders endowed with authority to act as such have for long ceased. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers the saints have never been without—that is, the written ministry of the two former, and the personal ministry of the three latter. Now these Hebrews were in a position similar to that of God's servants in succeeding ages. They had lost by death some of their guides, but they had some remaining; and the apostle, distinguishing between these two classes, exhorted them to remember the former, and to obey the latter.

How suited and needful was such an admonition! Some might let those who had gone slip out of their remembrance; others, dwelling much on the past, might be in danger, from affectionate reverence of those departed, of becoming insubordinate to those who remained. We know, surely, the danger of this, a danger which arises from the action of man's will, and a forgetfulness that our guides, or leaders, are raised up by Christ. To guard against both these dangers, the exhortations of vers. 7, 17 come in.

As to those who had gone, whose voices they would never more hear on earth speaking to them the Word of God, and whose countenances would never more cheer them, nor could their counsel—often, perhaps, so helpful—be sought again, the past in connection with such was not to be obliterated from the minds of the saints still on earth. They could, and they were exhorted to, remember such, and, considering the issue of their conversation, to imitate their faith. Such had not lived in vain. Their works, indeed, followed them,

but their path here could be remembered, and their faith imitated. The tomb would hide them from view, but their conversation and faith could be remembered. In this way could they be of present help and encouragement to the saints. Leaders they had been—leaders, in this sense, they could be still.

And what had the saints left? What they had always as Christians. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Be not carried away with divers and strange doctrines," &c. (Heb. xiii. 8). They had lost the presence of some leaders, but Jesus Christ did not change, nor were they deprived of the revelation by the written word—He, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The death of some leader was not to affect their faith, nor to change their walk. Doctrinal errors might abound, but Jesus Christ remained the same. To Him they were to look, and on Him to count. And since He changes not, the truth once taught remained unchanged; so if deprived of leaders to whom they had looked up, the unchangeableness of Jesus Christ was to keep them steadfast, and in the right way. What care was thus manifested by God for His saints!

But while each one was to remember for himself or herself the unchangeableness of Christ, they were not left without leaders. These they were to obey. Obedience and submission to such were enjoined, and a reason assigned why they should be cheerfully and truly accorded: "For they watch over your souls as those that must give an account, that they may do this with joy and not with grief (or mourning), for this would be unprofitable for you" (Heb. xiii. 17).

What responsibility devolved on these leaders, a responsibility which they could not shake off, but the due discharge of which would be rendered happy, and profitable to the saints by their ready obedience and submission to them. How carefully did God thus provide for the continuance of right order, and profit in the assembly, however often death might take away

such leaders as had especially enjoyed the confidence of their brethren. No opportunity was given for self-will to have scope, because, forsooth, some who had great influence had been removed. The reins of government were not allowed to drop, nor was there a transference of power to others when duly installed into the place of those that had gone. He who had made those who had departed to be leaders, had equally made those that remained. Thus there was no interregnum, nor room allowed for man to organise anything. It will be observed that they are called leaders, or guides, not elders. They may have been elders; but for eldership, introduction into office by apostolic authority, direct or delegated, was requisite. For leaders, who spoke to them the Word of God, no such induction was needed. Ordained elders we cannot have now; leaders we are never without.

The responsibility of being a leader was great, and with such the Lord will reckon by-and-by. Who, then, would assume such a place in the assembly? It might seem in the eyes of man a post to be envied, but, viewing it in the right light, as that for which the individual will be reckoned with, who would wish to assume that with which he had not been entrusted by God? and who amongst the Hebrews would not have been submissive to the leaders which remained?

Each saint was responsible to judge of doctrine by the Word, and Jesus Christ did not change; but obedience to their leaders was enjoined. The death of some neither opened the door for anarchy, nor paved the way for revolution in the assembly.

C. E. S.

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A CAKE made of memories will do for a bite now and then, but it makes very poor daily bread. We want the present enjoyment of God. We need still to go to the fountain for new supplies; for water which standeth long in a pitcher loses its cool and refreshing excellence.—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

## CONVERSATION.

TAKE care what is *heard* in your house. Much more is thought of what is seen in the house than what is heard. Not that we should take less care about what is *seen*, but more care of what is *heard*. Be careful of what is said *of others*, specially at your tables. I include the five o'clock tea-table, as well as the other meals. Make a rule not to discuss other persons at your tables; it is a dangerous thing for the speakers and hearers, and a very bad example for children and the household. In my regiment we made a good rule that no lady should be named at the mess-table. A friend of mine, after lunching at a certain house, said, "The whole conversation consisted in finding fault with other people." I am sometimes met with this reply: "Well, you know we must make talk at the table, we must talk about something." Yes, better to talk about *something* than *somebody*; and better to be silent than pick our neighbours to pieces. If we thought more of our own offences, we should be more lenient towards others. If our own faults and failings concerned us more, we should wish to hide those of others, instead of dragging them forth for our hearers. At some tables there is a constant process of depreciation and cutting up of other persons. It is neither good nor helpful to have the faults of others dished up. There is evil enough in mankind, but it is not our service to spread it before our hearers. Better to correct our own home faults and failings than to enlarge upon those of others at our tables.—*Captain Dawson.*

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GIVE not thy tongue too great a liberty, lest it take thee prisoner. A word unspoken is like the sword in the scabbard, thine; if vented, the sword is in another's hand. If thou desire to be held wise, be so wise as to hold thy tongue.—*Quarles.*

## LUKE, CHAPTERS XIV. AND XV.

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PUT together, these are wonderful chapters. In the first the Lord visits our world; in the second we visit His. In the fourteenth He makes Himself acquainted with our ways; in the fifteenth we are called to acquaint ourselves with His. This is the grand moral distinction between the two chapters, and nothing can exceed them in interest. In the fourteenth chapter we find that nothing satisfies Him. Are you prepared for this conclusion? In the fifteenth chapter everything is suited to Him; and if *we* are divinely intelligent, and divinely sensitive, we shall find that nothing in *man's* world and everything in Christ's world would do for us. It is the grand character of the Apocalypse that there is not a thing in it but suits the mind of the glorified church.

Chapter xiv. opens by the Lord being invited to eat bread in a Pharisee's house, and as He enters, at once all the sympathies of His mind are intruded on. The house is a type of man's world. "As He went in they watched Him;" and there came in a poor man that had the dropsy, and He asked them, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" Now why did they hold their peace? It was a hypocritical silence. They ought to have answered, but they wanted to catch Him. Oh! what wretched, miserable tricks these hearts of ours can play! Your heart is under the lion and serpent—violence and subtlety—Satan is represented as both these. "Which of you shall have an ox or an ass fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day?" Ought you not to have gathered your answer to the question from your own ways? The Lord takes us on our own showing, and exposes us out of our mouth and our ways. I don't want anyone to shew me what I am, I know very well.

In verse 7 He has entered the house, and looked

around. That is exactly where we fail. We are so much taken up with ourselves that we do not look around to see things with the eyes of the Lord. The Lord came with the heart and resources of God to dispense blessing ; but with the eye, and ear, and sensibility of God to acquaint Himself with the moral of the scene. What does He see here? First, the guests, and *they* do not please Him ; He saw they chose the highest room. Now suppose you had the eye of God, and looked on the scene around you day by day, would you not see the same thing? We savour too much of it ourselves, and, therefore, cannot testify against it. Christ was infinitely pure, so that He could detect the smallest bit of impurity. He saw that it was pride that animated the scene under His eye, and you and I must have very false notions of what is abroad if we do not see the same thing. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life mark the spirit that animates the scene around us. Now He looked on the host, but there was no relief for Him there. Selfishness in another form showed itself to Him. It was not the poor, the maimed, and the blind that the Pharisee asked to his feast, but his *rich* neighbours were seated on his right hand and his left. Here the heart of Christ tells itself out in calling those who cannot recompense Him. It is very happy that Christ cannot be pleased with your world. What would your Lord Jesus be to you if He could put up with such a world? If Christ could have found sympathy with man's world as delineated here, you and I could never have been saved. He acted on directly contrary principles, or we should never have had to talk of salvation.

Now one of the company says, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God ;" a gracious moment I believe ; I do not say whether it ended in good or not, but a certain gracious instant passed over his soul. The Lord was not unaffected by it ; He paid attention to the interruption. Oh ! the

precious and perfect humanity of Jesus! His deity was equal to the Father's. His humanity was equal to yours and mine; not in its corruption, but in all the beautiful traits that could adorn it in its perfection. He waits and indites the parable of the marriage supper. The man had said, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God," and the Lord brings out this parable to exhibit eating bread in the kingdom of God. This shows that the Lord is willing to wait on the secret stirring of your spirit, and give it a suited response; and that word of the man that sat at table gives Him occasion to expand before his eyes a feast spread in the heavenly country. And, oh! what a different one from that here!

Not one of the bidden guests come. No, and not one single bidden guest since Adam will be at that table. What do I mean? There must be more than an invitation. God must fill the chairs as well as the table. He must force His guests in, as well as fill the board. He sends His servants and says, "*Compel* them to come in, that My house may be filled." There is a peep into heaven. Did you ever see such a place in all your life? The richest feast ever seen, and not one there that has not been compelled to come in. And does God put up with this? If there had been only the mission of the Son, there would never have been a single guest. If there had been only the mission of the Holy Ghost, there would have been no feast spread. What a wonderful exhibition of the love of God! If you had prepared a kindness for another, would you like to find an indisposed heart in him? No, you would not ask him again, but would say, "Let him go and get what he values more." But there is the double mission of the Son and the Spirit. The Son prepares the feast, and the Spirit prepares the guests, so that not a single merely bidden guest is there; they are *compelled* guests. What an exhibition of the wretched heart we carry! One has bought a piece of ground; another has bought five



yoke of oxen ; anything but the Lord's feast. This is the contrast between God's table and man's.

When the Lord had delivered the parable, as He was leaving the house great multitudes followed Him, and He turned and said, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after Me, he cannot be My disciple." Now, how do you treat the Lord Jesus? Do you look at Him as a pattern, an example? "Well," you will say, "I *ought* to do so," and I grant it ; but you and I are thoroughly wrong if our first communion with Him is as a pattern ; it must be as with a Saviour. The multitudes followed Him as a pattern, and the Lord says, "If you *will* be like Me, you must give up everything."

The next chapter opens with publicans and sinners, and *there* is communion of soul with Him as a Saviour. The moment the Lord got that object He was at home. He passes on through all till "publicans and sinners" draw near to Him. He had entered and left the Pharisee's house, and His spirit had not breathed a comfortable atmosphere ; but when a poor sinner comes and looks at Him, that moment His whole heart gave itself out, and uttered itself in the three beautiful parables that follow.

It is impossible to follow the Spirit of Christ in this chapter without being comforted. Could I know Christ as I would know Him if He could find a home in *my* world? No! but He says, If I can't find a home *here*, do you come and find a home with *Me*. You have disappointed *Me*, but I will not disappoint *you*." As one said once, "In preaching the Gospel the Lord said, 'Well, if I cannot trust *you*, *you* must trust *Me*.'" It is another version of the same thought here, and these beautiful parables show one leading and commanding truth—that God's world is made happy by sinners getting into it. Do you believe that you, as a sinner, are important to heaven? Whether you believe it or not, it is true. It is not our gain in the matter of salvation that is presented

here, but God's joy, and that only. He takes these homely figures that our thoughts may not be distracted, and that you may learn that you are lost. But you learn, too, the joy of God in recovering you. I do not believe a richer thought can enter the soul of man. I sit down in heaven, not as a recovered sinner only, but as one whose recovery has formed the joy of heaven. *Now* you are at Christ's table, in Christ's world, and you see what kind of place it is. As for the poor lost sheep, if left to itself, it would only have wandered farther still; and as for the piece of money, it would have lain there till this hour if the woman had not searched diligently till she found it.

Now let us combine these two chapters. In xiv. you get the words, "Compel them to come in," and in xv. you get the prodigal compelled. We were observing the missions of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, but He enables me to read it. If I could not read it, it would be no use to me. Now, I ask *what* is this compulsion? It is not against your will, but you are *made* willing in the day of His power. Take, for instance, the prodigal. When he was brought to his last penny and began to be in want, *he came to himself*. This was the beginning of the compelling, when the poor prodigal opened his eyes to his condition. What did the Lord do to the heart of Lydia? He *opened* it, and her opened heart listened to what Paul spoke. The mighty, compelling power showed itself here, when the poor prodigal looked round on his condition, and said, "What shall I do?" The Holy Ghost makes you willing when He makes you see your need, and that death and judgment are before you. He stirs you up by this, till He puts you on the road to God. One poor soul says, "I had better begin to look out for eternity;" another is terrified by the thought of death and judgment. He will take you in any way. The thing is to get your back to the land where once you lingered. The poor prodigal says, "I will arise; I have found out the end

of my own doings ; I will go to my father ;" and back he goes, and back he is welcomed ! The story of the prodigal beautifully illustrates the *compelling* of the previous chapter. Zaccheus wished to see Jesus one morning, and up he got into the tree. That was the compelling of the Holy Ghost. Oh ! what two chapters ! Christ disappointed in *your* world, and you satiated in Christ's world !

J. G. B.

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WHEN no kind earthly friend is near,  
With gentle words my heart to cheer,  
Still am I with my Saviour dear ;  
" Alone, yet not alone."

Though no loved forms my path attend,  
With tender looks o'er me to bend,  
Yet with me is my unseen Friend ;  
" Alone, yet not alone."

E'en when with saints my lot is cast,  
And words of love are flowing fast,  
Still am I, when those hours are past,—  
" Alone, yet not alone."

Whate'er may now to me betide,  
I have a place wherein to bide,  
By faith ; 'tis e'en at His blest side,  
" Alone, yet not alone."

C. F.

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I AM very fond of that little philosopher of whom I have heard (she ought to have written a commentary), a little five-year-old who sat one day amongst the grave old divines, when one of them said, " We read that Jesus wept, we never read that Jesus smiled." " I am sure He did," said the little maiden. " How do you know ?" said one of them reprovingly. " I am sure He did," she persisted ; and then explained, half scornfully, " Why, if He had said, ' Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not,' and had not smiled when He said it, I shouldn't have gone to Him !" — *Mark Guy Pearse.*

## ECCLESIASTES AND THE CANTICLES.

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THE soul is much instructed by the different purpose of the Spirit of God in Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. Placed together, as I may say, in the progress of the oracles of God, they may naturally be looked at together—one penman also, under the divine Author, being employed in both—and they will be found to read our souls very different, though consistent, lessons.

In Ecclesiastes we are taught that he that drinketh of these waters shall thirst again; in the Song we learn that he that drinketh of the water that Christ giveth shall never thirst.

In Ecclesiastes the soul is presented as having full capacity to try everything under the sun. Solomon had been raised up as such an one. What could any man do which he could not do? What within range of human attainments was beyond him? He could say, and it was not a vain boast, "What can the man do that cometh after the king?" meaning himself (Eccles. ii. 12). And the only answer is, "even that which hath been already done." No one had, or could have, the command of more extended resources than he had, because God had so exalted and appointed him. He commanded wealth, and honours, and pleasures, and learning; all manner of such various stores of delights were found with him. He could wield the instruments, and traffic in the markets of all human, natural, earthly and carnal attainments and treasures, without stint and difficulty, and he tried them to the full; he tried them in all their variety, as he eloquently tells us in his Ecclesiastes. He found, however, that they would not do; they left his heart a parched ground and wilderness still. Instead of raising music there, it was all and only "vexation of spirit" that was felt, and "vanity" that was uttered over it all. He that drank those waters thirsted still.

In the Song the soul is differently affected altogether. It is in a different attitude and with a different experience. *It has but one object ; but that one is enough.* It is satisfied, and never for a moment thinks of looking for a second. It has "the Beloved" and cares for nothing else.

The soul, here, it is true, has its grief as well as in Ecclesiastes. But it is a grief of an entirely different character. Here, it sighs over *its want of capacity to enjoy its object fully* ; there, as we saw, it sighed over *the insufficiency of its object*, having full capacity to prove all that it was worth. "Draw me, we will run after thee," is the fond language of the heart here. It seeks for nothing but Jesus, but laments that it is not nearer to Him, more intimate with Him, more fully and altogether with Him. "I sleep, but my heart waketh" tells us, in like manner, that want of power in wakefulness is felt, but no want of an object, as indeed the sequel of that fervent breathing discloses ; for when that drowsy soul is questioned about its object, it recounts His beauties from head to foot, and thinks not for a moment of searching for another.

Such is the experience here, and such the character of the grief of the heart. It is conscious want of capacity to do justice to the object presented, to answer its worth worthily—a grief that deeply honours it, and, I may say, hallows it ; and we want a little more of this in ourselves. We want to find in Jesus a full and satisfying object, a corrective for the wandering of the heart, which, till it fixes rightly on Him, will, in the spirit of the Ecclesiastes, go about and still say, "Who will show us any good?"

The building of palaces, the planting of vineyards, the getting of singing men, and singing women, and musical instruments of all sorts, the multiplying of the children of men, all the trammels of the heart, should end at the discovery of Jesus. Thus will the grief of the soul change. Then, as in the Canticles, it will be sorrow over our want of capacity in ourselves

JESUS, ONCE HUMBLLED, NOW EXALTED. 161

to enjoy what we have reached in the blessed assurance that there is no defect or insufficiency in our portion itself. For he that drinketh of that water shall never thirst.

“ I came to Jesus, and I drank  
Of that life-giving stream ;  
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,  
And now I live in Him.”—*Extracted.*

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JESUS, ONCE HUMBLLED, NOW EXALTED.

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ONCE the Man of sorrows, Lord,  
Now the One in heaven adored ;  
Once forsaken of Thy God,  
Bearing then sin's awful load.

Creature mind can never know  
All Thy sufferings here below ;  
Mortal tongue can ne'er express  
Thy vast love and matchless grace.

Holy One and undefiled !  
Thou wast hated, scorned, reviled ;  
Perfect good was found in Thee,  
Yet men nailed Thee to the tree.

Then for sinners Thou did'st die,  
By Thy blood to bring them nigh ;  
Sov'reign mercy without bound !  
God alone its depth can sound.

For our sins Thou did'st atone,  
Now Thou'rt on the Father's throne ;  
Thou hast conquered death and hell ;  
Sweet and loud Thy praise shall swell.

We would here show forth Thy praise,  
Sing of Thee in sweetest lays ;  
Soon Thy glorious face to see,  
Soon for ever like to Thee !

J. O.

## SHALL I EVER DIE?

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“OF course you will, sooner or later,” most men will answer.

“I DO NOT KNOW,” is the answer which Bible-students *ought* to give.

Of believers, it is only those who have a special revelation that they will die, as Peter had (John xxi. 18, 19, ; 2 Peter i. 14) and Paul (2 Tim. iv. 6), who are justified in saying, “Certainly I shall die.” Peter *could* say so, for the Lord Jesus had promised to him in particular the martyr’s crown; Paul knew the same of himself. But *I* am only an ordinary Christian, and I do not pretend to be either a Peter or a Paul, and I do not pretend to have had any revelations direct from the Lord Himself to me about my own private self in particular. Therefore, I am obliged to be satisfied with the general light which God, in His word, gives to His family as such—that clear and broad light which shines upon all His people.

I am thus obliged to be satisfied with these words: “*As* it is appointed unto men” [man as a sinner; not, as often wrongly quoted, “unto *all* men”] “once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. ix. 27) [So far we read of what awaits man in fallen nature—death and the judgment. Then comes what is true of the believer only]: “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin, unto salvation” (ver. 28).

As mere man the sinner is appointed to death and judgment; but the believer (every believer) has had all the penalty due to his sins borne by Christ. He looks for Him: “To them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin, unto salvation” (Heb. ix. 28). Again: “Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to

come" (1 Thess. i. 9, 10). Again: "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed" (1 Cor. xv. 51). Again: "This we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise *first*. Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. iv. 15-18).

These Scriptures and many others show—first, that the path of the believer, as laid down in Scripture, leads the mind, not down to the grave, but up to meet the Lord at His coming; and, secondly, that the believers in apostolic days did look up that bright and shining way to the Lord returning as their hope, even as it becomes those "whose conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. iii. 20).

Thus did they, as I, having no special communication of my death, act up to the word of the two in white apparel who spake to the disciples as they stood looking up stedfastly toward heaven, where a cloud had received Jesus from their sight. "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts i. 11).

Being myself only one of the flock—nor bell-bearer nor shepherd—the prospect of the flock is my prospect, nor more nor less. Special communication to myself, as an individual, as to what ought to be looked for by myself in particular, have I none; so I must content myself with the hope set before all Christians, and seek to be like unto one that waits for his Lord from heaven, "Who shall change our vile body, that



it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things to Himself" (Phil. iii. 21).

It must be so. The Lord has not yet fulfilled the promise which He gave to poor self-confident Peter, "Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice. Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John xiii. 38, xiv. 1-3). Yes, such is our hope—that "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4).

Some one may say, "If these things are so in the Scriptures, how come the religious people of our day not to see them?"

To this I answer, The Pentecostal Christians were by faith and through the Holy Ghost occupied with the ascended Lord, who, having by His death cleared them of all guilt, was in heaven caring for all their heavenly and spiritual interests, and about to come again that He might receive them unto Himself.

Few of the religious, now-a-days, know even what the value of His death and resurrection is to them; they therefore cannot study His glory in heaven; and they do not long for His return, or even wish to do so.

It might be said, "Are you alone right and everyone else wrong?" I reply, Thank God, I am not alone in this; but if I were alone I would be alone in truth rather than with a multitude in error. "But are you sure you are right?" Of this I am sure—first, that God's word is with me; and, secondly, that God will not suffer those that prayerfully search His word, and lean not to their own understanding, to err in their faith and hope. Certainly Christ in His coming,

and not death, was the hope of the early Christians. Certainly, too, *it is written* at the end of the Revelation (and it cheers my heart to read it for others' sake as well as for my own), "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." "Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." G. V. W.

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 JOHN XX.
 

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IT is impossible to one, in giving great principles for the help of those who seek to understand the word, to develop all that is so deeply touching and interesting in this twentieth chapter of John, on which we have often pondered with (through grace) an ever-growing interest. This revelation of the Lord to the poor woman, who could not do without her Saviour, has a touching beauty, which every detail enhances. But there is one point of view to which one cannot but call the reader's attention. There are four conditions of soul presented here which, taken together, are very instructive, and each in the case of a believer:—

1st. Peter and John, who see and believe, are really believers; but they do not see in Christ the only centre of all the thoughts of God, for His glory, for the world, for souls. Neither is He so for their affections, although they are believers. Having found that He was risen, they do without Him. Mary, who did not know this, and was even culpably ignorant, could nevertheless not do without Jesus. She must possess Himself. Peter and John go to their home; this is the centre of their interests. They believe indeed, but self and home suffice them.

2nd. Thomas believes, and acknowledges, with true orthodox faith on incontestable proofs, that Jesus is his Lord and his God. He truly believes for himself. He has not the communications of the efficacy of the Lord's work, and of the relationship with His Father into which Jesus brings His own,

the assembly. He has peace, perhaps, but he has missed all the revelation of the assembly's position. How many souls—saved souls even—are there in these two conditions!

3rd. Mary Magdalene is ignorant in the extreme. She does not know that Christ is risen. She has so little right sense of His being Lord and God, that she thinks some one might have taken away His body. But Christ is her all, the need of her soul, the only desire of her heart. Without Him she has no home, no Lord, no anything. Now to this need Jesus answers; it indicates the work of the Holy Ghost. He calls His sheep by her name, shews Himself to her first of all, teaches her that His presence was not now to be a Jewish bodily return to earth, that He must ascend to His Father, that the disciples were now His brethren, and that they were placed in the same position as Himself with His God and His Father—as Himself, the risen Man, ascended to His God and Father. All the glory of the new individual position is opened to her.

4th. This gathers the disciples together. Jesus then brings them the peace which He has made, and they have the full joy of a present Saviour who brings it them. He makes this peace (possessed by them in virtue of His work and His victory) their starting-point, sends them as the Father had sent Him, and imparts to them the Holy Ghost as the breath and power of life, that they may be able to bear that peace to others.

These are the communications of the efficacy of His work, as He had given to Mary that of the relationship to the Father which resulted from it. The whole is the answer to Mary's attachment to Christ, or what resulted from it. If through grace there is affection, the answer will assuredly be granted. It is the truth which flows from the work of Christ. No other state than that which Christ here presents is in accordance with what He has

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done, and with the Father's love. He cannot by His work place us in any other. J. N. D.

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 LETTER OF INTEREST.
 

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## LIFE BY THE WORD.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I have nothing very especial on the points you speak of, save holding fast the great foundations that it is a new life communicated. “He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life;” only 2 Peter i. 4 is more conformity to the divine nature, as you say, though not merely attainment.

The word is the instrument; as it is said, faith cometh by hearing, ἀκοή, report, and hearing, ἀκοή, by the word of God. It is hard to say how the word merely works, save that it is God's method of the revelation of Christ, and where accompanied by the quickening power of the Spirit, it becomes thus the means of life; what is spoken of as the word communicated to the soul by the Spirit becomes life.

In Paul's case it was sight, yet revealing God's Son in him; indeed the words of Christ too came to his ear. The Holy Ghost gave reality in his soul to that which his senses told him of. The written (or spoken) word is a revelation of that which is true of Christ, and of Christ Himself, so that while it is the divine power of the Spirit by which we are quickened, it is the revelation of Christ to the soul (which) is objectively that which quickens me, what the Spirit brings to my soul, so that it is faith, faith in the report, which is the outward means, while the thing contained in the word which is life, Christ. The word in itself is merely the outward means or instrument, and by itself, though all truth be in it, produces nothing (unless to leave us without excuse).

The incorruptible seed is clearly in contrast with corruptible, or nature. His words were the expression of Himself, and the Spirit of God has given us

what is needed for salvation and blessing, and also revealed Him as in glory. Each makes us responsible to receive it; but to have life-giving power, the Holy Ghost must reveal what it is. It is a comparison or allusion to natural birth, but there is a divine nature communicated, a new life, Christ our life, brought spiritually into the soul by the operation of the Holy Ghost, with the word which reveals them. God reveals His Son in us, and so we have life, Christ our life, and so morally and intelligently, by the word which reveals Him. God begets us, though it be by the word; we are born of the Spirit, the Son quickens us; the Spirit is the immediate power as in all God's works, but He is pleased to do it by the revelation of Christ by the word. By the word in James, and in 1 Peter, is either meant "by" as an instrument, or what is called the instrumental dative. It is of all importance to see that a new life is communicated, that Christ becomes our life, just as we had the life of Adam in the old man, the flesh.—Your affectionate brother in Christ,

J. N. D.

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WHAT wonderful things chastisement can do for a man. "Tribulation," says the apostle, "worketh patience." This is one of the first qualifications of an apostle, but one of the last of the Christian graces that we generally acquire. We are all conscious of it. God is the God of patience; when we are most patient we are most God-like.—*S. Witherby.*

IT is due to Christ that I should join Him in praising His God and Father. His grace has this claim upon me. It is not now my thoughts of myself; these are but the forgetfulness of redemption, and the living in the *old* man. I *ought* to be a vessel of *praise* unto God and unto Christ, ever tuned for the Spirit to bring forth the glory of the grace of God in the cross of Christ, and in the peace it gives me in Him.

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JUNE, 1890.

## THE FIRST MAN AND THE SECOND MAN. —*Genesis* i.-v., *John* i.-v.

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AS we read the opening verses of the gospel by John, the mind instinctively recurs to the commencement of the book of Genesis. Both speak of the beginning; the former of Him who already existed, the latter of what was then first called into being. "In the beginning was the Word." "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." But the similarity between these two books does not end there. With different themes for their subjects—Genesis treating of the first Adam and his descendants, John of the last Adam, His words and works—there is nevertheless, as it is attempted in the following paper to be pointed out, so marked an agreement in the subjects of the first few chapters, and the order in which they are narrated, as to lead the reader to the conclusion that He, who sees the end from the beginning, was so directing what should take place from the commencement of this world's history that, when the events of Genesis and John should be recorded and compared, the master-mind, the guiding hand should be discerned. Nor this only, but that all that is related of the first Adam, when compared, or contrasted with what is told us of the last Adam, should bring out the surpassing glory and excellence of the latter, and the rich grace of God in sending Him into the world.

The earth prepared for man, all the animals over which he was to rule having been created, the first chapter of Genesis tells us of his appearance fresh from the creative hand of his God. "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." A creature represent-

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ing God on earth, and like Him, pure, free from spot and sin, such was the one placed as head over this then new creation. And God expressed His approval of this His latest work. He had on the previous day blest the work of His hands, the fowls, and all that moved in the seas. Now He blesses man that he may fill the earth, and subdue it. It was man's place to rule over it. Turning to the first chapter of John, we have mention of the appearance of another Man on this earth, a head like Adam, but a head of a new race—the Word made flesh. And as of Adam and all His works God had expressed His emphatic approval ; so we get a no less decisive mark of His delight in the Word made flesh, when the Spirit of God descended like a dove and rested on Him. The First-born of every creature, His only-begotten Son, when He appears must be signalled out by the special favour of heaven. On Him the heavens opened.

But what comparison with any of the sons of men can bring out His excellency, or delineate His glory? There must be contrasts to show what they had not, and what He has. Adam was made after the likeness of God ; He was God. Adam was made in the image of God ; of Him it could be said, He was the image of the invisible God. All creation could see in the first Adam one representing God on earth ; all who had opened eyes and prepared hearts could discern in the Lord Jesus “a glory as of the only-begotten of the Father.” Moreover He declared the Father (i. 18), which Adam, though made in the image of God, could never do. Again, Adam was created ; the Word was made flesh. Both had a beginning in flesh on earth. The first had none before he lived here ; by the last the first was created. Adam appeared on a scene prepared to receive him ; He entered a world ready to reject Him. Adam walked about surrounded by the works of God's hands ; He came to His own things *eis ta idia*. And whilst He came to *give* grace upon grace, and to *give* authority to

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become children of God, Adam was to *receive* the unqualified submission of God's creatures on earth. He was to be lord of all here. This is next brought out. It was God's expressed will when He created him. It was carried into execution by God Himself when He brought all creatures to be named by him. "And whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof."

Placed in the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it, all acknowledged his sway. To own Adam was to submit to God. To receive a name from him was as if it had been pronounced by the Lord God Himself. Beautiful picture of order and subjection to the one set over the works of God's hands! But he was only the type of Him who was to come (Rom. v. 14). So when He came He could not do less than give names likewise. To Simon He gave the name of Cephas, signifying, as Head of the new creation, the use to which He would put him. Afterwards, the sons of Zebedee He surnamed Boanerges (Mark iii. 17). By-and-by He will give to His saints each a new name, which no man knoweth but he who receiveth it (Rev. ii. 17). And just as we have Adam in the garden surrounded by all the living creatures, and owned by them as head of that creation, so we have the Lord Jesus presented to us as King in His kingdom, enforcing the subjection of all to His authority and will. The second chapter of Genesis gives us the one, the second of John the other. Alike in this, each one the centre appointed by God, how great is the difference. The glory of Adam seen that day in Eden passed away never to be restored. The glory of the Lord displayed on earth in a brief passing way can never pall, never decay; "He shall be great to the ends of the earth." "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end" (Micah v. 4; Isaiah ix. 7).

And, differing as Adam did from the Lord in the transient character of his glory, we may trace a



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difference in the circumstances connected with it. The former had to subdue the earth, but had no rival to dispute his sway, and no unruly spirit to reduce to subjection. The latter came on this earth, where His glory is one day to be revealed, and His kingdom established over all, with every opposition to encounter, and the ruling spirit of evil to overcome. In Eden there was real subjection to God ; in Jerusalem it was professed subjection to Him, coupled with the strongest manifestation of personal hostility to the One He had appointed, and the most determined opposition to the authority of God's King. Yet as God's anointed He must exercise the rights of sovereignty over the world. The *second* chapter of John gives a glimpse of what it will be. But first we read of joy ministered, and then of power exercised.

The happiness of Eden gone, and gone for ever, we learn how happiness can yet be enjoyed on earth. The Lord provides the wine for His disciples and those who had called Him to the feast. But it is when their provision is exhausted that He comes in and gives sufficient to last throughout the feast ; for what He provides can never end, depending, as it will, for its origin and continuance on the work and everlasting acceptance of Him who provides it. The happiness of Eden, brought to its climax when Adam received his bride, was soon alloyed with trouble, the fruit of sin. In the happiness of the kingdom His people will know no admixture of bitterness, for "the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces ; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth : for the Lord hath spoken it" (Isaiah xxv. 8 ; Rev. vii. 16, 17).

Passing now from Galilee to Jerusalem, the other work presents itself to be accomplished. He must vindicate God's authority where it has been denied. He purges, therefore, His Father's house. Oxen, sheep, doves, their vendors, the money-changers, all must depart at His bidding. He drives them out

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with a scourge, acts as none had acted before Him, and as none did after Him; for to Him, and Him alone, this place of pre-eminence belongs. Such is a brief glimpse of the double work of the last Adam in His kingdom. To both the first was a stranger. He sat in Eden to receive the homage of God's creatures. The Lord will give of His bounty to make glad the hearts of His saints—a more blessed position, surely, than Adam ever occupied (Acts xx. 35)—and will act in judicial power to assert the just claims of God. At Cana, inanimate creation owns His power; at Jerusalem, living creatures, men, beasts, birds obey His will: a foreshadowing of what the Psalmist predicts, "Thou madest Him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under His feet" (Psalms viii. 6).

This display of power, as of blessing, leads to the consideration of the need of such a work. Genesis iii. tells us of the entrance of sin, what caused it, and the sad consequences of disobedience. John iii. speaks of the remedy and its blessed results. In both chapters we get God and man brought face to face. In the former is the last meeting before they parted, never to meet as they had done on earth again. In the latter we learn how they can meet so as never again to part, if man will only hearken to God. At that meeting in Eden God passed sentence of death as the penalty of disobedience. At this interview between the Lord and Nicodemus He spake of everlasting life as the gift of God. And here another parallel in these histories comes out. In both cases we have the mention of a third party; but again we have a marked contrast. For in the one, the third party is the serpent, the seducer of Eve and destroyer of Adam and his race; in the other, the third party is the woman's Seed, the Son of Man, the Saviour of the lost. And what formed the chief topic of the serpent's conversation with Eve, and the snare by which he entrapped her, is the subject the Lord takes up, and deals with, when

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Nicodemus comes to Him. The serpent persuaded Eve that God had withheld something from them they ought to enjoy. He made her doubt the reality of God's love. The Lord, when teaching the master in Israel, tells out the exceeding greatness of that love, which stopped not short of the giving up of His only Son for a ruined, sinful world.

Adam and Eve ought to have resented any doubt thrown on the reality and fulness of God's love. What they failed to do, that the Son of Man takes up and carries through. They had proofs abundant of His love to them, and the very presence of Eve was enough to show that what was good for Adam to have God would provide. "It is not good," God said, "that the man should be alone; I will make him an helpmeet for him." He saw his need, and let none but Himself supply it. Would He act differently about that tree concerning which He had given such a particular injunction? Should any one of His creatures be allowed to supply the lack which God, conscious of it, had left unfilled? They failed to repudiate the insidious attack on their Creator. It remained, therefore, for the Son of Man to show how entirely contrary to truth it was. And how does He do this? By pointing to what Adam and Eve had received, and the place they had occupied as sinless creatures? No: but by showing God could love a sinful world. Adam had evidences of God's love in plenty to adduce, and the Lord gives a new proof in coming to die for him and his descendants. And so, after four thousand years had rolled by, the lie of the serpent is contradicted. God could so love the world, as to give His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. As far as the misery and ruin of Adam's sin had reached, so far could the remedy now announced go forth. Wherever there was a child of Adam, there was one for whom God in His love had provided a Saviour. Now God and man could meet on terms which could never

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be altered. No longer on the ground of man's innocence, nor on the ground of man's responsibility, for in that he had signally failed ; but on the ground of a gift which God had given, and a work which the Son of Man would accomplish.

Another point in these two narratives we must proceed to notice. Genesis iii. tells us of a voluntary act on the part of Adam, and an act of necessity on the part of God—the driving him out of paradise, lest he should take of the tree of life and live for ever. John iii. tells us also of a spontaneous act, and an act of necessity. The spontaneous act was on the part of God; and the act of necessity on the part of the Son of Man—the being lifted up on the cross. Adam's act was a gratuitous assumption that he knew better than God ; God's act in driving him out of Eden was one of mercy to His rebellious creatures. In John iii. we get something more than mercy—we get grace, God showing favour to sinners in giving them what none would have dreamt of, and no child of Adam have dared to ask. Adam, in Genesis iii., stands forth as the author of the ruin of his race. The Son of Man appears in John iii. who is “the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him.” It was needful to banish Adam from Eden, lest he should perpetuate his sinful condition for ever. It was needful for the Son of Man to be lifted up, that souls might live for ever. And the same God, so grossly misrepresented by the devil, and who appeared to pronounce sentence in Eden, is brought before us by His Son in a different character, as a gracious God, able and desirous to save the world.

The next subject the historian of Genesis takes up is the family of Adam, and the respective sacrifices of Cain and Abel. How to approach God with acceptance is a question of immense importance to fallen creatures, and of necessity follows closely on the fall. How to worship God aright is a question which must follow closely on the unfolding of God's grace.

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These questions are respectively taken up in Genesis and John, and the first fully answered in the sacrifice of Abel and God's acceptance of it. He brought of the flock. He owned thereby his condition and his desert—death, and that life for the dead sinner could only be procured at the expense of the life of a Substitute. Did the consequences of the fall stop here—the solution of the question how to approach God with acceptance—how many a dark and blood-stained page of history had never been written. But sin being in the world, its fruits are quickly made apparent, not only in entailing death on Adam and his children, but in inciting Cain to stain the earth with the blood of his brother Abel. Worship and death are the prominent subjects of Genesis iv. Worship and life are brought before us in John iv. And here we get more than the acceptance of an offering. It is the Father seeking worshippers. "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." Whether or not the head of the fallen race told Abel how to approach God, we know not; but it is revealed, and we read of it, how the Head of the new creation communicated to a poor abandoned woman, by the side of Jacob's well, the true principles on which worship to God must now be founded. And further, He unfolds to her, the last person in the world we, in our ignorance, would have thought of, the relationship in which God will now stand to all who believe on His Son. And as we read in Gen. iv. 8, 23 of man taking the life of his fellow-creature, the contrast would not be complete, unless we had set before us the Lord restoring to active life one who was nigh unto death, and in the next chapter, re-invigorating the limbs of one who had an infirmity for thirty-and-eight years. How great is the difference, here, between the offspring of Adam, begotten in his own likeness after his image, and the virgin's Child, begotten of the Holy Ghost.

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This leads us on to the following chapter in Genesis, where the sentence pronounced in Eden is seen carried out on Adam and all his descendants till the days of Noah. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. v. 12). Cain could shorten the life of his brother Abel, but sooner or later death must overtake him. "It is appointed unto men once to die." This is the solemn record of Gen. v. "He died," is the simple statement of the inspired historian appended to the close of the lives of all but one herein named. "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death; and there is no discharge in that war," is the word of the preacher (Eccles. viii. 8). And the one exception to the common lot of man forms no exception to the rule, that none can deliver himself from death; for we read, "he was not, for God took him." It was God's act, not Enoch's effort, which kept his body from the grave.

Turning to John v., we find death and the grave brought before us again; but how different is the way in which they are presented. It is not the common inevitable lot of man that we are called to meditate on, but the power of the Son of Man over "the king of terrors." The grave closed on Adam and his descendants, and hid them one by one from the gaze of their families and friends. The grave shall one day open at the voice of the Son of Man. None could by themselves escape the consequences of Adam's transgression. None can remain in captivity to death when the Second Man shall speak. "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." Death, by Adam's fall, obtained the mastery over all his offspring. By Jesus it shall be swallowed up in victory, and finally be destroyed.

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“For since by man came death, by Man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet” (1 Cor. xv. 21, 22, 26, 27). How cheering that the enemy, which entered the world by one man, has been overcome by another. Yet, what profit would that be to us, if we had not the hope of sharing in the victory? This, too, is presented to us. And here again comes out the difference between these two heads in a bright and glorious contrast. Adam involved all in death, not merely of the body, but also of the soul. The Lord can quicken dead souls, He can also give life in resurrection to the body. “The first man, Adam, became a living soul; the last Adam a quickening Spirit.” How all this work is carried on is unfolded in vers. 25-29 of the chapter: “For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself” (26).

With Gen. v. the history of Adam closes. Of his career after the fall Scripture says nothing. We read in Heb. xi. of a catalogue of worthies; but his name is not in the list. His future position is shrouded in mystery. Before the Second Man, whose genealogy in Luke is traced up to him, he will one day stand. His voice he will one day hear and obey. But of Him, before whom he will stand, there is no uncertainty now. He, like Adam, passed out of this world by death. But we know He lives, and lives for evermore. He has life in Himself, and He gives of it to others. And thus John v. discloses at once what He has, and who He is. Son of God and Son of Man, He has full authority from God, and all shall honour Him as they honour the Father. He has full power too; “For what things soever the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.” And the place of pre-eminence which Adam fell from is filled, and more than filled, by Him. He quickens whom He will. He will judge all. His

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voice, when heard, now gives life. His voice as Son of Man, when heard, shall raise the dead. Another Man is found to be set over the works of God's hand, worthy to be there, able to maintain His place ; for He seeks not His own will, but the will of the Father which sent Him.

From Adam what have we received? Of what have we to boast? A nature wholly corrupt, flesh not subject to the law of God, and which neither indeed can be ; for an inheritance, a life of sorrow and vexation of spirit ; for a prospect, death, "and the house appointed for all living" (Job xxx. 23). What did he give creation? By him the living creatures, indeed, were named. But by him the whole creation was made subject to vanity, and because of him the ground was cursed. Blessed be God, this condition is not irremediable, because another Man has been found who was obedient to death. Through Him we receive—but how unlike that which our first parent entailed on us—a nature which cannot sin, an inheritance which cannot fade away, and a prospect of life beyond death, nay, the assurance of everlasting life, of which the grave cannot cheat us nor the great enemy deprive us. And this is unchangeable to those who possess it. And the universe, too, shall rejoice in Him. The curse shall be removed, and the groaning creation be brought into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. Ruin, misery, death, follow the track of the first man. Blessing, happiness, everlasting life, flow from the Second. He gives, gives to the unworthy, gives to the unclean, gives to sinners. This characterises Him. Of Adam we have to say, he entailed on his posterity the consequences of his sin ; of the Lord we have to record, He gives everything the sinner needs, everything the saint, throughout eternity, can enjoy.

C. E. S.

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WHEN burning tares in a fire will turn them into wheat then universal restoration will be true.



## DIVINE INVITATIONS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

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GOD spake to man in Paradise both before and after the sin for which he drove man from that favoured spot where His own presence had been given him. And we have revealed to us the very words which were spoken; words of deepest interest to us, surely, they are, and they will be even in eternity. But it was 1500 years later than this (later than the revelation that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head) that we have the record of any further words which the Lord spake unto man. Yet He *had* spoken, we cannot doubt, for God had His line of faith in the family of Seth, and of one of these, Enoch, it is told us in the Old Testament that he walked with God 300 years, and was not, for God took him (Gen. v. 22-24), and in the New Testament, that before he was translated "he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Heb. xi. 5). How blessedly had God spoken to him!

But we come to Noah's day, when he was 500 years old. How dark, how terribly dark, things had become, no human pen could or can portray! God has given us some account of it, it would seem, in the 14th Psalm—of what His eyes beheld when He looked down from heaven; and in Gen. vi. 5 we read that "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart." And in verse 6, "The earth also was *corrupt* before God, and the earth was filled with *violence*. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had *corrupted* His way upon the earth." God therefore concluded to destroy man and beast, and creeping things, and fowls of the air, for it repented Him that He had made them; "but Noah found

grace in the eyes of the Lord." "And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with *violence* through them, and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood;" and so He gave His servant minute directions as to the construction of it. He told him, we see here, of the two great characters of evil, of unbridled evil, that his eyes discerned, *corruption* and *violence*.

These had been exemplified in the serpent with Eve (corruption) in the garden, and in Cain towards Abel (violence) outside the garden. The leaven of malice and wickedness had permeated the mass, so that God had to say "all flesh had *corrupted* His way upon the earth," and it was "filled with *violence*." But God established His covenant with Noah, and said, "Thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee." And as this was about 100 years (compare Gen. v. 32 with vii. 11) before they entered the ark, these eight persons had, what never pertained to any one else, a lease of life for 100 years! Here let us observe that God did not say, "Thou shalt *go*," but "Thou shalt *come* into the ark." Surely it suggested that Noah should not only find shelter and security there, but should find *the presence of Him who had saved him*. Accordingly, when the ark was at length finished, and Noah had finished his 100 years' preaching to deaf ears and rebellious hearts, "the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before Me in this generation." A second time had God said "Come," thus encouraging the heart of His servant with the reiterated assurance that God would be with him.

Nor need we find difficulty in understanding this, if we bear in mind that the true ark was CHRIST. It was in view of what the ark typified that God could make covenant with Noah, and could act in sovereign mercy towards him and his house—they should be in

the ark as typically in Christ a new creation. "The fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened" (Gen. vii. 11). Judgment raged without, but God had shut them in together with Himself, and the ark rode triumphantly over the waters. For a year and ten days they sojourned with God in the ark which Noah had prepared "to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Heb. xi. 7).

I have dwelt on the significance in the foregoing cases of God's using the word "Come." Let us follow on now for 1600 or 1800 years, and look at other instances in which God used that blessed word. By the mouth of Isaiah His prophet God spoke to His rebellious people (i. 18): "*Come now*, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." How truly gracious was this on God's part, as though He had bidden them to sit down and hear His voice of mercy.

But here again we see CHRIST. As in the ark it was His sovereign mercy through Him, so here the sins of scarlet and of crimson hue were to be for ever obliterated, because God's eye rested upon the infinite value and eternal efficacy of that precious blood which He would shed on Calvary, and by which we should become "white as snow" in His sight. God might have said, GO for ever from My presence. But no! He says, "Come, and let us reason together"; and what blessed and convincing reasoning is that which in sovereign grace declares—*They shall be as white as snow; they shall be as wool!*

In the case of Noah, God sets us with Himself in eternal peace and security; in the case set forth by Isaiah, He shows us how He makes us eternally fit for His own presence—WHITE AS SNOW.

Another Scripture in Isaiah (lv. 1-3) shows us how

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He *proclaims* His mercy and His grace: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, *come* ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; *come* ye, buy, and eat; yea, *come*, buy wine and milk without money and without price." "Incline your ear, and *come* unto ME: hear, and your soul shall live." Thus we have four times mercy and grace proclaimed in a blessed invitation, "COME." Every provision is made to refresh, and to gladden, and to nourish the thirsting soul. The waters to refresh; the wine to gladden; the milk to nourish. It is to this abundant supply that those who give ear to the prophet are invited; but the invitation then assumes a higher character: "Incline your ear and COME UNTO ME: hear, and your soul shall live." The one who secures the blessing secures also the Blessor; comes into His presence; makes His acquaintance; lives and walks before Him. This is the object and end of the four times given invitation. And beautiful it is to see that even the Old Testament shows the desire of God's heart to have His people for ever blest in His presence, to which purpose His word is, "COME UNTO ME."

Again we see CHRIST, for it is evident that in this wonderful 55th of Isaiah God looks on to the accomplishment of all His purposes as to His people by the Man of His eternal counsels, when "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied." And that divine invitation, "Incline your ear, and come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live," stands unrepealed to-day. It is hoary with the memories of five and twenty centuries which have passed since God proclaimed His mercy and His grace to every one who thirsted for that which He alone could supply; to every one that inclined an ear and would come unto Him. Yet it stands in all its priceless value before the reader's attention this moment as God's assured welcome to all who accept the invitations which His love makes to the sinner who truly turns to Him.

"KNOWN AND BELIEVED."

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

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

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

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

But perhaps the reader of these lines may ask, How do we know that God loves us? Well, that is a very important question; therefore we could do no better than allow Scripture to furnish us with its own answer.

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, *not that we loved God*, but that *He loved us*, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 9, 10). This is how we know it.

He has shown it, proved it by sending His Son to die for us; and we are sure that any one sitting down, and quietly and thoughtfully reading those verses, must rise up with the settled conviction in his soul that God has indeed manifested *His* love to us poor guilty sinners.

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

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

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

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

Are you then, dear reader, amongst those who can say, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us"? or are you amongst those who as yet can only say, "I wish I were"? If the latter, then turn your eye away from yourself entirely. Do not

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even *think* of your love to God, but gaze upon that wondrous expression of *His love*. Think how He has loved you, unworthy you, and given His beloved Son for you. Thus look and look, and continue to look, until your poor weary heart has taken its fill, and you find yourself lost in wonder, love, and praise. Then, and not till then, will you be able to say with the rest of the children of God, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us." W. E.

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LEAD THOU US ON.

(Tune, "Sandon," set to "Lead, kindly light.")

O JESUS, Lord, Great Shepherd of Thy sheep,  
 Lead thou us on.  
 Foolish and weak, we need Thee still to keep,  
 And lead us on ;  
 Dangers abound, and we are not yet home ;  
 O keep us near, nor let us from Thee roam.  
 Thy blood was shed that we might with Thee be  
 At home on high,  
 Amid that scene of light and radiancy  
 Beyond the sky ;  
 Yet even here we know Thee near, and hear  
 Thy voice, and follow, Saviour, without fear.  
 Dark though the path may be, we follow Thee  
 Along the way  
 Which leads us on, Thy glory soon to see  
 In cloudless day ;  
 Thus led by Thee, Thy tender Shepherd-care  
 Will keep, and guard, and guide us safely there.  
 What will it be when dangers all are past,  
 And, led by Thee,  
 We reach our home—the Father's house at last,  
 To dwell with Thee !  
 How loud the chorus which we then shall raise,  
 And sing for ever *to* Thee—in Thy praise.

W. E.

## THE WORD OF GOD.

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I DO not worship the Book, but I so intensely love it that I can say with David, "My soul standeth in awe of Thy word." You may speak of me as you please, and I can afford to regard it as I please; but when God speaketh then every power is hushed to hear what He hath to say, and the whole heart trembles before the Word of the living God. It is no ordinary book. I hate the science of comparative theology. I know but one God, and all the rest are idols. I hate all comparison of sacred books. I know of one, and all the rest are pretenders. No man of God who has ever read them will ever for a single second think they can be mistaken for sacred books. They have nothing of the tone, or the soul, or the majesty, or the depth of this wonderful Book of ours. It stands alone—the sole and only Book of God. I would express our confidence in the Bible under criticism. It has passed through a good deal of criticism now, has it not? I do not know why it should be criticised with superfluous severity when so many other books have been allowed to escape almost scotfree. Had they been criticised in the manner of biblical criticism there had not been a fragment of them left. But now there is not a fragment of the Holy Scriptures gone. No doctrine—no essential doctrine—of Christianity has been jeopardised by the most severe criticism of the original books or by any other kind of criticism.

I sometimes nowadays marvel at the men that are critics of such a Book as this. One said to me when I spoke of Paul, "I don't agree with Paul." Then I laid aside the question of inspiration, and only thought of Paul, "Why, man, he doth bestride this narrow world like a Colossus"; and here was an individual—he didn't agree with Paul! In the age of rushlights I should not have been more surprised if the rushlight had said that it did not agree with the sun. But they may pass it through more critical tests if they will.



It is as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. They do it service after all.

One thing also I would add here, and that is my testimony to the wonder which the book often excites in me. I could stop when I am reading it sometimes, and cry over it. It is not that I understand it. Often it is because I cannot understand it that my wonder makes me admire. You can get to the end of other books. You have spent them out when you have read them two or three times; but you have only begun with the Bible when your hair turns grey. It is marvellous how wonderful the Bible is the first time you come to it. I think I almost wish I had never read it that I might have the pleasure of reading it for the first time.

I had a note but yesterday from a gentleman who told me that he called upon my grandfather, an old man who is in his eighty-eighth year, and he said—"I went into his study. He had a big Bible in front of him. We exchanged salutations, and then the old man seemed to forget all about me. He sat reading on, and as he read the Bible he kept saying, 'Wonderful! wonderful! I have proved this to be true. My soul feeds upon it. I shall soon be in the presence of God. Oh, what a precious truth this is to a poor old man like me!'" Yes, it is as wonderful to the old man as it is to the young lad. Wonder upon wonders! How often have I cried to myself in the language of Herbert, "O Book! Exquisite sweetness! Let me still suck every letter, and honey gain!" May we all, dear friends, bear testimony to our faith in the Bible by continually yielding obedience to it. If we will obey its precepts we shall know its doctrines. The Bible is not merely a book—it is a way; it is a chart; it is a guide in the way of righteousness and peace. Put in practice the Divine Word, and as you do so you will love it more and more. In closing, I would say that I have scarcely ever given away the Word of God without meeting with very singular results. I gave to

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a cabman twenty years ago a twopenny Testament. I never looked to hear of it again, but I did hear of that twopenny Testament twenty years afterwards, in the hands of the man, who kept it probably as a kind of relic, because God had blessed it to the conversion of his soul. That twopenny was a good investment.

I hope you all try the Word of God every day in your own daily life. It is a splendid Book for the throne; it is equally good in the kitchen. It is a blessed Book to put into your pocket and carry with you when you are in the railway train; you will find it precious if you stay at home. In poverty or in wealth, in joy or in sorrow, the many-sided Bible only presents to you some new phase of its everlasting adaptation to your state and case. Give up the Bible! We will sooner give up our lives.—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

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 ON ECCLESIASTICAL INDEPENDENCY.

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 I.

THE point I take to be fatally dangerous is confounding private judgment and conscience. We see the full-blown fruit of it in the present state of Protestantism, where private judgment is used to authorise the rejection of everything the individual does not agree with.

The difference is plain in the case put. A father's authority is admitted. Now if it be a matter of conscience, Christ's authority or the confession of His name, of course this cannot stand in the way. I am bound to love Christ more than father or mother. But suppose I reject my father's authority for everything my private judgment differs in as to what is right, there is an end of all authority. There may be cases of anxious enquiry as to what my duty is, where spiritual judgment alone can come to a right judgment. This is the case in the whole Christian life. We must have our senses exercised to discern good and evil—not be unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is; and such exercises are useful.

But the confounding a judgment I form simply as a right with conscience is, in result, confounding will with

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obedience. True conscience is always obedience to God; but if I take what I see as sufficient, confusion of a deadly character soon comes in. *Does one not submit to a father's authority unless he can bring, even in an important matter, a text of Scripture for everything he desires?* Is there no setting up of self and self-will in such a principle?

But I go farther; and it is the case in question. Suppose in an assembly a person has been put out for evil. All admit that such, if truly humbled, should be restored. The assembly think he is humbled truly: I am satisfied, suppose, that he is not. They receive him. Am I to break with the assembly or to refuse subjection to their act, because I think them mistaken? Supposing (which is a more trying case to the heart) I believe he is humbled and they are satisfied he is not, I may bow to a judgment I think erroneous and look to the Lord to set it right. There is such a thing as lowliness as to self, which does not set up its own opinion against others, though one may have no doubt of being right.

There is another question connected with it—one assembly's act binding another. I do not admit, because Scripture does not admit, independent assemblies. There is the body of Christ, and all Christians are members of it; *and the Church of God in one place represents the whole and acts in its name. Hence, in 1 Corinthians, where the subject is treated of, all Christians are taken in with the assembly of Corinth as such; yet this last is treated as the body as such, and made locally responsible for maintaining the purity of the assembly; and the Lord Christ is looked at as there; and what was done was done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.* This is wholly ignored when one speaks of six or seven clever, intelligent Christians and a number of ignorant ones. The Lord in the midst of an assembly is set aside. The flesh, it is said, often acts in an assembly. Why assume it does and forget it may in an individual?

Again, why speak of obeying the Lord first, then the Church? But supposing the Lord is in the Church? It is merely setting up private judgment against the judgment of an assembly meeting in Christ's name with His promise (if they are not, I have nothing to say to them); it is simply saying, I count myself wiser than those who are. I reject entirely as unscriptural the saying, "First Christ, then

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the Church." If Christ be not in the Church, I do not own it at all. It assumes that the Church has not Christ, making them two parties. I may reason with an assembly, because I am a member of Christ and hence of it—if it is one, help it. But if I own it as an assembly of God, I cannot assume Christ is not there. It is simply denying it is an assembly of God. The thought is wanting of what an assembly of God is. This is not surprising; but it necessarily falsifies judgment on the point, which is not "if the word"—but if *I see* not the word for it. It is justly trusting one's own judgment as against others and the assembly of God.

I could not for a moment put a question of blasphemies against Christ on such a ground. It is really wickedness. The attempt to cover them by church questions, or by pleas of individual conscience, I abhor with perfect abhorrence.

Allow me to put the question on minor questions in another shape. Suppose I am of an assembly, and I think they judge something in a mistaken way. Am I *to impose* my individual way of thinking *on them*? If not, what am I to do. Leave the assembly of God if it be such (if not, I do not go there)? You cannot help yourself. If I do not continue in an assembly, because it does not agree with me in everything, I can be of no assembly of God in the world. All this is simply a denial of the presence and help of God's Spirit and of the faithfulness of Christ to His own people. I cannot see godly lowliness in it.

But if an assembly have judged as such in a case of discipline, admitting all brotherly communications and remonstrances, *I distinctly say another assembly should, on the face of it, receive their act.* If the wicked man is put out at Corinth, is Ephesus to receive him? Where then is unity? where the Lord in the midst of the Church? What led me out of the Establishment was the unity of the body: where it is not owned and acted on, I should not go. And independent churches I think quite as bad or worse of than of the Establishment. But if each assembly acts independently of another and receives independently of it, then it has rejected that unity—they are independent churches. There is no practical unity of the body.

But I shall never be brought to such wickedness as to treat acceptance of blasphemers as an ecclesiastical ques-

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tion. If people like to walk with them or help and support the bearing with them at the Lord's table, they will not have me. I distinctly judge that the principles defended shew want of lowliness as to self and a setting aside the very idea of the Church of God. But I am not going to mix the two questions. I do not accept the setting aside my spiritual liberty: we are a flock, not an enclosure. But in questions of discipline, where no principle is denied, I do not set up my judgment against that of the assembly of God in that which God has committed to its care. It is just setting myself up as wiser, and neglecting God's word which has assigned certain duties to an assembly, which He will honour in its place.

Let me add, there is such a thing as obedience in what we do know, which goes before speculating on possible claims in obedience, where we should like to be free to go our own way. "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given." Doing what we know in obedience is a great way of knowing further.

Both Ephesians and Corinthians teach us distinctly that unity is in and by the Spirit, and that Christ has in this respect the place of Head, not of Lord, which referred to individual Christians. This error if acted on would falsify the whole position of gatherings, and make mere dissenters of them, and in no way meet the mind of Christ.

## II.

Confounding authority with infallibility is a poor and transparent piece of sophistry. In a hundred instances obedience may be obligatory where there is no infallibility. Were it not so, there could be no order in the world at all. There is no infallibility in it, but a great deal of self-will; and if there is to be no obedience where there is not infallibility, no acquiescence in what has been decided, there is no end to self-will and no existence of common order. The question is of competence, not of infallibility. A father is not infallible, but he has a divinely given authority; and acquiescence is a duty. A police magistrate is not infallible, but he has competent authority in the cases submitted to his jurisdiction. There may be resources against abuse of authority, or in certain cases refusal of it when a higher authority obliges us, as a con-

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science directed by God's word. We ought to obey God rather than man. But there is never in Scripture liberty given to the human will as such. We are sanctified to the obedience of Christ. And this principle—our doing God's will in simple obedience, without solving every abstract question which may be raised—is a path of peace, which many heads who think themselves wiser miss, because it is the path of God's wisdom.

The question then is mere sophistry, which betrays the desire to have the will free, and a confidence that the person's judgment is superior to all that has been already judged. There is judicial authority in the Church of God, and if there were not, it would be the most horrible iniquity on earth; because it would put the sanction of Christ's name on every iniquity. And that is what was sought and pleaded for by those with whom these questions originated: that whatever iniquity or leaven was allowed, it could not leaven an assembly. Such views have done good. They have the cordial abhorrence and rejection of every honest mind, and of every one who does not seek to justify evil.

But the judicial authority of the Church of God is in *obedience* to the word. "Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." And, I repeat, if it be not done, the Church of God becomes the accrediting of every vileness of sin. And I affirm distinctly, that where this is done, other Christians are *bound* to respect it. There are remedies for fleshly action in it, in the presence of the Spirit of God amongst the saints, and in the supreme authority of the Lord Jesus Christ; but that remedy is not the totally unscriptural and miserable one proposed by the question—the pretension of competency in every one who takes it into his head to judge for himself independently of *what God has instituted*. It is, taken in its most favourable aspect (not an individual pretension which is its real character) the well-known and unscriptural system which has been known since Cromwell's time—that is, Independency: one body of Christians being independent of every other as a voluntary association. *This is a simple denial of the unity of the body, and the presence and action of the Holy Ghost in it.*

Supposing we were a body of Freemasons, and a person

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were excluded from one lodge by the rules of the order, and instead of looking to the lodge to review the case, if it was thought to be unjust, each other lodge were to receive him or not on their own independent authority, it is clear the unity of the Freemason system is gone. Each lodge is an independent body acting for itself. It is in vain to allege a wrong done, and the lodge not being infallible; the competent authority of lodges, and the unity of the whole, is at an end. The system is dissolved. There may be provision for such difficulties. All right if it be needed. But the proposed remedy is the mere pretension of the superiority of the recusant lodge, and a dissolution of Freemasonry.

Now I openly reject, in the most absolute way, the pretended competency of one church or assembly to judge another, as the question proposes; but what is more important, it is an unscriptural denial of the whole structure of the Church of God. It is Independency, a system I knew forty years ago and would never join. If people like that system, let them go there. It is in vain to say it is not that. Independency merely means that each church judges for itself independently of another, and that is all that is claimed here. I have no quarrel with those who, liking to judge for themselves, prefer this system; only I am perfectly satisfied that in every respect it is *wholly unscriptural*. The Church is not a voluntary system. It is not formed (or rather unformed) of a number of independent bodies, each acting for itself. It was never dreamed, whatever the remedy, that Antioch could let in Gentiles, and Jerusalem not, and all go on according to the order of the Church of God. There is not a trace of such independency and disorder in the word. There is every possible evidence of, in fact, and doctrinal insistence on, there being one body on earth, whose unity was the foundation of blessing in fact, and its maintenance the duty of every Christian. Self-will may wish it otherwise, but certainly not grace, and not obedience to the word.

Difficulties may arise: we have not an apostolic centre as there was at Jerusalem. Quite true: but we have a resource in the action of the Spirit in the unity of the body, the action of healing grace and helpful gift, and the faithfulness of a gracious Lord who has promised never to leave us or forsake us. But the case of Jerusalem in Acts xv. *is* a

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proof that the Scriptural church never thought of, and did not accept, the independent action insisted upon. The action of the Holy Ghost was in the unity of the body, and is always so. The action directed by the apostle at Corinth (and which binds us as the word of God) *was operative in respect of the whole Church of God, and all are contemplated in the opening of the epistle.* Does any one mean to pretend if he were to be put out at Corinth judicially, that *each church was to judge for itself* whether he was to be received; that judicial act pass for nothing or operative only at Corinth, and Ephesus or Cenchrea to do as it liked afterwards? Where then was the solemn act and direction of the apostle? Well, that authority and that direction is the word of God for us now.

I am quite aware it will be said, Yes, but you may not follow it rightly, as the flesh may act. It is possible. There *is possibility* that the flesh may act. But I am quite certain that what denies the unity of the Church, sets up for itself, and dissolves it into independent bodies, is the dissolution of the Church of God, unscriptural, and *nothing but flesh.* It is therefore judged for me before I go any farther. There is a remedy, a blessed, gracious remedy for humble minds in the help of God's Spirit in the unity of the body, and the Lord's faithful love and care, as I have said, but not in *the pretentious will which sets up for itself and denies the Church of God.* My answer is, then, that the plea is a sophistry which confounds infallibility and divinely-ordained authority met by lowly grace, and that the system sought is the *pretentious spirit of Independency, a rejection of the whole authority of Scripture in its teaching on the subject of the Church, a setting up of man instead of God.*

It is clear, that if two or three are gathered together, it is an assembly, and if Scripturally assembled, an assembly of God; and if not, what else? If the only one in a place, it is the assembly of God in the place. Yet I do object practically to taking the title, because the assembly of God in any place properly embraces all the saints in the place. And there is practical danger for souls in assuming the name, as losing sight of the ruin and setting up to be something. But it is not false in the supposed case. *If there be one such and another is set up by man's will, independent of*



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*it, the first only is morally, in God's sight, the assembly of God; and the other is not at all so, because it is set up in independency of the unity of the body.* I reject in the most entire and unhesitating manner the whole Independent system as unscriptural and a positive, unmitigated evil. Now that the unity of the body has been brought out, and the Scriptural truth of it known, it is simply a work of Satan. Ignorance of the truth is one thing, our common lot in many ways; *opposition to it is another.* I know it is alleged that the Church is now so in ruins that Scriptural order according to the unity of the body cannot be maintained. Then let the objectors avow, as honest men, that they seek unscriptural order, or rather disorder. But in truth it is impossible to meet at all in that case to break bread, except in defiance of God's word: for Scripture says, "We are all one body; for we are all partakers of that one loaf." We profess to be one body whenever we break bread; Scripture knows nothing else. And they will find Scripture too strong and perfect a bond for man's reasoning to break it.

J. N. D.

[*Note.*—*The Italics in this article are the Editor's.*]

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NOTHING that man can say of the Word of God makes us so much appreciate it as its own testimony to a lowly heart and a teachable spirit. It is then like the honey to which the Holy Spirit compares it, one drop of which on the tongue gives us a clearer proof of its sweetness than the fullest discourses and the most striking epithets.

THE desire for the *word*, not merely for *work*, is a good sign, a step onward. Here, those who have care for the assembly regret the setting of the current in the direction of *work* rather than in interest in the assembly, with which of course will be connected the word. But there seems a stage in the Christian course when work is the most prominent thought, after that comes another stage, desire for the word.—*Extract from a letter.*

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JULY, 1890.

## A SKETCH FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

### IN THE WILDERNESS AND ON THE SEA.

#### *Chapter vi. 12-52.*

The disciples, instructed as to the character of the work, and the principle on which blessing was dispensed, viz., faith, went forth on their mission, and preached that men should repent; and they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil, as Mark informs us, many that were sick, and healed them (Mark vi. 12, 13). That mission bore fruit in temporal blessing to many an afflicted one. But though the twelve rendered an account to the Master, as Luke has stated (Luke ix. 10), no particulars of their preaching nor of the success they met with has been put on record. The day will declare it, for surely it is not forgotten on high.

One effect, however, of this mission seems to have been that it reminded Herod the king of the murder of John the Baptist; and whilst people had varied thoughts as to who the Lord was, yet all wide of the mark, Herod settled the matter for himself, and declared that He was John the Baptist risen from the dead. "John," writes Mark, giving most probably, more particularly than Matthew, the very words of the guilty monarch, "whom I have beheaded, he is risen" (Mark vi. 16). Conscience was speaking, and, perhaps, regret for his deed the king in measure felt, coupled with the conviction that his victim had done nothing worthy of death, else how could he suppose that he was risen, and that mighty works did show forth themselves in him (14).

The forerunner had been beheaded; but the Christ of God was there. The king had shown his enmity to God in his treatment of His servant. An opportunity had been afforded him of repentance for his sin of incest; he refused to avail himself of it; and as one sin leads on so often to another, he, at the instance of

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the daughter of Herodias, who in that was guided by her mother, put his reprover to death. Later on, Herod and the Lord, about whom he was now hearing, did meet, but evidently no conscience work had wrought repentance in the king's soul. The murderer of John set the Lord at nought, mocked Him, and in derision arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. At length, about A.D. 40, his hitherto unchecked career of crime was arrested. He was deprived of his tetrarchy by Caligula, and banished to Gaul, and, as some state, died in Spain. He died in exile; his victim died in prison at the hand of the executioner. John will reign with Christ. Herod, where will he be?

It was shortly after John's death that the twelve, having accomplished their mission, returned to the Lord, and, as His servants, told Him what they had done. But here Mark gives proof of independence as a writer; for whilst agreeing with his brother evangelist, Luke, that the apostles told the Lord all that they had done, he adds—and it is in character with his gospel—"and what they had taught" (vi. 30). Teaching has a prominent place in his gospel.

Another thing we learn from him—and it is a refreshing thought for the weary servant—viz., that the Lord and Master, in consideration for the twelve, took them apart, saying, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat" (31). No other evangelist has recorded this, or hinted at it, though all of them mention the Lord's departure at this time. In fulfilment, then, of the Master's desire for the apostles, they departed by ship privately. But the multitude, Mark informs us, "saw them departing, and many knew Him,\* and ran afoot out of all cities." The Lord went by ship, though He might have gone by land. Privacy being

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\* Or, as some, "perceived it."

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His object, and the securing rest for the twelve, He chose the voyage rather than the journey. His thoughtful consideration was thus marked. But the desired rest was not obtained, for the multitude in their eagerness went after Him on foot; and again we have to own our indebtedness to Mark, who tells us they "outwent them" (33). So that on landing from the vessel, the Lord saw a great multitude already collected. He looked on them and had compassion on them. What a heart was His! Consideration for the twelve, pity for the multitude, these moved the Lord. He cared for His servants, He compassionated the multitude, "for they were as sheep not having a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things" (34).

The crowd was a large one and a mixed one, for there were sick folk amongst them. Had we been present, we might have seen many an one whose countenance bore on it the trace of bodily suffering. Had we been able to lift the veil and read the heart, we should have probably marked some burdened in spirit on behalf of their sick, and anxiously hoping that such might be subjects of the Lord's healing power. For John (vi. 2) tells us, that "a great multitude followed Him, because they saw the miracles which He did on them that were diseased."

In a desert place this crowd had collected, and the Lord ministered to them; teaching them, says Mark; healing them that were sick, writes Matthew; and though the son of Levi was present and heard the teaching, he has omitted all notice of it, and merely tells us of the healing. Had we only his gospel, we should but have known of healing power put forth that day. Had we only Mark's gospel, we should have known nothing about healing, but only have been made aware of the teaching. Now this is very interesting and instructive; for the feeding the five thousand is the only miracle, worked by the Lord in His life, which has found a place in all the gospels. And the

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manner of its introduction in each gospel will furnish the reader with a clue to the character in which the Lord is presented by each of the evangelists. A few words on this will not be out of place. In Matthew, we have the Lord as the Messiah and Emmanuel, the Son of David and the Son of Abraham (i.). In Mark, He appears as the Prophet. In Luke, He is presented as the Son of Man (iii.). And in John, He is a divine Person, the Word who was in the beginning (i.). In character, then, with this, Matthew prefaces the feeding of the five thousand with the Lord healing the sick. Now it was the work of Messiah, as the blind men well knew (ix. 27, xx. 30), to heal those who had need of healing. So, as occupied in that line of ministry, Matthew has described Him. Then as the Prophet or Teacher (Deut. xviii. 15), it is to His teaching, and that alone, that Mark here directs attention. As Son of Man the Lord had come to act in grace; so Luke, who presents Him in that character, tells us of His double occupation on that day—both healing and teaching—in a word, ministering in full grace to meet not only the need of the body, but that of the soul as well. Then John, who presents Him as the One who was in the beginning, the Word of God, notices neither the healing nor the teaching, though he was certainly present, but introduces the miracle by a question put to Philip to prove that apostle, for “He Himself,” writes John (vi. 5, 6), “knew what He would do.” Both knowledge and power were His, for He is God.

Another remark may be made. Each evangelist supplies something that the others have not given to their readers. For instance, Matthew tells us of the presence of women and children; and Luke alone gives us the subject of the Lord's teaching. Now had we all the histories but Matthew's, we should not have known of the presence that day of women and children. And while under those circumstances we should have been justified in saying there was no evidence that any of them were present, he who affirmed posi-

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tively that they were not would have been greatly mistaken. It is a perilous thing, unless assured of it, to assume that we are perfectly acquainted with all the circumstances of a case, and so to draw conclusions which may be false. We can stand on that which we have got, but should be careful how we intrude on the domain of the unknown, and affirm that this and that could not have been, because it has not been recorded in the Word. How many a difficulty we cannot now fully solve for want of more acquaintance with details. But we may be content to wait till we know as we are known.

To return. Healing and teaching went on that day ; but no record has been preserved for us of the cases healed, nor have any notes of the teaching come down, beyond just the subject of it as given us by St. Luke. All that is passed over, our attention being fixed on the miracle and subsequent voyage, though two, if not three, of the evangelists were present. We say two, if not three ; for whilst Matthew and John, as apostles, were certainly there, it would be hazardous to deny, with Mark's circumstantial account of things before us, that he was not a witness likewise of the healing and a listener to the teaching ; an observer, too, of the arrangement of the multitude, as well as a partaker of the loaves and fishes.

Let us look at the miracle. The crowd had apparently no thought of foraging in the surrounding country for themselves, though the disciples suggested that to the Lord ; and the disciples were to be taught that day their place of service in relation to the Lord and to the multitude. So, addressing them, the Lord said, "Give ye them to eat ;" their ascertained resources being limited to five barley loaves and two fishes, which a lad, Andrew announced (John vi. 9), had brought with him. That, however, was enough ; and the Lord commanded that they should all sit down. On the *green* grass, as our evangelist takes care to state, the whole company was seated ; arranged,

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too, in perfect order, in rows, by hundreds and by fifties. We can, therefore, picture the scene ; no disorder, no confusion, but all seated, and that in most orderly way ; so that, viewing the different companies, we should probably have seen them composed of rows containing one hundred persons each, and to each company fifty of such rows. It is remarkable that neither of the two apostles, Matthew or John, gives us the least clue to the arrangement of the vast multitude. That was left to Mark and to Luke ; and Mark's account of it is the most minute, and just such as an eye-witness might have drawn up.

All thus arranged, the Lord and the twelve occupying the centre, He took "the five loaves and the two fishes, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to His disciples to set before them ; and the two fishes divided He among them all. And they did all eat, and were filled. And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes." How circumstantial is Mark in his account ! To make the five loaves meet the need of all was wonderful ; but to make two little fish suffice for all, and for fragments of them too, to be left, seems more wonderful still. Jehovah was there. John the Baptist, Herod would have said ; Elias, others would have affirmed ; but it was Jehovah, who, by His own power, and not in the name of another, multiplied the loaves and the fishes.

To the disciples He gave, and they distributed to the multitude. They received from Him, and gave what He had given them. A little picture of true ministers of the Word, and a foreshadowing of that which was to be their service when the Lord should depart from this scene ; for till then He taught the people.

Evening was drawing on (ver. 35). The Lord constrained the disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida,\* whilst He sent

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\* This Bethsaida was on the west shore of the lake ; for, Mark tells us, they reached the land of Gennesaret (vi. 53) ; and John writes (vi. 17), that they went towards Capernaum.

## A SKETCH FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK. 203

the multitude away. The disciples on the water without the Lord, He went up into a mountain to pray. And when the evening was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and He alone on the land (ver. 47). Another picture of that with which they would become well acquainted after His ascension, when He would be on high, above and beyond the storms, and they would be left on earth to battle with them, and to be buffeted by the tempest. On the mount in prayer, He must have continued there for some time, for darkness settled on the scene (John vi. 17), and hours passed ere He rejoined the twelve. At length He went, descending into the stormy atmosphere which encircled them, and about the fourth watch of the night it was that He drew near to them. He saw them toiling, &c.; or, as some read, and probably more correctly, "And seeing them toiling, &c., He cometh unto them." This gives more point to the passage. He saw them, and went to their assistance. Blessed Master! we may well say. As then, so now. He sees His people in all their troubles and difficulties, and in His own way sustains and delivers. But here again we have to own our indebtedness to Mark, who alone has recorded His seeing them in the darkness on the lake.

We have said He delivers in His own way; for this passage in the gospel history has a dispensational bearing, as will be found by the remnant of the earthly people by and by. So, in character with that, He left the mountain and descended to the lake. But we do not dwell on that here, as it is more in keeping with Matthew's gospel than Mark's, with which at present we are occupied.

Walking on the water He drew near, and, as having perfect power and no need of assistance from any in the vessel, "He would," Mark tells us, "have passed by them" (vi. 48). "All saw Him, and were troubled," so writes Mark. The apostles and the rest with them were of one mind, that it was an apparition. But He



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spake, and set them at rest: "Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid." Then entering the ship, the wind ceased. The Lord had rejoined them, and the elements were still. So will it be in the future, when He appears to and for His earthly people. He will in the fullest sense make the storm calm, so that the waves thereof will be still (Psalm cvii. 29).

What a time it had been. In the wilderness, Messiah, the Prophet, and Jehovah had been displayed, and all in the Person of the Lord. In that night at sea, near day-dawn, the Creator was seen in the same Person. What teaching for the twelve! In service to distribute what they had received from the Lord; in troublous circumstances to await His interposition, assured that, however dark it may be, He could and does see His own.

Shall we say all this has no teaching for us who are part of the Church, and not of the remnant? May we not learn what should characterise any in ministry? and what should be laid hold of by all true saints on their pathway through this world? remembering, too, the Lord's gracious consideration for His working servants, and His perfect knowledge of where His people are, and of all that surrounds them in this chequered scene. He does not, it is true, come now walking on the water as He then did. That will have its fulfilment in the future. But He is watching over His own, thinking of His own, sustaining His own, and is coming not to be with them here, as He will be with the remnant, but to take them away to be with Him in the house He has made ready on high.

C. E. S.

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NATURE.—I have looked for the author of nature in His smaller productions, as well as in those where He is seen in all His majesty, and everywhere I have heard these sublime words, "It is I."—*Bonnet*.

## DIVINE INVITATIONS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

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THEY meet us immediately upon the Lord's beginning His ministry. Two disciples of John the Baptist ask Him, "Rabbi, where dwellest Thou?" He saith unto them, "*Come and see.*" These words remind us of the opening invitation in the Old Testament, "Come, thou and all thy house, into the ark." Genesis vii. 1 and John i. 39 are the same in principle, and the principle is seen later on in the same Gospel more fully and more blessedly brought out. It is conveyed in the words of promise from the Lord's lips, "Where I am, there shall also My servant be" (xii. 26); and confirmed by those same lips when in prayer (xvii. 24) He said, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am."

The same words that the Lord had used in answering John's disciples are repeated by Philip a few verses further on, in answer to Nathanael's enquiry, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Blessed in each connection are those words, "*Come and see.*" In the first case they refer to the *place* where He dwells; in the last to His own *Person*, Himself. Nor have these invitations ceased. May we not affirm that the Spirit of God invites us to-day *from earth to heaven*; not to see the place where the Lord lay, an earthly grave, but to see by faith the scene where the glory has received Him, and above all to contemplate Himself crowned with glory and with honour?

We venture, then, to say that the true character of divine invitations to-day is that the Lord is inviting *us to Himself and where He is*. David said, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thine honour dwelleth" (Psalm xxvi. 8). The two things were united in the temple and the tabernacle also, for the House of Jehovah was such only

because His presence dwelt there. But "we have such an High-priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens: a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man." There only can we say, "Thine honour dwelleth."

But we will now turn to a few New Testament invitations which will surely lead us to say of Him, "Grace is poured into Thy lips." In Matt. xi. 28 He says, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." What a trying hour it was to the blessed Lord when these words were uttered by Him! John the Baptist's heart, full of misgivings, had poured itself out in a message of unbelief; yet among them that are born of women there had not risen a greater than he. The generation to which Christ had come had no response to make to God's witnesses; the austerity of John was attributed to the devil, and the grace of the Lord to licentiousness. The cities which had known Him best, and of His wonderful works seen most, were those which had emphatically rejected Him. No honour had He in His own country. But He lifts His heart to His Father and thanks Him for the babes, or rather for the revelation that had been made unto them. Unto the babes it is that this tender, touching word is addressed, this invitation given. The callous and the careless heed it not; the gospel-hardened and the miracle-hardened care for it not. It is those who are crushed beneath a load of sorrows, and groaning beneath the burden of sins, the broken and the contrite hearted, whose ears are arrested by the invitation of Him who spake as never man spake! And what is His word? "*Come unto Me.*" Patriarchs and priests and prophets had gone before, and apostles were existing then, but though they had all been divinely appointed servants of God, yet not one could have properly used the words here before us, "Come unto Me." Here was One who could bid men who were

bowed beneath a load of guilt, and sin, and sorrow for sins, to come unto Himself, from whom they should receive what no one else could give—rest, soul rest, eternal rest, rest given by God.

Take another Scripture, Luke xiv. 16, 17. A great supper is the parable presented, the figure of God's bounty to famished souls. Two things may be noticed. (I.) "Supper-time" is the period when all working is over; when, however right work may have been in its place, it has no place any longer; it is a time for rest and not for labour. No longer a time for doing, because all has been done. Under the Mosaic law, the probationary period of the Jewish dispensation was the time for doing; and poor doing indeed it was! But under grace it is the time for making discovery that all *has been done*, and that *by Another and for us!*

"All that blessed work is done;  
God's well pleased with His Son."

And thus we read in the parable before us that the Maker of this great supper "sent His servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, "Come, for all things are now ready." Oh! that blessed, cheery word, *Come*, followed, as it is, by the encouragement given in the words, *all things are now ready*. In other words, everything has been done that had to be done. "My oxen and My fatlings are killed, and all things *are ready; COME!*"

II. The second thing is that the supper *closes the day*. It is the last, the final thing. A solemn thought, surely, for the unconverted. If you refuse the great supper, you refuse God's final offer of bounty and of goodness!

In John vii. 37, we again meet with the words, "Come unto Me." It is the last day, the great day of the feast of tabernacles. Hundreds, yea thousands, of Jews had flocked to Jerusalem, the city of solemnities. Thither had they come, but not to Him whose city it

was, and who had come there for and to them. To His own had He come, but His own received Him not. Yet, undeterred by the hatred and contempt that met Him, He took His place in the midst of His adversaries, if haply there should be found any who would hear His voice. "Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink;" alluding, no doubt, to the language of Isaiah the prophet, "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation" (Isaiah xii. 3). He stands forth in their midst as the true Fountain of life and Well of salvation. From Him, if they would have it, should that living water flow which should be to, and for, and from him who thirsted for it himself, and came unto Him to drink. He is the same Fountain of life to-day, and His word to every one that hath an ear to ear, to every one who hath a thirst to be quenched, is, "Let him come unto Me and drink."

Finally, in this gospel, John xxi. 12, we read concerning the risen Lord and His apostles, when He graciously met them at the sea of Tiberias—"Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine." And may we not say, not in the way of interpretation, but rather of application, that, on the other side of the sea, when the shore is reached where death is swallowed up in victory, when we are fully and finally with Him on resurrection ground, to the joy of His own heart will He say, Come and dine, making us to sit down to meat, and coming forth to serve us?

The very last chapter in Scripture supplies us with a divine invitation with which we may fittingly close our review. In Revelation xxii. 17, we hear the final echo of the Lord's precious invitation in John vii., "Let him that is athirst *come*; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

May every reader of these lines reflect upon the grace of God which bringeth salvation. Oh, what a Saviour is He whose word still is, *Come unto Me and drink.*

“FOR SHE LOVED MUCH.”—*Luke* vii. 47.

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TO explain the expression, “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven ; for she loved much,” we must distinguish between grace revealed in the person of Jesus, and the pardon He announced to those whom the grace had reached. The Lord is able to make this pardon known. He reveals it to the poor woman. But it was that which she had seen in Jesus Himself, which, by grace, melted her heart, and produced the love she had to Him—the seeing what He is to and for sinners like herself. She thinks only of Him : He has taken possession of her heart so as to shut out other influences. Hearing that He is there, she goes into the house of this proud Simon, without thinking of anything but the fact that Jesus is there. His presence answered, or prevented, every question. She saw that He was for a sinner, and that the most wretched and disgraced found a resource in Him ; she felt her sins in the way that this perfect grace, which opens the heart and wins confidence, causes them to be felt ; and she loved much. Grace in Christ had produced its effect. She loved because of His love. This is the reason that the Lord says, “Her sins . . . are forgiven ; for she loved much.” It was not that her love was meritorious for this, but that God revealed the glorious fact that the sins—be they ever so numerous and abominable—of one whose heart was turned to God were fully pardoned. There are many whose hearts are turned to God, and who love Jesus, that do not know this. Jesus pronounces on their case with authority and sends them away in peace. It is a revelation—an answer—to the wants and affections produced in the heart made penitent by grace revealed in the person of Christ.

If God manifests Himself in this world, and with such love, He must needs set aside in the heart every other consideration. And thus, without being aware of it, this poor woman was the only one who acted

suitably in those circumstances ; for she appreciated the all-importance of the One who was there. A Saviour-God being present, of what importance was Simon and his house ? Jesus caused all this to be forgotten. Let us remember this.

The beginning of man's fall was want of confidence in God, by the seducing suggestion of Satan that God had kept back what would make man like God. Confidence in God lost, man seeks, in the exercise of his own will, to make himself happy : lusts, sin, transgression follow. Christ is God in infinite love, winning back the confidence of man's heart to God. Removal of guilt, and power to live to God, are another thing, and found in their own place through Christ, as pardon comes in its place here. But the poor woman, through grace, had felt that there was one heart she could trust, if none else ; but that was God's.

God is light and God is love. Revealing Himself, He must be both ; so Christ was love in the world, but the light of it. So in the heart. The love through grace gives confidence, and thus the light is gladly let in, and with confidence in the love, and seeing self in the light, the heart has wholly met God's heart : so with this poor woman. This is where the heart of man and God always and alone meet. The Pharisee had neither : pitch dark, neither love nor light were there. He had God manifest in the flesh in his house, and saw nothing—only settled that Christ was not a prophet ! It is a wondrous scene to see these three hearts : man's, as such, resting on false human righteousness, God's, and the poor sinner's, fully meeting it as God did hers. Who was the child of wisdom ? for it is a commentary on that expression.

And note, though Christ had said nothing of it, but bowed to the slight, yet He was not insensible to the neglect which had not met Him with the common courtesies of life. To Simon He was a poor preacher, whose pretensions he could judge, certainly not a prophet ; for the poor woman He was God in love, and

bringing her heart into unison with His as to her sins and as to herself, for love was trusted in. Note, too, this clinging to Jesus is where true light is found : here the fruitful revelation of the gospel ; to Mary Magdalene, as to the highest privilege of saints.

J. N. D.

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I AM going to be like Christ in glory ; then I must be as like Him now as ever I can be. Of course we shall all fail, but we are to have our hearts full of it. Remember this, that we are the epistle of Christ. We are set for this, that the life of Christ should be manifested in us. Christ has settled the question with God. He appears in the presence of God for us, and we are in the presence of the world for Him. "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." If I know He is in me, I am to manifest the life of Christ in everything. If He has loved me with unutterable love which passes knowledge, I feel bound in heart to Him ; my *business* is to glorify Him in everything I do. "Bought with a price"—that is settled : if bought, I am *His*. But, beloved friends, I press upon you that earnestness of heart which cleaves *to Him*, especially in these last evil days, when we wait for the Son from heaven. Oh ! if Christians were more thoroughly *Christians*, the world would understand what it was all about. There is a great deal of profession and talk ; and the activity of the Spirit of God—thank God—there is ; but do you think, if a heathen came here to learn what Christianity meant, he would find it out ? The Lord give you to have such a sense of the love of Christ, that, as bought with a price, the only object of your souls may be to live by Christ and to live for Christ, and for those who do not know Him, that they may learn how He came down in love to seek us, and, because righteousness could not pass over sin, died to put it away.—J. N. D.



“ I WILL.”

*Exodus* vi. 6-8. *Jer.* xxxii. 37-44.

1. *I will* bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

2. *I will* rid you out of their bondage.

3. *I will* redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments.

4. *I will* take you to Me for a people.

5. *I will* be to you a God.

6. *I will* bring you in unto the land.

7. *I will* give it you for an heritage (*Exodus* vi. 6-8).

“ God brought them out of Egypt ” (*Num.* xxiii. 22).

“ He brought them forth also with silver and gold ; and there was not one feeble person among their tribes. Egypt was glad when they departed ; for the fear of them fell upon them. . . . He brought forth His people with joy, and His chosen with gladness ; and gave them the lands of the heathen : and they inherited the labour of the people ” (*Ps.* cv. 37-44). “ They took strong cities, and a fat land, and possessed houses full of all goods, wells digged, vineyards, and oliveyards, and fruit trees in abundance : so they did eat, and were filled, and became fat, and delighted themselves in Thy great goodness. *Nevertheless* they were disobedient, and rebelled against Thee, and cast Thy law behind their backs, and slew Thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to Thee ; and they wrought great provocations. Therefore Thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies ” (*Neh.* ix. 25-27).

“ Hath God cast away His people ? God forbid.” “ God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew.” “ For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance ” (*Rom.* xi. 1-2, 29).

1. *I will* gather them out of all countries whither I have driven them.

2. *I will* bring them again unto this place.

3. *I will* cause them to dwell safely.

THE SAVIOUR COMES !

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4. *I will* be their God.
5. *I will* give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear Me for ever.
6. *I will* make an everlasting covenant with them.
7. *I will* not turn away from them to do them good.
8. *I will* put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me.
9. *I will* rejoice over them to do them good.
10. *I will* plant them in this land assuredly with My whole heart, and with My whole soul.
11. So *will I* bring upon them all the good that I have promised them.
12. *I will* cause their captivity to return, saith the Lord (Jer. xxxii. 37-44).

“O give thanks unto the Lord ; for He is good ; because His mercy endureth for ever. Let Israel now say, that His mercy endureth for ever. Let them now that fear the Lord say that His mercy endureth for ever” (Ps. cxviii. 1, 2, 4). “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth’s sake” (Ps. cxv. 1). “Hallelujah !”

W. E.

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THE SAVIOUR COMES !

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THE Lord is coming !  
 The way is long ; the night is dark ;  
 The hour is late ; we’re tired, but hark—  
 Lo, “I come quickly.”

The Lord is coming !  
 Let those rejoice, hushed ev’ry sigh,  
 Who watch for Him with longing eye  
 Who hath said “Surely.”

The Lord is coming !  
 Faith’s eye can clearly scan afar,  
 Amid the gloom, the Morning Star  
 Which shineth brightly.

THE PRAYER OF A SAINT.

The Lord is coming !  
Ah ! yes, we know it well, but when ?  
No tongue can tell, but yet we ken  
" He will not tarry."

The Lord is coming !  
Soon shall we hear God's trumpet sound,  
Throughout the arc of heaven resound ;  
He comes most truly !

The Lord is coming !  
These hearts respond, nor would delay ;  
Come, Saviour, come ; oh ! come to-day,  
We want Thee sadly !

The Lord is coming !  
So dost Thou sweetly comfort all  
Thy weary ones, until Thy call  
We answer gladly !

A. R.

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THE PRAYER OF A SAINT.—*Eph.* iii. 14.

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THE tenor and subjects of our prayers will ever be in accordance with our knowledge and apprehension of God, and of the relation in which we recognise Him as standing toward us and us to Him. Thus, if we regard God as having given us only the hope of the attainment of salvation by Jesus Christ, our constant desire before God will be for the brightening and strengthening of that hope, as that which we feel to be needful for our comfort and peace of mind. But as to any farther revelation which God may have given of His mind and purpose, we can feel but little interest, whilst there remains a doubt as to our being personally concerned and having a portion therein.

But if we are enabled, in the undoubting simplicity of faith, to take our stand upon the sure foundation which God has laid for every sinner, in the incarnation, death, and resurrection of His beloved Son, our desires will naturally go forth after the knowledge of

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more of what is the purpose of God, in connection with the manifestation of the glory of Him in "whom we have obtained an inheritance." Now, one great design of God in the gift of His Son was the manifestation of His love. His power, His unspotted holiness, must be exhibited; His justice, as the Supreme Governor, must take its course. But in Jesus all can be displayed and exercised in love. God is love. And in Jesus "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." What Jesus expressed of God was love, as set forth in that short summary in His own blessed words, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). Thus the first step of a sinner's knowledge of God is, that He so loved him.

But it is in the farther increasing knowledge and apprehension of the love of Christ that we are led on to the fulness of God. Now this is the prayer of the Spirit of God, Him who makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God; asking, of course, only for that which it is our blessing to receive and know, and God's glory to bestow and communicate. We are too apt, judging of God by the narrowness of our own hearts, to remain satisfied in the attainment of a clearness of hope as to a future and final deliverance, looking upon the glory to be revealed as no portion of our present knowledge. But this is surely wrong, it is all the portion of faith now. "We have the mind of Christ," and the Holy Ghost abiding with us and in us; and although "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him," yet "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (I Cor. ii.).

It is true that in present circumstances, as being yet in the body, and in the region of sin, we "see through a glass darkly," but yet it is "all things," and thus our

power and capacity of understanding are now in kind, though not in degree, the same as they will ever be. But we are not sufficiently careful to distinguish between the perceptions of the natural mind and the perceptions of the spiritual mind by faith. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3). "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth [discerneth, marg.] all things" (1 Cor. ii. 14, 15).

Being born again, and having spiritual life and perception, we are capable of receiving the things of the Spirit of God; and it is in the exercise of our spiritual powers, in the diligent study and meditation of what God has revealed, that we grow up "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 13). To be satisfied with any measure of attainment in divine things is fleshly, natural; so it is to be satisfied with less than God has seen fit and necessary to give—"the fulness"—"all things." But the true secret of our willing ignorance is, that every step of attainment in the knowledge of God involves painful self-denial and crucifixion of the flesh. It is the prevalence of the "carnal mind," which is "enmity against God," over the "spiritual mind," which receives and delights in the things of God, as being of Him. Thus there is so much of death in our life, for the "carnal mind is death"—"the spiritual mind is life and peace."

Oh, how much of present joy and peace in believing should we experience, if, at once discarding from our hearts all fellowship with the "weak and beggarly elements of the world," we took our stand practically and constantly on the "sure foundation" of Jesus Christ and Him crucified, yea, risen and ascended to God; growing "up into Him in all things, which is the Head." Hence, indeed, would the deep vistas of eternity open to our view, stretching out in peaceful

calm and light—the King in His beauty—with all around subjects in the holy and blissful harmony of love. The fellowship of all this would give joy and repose to the soul, in the trying scenes around us and the conflict within us.

The testimony of the Spirit in the Scriptures is characterised as being to Christ—“the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow” (1 Peter i. 11). “And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in ALL the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke xxiv. 27).

Christ is the mystery of piety. God “created all things by Jesus Christ” (Eph. iii. 9). “All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made” (John i. 3). “All things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist” (Col. i. 16, 17). “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last” (Rev. xxii. 13). The mystery of Christ is “the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all” (Eph. i. 23); the man and the woman, in the great purpose of God—“This is a [the] great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church” (Eph. v. 32). “And He is the Head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead” (Col. i. 18).

In Genesis we read that “God created the heavens and the earth,” and man “in His own image;” and He looked upon all that He had made, and pronounced it “very good.” But we find that both the heavens and the earth became defiled by sin. “The angels which kept not their first estate” (Jude 6); and man, listening to the temptation of Satan, alike fell and sinned in disobeying God. Thus did the design of God seem to be frustrated, and the course of this world, dead in trespasses and sins, has ever since been running on in sin unto death, under the power of him who has the power of death. But God’s purpose was not defeated, for it was in Himself He purposed,

“according to the good pleasure of His will,” “according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord”—“before the foundation of the world”—as depending, not at all upon the obedience and rectitude of His creature, but upon Himself. And herein we learn the needful lesson—that, separate from God, there is no endurance for the creature, and that it is only by the grace of His own imparted power that the creature can live. All God’s dealings have tended to shew us what we are, yea, more, what all creatures put on their responsibility of obedience must be ; and what He is—God—the Sustainer of all things. Thus man continued to stand, apparently upon his own responsibility, but as a sinner, and incapable for ages, but with obscure intimations, known to faith, of grace. “The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John i. 17). And the incarnation of the Son of God contains the whole of the mystery of God (developed to faith by the Spirit), as to creation, redemption, and the sure standing and continuance of the creature by grace IN HIM. “By Him all things consist”—“in Him was life.”

Thus, in the Gospel by John, the especial testimony to the Son of God, we are at once led back by the Spirit to that which was before the visible creation existed. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John i. 1). “And the Word was made flesh” (ver. 14). This, as the sure foundation of the state of things, whereby to be made known and manifested, and as enduring (*κατὰ πρόθεσιν*), and that wherein shall be shewn the TRUTH of that said of man, “in the image of God”—and of all things—“very good.” But redemption required that there should be blood, death, resurrection ; and all these intervened before the full declaration of the hidden mystery could commence—and that He should take His place as the Head of all things, in order to the Spirit’s testimony going forth

as to what was (John vii. 39). But now is come forth from the Spirit the full announcement of the mystery of "the dispensation of the fulness of times ;" and surely to know our place and portion in those arrangements which are to be enduring, and for ever built up securely in God, must be a matter of the highest interest and importance ; and also, in knowing that we have a portion therein, to be enabled now to enter into the mind of God in the revelation of the mystery He has given, should be a subject of interest. This is our present portion, for we have the Spirit, the earnest of our inheritance. It is in the knowledge of what we are in Christ, as before God, and what God is to us in Christ, that we are capacitated to receive the further communications of the mind of God, as to what Christ is to all things, and this in order to our being "filled into all the fulness of God."

It should be the subject of our prayers, the object of our unwearied diligence, to be filled with God, and to have His mind in all things. It is the power, ever so regarded in Scripture, of our deliverance from this present evil world, into the world of faith—God's world—into that state of things which shall endure with the permanency of God, under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. And this, as God's object and purpose, should be our object and desire, in attaining true knowledge and understanding therein. It is, moreover, the true secret of power and facility in the discharge of those duties which more especially belong to our present position and circumstances as being in the world, as the children of God here, in a place of testimony and service to Him. We may observe, that this prayer of the Spirit by the apostle (Eph. iii. 14) is on behalf of those who had been made partakers of the "riches of His grace," in redemption through the blood of Jesus, and who had been sealed with that "Holy Spirit of promise, the earnest of the inheritance . . . . unto the praise of His glory" (Eph. i. 14). It is now on the ground of glory that the apostle prays—



“according to the riches of His glory.” It is not only of grace, though all be of grace, but of glory, that we are made partakers, “who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory ; that your faith and hope might be in God” (1 Pet. i. 21).

The character in which God is recognised and addressed here is “the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole [every] family in heaven and earth is named”—His children thus as named of Him, standing in the same relationship to God, and the glory of God, as He Himself does (Eph. i. 3). And indeed, in any recognition short of this, the whole character and subject of the prayer would be unmeaning and presumptuous. But this is true, and the character and standing of every believer in Jesus, as known to God, and as being one with and in Christ in *resurrection life*. Thus, in the declaration of the Lord after His resurrection, “I ascend to My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God” (John xx. 17). This more fully shewn by the Spirit, as sent from Jesus, and from the bosom of the Father, as shewing us “plainly of the Father,” in the abundant testimony of the Spirit in the epistles to the churches. “Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal. iv. 6). “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God : and if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom. viii. 16). “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet [*ἱκανώσαντι ἡμᾶς*] to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light : who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son” (Col. i. 12, 13).

Hereupon the apostle prays that we may be “strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man,” the “new man” in Christ Jesus ; strengthened in that which alone is capable of receiving and understanding farther communications of God—that which

is of God, born of God, begotten of God, a new, a spiritual, and a holy nature. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." That all that Christ was and is to us, and all that He has done and will do for us, may be constantly and habitually present (*κατοικῆσαι*) with us—not drawn away by objects of sense and present attraction, but having Christ as the one great subject of our meditation: and what a blessed field of thought is here!—Bethlehem, Nazareth, Capernaum, Galilee, Judea, Jerusalem, Gethsemane, Calvary, the crown of thorns, the cross, the grave, Emmaus, Mount Olivet, heaven, the right hand of God—a little while, I will come again! And all this of Him who is the Eternal Son of God, the Word, in the beginning with God, and God—the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, yet Himself truly man. We sometimes hear of the first principles of the truth, but the first principles are all; Christ is the way, the truth, and the life; He is all and in all; the beginning and the end, the first and the last; the beginning of faith, the end of faith; wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; the power of God, the wisdom of God, the glory of God, the love of God; and, O blessed thought! "Ye are complete in Him."

It is thus when strengthened in spirit, Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith, our power and capacity to "comprehend" become enlarged and expanded, and this in proportionate measure, progressive and increasing, "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." We come to know that here is the unfailing stream of love gushing forth in unabated freshness and fulness, through the ages of a boundless eternity. It is that wherein GOD shall be known to the whole family in heaven and earth, when, every cloud of sin for ever

removed, the calm and hallowed light of His unveiled glory shall shine forth to gladden their hearts for ever. The love of Christ is that wherein the boundless infinity, the fulness of God, is and shall be manifested.

Its height is hidden in God, coming forth thence as the counsel of the infinite mind in the beginning, of which all we can know or say is, that "God was."

Its depth is infinite, it has reached below the lowest possible depth of sin and pollution, and distance from God, even beneath that depth where there was no hope.

Its breadth comprises the utmost limits of God's creation, to gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and on earth.

Its length, too, is infinite as God and eternity. When God ceases to be, and eternity comes to an end, then, and not till then, shall we find the limit of the love of Christ.

In a word, it is the fulness of God, into which it is our joy, our blessing, our portion present and future, to be filled; and this in the increasing comprehension of the love of Christ. **IT IS THE LOVE OF CHRIST, THE FULNESS OF GOD.**

"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. iii. 21). G. V. W.

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### THE EFFECT OF TRUTH.

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TIMES without number have we noticed, in reading the word, how Satan attempts to thwart the purposes of God. When it was His purpose to bring the children of Israel into the land He had promised to Abraham, we find Satan using Pharaoh as his instrument, and then again Amalek withstands them. We have noticed the two-and-a-half tribes are content to

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be on the other side of Jordan ; no doubt, Satan's work. And again, when he has failed in preventing them entering Canaan, their rites and ceremonies are taken up by him, and thus he succeeds in leading the hearts of the people away from God, though they may draw near unto Him with their lips.

As we come to this dispensation we see the saints at Corinth, who came behind in no gift, lifted up with spiritual pride ; glorying, as it were, in what they had received (1 Cor. iv. 7, 8) ; turning the grace of God into licentiousness. Here, again, the very truth received used of Satan to draw hearts out of communion. Notice, again, the saints at Thessalonica. They were turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven. Now what do we see here ? This blessed truth had taken hold of some to such an extent that they ceased working, and became idle busybodies (1 Thess. iv. 11 ; 2 Thess. iii. 11, 12). Not that one would esteem it lightly, but the effect of it was missed, and thus Satan gained the advantage.

And how has it been with ourselves, beloved ? Take the Corinthians as an illustration. Spiritual pride was there. There were none like them ; but as for the power, how little we see of it. Saul believed he was doing God service when he was persecuting the church ; and what he believed had a power over him. Saints devoted to God in the denominations are held by the power of what they believe, though not scriptural ; and we see many devoted Catholics, though in darkness, yet zealous for the principles of their church. Oh ! beloved, what a standing testimony against us ! Now what do we believe ? What do we profess ? What power has it over us ? Are we ignorant of Satan's devices ? Surely not. Have we forgotten that to whom we yield ourselves servants to obey, his servants we are whom we obey. If we obeyed from the heart, then what a difference there would be. Then as to the Thessalonians as an

illustration, let us beware lest we be occupied with some truth to the exclusion of all else. What is called Church truth may be unduly before us, to the exclusion of practical holiness. For what is God's purpose concerning this? (See Titus ii. 11-14; Eph. ii. 10; John xv. 16; Col. i. 9-11; 1 Peter ii. 9). Only as dead and risen with Christ shall we carry out these desires of the Lord—no matter what the truth before us—reckoning ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Christ Jesus our Lord.

May we humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God! Does our behaviour attract souls? Praise to His Name if the truth searches us, and we bow to it. We are here for Him. Devotedness to the One who so loved us should characterise us. Precious Lord, how unchangeable Thou art! Thou dost not forget us, though we may forget Thee. Shame on us that it should be so. Rather let our language and manner of life be expressed thus: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge that if One died for all then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. v. 14, 15).

J. H. I.

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"OH 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.

"Oh 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."

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AUGUST, 1890.

## THE CHRISTIAN AND THE SABBATH.

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THE question of the Sabbath is a very simple one for the Christian, if he be subject to the teaching of Scripture. The point is this: is the Christian under law or not? If he is, he is bound not only to keep the Sabbath, but the *whole law*, and cursed if he breaks it (Gal. iii. 10). It raises the whole question as to what the Christian state and position is—whether he is in Adam or in Christ; in the flesh or in the Spirit; on the ground of responsibility to obtain blessing, or taken up and blessed on the ground of sovereign grace, and therefore responsible to act consistently in the new relationship in which that grace has set him. Clearness on these points would not only preserve Christians from the folly of the Judaizing teaching of the seventh-day adventists on this question, but it would give them to enjoy true Christian liberty in their souls in a way which they never knew before.

Much mischief has been done, and a handle given to those who profess to keep the seventh day, through Christians using terms which are not found in the Word of God. They speak of “the Christian Sabbath,” as though the seventh day, the Sabbath, had simply been changed to the first day of the week. Then there are others who have gone to another extreme, and have fallen into the error of supposing that not only the Sabbath, but the whole law, is dead and gone—buried in the grave of Jesus. Both things are mischievous and unscriptural.

The only Sabbath that Scripture speaks of as given to man to keep is the seventh day of the week, not the first; the day that God blessed and sanctified, because that in it He rested from all His work which He created and made (Gen. ii. 2, 3). That day has never been set aside, nor has any other ever been commanded by God to be kept instead of it. When He gave the law to Israel at Sinai He incorporated

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the keeping of that day into the law as the fourth commandment, and most jealously guarded it, severely punishing the least infringement of it. No work had to be done on it, not even a fire to be lighted on pain of death (Exodus xxxv. 2. 3); for gathering sticks on it a man was stoned to death (Num. xv. 32-36); and severe judgments were pronounced against those who dared to desecrate it in Jeremiah's days (Jer. xvii. 27).

Whether our modern seventh-day friends refrain from lighting fires, and scrupulously observe all these divine instructions as to the Sabbath or not, we must leave them to say; but we *do* know that Scripture says, "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 confirmed by the Apostle James, for he writes: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet *offend in one point*, he is guilty of all. For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law" (James ii. 10. 11). Were a man suspended over a precipice by a chain of ten links, and one of them were to break, it would be as fatal as though the whole ten had broken. If, therefore, the least infringement of the law as to the Sabbath is allowed by those who profess to keep that day, even lighting a fire, it is fatal, and puts them under the curse. It is *law*, and they cannot play fast and loose with it, applying it to what *they* like, or taking such parts of it as *they* choose. Whether, therefore, it be the fourth commandment, or any other of the ten, to offend in one point is to be "guilty of all."

But the question is not, Is the seventh day the Sabbath, and were the Israelites commanded to keep it? That is indisputable. The real question, and the root of the whole matter is, *Are Christians under the law?* If so, they are bound to keep the Sabbath as being part of the law. Now Scripture alone can

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furnish the answer to this question. To it, therefore, we shall turn, and seek as simply and as concisely as possible to set forth its teaching on this subject. And if we see from God's Word that the Christian is *not* under law, then the Sabbath question is settled for all who bow to the authority of that Word. The reader will do well to carefully and prayerfully study with his open Bible before him the truths here set forth.

In the epistle to the Romans, man, both Jew and Gentile, are shewn to be "guilty before God." The Gentiles in chap. i. 18-32; then the educated men—the philosophers, also Gentiles, in chap. ii. 1-16. The Jews are next taken up (chap. ii. 17 to iii. 9). Then the testimony of the Scriptures is given from the Psalms and the prophets that *all* are guilty, so that "there is *none* righteous, no, not one" (chap. iii. 10-18). Thus "*every mouth* is stopped, and *all the world guilty* before God" (ver. 19).

Next we have "the righteousness of God" seen in freely justifying men who are proved to be ungodly and guilty sinners, because of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ (ver. 24, 25); *faith* being the principle on which that blessing is received, not works of any kind (chap. iv. 4, 5). This is further seen by our attention being called to the difference between Abraham and us. He believed that God would give him a son (ver. 18); he believed *the promise* of God (ver. 20), and God reckoned him righteous (ver. 22). We believe an accomplished fact, that God *has given* us His Son, and "delivered Him for our offences, and raised Him again for our justification" (ver. 25). Not He *will* do it, but He *has done it*; and righteousness is reckoned to all who believe (ver. 23, 24).

The blessed results of this wonderful action on the part of God are seen in chap. v., and are the portion of *all* who have believed the Gospel. "Being justified by faith, we have *peace with God*" (ver. 1), so that the *past* is settled *perfectly* and *permanently*, and the



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believer has peace as to it. Next, as to the present, he has a perfect standing before God (ver. 2). Then as to the future, he rejoices in hope of the glory of God (ver. 2). Not only so, he glories in tribulation as he learns his lessons on the way home, the love of God being shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto him (ver. 3-5); and lastly, he is able even to joy in God Himself (ver. 11). Thus the question of the believer's *guilt* is perfectly and permanently settled, and he is justified *by* God, and stands justified *before* God.

But now comes another question. What about his *state*? He is a child of Adam, and possesses an evil nature; is what Scripture calls "in the flesh" (Rom. vii. 9); is under the power of sin (chap. vi. 20) and law (chap. vii. 1), and needing deliverance from these things. This, which God has provided for likewise in His grace, and is the portion of the believer, is next taught in this wonderful epistle. Not that these things are necessarily consecutive in the soul's experience. They may be all concurrent. But the subjects are different, and taught separately.

Having heard the word of truth, the gospel of his salvation; and having trusted in Christ; the believer is thereupon sealed with the Holy Ghost (Eph. i. 13). He is *in Christ*, and Christ is in him (John xiv. 20). He is no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit (Rom. viii. 9, 10). Now Christ having died and risen, after having glorified God about the question of sins and sin, He has now taken His place as Head of a new race, as Adam was the head of a fallen race. The condition, therefore, of the Head is necessarily that of all who form the race. Adam's one act of *disobedience* constituted all *his* race sinners, and involved them in all the consequences of that act (Rom. v. 12). So Christ's one act of *obedience unto death* (Phil. ii. 8) constitutes *His* race righteous, and makes them sharers in all the blessed results of His act (Rom. v. 12-21).

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The question of *guilt* having been settled, and that of *headship of race* clearly set forth, the apostle proceeds to apply this last truth to the question of *sin* and *law*. God has, first of all, "*condemned sin in the flesh*" (Rom. viii. 3). Our old man has been crucified with Him (Christ) (Rom. vi. 6). Thus the evil nature in us has been dealt with by God and condemned in the sacrifice of Christ. God will, therefore, have nothing more to say to it; and at death, or the coming of the Lord, we shall leave it behind for ever. But further, the believer can say *he has died to sin* (Rom. vi. 2). This is true of him as in Christ, because Christ actually died to it on the cross, and the believer is now in Him. And as he accepts this truth of being dead with Christ to sin, and practises it by "*reckoning himself dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Rom. vi. 11), he finds a *present deliverance* from the *power* of sin, and looks forward to the time when he shall be delivered from its very *presence* (chap. viii. 23).

In chap. vii. this is applied to the question of law. The apostle is there speaking to those who were under law (the Jews). The law was never given to Gentiles. *They* were never under law, though they put themselves under it, and it thus becomes very useful to teach them what they are. He says, "I speak to those who know law, that the law has dominion over a man as long as he liveth" (ver 1). Then he proceeds to shew that the believer *has died to law* by the body of Christ (ver. 4). This he repeats in ver. 6: "But now *we are delivered from the law, being dead to that wherein we were held* (margin); that we should serve in *newness of spirit*, and not in the oldness of the letter." Then is the law dead and gone as some affirm? No! certainly not. Is the law sin? God forbid (ver. 7). Do we then set the law aside? No, in no wise. But in the person of our Substitute, whom it condemned and crucified when, in grace, He took our place, it has set us aside; for we have died to it.

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Suppose a man commits murder ; we know that the end of the law for murder is the rope. Now if the murderer is hanged, is the law set aside? No! it is vindicated. Its claims are established and vindicated in the fullest way by the death of the murderer, and it stands in its full force the same as ever, forbidding the crime of murder, and pronouncing death as the penalty for committing it. Now the law said, "Cursed be he that confirmeth not *all* the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen" (Deut. xxvii. 26). This is used by the Apostle in Gal. iii. 10. But he goes on to show that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us ; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. iii. 13).

When the Judaising teachers came down from Judea and sought to bring the Christians again under law, and thus put a yoke upon their necks which neither their fathers nor they could bear (Acts xv. 1-10)—the very thing that seventh-day adventists and others are endeavouring to do to-day—even Peter and Barnabas were caught in the snare and carried away by it ; but Paul withstood them to the face. To him it was another gospel, and he uses the strongest language to denounce such conduct. They were *troublers* of the saints—*perverters* of the gospel. And though he himself, or an angel from heaven, or any man, preached any other gospel than that which he had already preached to them, let him be accursed (Gal. i. 7-9). How jealous he was for the simple but glorious gospel which he had given them : a gospel which gives the believer deliverance from *the guilt of sin* ; deliverance from the *power of sin* ; from *law* which is *the strength of sin* ; and presently from the very *presence of sin*. How jealously *we* ought to guard this precious, emancipating gospel, and not allow it to be spoiled by the introduction again of that which we have been delivered from—the law—whether in the form of Sabbath-keeping or in any other form ; but stand fast

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in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage (Gal. v. 1).

He then goes on to shew that if they again put themselves under law, after being justified by Christ on the principle of faith, they build again the things they destroyed, and make themselves transgressors (ii. 15-18). If they *gave up law* to be justified on a different principle entirely, the principle of faith, how could they go back to it? If they were right in giving it up, they would clearly be wrong in going back to it, and would be transgressors. Moreover, he clenches this argument in the strongest manner by saying, "For I through law *am dead to law*." Not that I might be lawless, and continue to live in sin. No! God forbid such a thought. But, "that I might live unto God. *I am crucified with Christ*, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 19, 20). How, then, could they be governed in any way by that to which they had died? Christ was now their life, and was to be their *rule of life* (1 John ii. 6; Col. iii. 1-3; 2 Cor. iii. 18).

The story is told of a German who was drawn in the conscription, but whose friend took his place, fought, and was killed. After a time there was another call for men, and the German was again drawn, but he pleaded *I am dead*. He was not actually dead, of course, but his substitute's death was counted as his, and thus he was freed for ever from the military claims of his country. Thus it is with the Christian: we have died with Christ, and *are dead to law*, but not left to be lawless, but to live unto God. The law spent its full force on Christ as our Substitute, when He stood in our place and died for us on the cross.

"The law was our schoolmaster up to (or until) Christ," we read. But "after that faith is come, we are *no longer under the schoolmaster*" (Gal. iii. 24, 25).

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“ Law has dominion over a man as long as he liveth ” (Rom. vii. 1). But the believer has died with Christ, and is therefore no longer under law. Is he therefore lawless? God forbid! He has a new *life*—eternal life (John v. 24); a new *power*—the Holy Ghost (Eph. iii. 16); and a new *object*—Christ in glory (2. Cor. iii. 18. The ministration of law and the ministration of the Spirit are in contrast to each other; the one being a ministration of death and condemnation, the other being a ministration of life and righteousness; the one being characterised by the fading glory on the face of Moses—which God would not let them see, hence Moses was commanded to veil his face—the other characterised by the glory shining in the face of Jesus Christ, never to pass away, and on which we are privileged to gaze (2 Cor. iii.). Then, as we are occupied with Christ, without being under law and in bondage, “ the righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit ” (Rom. viii. 4).

This, then, is the testimony of Scripture, and shews conclusively that the believer is “ not under law, but under grace ” (Rom. vi. 14). He is dead to law. To insist therefore on his keeping the Sabbath, as part of God’s holy law, is to make him debtor to do the whole law, and thus bring him into bondage. The Sabbath had, and still has, its place for those under law; the believer has died and is in Christ, governed by a new power; has a new object; and the grace of God which saved him teaches him how to live (Titus ii. 11-14).

The Sabbath was God’s rest (Gen. ii. 2, 3); but not one word is *there* said about its being given to man to keep. Man was the last work of God on the sixth day. He had as yet done no work, and therefore needed no rest. Then 2,500 years or more elapse before we hear another word about the seventh day. God’s rest had been broken by sin, and He had to begin to work again; His first work being to make coats of skins for the very ones who had broken His rest (Gen. iii. 21).

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How gracious of God. Hence the Lord Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John v. 17). So that the first recorded Sabbath, God's rest, was a very brief one, and became a type of one which is still future, and yet remains for the people of God (Heb. iv. 9).

When next we hear of it, it is given to a redeemed people (Exod. xvi. 29); then incorporated into the law (Exod. xx. 8-11); given as a *sign* that they were a sanctified people (Exod. xxxi. 13, 17; Ezek. xx. 12); given to them *because* they were redeemed (Deut. v. 12-15); it was a shadow of things to come (Col. ii. 16). The Lord lay in the grave all the Sabbath day. The whole of that order of things passed away for the time being on the rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah by the Jews, until they shall see Him coming with clouds (Rev. i. 7), and shall say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. xxiii. 39). Judaism and its Sabbath-keeping is, therefore, set aside till that day when they shall hail their Messiah as their King. Then shall He reign over them, and they shall have their true rest, to which all their Sabbaths had pointed.

The Lord Jesus rose again on *the first day of the week*, and inaugurated a new order of things entirely; and this day characterises Christianity, just as the Sabbath characterised Judaism. Then when *seven* Sabbaths were passed, on the *fiftieth* day, "when the day of Pentecost was fully come" (Acts ii. 1), the Holy Ghost came down and the *new thing* began—Christianity. A new thing. It is neither Judaism nor heathenism, but a new thing—"the church of God" (1 Cor. x. 32), composed of believers out of both Jews and Gentiles, saved and baptised with the Holy Ghost into *one body* (1 Cor. xii. 13; Eph. iv. 4).

The first day of the week, therefore, speaks to the believer of the victory and triumph of his Saviour, and points forward to the eternal state—the rest of God—after the great Sabbath-keeping is ended; and

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it is his joy to gather together with the saints on *that* day "to break bread" (Acts xx. 7), and thus to remember the Lord and to shew His death till He come (1 Cor. xi. 26). On that day we read of the Lord twice appearing to His disciples (John xx. 19, 26); and John evidently speaks of it when he says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Rev. i. 10). The Sabbath was the seventh day, a day of rest at the close of a week of toil. The first day of the week is the day we keep as Christians, when we meet together as redeemed ones in the enjoyment of God's salvation, to *commence* the week by *giving* to Him the praises of full hearts made glad by Him at such a cost, and serve Him with gladness in telling forth the riches of His grace made known in the Gospel. Then we can go forth to a week of labour, and whether eating, or drinking, or whatsoever we do, do it all to the glory of God (1 Cor. x. 31). "Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the *Sabbath days*: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" (Col. ii. 16, 17); and "be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage," but "stand fast in the *liberty* wherewith Christ has made us free" (Gal. v. 1).

*New Zealand.*

W. E.

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PSALM CII.—What is peculiar in this Psalm is that it brings out the person of Christ, His divine nature, in answer to His sufferings and cutting off. It is not grace to others by His sufferings, nor judgment on others because of their iniquity in inflicting them. But in reply to the utter loneliness in sorrow and touching appeal to Jehovah of a heart withered like grass, He is owned as Jehovah, the Creator, Himself. It is not what He is for others through His suffering and humiliation, but Himself. The answer is His own glory, the blessed title of His person. This it is which gives it such peculiar interest.—J. N. D.

## “PROVE ALL THINGS.”

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IN 1 Thess. v. we find the above words. Others that go before I would just ask you to receive; their preciousness and service now in checking unwholesome speculation will be found where ears are open to hear. Every word of God is pure. What gratitude to Him there should be for His Word; how sufficient! No matter what urgent need, danger may threaten, His dear ones become entangled; whatever the emergency, His Word is sufficient.

Warning notes, danger signals, and such like tokens of storm or trouble are never very welcome, but to raise them for Him enables one to brave all after consequences, such as misinterpreting motives, &c., too common in our day. Cries are raised very freely of late, near and far, against the Lord's servants and their work, proving the times we live in exceedingly evil and difficult.

The apostle writing to Timothy says: “This know also, that in the last days perilous (difficult) times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves. . . . Despisers of those that are good.” Then referring to himself, he says: “But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions. . . . What persecutions I endured, but out of them all the Lord delivered me.”

Shall we not ask the question, by whom and for what object are these reports concerning the Lord's servants and their ministry raised? They only need facing to be silenced. It will be readily seen how utterly fallacious they are. But why have they gained currency? Is it not easier to question than to test by the infallible standard? How many have got things easily, without exercise; and now that differences exist there is perplexity; with it the cry raised, “Unsound,” “Fundamental error,” “Very serious doctrine,” then dismissing valuable ministry, and encouraging



others to do so ; all for lack of exercise, not holding the Head that directs, not going again and again to His Word to establish or refuse such as no Scripture is given for. Let me ask you to ponder the words heading this paper : " Prove all things." Such words as " Away with Him " are painfully familiar ; the blessed Lord knew their significance. No wonder those who seek to do His bidding hear the same voice, time making no change for the better, but the contrary. We should not be taken aback by these assaults ; yet grave apprehension for the well-being spiritually of those who give heed to such reports one cannot help entertaining. However, warning is better than censure, and attacks made upon such as He has fitted for His service just as useless as they are wicked.

But is there not a condition of soul that takes in as truth that which is false, that acts as ready material for the enemy's purpose, trying to convey to the children the thought that their meat is tampered with, not fit for food, but to be refused, untasted, untested ? If there is death in the pot—if there has been a gathering up of anything and everything, and thrown in indiscriminately—then, surely, some cause for alarm ; but when the opposite is the case, all the easier to point out the cheat, the imposture, and falsehood of the enemy, to keep the beloved of the Lord from availing themselves of food furnished by His loving hand for our growth and profit. Does He expect us always to be babes, never able to try things that differ ? His Word is placed in our hands to use. He makes no mistakes when He takes up one here and there whom He teaches to rightly divide and deal out to the hungry good things. Where are the hearts ? where the unvitiated taste for precious things such as He delights to bestow ? What hast thou done ? Oh ! think of questioning the heart that is full of love, and cares for your progress and development. The instrument is a small thing. He is suffi-

cient champion for His own servant ; no special stress is needed to tell of virtues in them ; but His wisdom is seen in permitting even a cry to be raised against them, in order to deepen exercises in those who have left much of the thinking and searching to others to do, overruling so that such as have profited by ministry He has given through His servants, both written and otherwise, may learn to pray for such, and hold them in high esteem for their labour for Him. Do we esteem what He offers through His own, and by regard to His Word see if these things are so? Think of the Bereans, God's nobility. The Word was not to be supplanted by ministry, but the latter to lead to it. Beware of thriving upon ministry apart from the Word ; it will scarcely last us a day. A wind of doctrine may be wafted by another to-morrow, and where should we be? Tossed about, not grounded and settled. Eloquence is very taking ; we all like it ; but for staying properties we need bread-corn, the Word, Christ.

“But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them ; and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” The Lord's people are not exposed to rebuke for testing things by the Word ; but unless you and I do so, what an easy prey are we to the devices of the enemy. Unquestioning obedience to God's precious Word, how safe—what preservation for us all. “Esteeming highly,” the Word reads, “those who labour in the Word,” praying for such. Why the departure? What loss! “*Remember them which have the rule over you ; who have spoken unto you the Word of God : whose FAITH follow, considering the end (or issue) of their conversation.*” With adoring heart I would render thanks for what His grace has wrought in men and women once corrupt, but now an epistle known and read of all men—the fear of man gone, the fear of God instead ; principles having more

weight than men's persons. Mere words are easy to utter, but how flat they fall where there is not faith told out to us beyond contradiction by good works, which God hath before ordained we should walk in them. These are to His praise, cannot be gainsaid. The attack may come; let it—for defeat is sure before it commences where regard is given to His word, abiding the bidding of Him we call Lord and Master. We might as well try to move a mountain by talking to it, as dismiss ministry He has given for the profit of His own. Individually, dear child of God, you may be the loser by permitting prejudices, malice, jealousy to make it null as far as you are concerned, but it should not be hard to detect an enemy hath done this. Sorrowful, indeed, to think we lend our ears to his seductive whisperings, and pass on our false impressions until a Babel of voices exclaim against, and conclude to throw overboard the precious and retain the vile. This is not God's order, so confusion follows. No diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; principles let go for persons. What dishonour! This is what we are exposed to now—to-day. Are you about to repent you of being under the teaching of servants of God, so that you will rally to men-fearing ones who have a pedigree in keeping with the honeyed utterances, assumptions, and fair speeches made? Where is the divine signet stamping the ministry of those who hint and suggest to away with such as He has chosen, and is graciously pleased to use for His glory?

I make no plea for the servant—none is needed beyond Scriptures already quoted. We should have our minds stirred up to our danger of letting go the Head that directs all ministry. Think of suspecting those who have earned your confidence, of challenging that heart who has given grace to go on through opposition and persecution. Will you not esteem such highly? Oh, beloved, I cannot think of you in any other relationship than His dear children, whom He

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has delivered and will yet deliver. Be honest, candid, manly; face things. If you have difficulties, look to Him, search His word, endeavour to grasp the thought, not making each other offenders for a word. Write frankly and fully if you cannot go to such as put forth ministry on paper. It gives pain to detect occupation with the servant, rather than going beyond all to the source of supply, to Him that ministers refreshment to the weary. Imperfection you must find in the vessel, it is but of earth; but what about the goodly portions proffered for your edification? Consider these things. May He graciously bless.

W. B.

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 THE DAY IS AT HAND!
 

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OH! the joy, the bliss of knowing  
 We are on our way to God;  
 Clouds are gathering, shadows falling,  
 'Tis the path Himself hath trod!

Precious Saviour, with what gladness  
 Thou wilt welcome ev'ry saint;  
 What an end to all their sadness,  
 What a hush to each complaint!

Then, blest Saviour, what a pillow  
 Shall Thy bosom be for aye,  
 When without a cloud or shadow  
 Shines the everlasting day!

These the joys to which we're hasting,  
 This the prospect we survey;  
 For Thy shout Thy saints are listening,  
 Calling them from earth away.

Spotless, blameless, Thou would'st have us,  
 Diligent and found in peace,  
 When Thou comest to receive us  
 To the joys which ne'er shall cease.

## THE DAY IS AT HAND.

Until then, adorèd Saviour,  
 Loved and long-expected Lord,  
 Be it ours to seek Thy favour,  
 More and more to love Thy word.

Soon shall end our earthly story,  
 Soon shall sound Thy longed-for voice,  
 Then in everlasting glory,  
 With Thy saints wilt Thou rejoice.

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NOW, with regard to the authority of Holy Scripture, if it be inspired ; if, as we believe, the writers were under the direction and control of the Spirit of Truth in a special and supernatural manner, then its authority is easy to understand, for there must be in connection with such an inspired Book more authority than in any other book. I heard a story the other day about two children who were contending as to the truthfulness or untruthfulness of a certain thing. The controversy went on in the familiar way : " It is " and " It isn't. " At last one settled it thus : " My mother says ' It is ' ; and when mother says it is, it is, if it isn't. " Now we do not say, " If the Bible says a thing is, it is *if it isn't.* " That would be irrational ; but " What the Bible says, when properly interpreted, *must* be true. " Now, accepting this Book as inspired of God, as the voice of God to us, we feel it speaks with authority, and we believe everything it says, and seek to do what it commands. We believe everything that is stated is true, and what is true will be in accordance with reason, when reason is properly enlightened. Therefore we consent to the authority of Scripture, and accept its commands as binding on conscience and reason. It is our final authority.—*Extract.*

ABRAHAM gives up the world in liberty, conquers it in power, and refuses it that he may have everything from God. He is blessed of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth.

**"THEY THAT ARE CHRIST'S AT HIS  
COMING."—I *Cor.* xv. 23.**

WHAT a scene of indescribable glory that will be when the Lord Himself shall descend to gather His redeemed to the home He has prepared for them! What a moment of unsullied delight, when at the shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, His sleeping saints, raised, and living saints, changed, "shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall they ever be with the Lord!"

All the hosts of the redeemed shall be marshalled there, in bodies of glory, instinct with divine life—the saints of old, who on the faith of a promise were worshippers, pilgrims, soldiers—those to whose faith dens and caves bore witness—"of whom the world was not worthy;" the elders and just men "who died in faith, not having received the promise," shall be there; "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;" "Noah, Daniel, and Job;" "Moses and Elias" shall be there; Abel, and the long line of martyrs; Aaron, and the Lord's priests; Samuel, and the Lord's prophets; David, and the men of faith who sat on his throne; all God's renowned ones, the perfected just, shall stand in that scene for which they in faith waited.

"The Church of the first-born," too, as the bride prepared for her Lord, shall take her place there; all down to the last re-born soul, who shall form the completion of the mystery. She, too, will recount her worthies in that morning; the many who have stood forth in other days, and who stand forth in our own day, as the witnesses of God's truth and the heralds of God's salvation, all shall ascend together and swell the countless multitude of Christ's own—shall take their place, too, in their respective glories—"every man in his own order"—star differing from star in glory, and each reflecting the image of Jesus. There will be seats, too, in the kingdom; thrones for ruler-

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ship over the tribes of Israel ; mansions in the Father's house ; thrones around the throne of God ; all shall be occupied by the redeemed, each invested with the insignia sovereign love has assigned him. All will "know even as they are known"—each known to all—all known to each. What a season of unutterable joy! of holy intercourse! of uninterrupted communion! But the rapturous thought of each one of this innumerable company will be, they are Christ's—"I am my beloved's, and His desire is towards me." To be Christ's own will be a source of deep, unmixed pleasure then (should it not be now?). The absorbing object of their heaven-inspired vision will be Christ—to be for ever with Him—to behold Him—to cast their crowns at His feet, paying the heart's deep homage to Him in one united utterance of "Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood."

The power of Christ's resurrection will be applied to the bodies of His saints ; they will be raised, because He has been raised, by virtue of having His life and being indwelt by His Spirit ; they will be presented in the perfection of that life, in its full triumph over death and him who had the power of death ; they are raised, not for judgment,—that, to them, is passed, Christ bore it for them—but because they are Christ's: Christ's resurrection was the first-fruits, and the pledge of that abundant ingathering. He was the first sheaf presented to Jehovah, the sample and earnest of the harvest that shall then be gathered into the garner of God ; they will be raised up, and presented in the glory with Him. He is the expression of the glory, and they stand in Him. The reunited dust shall be reanimated and vivified with divine life ; the weakness shall be transformed into power, corruption into incorruption, dishonour into glory, the natural body into a spiritual body ; it will bear the image of the heavenly, even as it has borne the image of the earthy. Where is the sting of death? Gone! Where the

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grave's victory? Gone! Victory, full, complete, eternal, is theirs—Satan bruised under their feet for ever.

The saints will stand before the tribunal of Christ, to receive the rewards of the kingdom; but they will appear there as glorified saints; no stain of sin shall be there, the last trace of the curse shall have been removed, the reproach of Egypt clean and for ever rolled away; the death of the slain Lamb will be learnt in the light of glory, and in the presence of God.

The world may move on still in its course and projects, as it did when its light was set in the darkness of the cross; its religion may go on too, quite compatible with its godless pursuits, until judgment break the spell of its delusion and dissolve the dream—awaking men to the deadly reality of falling “into the hands of the living God.” The light—God's light—shall have been removed to its own proper sphere, there to reflect each its peculiar brightness, “shining as the brightness of the firmament”—“as the sun in the kingdom of their Father”—being with Him who is the sun and centre of that heavenly system, undimmed, unobscured by the clouds of unbelief or doubt. They are with Him as He moves on in the course of the counsels of God, whether relating to the heavens above or the heavens beneath. In the presence of His glory, they shall be presented faultless, “with exceeding joy.” Will He “take His great power, and reign,” swaying the sceptre of righteous supremacy over a judged and renovated earth? They will be with Him there! After the course of the kingdom shall be complete, and He shall have delivered up the kingdom to the Father, will He be tabernacled in the home, the dwelling place of righteousness, in the new heavens and new earth? They that are His will still be with Him. They are Christ's present and eternal portion, and their place is to be “for ever with the Lord.” Whether in the kingdom or in the new heavens and new earth, they will enjoy the rest of God in its perfection, and



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bear witness to His glory in the exalted sphere in which grace has set them, and for which grace has adapted them.

The hope for which we wait is, not judgment, not the kingdom set up, not Israel's restoration, or the deliverance of creation from its present bondage (all true in its place)—but God's Son from heaven! He is coming, not to fulfil *prophecy*, but to fulfil *promise*: "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." Judgment waits for this! the restoration of Israel, creation's deliverance—all waits suspended until the rapture of the saints—"they that are Christ's at His coming."

After the Lord Jesus has gathered His own to Himself in the heavens, He will make good the prophetic word in its bearing towards the earth, and deliver creation, bringing it into the liberty of redemption.

Well may the affections of the heart be moved at the prospect! Well may the sound of that well-known Scripture reverberate in the inner man, "Behold, I come quickly!" Yes, He is coming, to appropriate to Himself that which He has purchased at His own personal cost; to whom He can say, "I have redeemed thee; thou art Mine!" to surround Himself with trophies of redeeming love. The Father's will will be fully accomplished in the resurrection and glorification in those who were the objects of it: for this they were saved. Our necessities were not the first cause; God is glorified in the redemption He has wrought, and the objects of His love are prepared for the glory that awaits them. They shall stand in the clear, unclouded light of divine righteousness, and be at *home* there. The robe in which they are arrayed is divinely righteous and meet for the occasion.

God, resting in the complacency of omnipotent love, will welcome them to Himself; His own immediate presence will be their rest; His unclouded glory the sphere of their worship; God and the Lamb their

## A NOTE ON PSALMS XLII., XLIII. 245

light and their temple. He will dwell in their midst ; they His people—He their God.

What a prospect ! Even the anticipation of such a hope lifts our spirits above the clouds and mists of earth ; but we need purified hearts to be prepared to allow the rays of that glory to reach within and shed its light abroad there. There should be nothing allowed discordant with that holy scene ; it would darken the vision and confuse the affections. The Holy Spirit will be leading us within, to look after the house, and rid it of its corruptions and intruders, instead of opening the windows of the heart to allow the light of a new heaven to fill and irradiate it with its illuminating glory.

O that our constant position may be—as those who are “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God”—“to wait for His Son from heaven,” with the heart purified and the eye single, with staff and girdle, ready to welcome the shout in the air, whenever it may be uttered : ready ! with nothing to leave behind that would retard our upward flight, nothing that may clash with that oft-expressed desire—“Amen ! Even so, come, Lord Jesus !”—*Anon.*

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A NOTE ON PSALMS XLII., XLIII.

NO one who reads these two Psalms with any attention can fail to see the close connection between them. The expression of Psalms xlii. 5, 11, xliii. 5 shews that. The soul is cast down, but the godly one would encourage himself with the assurance that he shall yet praise God.

In the Authorized Version, however, the sense is obscure in some degree by the translation of verse 5, which in the original, as the LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate agree, is not the language of regret at the remembrance of privileges once enjoyed, but the language of hope as he looks forward to what he will

enjoy. The words are, "I shall go with the multitude, I shall go with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, a multitude keeping a feast." Though outside Jerusalem, he will one day be inside; though it is for him now the time of sorrow and reproach, the festive day will come. So, when reproached by his enemies, he pours out his soul in prayer for this. The special subject of the prayer we get in Psalm xliii. Thus these two Psalms are divided into *three* parts. Psalm xlii. 1-5 gives the desire of his heart, panting for God, as the hart pants because of the waterbrooks, and the confidence that he will yet enjoy what he so much desires. Then verses 6-11 give the special circumstances which call out this confidence of hope. He is afflicted, beyond Jordan, unable to reach God's house, through the oppression of the enemy. Psalm xliii. gives the subject of his prayer, to be judged and avenged, and states the *way* by which his desire will be accomplished. "Send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me." It is beautiful to see that the soul cannot rest till it gets to that place on earth where God dwells. It is strengthening nevertheless, to see how God graciously ministers comfort under the circumstances (Psalm xlii. 8). It is instructive to see what the godly one will do when he reaches the holy habitation. "Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my God."

I would add that *help* in verse 5 and *health* in verse 11 are the same word in Hebrew, and the three versions mentioned above, LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate, connect "O my God" of verse 6 with the end of verse 5, by which verse 5 is made to tally exactly with Psalm xlii. 11 and Psalm xliii. 5. C. E. S.

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WHAT matter that the sea is rough, if Christ is there to make us walk on it? what good that it is calm and smooth, if He be not?

## MEETINGS: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.

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IT should surely be the aim of every saint, as far as he or she possibly can, to make every meeting of the assembly, in the highest and best sense, a success; although perfection even in this will not be reached here on earth. We have some remarkable instances in the word of blessed seasons with the Lord in the midst, with details supplied, telling of what hindered; and it should be ours in noting these to seek earnestly to avoid them.

On the mount of transfiguration, we have the Lord Jesus and three of His disciples, whom He specially chose to accompany Him at the time, meeting with Moses and Elias, two of the most distinguished of the saints who had long left the earth. These spoke with Him of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. The Lord was transfigured—glorified; such a blessed sight human eyes had never before beheld. And yet being eye-witnesses of His Majesty, as Peter tells us later they were on that occasion, with the deeply important subject of the Lord's decease before them, and the company of Moses and Elias, all these did not prevent an intrusion which was dishonouring to Christ and totally unfit for such a meeting. Peter acting from impulse, and thinking more of "*us*" than of Him, spoke without intelligence, not knowing what he said—places the Man Christ Jesus on a level with Moses and Elias, who retire! Observing how the voice of the Father guards the honour of this blessed One, by proclaiming what He was by relationship and ways, adding a most important word to them and to us, "Hear ye Him," how we can rejoice to see the guardianship of the Son's glory in such keeping! How humbling to learn that good intentions will never enable us to rise to the height of what is suitable to Him. We must have God's mind, and keep our lips closed till they can be opened with

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divine intelligence, and thus contribute what will be in place and for the profit of all.

On the day of the Lord's resurrection from among the dead, the disciples, with one exception, are assembled together in an upper room at Jerusalem ; one absent in unbelief, while those gathered are filled with alarm. The doors are shut for fear of the Jews. Unbelief and fear are poor contributors. So, if the meeting is to be a success, the honour will not belong to them. Jesus Himself comes into their midst, knowing all about their fear ; removes it by saying, "Peace unto you ;" and at once arrests every eye and heart, displaying to them His hands and His side ! What about doubts and fears now ? Gone, all gone, and gladness and joy have taken their place ; for they were "glad when they saw the Lord."

Eight days after, the disciples are again together, and Thomas with them ; and well was it for him that he was present. He had not, however, left his unbelief behind, but brought it into the meeting. But if this exposes him to a gentle reproof from the Lord, who again appears in their midst, it displays His patient grace, who at once invites the doubting one to verify for himself the fact of His resurrection from among the dead. And this awakens full confidence and joy, which found vent in the cry, "My Lord and my God !" It was sad indeed to miss the blessing of the Master's presence through absence in unbelief ; and sad, too, to be present on another occasion in a condition that could only hinder blessing. But the grace and tender love of the Lord could meet the failing saint ; yes, and the rest must wait while the erring one is corrected and restored.

Absence from the assembly meetings should never be voluntary ; never from lack of interest or coldness of heart. How blessed to meet the Lord, not now an object of sight, but divinely and truly revealed to faith ; for we have His own word to rely on, "Where two or three are gathered together unto My name, there am

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I in the midst of them." Surely the more we cherish in our hearts this fact, the more shall we be blessed. Alas! how often the absence of a gifted brother leads some to remain away, or if present, to show that they cannot be satisfied unless some one *speaks* well of Him, for they do not see Him for themselves. Thank God, there is a perfect meeting in prospect, from which no brother or sister shall be absent! nor shall the meeting itself be delayed by the noise and lateness of some who could be in time. An old writer has said :

"What shouting, what greeting,  
What heavenly singing,  
Shall be at that joyful,  
Triumphant church meeting ;  
Not sickness, nor business,  
Nor length of the way,  
Shall keep from that meeting  
One brother away !"

No danger then from impetuous nature or the working of evil in any way ; for before we go the Lord will absolutely perfect each one. To that meeting He will, by His power, convey us all at once. And lastly, it will never break up.

"So shall we ever be with the Lord."

Do not our hearts long for that meeting? It will be sweet to find all cause for separation at an end, to meet so many of God's beloved ones ; but this is small compared with the bliss of seeing Him "Who loveth us and gave Himself for us," and seeing too His glory! Lord, how long? E. R. W.

## LETTER OF INTEREST.

## ON ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

The denial of this doctrine is a deadly and demoralising heresy, or, rather, infidelity. It issues in denying responsibility and conscience, enfeebling, in

the most deadly way, the sense of sin, the value, consequently, of the atonement, and ultimately the divinity of Christ. All do not go this length, and are unaware of it, but it has led thousands in America there. It is its just result. The greatest part of their alleged proofs are from the Old Testament; and the moment you know that the mass of their texts refer to temporal judgments on earth, all that part of the fabric comes down. Then they dodge to words in the New Testament: as if, e.g., "destruction" means ceasing to exist. This is not true, as "Oh Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thy help." In the original it is the same word where it is said, "the *lost* sheep of the house of Israel." God can say, "I create and I destroy;" but otherwise it is used constantly for ruin in a general sense, as in the boat the disciples say, "Carest thou not that we perish?" They admit there can be no annihilation in nature, and do not like the word. Next, *death never means ceasing to exist*. Scripture speaks of casting the soul into hell after the body is killed; so in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, they subsist after death. They say that is a Jewish figure: I admit it; but it is a figure to show how they subsist after death. Again, it is said in Luke xx., "For all live unto Him"—dead men, but always alive to God. Besides, if it be then ceasing to exist, there is nobody to raise for judgment. The second death even is casting into the lake of fire, where they are tormented; that is, it is *not* ceasing to exist. They say eternal life and eternal death does not mean eternal. This is not true; eternal life and eternal punishment are spoken of together, and it is the regular force of it in Scripture—"The things which are seen are temporal, and the things which are not seen are eternal." Nothing can be plainer than that. So we have "the eternal God," "the eternal Spirit," "eternal redemption," "eternal inheritance,"—all contrasted with time.

What is so morally dreadful in it is the weakening

the sense of sin and atonement. For if my sin only deserved death, Christ had only to bear this for me, which hundreds have borne besides. Sin becomes little and atonement nothing. Hence a vast number speak of what Christ *obtained* for us by His death, but drop the atonement for our sins as of any consequence. Again, if death means ceasing to exist (and this is the basis of all their statements), then Christ ceased to exist. This leads many on to deny His divinity (I do not say all). If they say, "No, He was a divine person, He did not," still He was a true man, body and soul, and truly died; and therefore death does not mean ceasing to exist. Further, this materialism as to the soul is entirely contrary to Scripture. In Genesis, the way man is created is carefully distinguished from beasts. God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: this He never did to the beasts. Hence Adam is called the son of God, and Paul declares we are the offspring of God. Hence to liken our soul to the beasts is false, besides what I quoted from the gospels as to its subsistence after death. The one text, "It is appointed unto men once to die, and *after* this the judgment," proves demonstratively that we subsist after death. Death dissolves our present state of existence, but that *existence* does not cease at all. So far from death being the full wages of sin in this sense, it is after death we get all we are adjudged to. That is, death after the body is the result of sin here; the judgment of the man, to receive the real consequences of it before God, comes altogether after it. Hence there is a resurrection of the unjust, a resurrection to judgment. Remember, we conceive of eternity as prolonged time; that is, we do not conceive it at all. It is an eternal now. And this is the very definition of the word given by writers of the apostles' time.

I have thus, dear brother, given you rapidly, as far as a letter allowed, the way the question has actually come before me, and my reply. The effect in




destroying responsibility is fearful, and, in people with grosser habits, rejection of all truth and immortality. The tree was bad, had a bad sap, and so was cut down, and there was an end of it. Where is sin and atonement there? One, the most eminent, quiet, and most guarded (who had learnt much truth from brethren in England, and a very popular preacher), said, he believed that the elect were the only souls God meant to exist; the rest were the fruit of man's lust after the fall! When asked how he would reconcile the doctrine of thus perishing of souls simply bad and responsibility as stated in Scripture, he said he could not, but, as he found it there, he did not deny it. But he was wholly a materialist as to the truth of a soul; he would not call it material, but it is born by mere physical generation. I regret to have to refer to such things. Keep your mind simple if you can by grace, and receive what Scripture says in simplicity as it stands.

Your affectionate servant and brother in Christ.

J. N. D.

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COMMENTARIES.—How often they are vague, diffuse, irrelevant, trifling, or disputatious—how often they obscure the obvious without elucidating the obscure. The "Great Bible," first published in 1538, had a  printed in the margin to indicate the more difficult passages, it being intended to publish afterwards notes explanatory of these; but this was never done. Many of the annotations of commentators, ancient and modern, are like these hands, pointing to difficulties which they never explain. Beneath their ponderous erudition, the plain meaning of Scripture has sunk out of sight; as in very old churchyards, the earth in the course of centuries has gradually risen and almost buried the church.—*Bishop of Colchester.*

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SEPTEMBER, 1890.

## THE PRAYER OF THE SON OF THE FATHER.—*John xvii.*

THE Lord, the Son of the Father, was often when on earth in prayer. At His baptism He prayed (Luke iii. 21). In the agony in the garden He prayed (Luke xxii. 41-45). Before His transfiguration He prayed (Luke ix. 28). Before He called the twelve He spent the whole night in prayer (Luke vi. 12). After that memorable day of service, so fully related by Mark, He retired to a desert place to pray (Mark i. 35). After feeding the five thousand, and having sent away the twelve, He retired to a mountain for the same purpose (Mark vi. 46). For Peter He prayed (Luke xxii. 32). Before raising Lazarus, too, He prayed (John xi. 41); and in the audience of His disciples, as related at length by John, He poured out His heart in prayer to His Father.

A memorable and a wonderful time this last must have been. Memorable because the occasions were few, as far as we know, on which the disciples were privileged to hear Him in prayer; for on many—may we not say on most?—occasions of which we read, He was alone, apart from the twelve. Not so on the night before the cross, when He addressed His Father in the words which John has preserved, and let His disciples know why He thus spake—viz., that they might have His joy fulfilled in themselves. A wonderful time, too, it must have been, as they heard not only His desires for them, but something, also, of the character of their service whilst He should be absent, and they left in this scene. Nor does that prayer end without making certain for His own where they will be in the future, after life's journey, conflict, and service are over.

As the Son He prayed, incarnate, yet only-begotten; a Man, a Servant who had finished the work given Him to do, yet withal God the Son, who was returning with the sanction, and by the power, of the Father

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to the glory which He had with Him before the world was. He could speak as God, equal as such with the Father, yet as Son in subjection to Him. He could ask to be glorified with the Father, and by Him, with the glory which He had from eternity; glorified with Him, for as God He was equal with the Father. Yet the Father was to do it, for the place of the Son is to be in subjection to the Father. He was asking for what was His, but He asked His Father to do it: "Glorify Thou Me." He speaks according to the dignity of His Person, for He is God; but He speaks in the full recognition of relationship—He is the Son. If the Son, there is the Father; and as He had formerly said, "The Son can do nothing of Himself" (John v. 9), He here shows that the Son would not glorify Himself, but would submit to the Father's doing that for Him.

Little had the disciples previously grasped of the truth of His Person. They had just confessed that He had come forth from God (John xvi. 30); now they heard Him in prayer speaking of that glory which was always His, and which is proper and peculiar to God. They could hope to *go* to heaven. He was *returning* to it, for He had come from it. Hated and rejected by the nation, of which they were well aware, they heard Him speak to His Father of a gift He had received from Him—viz., authority over all flesh. All flesh put under Him, the despised and the about-to-be crucified, One. Authority over all flesh! This He had received from His Father. All men are concerned in this. All will have to own it some day, when as Son of Man He calls forth the dead from the tomb; for His voice will penetrate the deepest recesses of the under world, and a word will He speak with which none will then refuse compliance. He will speak, and they will come forth. Ere, however, that solemn hour should come, He exercised, and would exercise His authority in giving eternal life to those whom the Father had given to Him. As

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the Son of God He was quickening souls. As the Son of Man He will raise the dead. Hence a work of grace must go forward upon earth if the number of the elect comprised more than those already saved. How else should any be called out of the world? Now in this work human instrumentality was to be employed; so the disciples were left behind for service during the Lord's absence. Of testimony to the world on their part He had already told them (John xv. 27), and of His departure to the Father, who, in consequence, would send to them the other Comforter, the Holy Ghost (John xiv. 16, 26). Now they were to understand that their testimony would be fruitful in blessing to others, and to learn too from that prayer, uttered in their hearing, that they were put by the Lord under the special care and keeping of the Father.

The Son would be glorified with the Father. They would be kept by the Father. He had manifested to them the Father's name. He had given them the words, the divine communications, which the Father had given to Him. They had kept the Father's word, and had received and had known truly that He had come out from the Father, and had believed that He had sent Him (John xvii. 6-8). The Lord could say this of them, which none of them would have said for themselves. They heard, moreover, what the Son was competent to declare, that they were the Father's gift to Him, belonging to the Father, and belonging also to the Son. "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me." Did they cease to be the Father's because given to the Son? In earthly matters, what we give is no longer ours. Not so in this case; and hence the Son could assign a reason for their being kept. "I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given Me, for they are Thine." They had not ceased to be the Father's, though they were His gift to the Son, and never could they cease to belong to both the Father and the Son. "All

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Mine," He says, "are Thine, and Thine are Mine." And He adds another reason for the Father to keep them: "I am glorified in them." Precious to the Father, because they were His own; precious to Him, likewise, because they were the Son's; precious, too, because the Son was glorified in them. What grounds were these for the Father to keep them, and to keep them, as He asked, in the Father's name, that they might be one, as the Father and the Son were. Thus far we have what the disciples were.

Belonging to the Father and to the Son, how would the world regard them? Of this there was to be, there could be no doubt. The world would, nay did, hate them, for they were not of it, as the Son was not of it. Were they, then, to be taken out of it? No, but to be kept from the evil; the petition put up on their behalf indicating at once their need, and His thoughtful care for them. To be kept from the evil He prayed, and that would be effected through the truth operating on them. Hence He adds: "Sanctify them through the truth; Thy word is truth."

Kept, sanctified, activity in service is next mentioned, to which they were called, and that in a world of whose hatred they were already informed. What a position to be in! A little company, just eleven men, with the world against them, how could they look to make any impression upon it? The ruling powers opposed to them, the Sanhedrin and Roman governors to face, how could they hope to cope with men and carry out their mission with just one weapon which they could use—their voice telling out the word of God.

Hopeless indeed would their mission naturally appear. As well expect a child to dig down a mountain, as for that little band to make an impression on a hostile world with no other weapon but their word. The power of eloquence we know is great. An orator may sway a crowd for the moment; but where self-interest, family ties, worldly associations,

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temporal advancement, ease, and the good opinion of others would all be arrayed on the other side, what hope could there be that they should gain a hearing, much less gain adherents to their cause?

The method of working to advance God's cause was a new one. Judaism was conservative, but not generally \* aggressive. They were to be, they must be aggressive, if any effect was to be produced, and by their word that was to be done. National prejudices and the thoughts of men of different races, and diverse creeds would have to be met and overcome. What a task lay before them! But the prayer which spoke of it in their hearing assured them of success in measure in their labours. There would be those who should believe on the Lord through their word; and for those, as yet unknown to the disciples, but all known to the Son, did He at that time pray to the Father.

We know of results. Three thousand on the first occasion that they preached were reached by the word; and the work spread, though the Sanhedrin opposed it, and threatened and imprisoned the apostles, who with great power gave witness of the resurrection. The number of adherents still increased, though persecution was stirred up to silence their testimony. Preaching and teaching effected mighty results amongst the Jews and amongst the nations. The prejudiced Jew and the intelligent Greek alike felt the power, and bowed to the truth. And who indeed of men can count the numbers who have been reached by apostolic ministry, whether personal or through the written word?

But more was set forth. Bereft of the bodily presence of the Lord, as they so shortly were to be, they would not be eternally separated from Him; for He spoke of the glory into which they would enter, and that as a final condition for all those who had served Him on earth. The end of their path, as

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(\*) There were proselytes (Acts ii. 10), those who feared God (Acts xiii. 26), but their number was, comparatively speaking, small.

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the end of His, the obedient Man, was in glory; for them the reward in grace, for Him what was rightly His due. Nor that only; for they would be with Him where He is, beholding His glory given to Him by the Father. Severed from Him for a time, they would again be in His company—not on earth, but in heaven, and so with Him for ever. Short of that this prayer does not stop, for short of that the desires of the Son for His own do not fall. He will have them with Him where He is, and then the world will know that the Father sent the Son, and loves His disciples as He loves Him.

Thus this prayer is a little sketch of the disciples' history from the cross to the glory. As the Father's, they would be kept by Him. As for the world, they would be hated by it. As to service, they were to be sent by the Son into the world, and by their word would adherents to His cause be won. Then the end, glory on high, and the seeing Him in His glory, and the being with Him where He is. What thoughts and desires were the Son's for His disciples and their converts!

C. E. S.

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NOTES OF A LECTURE ON EPH. IV. 1-16.

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I WANT to speak a little on what we get brought before us in this chapter. Firstly, our responsibility; and secondly, our resources. The Spirit of God does not speak of our responsibility till He has shown it to us. Nor does our responsibility begin till we are in the relationship. A man has no responsibility as a husband, till he is one. As soon as a maid enters a house for service her responsibilities as a servant begin, but not before. And how can a man love and serve God till he knows he is a child of God? It is impossible. All through the Ephesians you find it the same. Our relationships are put before us before ever God says walk worthy of them down here.

## NOTES OF A LECTURE ON EPH. IV. 1-16. 259

What then is the vocation? What is the standard we are to walk worthy of? We get it brought before us in the previous chapters. In chapter i. we see what God's thoughts were about us before the foundation of the world—entirely apart from the question of sin. And what are we as chosen in Christ? First, children of God. Not merely our need met, as in the prodigal's case, whose only thought was the place of the hired servant, with food to eat to keep him from starving. But how different the father's thought. First, he fell on his neck and kissed him. The prodigal never thought of that. Then, bring forth the best robe, and shoes, and ring, and kill the fatted calf. He never thought of that. And the father blessed him according to his own heart, not merely according to the son's need.

Thus it is with regard to us. It is according to the good pleasure of His will we are made children of God. This is part of the vocation, but not all of it. In verse 22 we get Christ head over all things to the church, which is His body. Just as my body is united to my head, and all my members to one another, and each one working for the good of the whole body. In Christendom, what do we see where all the work is left to one member? What would you say if all the ministering to my body were confined to one hand?

In chapter ii. we are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit. God took up His abode on the mercy-seat when the tabernacle was reared up. The glory of God filled the house, so that Moses and Aaron could not go in. It was the same in the temple. But in Ezekiel we read in the first eleven chapters of its departing, and from that time till Christ came God was not on earth. Then at Pentecost, by His Spirit He came and took up His abode in the midst of the one hundred and twenty then assembled; and since then all saints are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.



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These three things then : 1st, children of God ; 2nd, members of the Body ; 3rd, the habitation of God through the Spirit, constitute the vocation we are to walk worthy of. But how are we to do it? Here are saints brought closely together with different tastes and propensities, not all alike. How then can they go on together? This verse tells us (chapter iv. 2). If you are thinking of what is due to you, and I am thinking of what is due to me, we shall soon find we do not get what we want ; and jarring and unhappiness will follow, and dishonour to the Lord. But if we are each taking the low place, there will be no collision in that road. Hence we read, "With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love." Why did the Spirit of God put in that word, "Forbearing one another in love?" Because He knew it would be needed.

But what are our resources? What have we to help us to walk worthy of this vocation? First, there is the Head Himself? The One who *descended* and has *ascended*, has control over everything that could possibly come between His ascension and His coming again ; and it is He who gave gifts to men. First, apostles—those who could say, "Thus saith the Lord ;" those who could communicate the mind of the Lord before the canon of Scripture was completed. Then prophets—those who bring your conscience in contact with God. Then evangelists—those who go out into the world to preach the Gospel in order that sinners may be saved. Then pastors to care for them. Then teachers to build them up in the truth. These are the gifts of an ascended Christ for the perfecting of the saints, &c. (ver. 12). But there may be some who find themselves in circumstances gathered to the Lord's Name, and owning no other Name but His, and as they look round they fail to find one amongst the two or three with whom they are gathered who would answer to any of these gifts. What are they to do? Have they no resources?

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Yes, thank God! If they have not the gifts, they have the Head, and He cares for each member, and it is the privilege of each one to count on Him and edify each other in love. \* \*

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 TRIMMED LAMPS.
 

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IF ever there was a time when ample material could be found for humbling, for producing godly sorrow, working repentance not to be repented of, is it not now? How slow are we to read His thoughts and gather His purpose of love in permitting failures to come out in all their hideous blackness, so that we might learn to cease from man, from ourselves, from leaning on our own understanding, that we might gaze undistractedly upon Him in glory; by such occupation gathering energy to witness for Him, not by lip, but by life; by works as well as words—such joint testimony that would preserve His name from reproach, and silence the lie that spurious profession puts in the lips of them who believe not.

The judgment-seat of Christ, dear reader, is no figure of speech, but a wondrous, solemn reality. In view of it—where all has to be measured not according to our thoughts but His—what have we to say? Consider the causes there have been, of late, to produce lowliness and humiliation unfeigned. Apt, indeed, to think all wrong but ourselves; yet where is there room for being longer deluded? Failure is general, to our shame. How can we hold up the head, and accuse others, when we individually are guilty of the same? “Thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? or despiseth thou the riches of His goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?”

Have we turned lately to that portion of which He says, “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear

the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein : for the time is at hand"? Now that individual and collective testimony are becoming less decided, more indistinct, does it not give exercise? Yet how much to encourage—His own words of cheer, that call the saint to return in heart to Him ; that I and you may respond, and be found obedient. Not a rebuke or word of exhortation given without the greatest grace displayed in holding out inducement to return, to judge that which answers not to His word. We may gather, surely, that His word reaches, as it reached in the past, hearts that He only could satisfy ; that He would not permit to be joyous under however much activity, zeal, or knowledge ; and such overcomers would still need His word abiding in them, if fruit were to be found to the praise of His grace. What a mercy there is such a thing as restoration—such grace we need to know more of.

He Himself has taught us to love one another. How little do we practically take in that lesson taught in John's record of His doings, how that He girded Himself, poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded. Self-judgment does not mean no judgment ; for if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. None from above, most surely. No painful removal from this scene for such as go on in lowly dependence, walking and serving in humble fear, with heart established in grace. We escape the displeasure of our blessed God, but we incur the scorn and judgment of the world, who are not at one with Him ; counted worthy of death by them ; this comes about through following Him—through subjection to His word as He to His Father's. Faithfulness to Christ, then, and His word, meets with persecution. Knowing this, and being prepared for it, no room is given to the adversary to insinuate that all is easy, that no difficulties exist for the child of God.\

Let us call in another witness here, an infallible one, found in Acts xx. 23, 24. "The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." No room for compromise here, beloved people; no striking colours. Then, says the world, we will give you no quarter, no rest; but the apostle Paul knew beforehand, so was not taken unawares, for the Holy Ghost had given, and gives still, this testimony: "They that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Timothy, his son in the faith, he encourages to stand and take his share in suffering and affliction for the gospel, for righteousness, for Christ's precious name. In Rev. ii. and iii., He gives the word to recall and arouse His own, whom He cares for all the time such are to be found here: "Keep them from the evil." He is soon to have His own, in garments clean and white, presented to Himself without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

What means, then, this great change of attitude, this adulterated mixture of preaching salvation, but leaving out the precious person of Christ, and His wondrous work but little dwelt upon; this preaching, that fails to attract to Him, that permits speaker and people to go on as they list, making no attempt at confirming in the truth such as have professedly received it? Why do we follow in line with such as we know preach not Christ, preach not the word, but preach to please and attract those who go, alas, too often as they came, with consciences not reached, but feeling better pleased with themselves than ever? One would not expect to find much from those who have a name to live, but are dead; but are we not in danger of going to yet greater lengths, in adopting ways and means that would stop the offence of the cross and give us easy times?

You may preach salvation with all the energy you are capable of, use great means to reach the masses, resort to novel inventions, and have all the sympathy your heart could wish, yet in all this come short of catching from His word the purpose He has in saving souls. We might well ask, what about His glory in all this? He does not, as a fisherman might, sit by the side of the stream and pull out fish, with rod and line, just for the pleasure of it, leave them there, and that's the end of it. No, He came not to pluck brands from the eternal burning and then leave them to be overcome of evil; but that such might be set upon their feet, sustained by Him, established and controlled so as to reflect what grace had wrought, that He might be honoured, have praise, and be glorified in His saints. Shall we not then have before us more simply His glory in the salvation of our fellows, not merely our gratification? Why should we content ourselves with souls being saved, and left without any effort made to instruct or shepherd the lambs as desiring His glory? We know well they should be gathered in to His name. May we lay these things more to heart, ceasing from man and his suggestions, giving no countenance to the baits used to-day to attract and amuse poor perishing sinners. May He grant to each the needed wisdom to walk before Him, before those within and without, that He may have praise; for His Name's sake.

W. B.

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“GOD is never in a hurry.”

(REV. J. C. JONES, in *Pulpit Analyst*): “We have taken the grand verities of Divine Revelation, minutely dissected them in the study, and embalmed their bones in what we are pleased to call ‘Bodies of Divinity.’ And on Sundays we take these skeletons with us to the pulpit, and rattle their joints in the hearing of the congregations. No wonder that many timid souls are scared away.”

## THE JOYFUL SOUND.

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‘BLESSED is the people that know the joyful sound ; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance” (Psalm lxxxix. 15). What is the joyful sound here spoken of? The Hebrew word is *t'ruhah*, the sound of a trumpet. But not every sound of the trumpet was so called. To assemble the people to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation no such sound was required. The single blast for the princes to gather together was not this. To call Israel to their feasts and fasts the trumpet sounded, but not such a blast as is here referred to. But if the congregation, as they lay encamped in the wilderness, were to strike their tents, the camp to be broken up, and the people to keep close to the symbol of the divine presence, as it preceded the camps, or journeyed in their midst, then this special sound was heard. Also, if the land should be invaded, they were to sound the alarm, which seems to have partaken of the character of this sound, though the substantive, as in the previous case, is not expressed, but the verb from which it is derived.

Besides these special occasions, there were two regular times when the trumpet sound *t'ruhah* was heard : the one, the fiftieth year, on the tenth day of the seventh month, to proclaim the advent of the year of Jubilee (Lev. xxv. 9) ; the other annually, on the first day of that same month, called the day of the trumpet-sound, or (as the Authorized Version) a day of blowing of trumpets (Numb. xxix. 1). This latter seems to elucidate what is spoken of in the Psalm.

It is not the announcement of the Jewish festivals in general as is often understood ; for for them no such trumpet-blast was blown (see Numb. x. 10 in the Hebrew). But the reference is surely to the first day of the seventh month, when, after a pause in their feasts since the day of Pentecost, the trumpet sounded to tell the people of the commencement of

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Tisri, in which the day of atonement and the feast of Tabernacles would be kept, and the year of Jubilee be from time to time proclaimed.

Looking at the Psalm from a dispensational point of view, this explanation will be found in character with the circumstances of the people in this, the third book of Psalms. They are restored to their land, their captivity brought back (Psalm lxxxv.); the day of blowing of trumpets has had its fulfilment; they are gathered again round the centre God has appointed on earth, but the full blessing is not yet entered upon. For this the Psalmist by the spirit of prophecy pleads. His promises to David are unfulfilled. But, restored to their land, they plead for them, so can say, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; they *shall* walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance."—*Anon.*

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THE EFFECT OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD  
—JEHOVAH OF THE OLD TESTAMENT,  
THE JESUS OF THE NEW.

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ABRAHAM (Gen. xvii. 1, 3), Moses (Exod. iii. 6), Joshua (Joshua v. 13, 15), Elijah (I Kings xix. 11, 13), Daniel (Dan. x. 8, 15, 16), Simon Peter (Luke v. 8), John (Rev. i. 17), and many others recorded in Holy Writ speak fully to us of the effects of the presence of God. Well for us to study such portions of Scripture and be taught of God by them. We cannot advance in nearness to God without knowing something of the breaking down process that is produced in us by the presence of God (see Job xlii. 5, 6).

I call attention to these Scriptures that we may bear in mind that it is the same blessed God and Lord who assures us of His presence in Matt. xviii. 20. All our thoughts and actions need to be swayed, when assembled in His name, by the wondrous fact that He is in the midst. This *fact* will tell on every

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movement. We shall study to be found with our brethren at the hour appointed. He sets our lessons as to this in Luke xxii. 14 ; and when there, our faith in the fact of His presence will be proved by our dependence on Him. We need exercise of heart and mind and guidance of the Spirit when so gathered, in order that we may be, if the Lord pleases, the vessel, to give utterance to the worship the Father seeks from His children. There will be no haste, and there will be a chord passing from one thing to another which will bow hearts, and make us sure that it is of God and not of man. Many an one, if *God* was more simply before them, might in a few words take the company in before God, and adoration of heart would result. Who is it that cannot speak of the power that has accompanied the utterances of some timid and backward soul, but who has been compelled to "break forth" and "utter the memory of His great goodness"? Often in reading Scripture we start well, but go on much too far, and the point to rest on the heart and produce worship is lost. We have to study in the presence of God all these things: and be assured, if we are under the power of the greatness of the grace that is symbolised in the bread and wine, we shall tread softly, and no one will realise his inability to give right expression to His praise more than the one who is taken up by the Spirit of God to lead his brethren and sisters.

Let it be borne in mind that we need to seek daily separation to the Lord in order to prove His presence according to the love of His heart, as we assemble round the memorials of His love unto death. Worldly ways and associations will hinder all. The Spirit is grieved, and the Lord refuses to manifest Himself to us. How much we hinder one another in this way!

Many get weary and turn aside, seeing faults in what they once delighted in. The faults are in themselves—are in us all; but the Word of God, with all its blessed teachings, and the Holy Ghost remain to



us "as at the beginning." *To give up* is to return to what is in principle and practice worship "in the flesh," not "in the Spirit." If we live in and for the world we cannot find our joys *in the presence of the Lord*.

*His delights* are with the sons of men ; *where are ours ?*  
D. S.

## OUR ISRAELITISH ORIGIN.

THIS is entirely refuted by the following consideration. The epistle to the Galatians, inspired by the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of *truth*, recognises these Galatians not in any sense as Israelites ; but on the contrary the whole argument rests on this, that they being *Gentiles by origin* were turning to the weak and beggarly elements of Judaism. Paul, *being himself a Jew, could circumcise Timothy and be blameless ;* but he writes to the Galatians that if THEY were circumcised Christ should profit them nothing.

Now these Galatians were our kindred, our very cousins-German, as all history testifies. Take the following from Rollin (ed. 1826, vol. 2, p. 312) on the authority of Justin, Pausanias, Suidas, &c., and especially of Livy. In A.M. 3725 (B.C. 279) "the Gauls, finding their own country too populous, sent out a prodigious number of people to seek a new settlement in some other land. This swarm of foreigners came from the extremity of the ocean, and after proceeding along the Danube arrived at the outlet of the Save, and then divided themselves into three bodies. The first, commanded by Brennus and Acichorius, entered Paūonia, now known by the name of Hungary ; the second marched into Thrace under Cerethrius, and Belgius led the third into Illyrium and Macedonia." Omitting the doings of these bodies, only remarking that Brennus and Acichorius were defeated in an attempt to plunder the temple of Delphi, we follow the detachments which broke off from these com-

manders as thus related :—“ During a sedition which happened in their march, a body of 20,000 drew off from the main body and marched under Leonor and Lutarius, whom they chose for their commanders, into Thrace, where they joined those whom Cerethrius had already led into that country ; after which they made themselves masters of Byzantium (Constantinople) and the western parts of Propontis, and then laid the adjacent country under contribution. A difference arising between the two chiefs, they separated from each other. Lutarius continued his march along the Hellespont, and this latter returned to Byzantium with the greater part of the army. The latter having afterwards passed the Bosphorus, and the other the Hellespont, they met again in Asia, where, a reconciliation being effected between them, they rejoined their forces, and entered into the service of Nicomedes, King of Bithynia. This prince, after he had reduced his brother, Zypates, by their assistance, and regained possession of all his father’s dominions, assigned to them for their settlement that part of Asia Minor which took from them the denomination of Gallo-Græcia, or Galatia. The canonical epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians was written to the descendants of this people ; and *Jerome, about 600 years after the time of which we are now speaking, declared that they continued to speak the same language which he had heard at Treves.*”

Luther recognises the supposed affinity between the Germans and the Galatians in his commentary on the epistle to the Galatians : “ Some think,” says he on chap. i. ver. 6, “ that the Germans are descended of the Galatians. Neither is this divination perhaps untrue ; for the Germans are not unlike to them in nature,” &c. Their “clans (according to Livy) were the Tolistoboi, Trocmi, and Tectosagi. Strabo gives them nearly the same denominations. They retained their power till the war between Antiochus and the Romans. It may be observed that Polybius and

Pausanias term these Gauls Κελτοί, or Celts; other writers call them Galatæ-Galli and Gallo-Græci."

Whether these wanderers derived their origin from the banks of the Rhone or of the Moselle, to which localities they seem to belong, or whether they were tribes of pure Saxon blood, they may stand very well as representatives of the mixed multitude of British, Saxon, Norman, and Scottish races which people our islands. If all these races are claimed as of Israel, certainly the Gauls must come in for their part of the honour. If only our race, let that favoured race be shown to be quite distinct from the remainder, and from those Galatians whom we have shewn to be pure Gentiles, having no title whatever to circumcision or to the ordinances of God's earthly people.

In the meantime this fabulous idea of "Israelitish origin" serves but to nourish the vainglorious pride of some persons, and to induce in them forgetfulness of the "heavenly calling" of the Church, and a determination to pursue with more avidity and with less remorse of conscience those riches and honours of the present world which were Israel's inheritance by virtue of the donation of God. At the same time, the grasping and selfish policy which characterises the Roman earth, and which seems pourtrayed in the character of the fourth beast, in Daniel vii., is veiled over with a saintly-seeming show of the approbation of God, as if *we* were "the people of the saints of the Most High," to whom the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given.—*Anon.*

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"AN inheritance may be owned without being possessed. It will take us all eternity to go round our inheritance."—*Rev. H. Brooke.*

"PLENTY of saved souls lead wasted lives."—*Ibid.*

"IF you are a vessel filled by the Lord, the very trembling of the hand will make the vessel flow over."—*C. A. Fox.*

## LETTER OF INTEREST.

## ON IMMORTALITY AND EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—As this question, this evil heresy, is the one by which, most commonly just now, Satan seeks to perplex the minds of the simple, I write a line to you in connection with the tract sent to me. A great many human names are introduced, but Scripture is little inquired into. In this doctrine the great point of consequence to me is that the true character and import of sin, of atonement, of repentance, is overlooked, and the responsibility of man. Atonement is either denied or dropped out. Here it is entirely dropped out. Now it is evident, if temporary punishment is the whole desert of sin, Christ had only to suffer accordingly. Repentance is proportionate. And one of the chief teachers in the United States declares in his book that the deep distress of conscience and terror about sin committed was a base servile fear and wrong! To one who found he had lost the atonement and the sense of responsibility out of his mind, and who asked him what he made of responsibility, he replied, it was impossible to reconcile it with his system, but he saw it in Scripture, and so did not deny it. They insist that souls of men and beasts are the same, and plead Genesis to this end—all in whom was the breath of life perished in the flood—that beasts have a living soul and so has man. If this be so (that we have more intelligence, but a living soul like a beast's), you cannot charge a beast with sin, nor make Christ die to put away a beast's sins. What did Christ do for us? not as giving life, but in the way of atonement? That is the grave question. Again, they confound eternal life and immortality, which is not honest.

Save as to the immortality of God, where it declares death, of course, has no part, *ἀθανασία*, mortality and immortality as to men, are applied solely to the body

and have nothing to do with eternal life. Eternal life is what we have in the last Adam: the question is the condition of the first. Thus, "when this mortal shall have put on immortality," "the life of Jesus in our mortal flesh." The places are these—Rom. vi. 12, "mortal body;" viii. 11, "mortal bodies;" 1 Cor. xv. 53, "this mortal;" verse 54, where it is the resurrection, that is, the body (or change); 2 Corinthians iv. 11, "our mortal flesh;" v. 4, "mortality swallowed up of life," when he speaks of the tabernacle we are groaning in. Mortality is always of the body, immortality is put in contrast with mortality (not mortality of the soul, but of your present mortal condition). 1 Corinthians xv. 53, 54 is the change from a mortal state. Otherwise it is used only of God. In 1 Tim. vi. 16, He is undying in nature. Mortal is applied to our present state, but is not applied to the soul at all. That God only has immortality does not affect an undying existence conferred; for angels are not mortal, as all admit, and as Luke xx. 36 shews. With these and the state of the fallen angels these teachers never trouble themselves. Men must not suffer, their love goes no farther than themselves. Now the everlasting punishment is prepared for the devil and his angels, and there the judged of Matthew xxv. are sent; so Revelation xx. 10, 15; xxi. 8.

As to the life we have naturally, beasts were formed by God's word out of the ground, and there the ordinary creation ended, and then beasts were pronounced good (Gen. i. 25). And then God proceeds in solemn consultation to form man as His image, as lord of all that had been created, and in His likeness; and first makes him a frame out of the dust, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man by partaking of what came directly from God became a living soul (not at all as the beasts), God's image on the earth. Hence he is called (Acts xvii.) His offspring. He has a spirit as well as a mere soul, when the distinction needs to be made, which death does not touch. We

are not to fear them which kill the body and after that have no more that they can do—that death does not touch what is besides bodily life. I will speak of “destroy” in good time ; but death leaves the soul in existence, not merely the souls of saints. When the resurrection was called into question by the Sadducees, it is not said of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob only that they are alive, nor is this founded on their being saints, though they were such, but it is added, “for all live unto Him.” Death does not affect *the soul*. All live, not for man indeed on the earth, but for God.

The case of Lazarus and Dives clearly teaches the same solemn truth ; the sinner was as much alive as the saint. They allege that this is a Jewish figure, I admit it fully *as to the form* ; but it is not a figure of a person’s not existing. The second death is the lake of fire—is *punishment*. They allege that it burns man out in time, and that ceasing to exist is the second death ; but Scripture says the punishment is itself the second death. Death never means ceasing to exist.

Then as to this word “everlasting.” It is incontrovertible that its proper sense is everlasting. It is defined carefully to mean it by Aristotle and Philo (the last a religious Jewish writer of the apostles’ age) and others. Scripture speaks of the eternal God, the eternal Spirit, the eternal inheritance, eternal redemption ; and what makes it conclusively evident that the word in itself means it is the statement of the apostle in 2 Corinthians iv.: “The things which are seen are temporal, and the things which are not seen are eternal,” where it is used in express contrast with temporal, without any subject (as they allege) which on other grounds shews what it means. So eternal life and eternal punishment are used in direct contrast—eternal life is in Christ, the gift of God. It is only named twice in the Old Testament, and both refer to the millennium (Daniel xii. ; Psalm cxxxiii.) ; for life and incorruptibility were brought to

light by the gospel. In Romans ii. 7 it is incorruptibility, not immortality.

None of the quotations following apply to the subject at all. I have eternal life now; yet I am as mortal as ever. That life is not touched in any way when I die (2 Cor. v. 6-8). It is in full glory when I get a glorious body; mortality or immortality it has nothing to do with, nor they with it. It is "life and *incorruptibility*" which are brought to light by the gospel. There is a resurrection of the unjust as of the just. They subsist meanwhile, or there is no one to raise; their judgment comes after their death. At any rate eternal life does not touch or take away mortality—has nothing to do with it, nor does it give immortality. It is only the darkness of common doctrine that has given rise to these statements, which have no real foundation at all. "All live unto Him." Destroying the body does not touch the soul. "Who only hath immortality" does not apply to created existence. The angels are not mortal as we are, but they have no existence independent of God any more than we have.

Dr. Whately is wrong altogether—\* "of those only," he says, "who shall," &c. Now it is not so. Immortality is only used twice, applied only to the body, and when it has ceased to be mortal.

Another thing important to remark here is the abuse of the word "die." We may be quite right in seeing, as spiritual persons, that men may be dead while they live, and that we may be dead in sin, as towards God, when alive, and that the *judgment* of death implies estrangement from God; as the gift of life is bringing us, in principle, in blessedness to Him. But dying in its positive sense is never applied to the

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\* "It is certain that the words 'life,' 'eternal life,' 'immortality,' &c. are always applied to the condition of those, and of those only, who shall at the last day be approved as 'good and faithful servants,' who are to 'enter into the joy of their Lord.'"—*Dr. Whately.*

soul. Thus Ezekiel xviii., constantly quoted for this, and used by good people with good intentions, speaks only of death in this world—present judgment here ; not for a father's, but for our own sins.

Quoting such a passage as "He that hath not the Son of God hath not life" proves utter confusion of mind ; for if I were a living sinner, I have not life in that sense, yet am alive all the same ; and if I never died at all, was not mortal as to the body, should not have it a bit more. What lost life has the sinner no power to regain? Not the fact of life (*i.e.*, conscious existence) ; he has it as much as ever. It does not touch the question ; and I know from Christ's word that death to which I am sentenced does not affect the soul. Why so diligently confound spiritual life and actual existence? And this is the whole secret of the way they puzzle people—poor work! Death as judgment on man may intimate a great deal more, just as life does. But "thou shalt surely die" was bringing in mortality ; and hence man was not allowed to touch the tree of life lest he should eat and live for ever—live for ever as a sinner in the world. Here, as a matter of fact, God was not precluding him from getting spiritual life ; and if, when actually alive, as he was, he had eaten of the other tree, he would not have died at all. Immortality in his then state, before or after the fall, would have been immortality as a living man as he then was. The death threatened we have plainly declared to us—"Till thou return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken ; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Did the *spirit* God breathed into Adam come out of the dust? It returns to God who gave it ; and the body will be raised, and then judgment come, and only then the award of sin by judgment. The corruption of the body is only an intermediate state, common alike to saints and sinners, just as death itself is, save by special intervention of God's power.

As to union with the Saviour giving life, it is all



a blunder. It has no such effect. None but already quickened ones are united, and that by the Holy Ghost. I need not say that all he speaks of as to the end of all things at a common resurrection is no part of our belief; but it is one of the acts of Satan to take fresh light and use it, where it has not been, to pour in his darkness.

The statement of everlasting punishment to a simple soul is as plain as possible in Scripture: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into everlasting life." To a simple soul it would be monstrous to say that "everlasting" was not meant to mean the same thing. They are "tormented for ever and ever." Death gives up all it held into the lake of fire—that is, for ever and ever; the same word always used in that book for God's existence. They are "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." Now everlasting destruction has no sense if non-existence be meant by destruction. Total destruction I understand; but everlasting destruction in such a sense is nonsense. And in this case, on their own theory, it is no destruction then at all; for 2 Thessalonians i. is at the beginning of the millennium, when, according to their own system, and my own full conviction, they are not destroyed at all.

This leads me to the word "destroy." It is, like death, used for the ruin of a present state of things, even moral ruin, not for a cessation of existence. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thy help." "I am not sent but to the *lost* sheep of the house of Israel"—the same word. "He that loseth (destroyeth) his life for My sake, shall save it." "Carest thou not that we perish?" Zacharias "perished between the temple and the altar." Take an English-Greek Concordance, and you will easily see. So destruction; waste of the ointment; the son of perdition; damnable heresies—heresies which ruin people. Moral ruin is meant as well as destruc-

tion of existence, if that is ever meant. The world of the flood perished—the flood came and destroyed them all; yet they are spirits in prison after that—another proof that death destroys no soul; does not mean it. Abaddon and Apollyon are the Hebrew and Greek for destroyer: are they able to make to cease to exist finally? I do not think “destroy” is ever used for finally ceasing to exist, but totally ruining as to the state anything has been in. When men are everlastingly destroyed from the presence of the Lord, it confessedly is not so; they then go into punishment; but that is final. And when it is said, “*their fire is not quenched*,” to assert that it means that they do not exist at all is a miserable come-off, not more. *It is a figure, no one denies*, and refers, as is stated, to Isaiah; but the figure is one of the *continuous* existence of the objects of punishment. “From one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord; and they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against Me, for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.” It is continuing abiding objects of *punishment* which are now before the eyes of those who come up. It was not a supply of fresh material, &c. All this is false. The opposite is what God is teaching. It is of continued existence; it is the carcasses that were indestructible—at any rate undestroyed: an external matter, no doubt, in Isaiah, and used by the Lord as a figure, but a figure of *continued shame and misery*, and no fresh supply. And what is the meaning of everlastingly supplying hell, where body and soul are, with fresh materials? “Destroyed for ever” (Psalm xcii. 7) applies to this world; so Psalm civ. 35, “Consumed out of the earth.” You may take it as a general rule, that in the Old Testament, judgment, destruction, &c., refer to this world, though a future state is referred to in the Psalms.

Again, the passage "Seek for glory, honour, and immortality" is incorruptibility. God is immortal in His present existence—cannot die. Man is looked at, when spoken of as such, as body and soul, and now mortal in that condition; and mortality is used only in respect of his existence in the body, and immortality too, only in another state. In Romans ii. 7 and 2 Timothy i. 10, it is incorruptibility; but it is always a state *in the body*, now mortal, then immortal (*i.e.*, the soul separable from the body or inseparable). It does not touch the question, though habit uses it for it. Ignorance or dishonesty can alone quote the word. Angels are acknowledged to be immortal—and what we have to do is to learn from Scripture what becomes of that which was directly communicated from God when He breathed into his nostrils, and which, most certainly from Scripture, death does not touch.

I have already said eternal life has nothing to do with it; I am as mortal when I have it as before. Now Scripture is positive that death does not touch the soul. It subsists after death and apart from the body. There could not in their use of it be a second death if it meant ceasing to exist. Death does not mean for men ceasing to exist; neither does the second death. That is going into the lake of fire, *not* getting out of it. And this driving out of the presence of the Lord is for ever; *punishment is everlasting*. When dead, all live for God; when raised, they are cast into the lake of fire, and that is the second death, and the final state spoken of. They shall then *have their part* in it. That is "for ever and ever"—the term used for the duration of God's own life; and the duration of His glory (Rev. iv. 9; v. 13, 14). It is exclusion from the presence and dwelling-place of God: "*Without* are dogs," &c. The time when God is all in all, and no more death, sorrow, &c., is the time when the evil are cast into the lake of fire. For death is separation of soul and body,

which will never take place again. There will be no more dying, but just punishment on the raised wicked, but no more death; that and hades are over. But that judgment is destruction from the presence of the Lord.

What they specially insist on is that, till we get eternal life, we have, though more intelligent, life like any other animal. Now the falseness of this is evident. So we have seen, we are God's offspring, but I speak of it for another purpose now. I have a conscience; I have a soul that can hate God and did—formed to have to say to Him—that can be rebellious and disobedient, and enter into appeals to my conscience. In a word, I am a moral being. When I am converted, I feel how I have failed as to my *previous* responsibility; I repent, I feel I am guilty—liable to judgment from God: what has this to do with animal life? If I get eternal life, it makes me look backward on all my previous course as guilt, as subjecting me to divine punishment. When I know myself, I know that the mind of the flesh is enmity against God. God claims moral authority over the unconverted man. For these sins Christ, I find, has died. I was dead in sins. In Him I have died to sin. If I am a mere *nephesh chayah*, as they speak (and we are that physically), I cannot repent nor think of atonement for what I did as such. The idea of sin is lowered. All there is is merely a temporary punishment for certain faults which takes place now and also hereafter. For Scripture it is enmity against God, and the remaining so is infinite misery, when the veil of sense is taken away and final judgment pronounced. The atonement, responsibility, the true sense of sin, repentance, all go when this fatal falsehood and device of Satan gets into the mind. It is a soul as to its nature capable of hatred and love of God. Would you put the cleverest elephant into this place of responsibility? or could it have a need for its sins to be borne?

If you deal with a simple soul, shew it the plain language of Scripture: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." Conscience will tell what that means, and if they have been dealt with to prove eternal does not mean eternal, shew them what is said in 2 Corinthians iv. 18; and simple souls, souls where Satan's wiles have not polluted them, will bow to the plain word of God. I have nothing to do with popular statements (though better, if essentially sound, than these immoral deceits); but the conscious subsistence of the soul after death, and eternal judgment and punishment of the wicked, are as plainly taught in Scripture as possible. Men have spoken of it (though sound in intentions) in a way designing people can lay hold of, specially from the Lord's coming not having been seen. But the word of God is clear. It does not detail the misery as it does the blessing, and this is its perfection; but it declares it, and this is right. "I am" is *essential* existence. No other word is used for the duration of God's existence which is not used for that of the punishment and torment of the wicked. And while a few persons have been scandalised who seek their own thoughts and take their own feelings, when there is no just sense of what their own sins have deserved (for this is the secret of it), how many thousands of thousands have been awakened by the just terror of judgment?

I write thus to you because you will have to say to it. I have not entered into all, nor could in this letter. They give a few misapplied texts, but there is no serious investigation of Scripture, as bearing on a responsible soul, the offspring of God—no sense of what sin is, and that is the evil of the matter.—Affectionately yours in Christ,

J. N. D.

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"IF you can ever hold your tongues for God, do it! Never speak unless sent by God."—*Spurgeon*.

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OCTOBER, 1890.

## P E T E R .

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THE history of Peter, as given us in the Gospels, affords much salutary instruction for all time.

Peter is marked by *haste*. He little knew what it was to wait and see what the Lord, whom he truly loved, would say and do. *He* must be talking and doing. Remark what he said on the holy mount—“Let us make three tabernacles: one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.” The divine commentary is significant—“He wist not what to say” (Mark ix. 5-6).

Luke xii. 41 tells us that when the Lord was cautioning His disciples to be ready for the Son of Man, Peter is heard asking, “Lord, speakest Thou this parable unto us, or even to all?” This remark was evidently not the saying of one who in his soul felt that *he* needed the Lord’s exhortation. The edge of the Lord’s words got turned aside; Peter is occupied with others instead of himself.

This is serious. Satan can use us in this way when we may be quite unconscious of it ourselves. The Lord may present a word in order that my conscience may be stirred up, and that of others who may be present; but if one is not in communion with the Lord, Satan may use me to divert the minds of the Lord’s people by some other truth, but which is not in the current the Spirit of God is guiding us at the time. Are we aware of his devices?

Again, Peter twice, on that wonderful occasion recorded for us in John xiii., when the Lord took the bason and poured water into it, and began to wash His disciples’ feet, draws the attention of all upon himself. He declares that the Lord shall never wash his feet. This brought out from the Lord the fact that unless He did wash his feet Peter would have no part with Him. Peter could not brook such a forfeiture, and in his haste he cries, “Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.” Correction is

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again bestowed on him, by the Lord telling him that his feet alone requires His service now, as the service Peter wished done to him was one which needed no repetition. We are certain to betray our ignorance if we speak when the Lord means us to be silent and receive from Him.

The closing scene of the Lord's life furnishes *the* remarkable instance of Peter's confidence in himself, when he proclaimed that although all should deny Him, he would not. Yea, he declares, "I will lay down my life for Thy sake." The Lord knew Peter; He was aware that at bottom Peter did love Him, but He assures him that he would deny that he ever knew Him instead of going with Him unto death. Peter could not follow the Lord until the Lord had gone alone into the judgment of God, and dried up its waters by drinking the cup the Father had given Him to drink.

Peter, however, must get the self-confidence, which was so strong, broken; and the only effectual way for this end to be secured was to let Peter alone and allow him to touch the bottom, when he would find himself where no mere human aid could avail him.

The Lord loved Peter; how truly He did so! He is on the way to die *for* Peter, to go where Peter could not go—where He must be *alone with God for Peter*.

But the love of Christ for Peter is not seen only in this, no doubt the greatest of all sights; but He must *teach* Peter what no one else could teach him: Peter must learn to boast only in the Lord.

How needful for us all such a lesson! and, as it has been remarked by someone else, we must either learn it in communion with God or, if out of communion, with Satan. Blessed Lord, Thou knowest how to do it, and Thou art able to turn our self-conceit into blessing and make our failures beacons of warning to others, that with Thee they may learn, and so not fall.

The current of the world runs high, and we are

heard declaring loudly against its ways. The ways are wrong, no doubt. They are the ways of the world which murdered *our best Friend*, and we do well to daily seek separation in heart from it. But let us beware of the enemy of our souls at such a moment; he works for our fall, he will use our zeal for the Lord to accomplish this. When the tide is strong against us, he often secures his end by whispering in our ear "that there is no good gained by such a strict line—that, in fact, we shall accomplish much more by coming down and meeting men in their plans and operations," and we are overcome; our strength is gone, and we wist it not!

The line of separation between what is of the Father and what is of the world has lost none of its distinctness in God's sight. It has lost it in our sight, in our practice. Things are daily being toned down to make our course easier. Let us not be deceived—it is not advance we are making by such ways, it is the "down-grade." Do not think that that "grade" is only to be found in what we term "system."

But the *heart* is not easy; and if our heart condemn us, God's is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. The heart accuses and excuses by turns; but, unless prevented, the soul moves steadily down, and at last the world is *all* it seeks after. But a friend of the world is an enemy of God.

May the good Lord deliver us, keeping us awake, granting us to hold faith and a good conscience, that so we may not make shipwreck. D. S.

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### EBEDMELECH, OR FAITH'S REWARD.

—*Jeremiah* xxxviii. 1-13; xxxix. 15-18.

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THE cup of Judah's wickedness was well-nigh full. To such a pitch had the people come that "they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people till there was no



remedy" (2 Chron. xxxvi. 16). God had, by Jeremiah, set before them the way of life and the way of death (Jer. xxi. 8). They had chosen the "way of death," and onward to judgment they swept with gathering speed. They could not tolerate the presence of Jeremiah among them, and therefore the princes of the people present their petition to the king (Zedekiah) to put him to death. "We beseech thee, let this man be put to death; for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt" (Jer. xxxviii. 4).

Such was their language. And does it not remind us how, in a later day, "the chief priests and elders and all the council sought false witnesses against Jesus to put Him to death?" As with our blessed Lord so with Jeremiah, we find not the poor and weak ones, but the leaders of the people arrayed against him. And the answer of the king betrays an impotency and a vacillation similar to that which marked the conduct of Pontius Pilate: "Behold, he is in your hand: for the king is not he that can do anything against you" (ver. 5).

The princes, therefore, prevail: Jeremiah falls into their hands, and is cast into a loathsome dungeon where "there was no water, but mire; so Jeremiah sunk into the mire." Perishing for want of bread (ver. 9), every ray of hope seemed extinguished. In this dire extremity will Jehovah forsake him? Surely not; for hath He not said that "He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee?" One only has He ever forsaken at the supreme moment of trial, even His own beloved Son, and that, too, on account of us. Blessed Jesus, who but Thyself could know the agony which brought to Thy lips that piercing cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" May our hearts learn to know more of Thy deep and wondrous love.

Help is close at hand. In the king's house is one

who, hearing of Jeremiah's terrible condition, resolves to seek deliverance for him at the hands of the king. He makes no endeavour to obtain a private interview with his master, as, doubtless, he might have done (irregular as such an act might have been), but goes forth out of the house to the place where the king was sitting in the gate of Benjamin (ver. 7), and there, the most public place of the city, before the world, as it were, and in spite of the hostility of the princes of the people, he pleads the cause of Jeremiah, whose cause is that of Jehovah's.

Take a look at him, my reader. He is but a menial servant of the king's household—an eunuch, bearing the name of Ebedmelech (what an honour to have his name recorded in God's word), which very name signifies "servant of the king." His skin is black, being an Ethiopian, and therefore belonging to a nation who were Judah's enemies (Isaiah xliii. 3, &c.); a total stranger he is, and a Gentile, and *quite alone*, with not one solitary feature about him to command attention, save, perhaps, the apparent incongruity of his position. There, unabashed, and with rare courage for one of his calling and of his parentage in the midst of such a people, he stands before the king, in the presence, doubtless, of many of the renowned of Judæa—of Jehovah's people forsooth, and as he charges the princes with having done evil in putting Jeremiah into the dungeon, and acquaints the king of the prophet's condition, think you no reproach fell upon his ear or scornful look met his gaze? "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise: and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor. i.). This "base thing," in Judah's estimation, had gone forth out of the house to the gate bearing Jehovah's

reproach. So we are reminded how "Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him, without the camp, bearing His reproach," and take comfort and courage from the example of this noble Ethiopian.

Ebedmelech's mission was not in vain. He received immediate orders from the king to take up Jeremiah out of the dungeon; to accomplish which, the assistance of no less than thirty men is granted him. Significant, surely, of the horrible nature of the dungeon; and a faint resemblance of the awful depths into which our blessed Saviour went to ransom us; while, at the same time, we learn that "the wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him," but "the Lord will not leave him in his hand" (Psalm xxxvii.). Another proof, if proof were needed, that the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear.

And now with what care and tenderness does Ebedmelech draw up the prophet from his horrible dungeon. He could see in that poor wreck of humanity, covered with mire, something to love and to admire. How comforting to Jeremiah to receive such consideration from the hands of this eunuch! It was but a thief, amid all Judah's gathering on that day, the darkest which the world has ever seen, that comforted Jesus, or that could distinguish in the attenuated form on the cross by his side his Lord, his King, his Saviour!

Adorable Saviour, open our eyes that we may see more of that beauty which belongs unto Thee!

Satisfied as, doubtless, Ebedmelech was in having rescued Jeremiah from a fate which seemed inevitable, there was One looking on who cannot forget the least service rendered to Himself or to His people. Nothing that the feeblest among us does for Him is ever passed over. A reward, sooner or later, will come from His own loving hands. Is this Ethiopian to be an excep-

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tion? Certainly not. He learnt by a special word from Jehovah, through the prophet, what his reward would be. It was not a present, but a future reward. IN THAT DAY (xxxix. 17) it should be granted him. So with the Christian. In that day will he receive *his* reward. For, says the apostle, "henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me AT THAT DAY: and not to me only, but unto ALL them also that love His appearing" (2 Tim. iv. 8). May we, the humblest of His servants, ever keep in view that day. We surely can bless God for shewing to us, in this simple tale of Ebedmelech, that He honours all who honour Him, be he the meanest of menials.

Further, we learn the real secret of Ebedmelech's conduct, and of that which brought down upon him Jehovah's blessing: "*Because thou hast put thy trust in Me, saith the Lord*" (xxxix. 18).

Precious revelation for ourselves, as for this lowly servant! Who can doubt that after this, Ebedmelech, like another Ethiopian eunuch (also attached to a royal household) many years after, went on his way rejoicing (Acts viii. 39)?

"Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him"  
(Psalm ii.). A. C. H.

## A SKETCH FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

ON THE BORDER OF PHENICIA AND ON THE  
FARTHER SIDE OF JORDAN.—VII.-VIII. 10.

A NEW circuit the Lord now made. He had returned to the west side of the lake, to the land of Gennesaret, and ministered to those who had need, even to all who touched the border of His garment (Mark vi. 53-56). But the determined opposition on the part of the Pharisees and scribes was afresh manifested. In the happiness of such as were healed those wretched people had no part. For them healing power in exercise had no interest so long as the disciples kept

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not the tradition of the elders! So the bright sky was to be clouded over. The tradition of the elders was, in their eyes, of all importance. Now an opportunity was found to attack Him whose teaching condemned them, by bringing a charge against the disciples of neglecting those traditions. "Thy disciples," they said, desiring to engage Him in controversy about their eating with unwashed hands. Any pretence is good enough if it can stop or hinder in measure the working of God in grace.

The Lord met the attack with a charge which they did not expect. They found fault with His disciples for not keeping the traditions of the elders; He charged them with rejecting the commandment of God for their tradition. Zeal for human enactments characterised them, who in their teaching inculcated open disregard of one of the ten commandments (Mark vii. 8-13). The Pharisees, thus convicted of hypocrisy, were offended, Matthew tells us (xv. 12). The Lord then left the place, and started on a circuit northward into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and found there something to rejoice His heart in the faith of a Syrophenician woman.

What a trial the persistent opposition of the Pharisees must have been to Him! What joy, on the other hand, to find one of the doomed race who desired His help, and who would not be denied the relief for which she petitioned. For though Matthew as well as Mark relates this incident, the latter it is who tells us of the woman's persistency in seeking relief. For the Lord, he writes, after whom that woman had been crying in the way, had entered a house desiring that no one should know where He was. He sought retirement from popular attention or observation. But He could not be hid, writes the historian (Mark vii. 24). Her want was as yet unmet, and her faith in Him remained unshaken. Into the house, therefore, she went after Him. Faith in that woman was active. It prompted her to appeal to Him, to whom, probably,

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she had been hitherto a perfect stranger. "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil" (or, rather, demon). So writes Matthew (xv. 22), who gives us the very words of her supplication in the way. Traditions of the elders occupied the Pharisees. Pressing need stirred her; it moved her to follow Him. It urged her, regardless of her being very probably the only woman in the midst of a company of men, and all strangers to her, to enter the house after Him, and there in the presence of the disciples, and prostrate before the Lord, to press her suit. We may picture it—a sorrowful, burdened creature in the midst of a company of men, and at the feet of the Master; she a Gentile, He a Jew. The disciples, doubtless, were silent, but not unconcerned spectators. She *had* pressed her suit in words which told of the heaviness of her afflictions. Have mercy on me, my daughter is grievously vexed with a demon! She *still* pressed it, as she "besought Him that He would cast forth the demon out of her daughter" (Mark vii. 26). Nor did she press it in vain.

Her faith shown in following the Lord till He responded to her petition, was further shown in her leaving His presence to return to her house in the full confidence that her daughter was healed. It was true what He had said: "The demon is gone out of thy daughter," for, when she re-entered her house, she found the girl laid on the bed and the demon gone out (Mark vii. 30). Ere she had regained the threshold of her abode, and even ere she left Him, the deliverance for which she had asked had been effected. The daughter had been the subject of divine, delivering power whilst the mother was still absent on her errand. The deliverance, too, was complete without the Lord seeing the girl, and without one audible word of command escaping His lips. The demon had gone out, for the Lord would not suffer it any longer to possess that poor creature. It submitted to the exer-

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cise of His power, and the mother and the daughter could now rejoice together in the cure. That mother got what she did not deserve, and what she never could have earned. It was the answer to her faith. A Gentile and a Canaanite, she proved there was mercy for her as well as for others; for God can have mercy upon all, if only all are willing to be subjects of it. Israel will learn that by and by, and rejoice in it as meeting, and fully so, their case (Rom. xi. 32). Who has learnt, or is learning that now? How did she find it out? She came to the Lord and got it. How can any prove the same for themselves? By believing on Him now as the Saviour of the lost (John iii. 16).

The Lord, who had gone into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, now went out from those of Tyre, and went through Sidon unto the sea of Galilee through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis (Mark vii. 31). In Decapolis it was that the Gadarene demoniac had published the tidings of his cure (v. 20). Were people there in consequence more ready to receive the Lord? It would seem so. For great multitudes, Matthew writes (xv. 29-31), came to Him with lame, blind, dumb, and maimed, and many others, and cast them down at His feet, and He healed them; insomuch that the multitude wondered when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see. And they glorified the God of Israel.

What a scene it must have been! The subjects of delivering power, enjoying and displaying the grace shewn them. Speech, sight, activity, and use of limbs—all this heard or seen by the wondering crowds. How many cases of cure, each full of interest in itself, could have been recounted. But Matthew passes them all over. Not so Mark, who has related (vii. 31-37) one deeply interesting and instructive case—that of the deaf man, who had an impediment in his speech. He could not hear; he could not speak aright. Had we

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seen him at a distance, or in the crowd, we should probably have thought him like other men, till coming to close quarters we should have discovered his defects, and have heard that he could not properly articulate. The ears were there, the tongue too was there ; but the former were useless, and the latter was inefficient.

How long he had been in that condition is not stated. Human skill and human resources were evidently powerless to remedy the defects. They brought him now to the Lord, and supplicated Him for the desired relief. The Lord graciously acceded to their request, and that at once. He took the deaf man aside from the multitude. The two were now alone together, the deaf man in the company of the Son of God. Attention was first directed to his ears, then to his tongue. He must hear sounds aright before he could speak intelligibly. Now this act of the Lord, in first putting His fingers into his ears, would strengthen the supposition that he had been deaf from his birth, and therefore had never heard the articulate sounds of human speech. Soon, however, was he to hear that most pliable and melodious of musical instruments—the human voice ; for he was in the company of Him who made the ears, and who also formed man's mouth, and who was not indifferent to that man's condition ; for the Lord, looking up to heaven, sighed—a token, surely, of His sympathy with His creature, and a proof how fully He felt the consequences of the fall. And then, but not till then, He uttered that one word in Aramaic, which Mark has preserved: "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened."

How often are we reminded, in reading the Gospels, of that graphic description in the Psalms (xxxiii. 9) of the exercise of the Creator's power. "He spake, and it was done." It was thus in the storm ; it was thus with the leper ; it was thus with the deaf man. "Ephphatha" was the word of command, and it was done. The effect on the man was instantaneous : "His ears were opened, and the string (or, rather, bond) of



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his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain." The effect on the crowd was marked also. The Lord "charged them to tell no man; but the more He charged them, so much the more, a great deal, they published it. And they were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well; He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak" (vii. 33-37). May we not be thankful to Mark for recording, under the guidance of God, this most interesting incident, which both Matthew and John have wholly passed over?

The healing of the Syrophenician woman's daughter, and the curing the deaf man, are both of them striking instances of the Lord's power, and of His willingness to meet the need of fallen creatures. Yet the circumstances in each case are very different. That woman's daughter was delivered from the tyranny of the demon without her ever seeing her deliverer. The mother had asked for the daughter, and the Lord delivered the child, illustrating, in her case, how grace could flow out to one who could not claim it. It was mercy from first to last. The deaf man had to be taken aside by the Lord, to be alone with Him, ere he heard a sound or could articulate correctly. Now, if the former case reminds us, as it surely does, of mercy flowing out to a sinner, does not the latter illustrate to us mercy flowing out to one hitherto a mere professor? With all his organs, both ears and tongue, he did not hear; he could not speak plainly. He must have appeared outwardly like one who ought to hear and to speak well. But he could do neither, for he was deaf; he needed intercourse with the Lord ere he could utter vocal sounds intelligibly.

Are there not some even now, and have there not been some in past times, who, taking the place of Christians, have been found lacking in that which should characterise the believer—the power to give God thanks for saving grace known and enjoyed? Professors they are with a name, and a reputation, perhaps, amongst men, yet who have never heard the

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quickenings voice of the Son of God (John v. 25). Do these lines meet the eye of any such? What is needed? Just that which the deaf man proved—the blessedness of being alone with the Lord; taken aside, as it were, from the crowd to experience His sovereign power in grace. That man could tell of the graciousness and grace of the Lord; so will anyone who, like him, is willing to receive what is needed, but from Christ.

We have spoken of the circumstances of the daughter and of the deaf man; we would add a few words about the fitness of the way in which the Lord ministered in these cases. Both were indebted to Him for their deliverance, yet they got it very differently. The suppliant mother had to own herself and, by consequence, her daughter, as no better than a dog beneath the children's table. In the case of the deaf man, there was no such dispensational barrier. The Lord at once acceded to the request of those who brought him. The fitting subjects for divine grace must take their right place before God as claiming nothing at His hand, and they must be willing to receive from the crucified One all that is required. But it should be remarked, in the case of the deaf man, that his ears were first attended to, then his tongue—he had first to hear ere he could speak correctly. Suggestive is this. He who has been a mere professor must first hear the voice of the Son of God, then he will be able to tell out the praises of the Saviour. Nor will praise for that blessed result be confined to the fresh subject of grace; for others, witnessing the effect on such an one, will be constrained to thank the Lord also.

The crowd, Matthew has related, gave glory to the God of Israel, and specially remarked, Mark tells us, on the Lord's power in giving hearing to that deaf one—power put forth on that man's behalf of which they had no need. Now, however, as ears are unstopped, and tongues set free to praise the God of all grace, thanks and praises ascend not merely from

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eye-witnesses of that which has taken place, but from such as have also themselves been previously subjects of the same saving grace.

Another incident of interest connected with this circuit is now related, and both by Matthew and by Mark, though by John, who was present, it has been wholly passed over, and Luke, who searched out much, has left it wholly unnoticed. The Lord still on the farther side of the lake, with the multitudes around Him, consideration not merely for the sick, but for them all, is now displayed. For three days had they been with Him. Now, destitute of supplies, and in a region where it was impossible to procure them, the Lord called the attention of the disciples to the want, and declared His compassion for them all. Three days had they been with Him—He noted the time. They had nothing to eat; He informed the disciples of this. Two courses were there of acting, either to send them all away to provide for themselves, or (as He had done before) to supply their need miraculously in the wilderness. To send them away, He would not. He took account of their natural, bodily weakness. "If I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way; and" (as Mark alone has recorded the end of His speech) "divers of them have come from far." The better reading here brings out His intimate acquaintance with their circumstances, and He would have that to be known.

The disciples had forgotten the lesson taught them on that same side of the lake not long before. Slow to learn! How like us, we may say. Unbelief is natural to fallen man. Often is that seen. So here. "From whence," said the disciples at once, "can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?" Had the Lord, they seemed to say, forgotten where they were? The disciples it was who were forgetful, not the Master. They forgot who the Lord was—the Messiah of Israel. His quiet reply both the evangelists have recorded: "How many loaves have

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ye? and they said, Seven." That was enough. He therefore addressed the company, and commanded them to sit down on the ground. All seated, He took the loaves and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave them to His disciples to set before them. And a few little fishes which they had He also distributed in a similar way, having first blessed them. It was enough. All were fed. All were satisfied, for the disciples took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets\* full. Four thousand men, besides women and children, had been fed by the Lord in the wilderness; then, not till then, did He dismiss them.

They had come to Him, and had continued with Him. To send them away hungry and faint He would not. None who have ever come to Him have found Him indifferent to their condition, or incapable of fully meeting it. On the former occasion the disciples first told Him of the want, as the three synoptic gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke agree in stating. On this He told them. He was aware of it, and thus showed it. Again, on the former occasion He said to the twelve, "Give ye them to eat." In that again the three evangelists are agreed. This time we read nothing of that. Then the Lord was instructing the disciples in that which was to be their service. Here He was teaching them and all of us that none following Him should lack that which was needed. Hence the absence, surely, of the command on this occasion.

These different events of this circuit are narrated in their historical order; but are they not found in a moral order likewise? Grace, we learn, can flow out, however undeserving are the subjects of it; and to utter aright the language of a Christian there must first be intercourse between the soul and Christ. The

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\* The baskets here were larger than those used on the former occasion. Those called *cophinos* were round, plaited, hand baskets. These called *spyris* were used for fish. In one such it was that St. Paul was let down out of a window at Damascus, and so escaped (Acts ix. 25).

individual must hear before he can speak plainly. Then for all who follow Christ He will provide; He knows the need, and never will, and never did send the hungry away.

After feeding the four thousand, He re-crossed the lake to its western side to be met afresh by the Pharisees. How happy had been the seasons enjoyed in that circuit which had just closed. Now the unbelief of the Pharisees was anew to be encountered. What must that have been to His spirit? They asked a sign to attest His divine mission, who was shortly afterwards to be seen by three apostles in His millennial glory! Need we wonder that He left those people and re-crossed the lake to the other side (Mark viii. 11-13)? "He filleth the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away," said His mother, speaking of God. How true was it of her Son, who is God as well as man? C. E. S.

### INTERCESSIONS.

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men."—1 *Tim.* ii. 1.

To speak to Him for ourselves and on behalf of others has been in the past most delightful occupation; it cannot be other when enjoying communion with Himself, so that holy hands are raised without wrath or doubting. Our hearts might well be in tune, and our lips give expression to unfeigned praise, as we are privileged to overhear one and another address Him who has all power and might, to whom there is none to say Nay. Such an One are we exhorted to supplicate, pray and make intercession to. Would you not like to draw near, and with bowed heart and deep reverence appeal on behalf of some dear to Him, who may be perhaps in danger of turning aside after a vain show, the things of the world, or faint because of trials by the way?

How beautiful are some instances given us—dotted here and there in the precious Word—where saints,

whether Old Testament or New, are so free from self as to interest themselves in others after a God-like fashion. There is such a character in the person of Abraham (Gen. xviii.). He has leisure ; but there he is in his tent door, with the covenant of God in his flesh, communing in the heat of the day—not reposing or asleep, but alert, and objects meet his eye whom he immediately greets and shows interest in ; hospitality, shade, refreshment, rest, are pressed upon the strangers by one who knows God and desires to serve and follow Him—not afar off, but near. “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” . . . Others, to their deep joy, put into practice this common courtesy to travellers, and found themselves no losers for imparting of their substance. “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went ; and He made as though He would have gone further. But they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us : for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And He went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him ; and He vanished out of their sight.” Sometimes invited to stay, as Abraham invited the visitors that appeared before him ; at other times—solemn to say it—pleaded with to go away, to depart, as the swine farmers did on the memorable occasion when He wrought a good work upon him who was possessed !

How grand to have His doings and purposes made known to us ! Surely we know for this there must be, as we find in Abraham, condition of soul, orderly house, interest in righteousness and truth, for such inexpressibly sweet intercourse to be held. “Friendship with the world is enmity with God,” thus those who go on with its ways, who settle down in it, can

show no such interest by pleas earnestly and repeatedly made to Him for those in it, but not of it.

This may seem a digression ; but being imitators of God as dear children does not leave us engaged in one solitary work agreeable to Him. Orderly house, subject children, and hospitality shown were the traits Titus was to see before he would have permission to ordain elders. A good work, surely, to care for one's children, to think of others and show hospitality, but a better exceedingly to have more than the welfare of body before us—to delight in His business, and, like Him, through being with Him, show that His thought does not stop at the supply of temporal things, but goes on and rejoices to find hearts prepared to receive spiritual things first before communicating them. “If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?” “The desire of the righteous is only good : but the expectation of the wicked is wrath. There is that scattereth and yet increaseth ; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat : and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.”

What ministering of nourishment and increase and health spiritually and physically to-day if we but held what He entrusts ; and if it is but the shade of a tree to offer, a morsel of bread, fine meal cakes, and a young calf tender and good—being in the current of His thoughts—no apology will be needed, and the fare will be provided in keeping with the well-ordered tent, with ready heart and hands to carry out obediently and immediately the request of him who is head. How beautiful and, no doubt, full of instruction every detail ; but to follow on, the refreshment has been partaken of, and now communications made to him—the friend of God—who would not withhold the mission these refreshed ones were on ; who would make search and look, saying nothing of fire to consume, but keen to detect that very grievous sin called for judgment from God.

## INTERCESSIONS.

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Abraham stands yet before the Lord, and pleads for the righteous in that place again and again. His importunity did not meet with rebuke—no censure, or counting him inquisitive for such persistence.

Do we forget a greater than Abraham? Let our hearts ponder His Words as we are permitted to hear them whether from Isaiah liii.—“And He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors;” or to listen again as He intercedes in John xvii. Oh! what words are these for us to hear!—His words. Where are our hearts, beloved, and what attitude do we take before Him for His own, whom He shows His untiring interest to be in, and whom He has taught us to love? Was it self with Stephen stoned, expiring, who kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, “Lay not this sin to their charge”? His voice, too, was heard from Calvary’s cross, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.” Matthew xviii., again, would take up the same thread as heads this paper, and teach us there is such a thing as intercession with God for saints, sinners, cities, etc. But what I would ask myself, my brethren and sisters, is what part have we taken in view of this exhortation—our thoughts, are they still all astray from His thoughts, although so graphically told out and communicated to one who had time and opportunity to receive them? Our fellowship with Him must be faulty indeed if we have failed in grasping what He delights in. Heart searchings, self-judgments, raising up of family altars, holding reins of government, houses in order, children subject, and such like may bring about that which is and should be cherished beyond all else—the confidence, intercourse, and counsels He has to make known to those who walk with Him, clear of unequal yokes, who hunger and thirst after righteousness, whose desire is to glorify Him, and who know that if they take forth the precious from the vile, they shall be as His mouth.

W. B.



“I, EVEN I, AM HE THAT COMFORTETH YOU.”

—*Isaiah* li. 12.

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THEN who would ask, if such a boon were meet,  
Without a care along the world to stray,  
Without a want to make the promise sweet,  
Without a tear for God to wipe away?

Who that hath watched to see the dawn appear  
Can wish that night had ne'er a shadow cast?  
And when is nature's gentleness so dear  
As when the terrors of the storm are passed?

And could the heart, by meek submission stilled  
To patient waiting for God's faithful word,  
Feel the full gladness of the hope fulfilled  
Before the sickness of the hope deferred?

Then, mourner, think, amid the weeping night,  
Of Him\* whose love the morning joy secures,  
Whose anger passes with a moment's flight,  
Whose favour like eternity endures.—*Anon.*

\* PSALM xxx. 5.

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## WORSHIP AND WORSHIPPERS.

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IT is well to be reminded of our great High Priest who bears our names upon His heart and shoulder, clad in garments which Exodus xxviii. typify of the perfections to be found in Him. We are reminded also of His priestly work; how He has entered the holiest, having found eternal redemption for us. Then what a perfect standing is ours as we see by faith the blood, the blood sprinkled on the throne (which is now the throne of grace to those who have received mercy), and seven times before it. Now we who were in darkness have been set down in the light of His presence, and thus are told that we are a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God by Jesus Christ (1 Peter ii. 5)—sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving to Him who has redeemed us to God. Then we learn from this the place of worship is not on earth, but in the holiest, even in the presence of the living God. The Jews alone, under the Mosaic economy, could claim a

place of worship on earth, and that not upon every hill, or under every green tree, but in the place where Jehovah had recorded His Name (Deut. xii.); and so the Lord says to the woman of Samaria, "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews" (John iv. 22). Let us bear in mind it is in our priestly character we worship now. In spirit and in truth, as gathered round the Lord Jesus in subjection to the Holy Spirit's leading, we worship and adore the blessed One.

The character of the place, then, should keep us walking consistently with it. "For their sakes," the Lord said, "I sanctify Myself." Let us take warning by the solemn words we read in Mal. i. 6-10, and judge ourselves if in any degree His Name has been despised. How easy to commit the two evils with which the Lord charged backsliding Israel (Jer. ii. 13). Knowing the danger, then, we need to keep the heart with all diligence. What can this world offer but "broken cisterns"? How significant the fact that "Jesus, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, *suffered without the gate*;" and has not this earth upon which we tread been stained with His precious blood? Solemn thought! Let the man of the world remember this. Let the man of God remember this. Let the worldly-minded Christian remember this. Can you, can I, beloved Christian reader, then, be false to the interests of the One who so loves us? Far be the thought. If this be recognised, let us see how we obey His loving request in being gathered to His Name alone; endeavouring to keep the unity which He has formed in baptising believers into One body. Israel were told not to worship upon every hill or under every green tree, but in the place which the Lord their God should choose to put His Name there (Deut. xii. 4, 5). But we see how they failed and turned aside, forsaking the fountain of living waters (Jer. ii. 13, 20; iii. 6).

If, then, we find it is only unto the Lord's Name we

can be gathered (and it is only by the Spirit's power that it can be so), shall we be found turning to this or that denomination, as if to do that which is right in our own eyes? No, rather let us bow to the Word of God, for "it is better to obey than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." How can we who are made priests unto God seek any other way than that which He has appointed (Heb. x. 19-22)? We have been brought to God through His rich grace, for which we can praise Him now. Let us ponder well the words we find in Lev. viii. 22, 24; our ears opened to hear His voice, doing all things to the glory of God, and walking in communion with Himself. Then, whether in the assembling of ourselves together, or in our individual walk, we should realise that the glory of God is concerned. And we are also to be found provoking one another to love and good works, exhorting one another, yea, and so much the more as we see the day approaching, when we shall be gathered home. In the light of that eternity we are to spend with our beloved Lord, may we order our words and actions to His praise who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.

"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 ever. Amen" (Jude 24, 25). J. H. I.

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### LUKE XIII.

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THOSE who were present and heard Jesus may tell Him, as they did, of Pilate and the Galileans who suffered under his hands, or of the eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew them, with the idea "that these were sinners above all others;" but He tells them, "Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall *all* likewise perish." It was not because these were the worst in Galilee or Siloam, but as teaching

the great fact by the tower and by Pilate, that He likewise had been telling out by the south wind and the cloud in the west, that the rest should discern by these signs and give diligence, and repent towards God ; yea, be delivered, lest judicially a worse disaster fall upon themselves.

It is a relief to turn from all their questionings with Jesus (which were usually so insincere) to His own direct instructions, who spake as never man did ; and thus by the parable of the fig-tree in the vineyard, and the planter, and the dresser, and the sentence, " Cut it down : why cumbereth it the ground ? " to make them the judges of their own national state before God, and get them to understand by this fig-tree what they had not by Pilate and the tower of Siloam, " Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," or be cut down.

How touching are the words of Jesus, had they had feelings that could be reached by them : " Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none : cut it down ; " but the dresser said, " Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it." And this was the ministry of Jesus and His disciples day by day. In patient grace He said to the planter, " If it bear fruit, well : and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down ; " and so it has come about with the fig-tree—the nation of Israel.

Those who misunderstood the tower of Siloam, and thought the men upon whom it fell were sinners " above all men that dwelt at Jerusalem," do not get light from the parable of the vineyard, or by the voice that interpreted it to them, and are slow to perceive that the very greatest of all sinners upon the earth must be those who yielded no fruit (the wine that maketh glad the heart of God), when such a Dresser and three years' watchful digging and dunging sought to produce the grapes !

A ruler of the synagogue comes forth with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen

years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself, and He "laid His hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God." But even gleaning grapes like these are unobserved and unknown except to the dresser and the planter. The voice from the synagogue said to the people, "There are six days in which men ought to work: in them, therefore, come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day." But the Lord answered him, "Thou hypocrite! doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?"

The lighted candle on the candlestick is set in the house again, and if those in it refuse to be made manifest, and to give diligence that they may be delivered from the magistrate, the candle must convict and condemn by its searching light those who remain behind. He takes out this "daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound," and looses her from his bonds, but leaves the ruler and his indignation to the judge. "And when He had said these things, all His adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him."

In the former chapters we have seen the scribes and Pharisees, with the rulers, in determined rejection of their Messiah and His testimony to the kingdom of God, come nigh to them; neither will they be instructed in this chapter xiii. by the tower or the vineyard and its Dresser, nor by the daughter of Abraham, on His part; or the ox, and the ass fallen into a pit, on theirs; so that they compel Him to change the similitudes of the kingdom and the nation.

"Then, said He, unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?" It is no longer to His eye the vine out of Egypt, or the fig-tree of Israel, but like "a grain of mustard seed" cast into a garden, which grew and waxed a great tree, so "that the fowls of the air" came and "lodged in the branches." It would not yield figs or grapes, under

the Dresser's hand, for the Planter ; but it grew up for the fowls of the air, like Jesus had said to them before, as to the palace and the house and their last end ! Again He said, "Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God ? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." Such would be the extent, and service, and character of the kingdom, whilst it was tenanted by "the seven spirits worse than the first," and by "the fowls of the air."

"And He went through the cities and villages teaching, and journeying towards Jerusalem ;" and here He accepts "His decease," and its necessity, too, from the mustard tree, and the woman, and the leaven, and the wickedness in the kingdom, that He might in due time cleanse it, and take it, just as He had accepted His decease from the mount of His transfiguration, that He might, in its proper season, connect the two men who appeared in glory and the three others with Himself, when He should come in His manifested power and majesty.

On His way to Jerusalem it is that one said to Him, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" for to this man the time was not come when "*all* shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest ;" nor to the mind of Jesus was He expecting at Jerusalem that every knee should bow and every tongue confess Him to be Lord, to the glory of God the Father. And He said to them, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate : for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able;" for the external and manifested form in which the setting up of the kingdom, and the outward glory of the King and His throne, could not now take the form of Solomon's times, but must needs be as it was in the days of the rejected David when Saul held the authority and power, and when the land itself was full of Philistines.

The entrance *now* into the kingdom was like it was then, by the cave of Adullam, and David understood

in it by faith and not by sight, as the rightful king by title, though in the cave. They must strive to enter it, for it was at present moral, and "at the strait gate," for it was not seen by the outward eye, but only to faith, that could discern in Christ's person what the mighty men discerned in David when in the cave, before he took his place in royal majesty and glory upon the throne in Jerusalem and Mount Zion. "Many will seek," Jesus adds, "to enter in" (when the Master has risen up and shut to the door) by knocking, and saying, Lord, open to us, for we have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets. But these associations are after the pattern of flesh and blood, and cannot be pleaded when He has risen up after another order, as the rejected One, into a new position in heaven, where He is now indeed gone, hidden at the right hand of God. He shall say from within, "I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity." They would not enter the kingdom as repentant under John the Baptist's preaching, nor would they by the call of Wisdom itself, standing at the gates and the entering in of the doors, and saying, "Unto you, O men, I call," for "My delights were with the sons of men." They would not come out to a greater than Solomon, or to a greater than Jonas the prophet; therefore, they shall weep and gnash their teeth when they see "Abraham, &c., in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out." Their father Abraham had left kindred, and house, and land when the God of glory appeared to him, and followed, not knowing whither he went. But they refused Emmanuel, come into their midst as Jesus, the Saviour, to deliver them from all their enemies, and to bring them out into the blessings and promises which were only covenanted and seen "afar off" by their fathers.

Besides this, others should come from the east and from the west, and sit down in the kingdom of God, and they themselves be cast out; for "the aliens from

the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise" would find the middle wall of partition broken down in a heavenly Christ, and enter into the kingdom of God, not by the visible throne and its king in Jerusalem, but by "the decease" which He was now on His way to accomplish there instead.

One more interview awaits Him with the Pharisees, who tell Him to get "out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill Thee," and all will then have been gone through with His adversaries in spirit, till the day of slaughter actually comes, and they shall lead Him up to it as the lamb, and He be as a sheep dumb before its shearers, to accomplish what lay upon that path, for His own glory and the glory of God. "And He said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected;" and Herod could not stop Him in His course, or if he attempted it, all he could do was to help onward the third day when resurrection from the midst of the dead would display Him in the perfection of the Second Man.

As a last prophet in the midst of the city of the great King, He lifts up His voice of wailing and beseeching to her (as Jeremiah had prepared the way of the Lord in his lamentations), crying out, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" He does not yet come and present Himself to Jerusalem as her King on the colt, but addresses her in the voice of prophecy, and as the greatest of those who had by their ministries sought to recover the city and the people back to God, and to instruct and cheer her heart by the hope of His coming to woo her and win her, but whom she had now refused. He it is, who having come in faithful love to her, upbraids her for her unfaithfulness, and says, "Nevertheless, I must walk to-day and to-morrow, and the day following;



for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem."

But she cannot arise and shake herself from the dust, or put on her beautiful garments, at the voice of this prophet, whether His ministry be by direct testimony to convict and arouse her affections, or by weeping and lamentations to win her heart to Himself. What can He do more? but look at her in the light of a future day, when, as the fruit of His sufferings and death, she shall be made willing in the day of His power and glory.

In the meanwhile He leaves the city, in this character of the Prophet, saying, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me, until the time come, when ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." "Ichabod" is written by Him upon the house, for verily "the glory is departed from Israel," and the "ark of God," with the pledges it contained, and the outward witness which it was in itself between "the God of the whole earth" and His people, had been refused in the person of the Son of His own love.

In what other relations can Jesus pass before the eyes of this people? Only one of these remains to Him; and presently, when He takes up that one and offers Himself to Jerusalem as its King, she will finally refuse Him, and consummate her guilt by the shedding of His blood. He quits the "house that is left desolate," and refuses it in His turn, declaring it to be "your house," and goes His way, content to be the "candle lighted," and set on a candlestick, to give light to them that are in the house, or who may enter therein. Morally, He accepts this place in their midst.

J. E. B.

## THE NIGHT OF ALL NIGHTS AND THE MORNING OF ALL MORNINGS!

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THE night gives birth to the morning; our observation continually confirms this. The sequence is maintained with unerring certainty. "Day unto day uttereth speech," says the Psalmist, "and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard" (Psalm xix. 2, 3). We speak of day and night, of morning and evening, but God at the creation spoke of "the evening and the morning" constituting each successive day. The mornings of Scripture are full of interest, but how much more impressive and suggestive the nights!

"I must works the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John ix. 4). But this contrast is also used in another sense, for we read: "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." Each is in its suitability as it occurs. In the former case it is *service* which is contemplated. For 1800 years and more might the Lord now say, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." And throughout that long period, "the accepted time, the day of salvation," God's servants have borne the heat and burden of the day, because it is the day of God's long-suffering mercy to a guilty and Christ-rejecting world. They have toiled on with steadfast purpose, speaking in the Master's name, for the Master, and of the Master, through evil report and through good report, knowing that an everlasting night is about to fall upon a godless, Christless world! When the saints, who, during Christ's absence, are the light of the world, shall be caught up as they are expecting to be at any moment, then a darkness more terrible than that of Egypt, "even darkness which may be felt," shall fall as a pall upon all those who would not come unto the light. Then service for Christ, as now happily exercised, will for ever cease, and the

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wayworn toiler in His vineyard will enter into the rest of God.

The other contrast (Rom. xiii. 12) relates not to service, but to *suffering* for His sake, and is therefore illustrated in the contrary way. A night of suffering is about to be followed with a morning of joy. In that connection we welcome fully the Spirit's encouragement, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." "Let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Ps. xxx. 5). Long and dark as the night may be, *we are not of it*. "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (1 Thess. v. 5). How blessed these titles, "Children of light, and children of the day." Three times over does this word, "Children of light," occur in the New Testament (Luke xvi. 8; Eph. v. 8; and 1 Thess. v. 5); and how suitably, therefore, does the Spirit of God bid us by the apostle cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light; our only defence in a night of sorrow and of suffering being this armour of light!

But another night, and that an actual one, recurs vividly to the mind. In Matt. xxvi. 31 we read that the Lord, addressing His disciples, said: "All ye shall be offended because of Me *this night*: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." Again, in verse 34, we read what the Lord said unto Peter: "Verily, I say unto thee, that *this night*, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice." The appended words, "before the cock crow," emphasise "this night," for at the cock crowing it was night no longer. Thus "this night" is connected with the general desertion of the disciples, and equally so with Peter's denial of his Lord and Master. Further, in John xiii., recording the circumstances which preceded the base betrayal

of Judas, we read (ver. 30): "He, then, having received the sop, went immediately out; *and it was night.*" Also, again, are we reminded of this by the "lanterns and torches" which "the band of men and officers" brought with them when He was arrested. And lastly, in 1 Cor. xi. 23, we read: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, *the same night* in which He was betrayed, took bread," &c.

Oh! beloved, "what a night of nights," as has been remarked, that night was! The night in which He agonised in dark Gethsemane, when "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." The night in which His own disciple, Judas, one of His apostles, betrayed Him to death. The night in which His devoted servant and apostle, Peter, denied Him with oaths and cursing, again and again. The night in which all His apostles were offended with Him, and became as sheep scattered abroad. The night in which, addressing His enemies, He had to say, "*this is your hour and the power of darkness.*"

That was morally the darkest night that ever fell upon the earth; and is it not inexpressibly sweet to reflect that it was even upon "*the same night*" that He instituted for us that precious feast of fat things wherein we REMEMBER HIM, and shew His death until He come?

This becomingly leads us on to the second branch of our subject, the morning of all mornings! "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Ps. xxx. 5). That night of all nights our adorable Saviour passed through once for all. It is behind Him for ever now. "Death hath no more dominion over Him." "It was not possible that He should be holden" of the pains of death. Very early in the morning of the first day of the week He rose triumphant over death and the grave, sin, sorrow, suffering, wrath and judgment; all, all out-distanced, and captivity for ever led captive! What a morning

was that, and how it conducts the heart onward to that "morning of all mornings" when He shall have His Bride presented faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, and when all the heavenly saints shall be raised from the grave or be changed in a moment, and be caught up to meet Him in the air, thus being for ever with the Lord!

And what, let me ask in conclusion, is there of a special character linking that "night of all nights" with this "morning of all mornings"? You will instantly answer—"the bright and morning Star!" In the darkest atmosphere, in the impressive midnight hour, when faith only can find a footing, and hope only can sustain, "the bright and morning Star" shines before the benighted pilgrim's tear-dimmed eye, illumining his heart with rays of the approaching glory, making good to his soul the word, "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs iv. 18).

May our hearts be thus sustained, and be kept in all the freshness and the fervour which the Spirit of God by this blessed hope of Christ's return ever seeks to inspire! In our darkest days let us reflect upon His night of weeping, and in our brightest upon His morning of joy when all the shadows shall flee away!

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### THE TRUE STRONGHOLD.

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"THE burden of Nineveh" (Nahum i. 1). How strange, probably, that at first sounded in the ears of some. The burden—*massa*. By this term prophetic or oracular announcements are described, as Proverbs xxx. 1; xxxi. 1, and very commonly such as indicate, when used by the prophets, final temporal dealing on the part of the Most High. In this sense was it used by Nahum.

Assyria, of which Nineveh was the metropolis in Nahum's day, was the great power of the East at that time. It could boast of a long and glorious history,

though at times it had met with reverses. Recently, however, it had made its power and authority felt in the heart of Egypt; for No-Ammon, or Thebes, the capital of Upper Egypt, had succumbed to Assurbanipal, and spoil from the banks of the Nile enriched the capital on the banks of the Tigris. To this, probably, Nahum referred in chap. iii. 8-10, thereby helping us to fix the time of his prophecy. Assyria had now reached the zenith of her greatness. With Assurbanipal, who was the son of Esar-haddon, and the Sardanapalus of the Greeks her glory culminated. Her sun was soon to set to rise no more; for under Esar-haddon II., called by the Greeks Saracus, the Assyrian empire came to an end.

By Jonah a message had been sent to Nineveh, to which she then hearkening, God's threatened judgment was averted. By Nahum another revelation was given, announcing, without hope of reprieve, the complete and final desolation of the city, and involving with it the fall of the empire. "Nineveh," wrote Nahum, "is of old like a pool (or reservoir) of water; yet they shall flee away. Stand, stand! shall they cry: but none shall look back. . . . She is empty, and void, and waste" (ii. 8-10). God gave Nineveh space to repent in the days of Jonah. God announced Himself as definitely against her in the days of Nahum. Her history thus witnessed both to God's forbearance with His creatures, and to His dealings with the finally impenitent; this last being announced when she was glorying in her greatness (ii. 11, 12). It is just when the course of the wicked may seem to be one of unbroken success, that the people of God can count on divine dealing with them (Ps. xcii. 7).

In sublime and poetic language does the prophet write. But this short book is all that we have of his utterances, and contains within its limits all that we know of the writer. In the annals of his nation he finds no place, nor is his native city elsewhere

mentioned. Hence conjecture and tradition have been busy as to its locality; for, whilst ancient testimony pointed to Galilee for the site of Elkosh, more recent tradition would identify it with *Alkush*, near Mosul, on the banks of the Tigris. The important question, however, is not *where* he wrote, nor *whence* he came, but *what* he wrote, so comforting as it is to the people of God, yet containing a timely warning to others as well. He wrote of God, and of the fall and extinction of that empire which had tyrannised over nations, and the iron hand of whose despotism had weighed heavily on the people of God.

Sure it is, however long it may be delayed, there comes divine dealing with the impenitent and with the persistent oppressors of God's people. So, though we read in Nahum (ii., iii.) of that which is past, and of the fall of a gigantic, overshadowing power with which we have had nothing to do, we are reminded by it, not only that a day of reckoning with the wicked must come sooner or later, but also that God's people will be finally delivered from all who harass them. This last, treated of more at length, as it regards the Assyrian or northern power of the future, in the prophecies of Isaiah and Daniel, and referred to in Micah (v. 5), is also noticed in i. 12-15 of our prophet.

About to predict the fall of Nineveh, Nahum speaks first of that which is even still future. For prophecy, as Peter instructs us, embraces one vast plan of which different prophetic utterances are but parts; and events in the past are often shown thereby to be shadows of the future. Hence men of God, speaking by the Holy Ghost of events long past, embraced also at times in their predictions something of that which is to come. Nahum, as we have remarked, provides us with an example of this: "Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more! . . . Behold, upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O, Judah, keep thy solemn

feasts, perform thy vows : for the wicked shall no more pass through thee ; he is utterly cut off." " The Lord hath restored (rather than, turned away) the excellency of Jacob as the excellency of Israel " (i. 12, 15 ; ii. 2).

Now the capture of Nineveh and the overthrow of the Assyrian power by Cyaxares, the Mede, and Nabopolassar, the viceroy of Babylon and father of Nebuchadnezzar, brought no such deliverance to the Jews. Nor could they then have expected it ; for subjection to Babylon and the humiliation of David's house in his descendants becoming eunuchs in the palace of the kings of Babylon, had been foretold by Isaiah before Nahum's day,\* and when Assyria was still the dominant power in the East. Hence we must regard the verses above quoted as predicting the final deliverance of the people of God, to which Micah, the Morasthite, also points his readers (v. 5, 6), and which is contingent on the final overthrow of the king of the North of whom Daniel wrote (xi. 45). The Assyrian's fall in the past transferred the power over Judah from Nineveh to Babylon, but wrought no joyous deliverance for the Jews. God, however, bids His people look forward to the end. So the promise of final deliverance from the yoke of the oppressor is announced (Nahum i. 13) before the graphic description of Nineveh's capture and desolation is traced by the pen of the prophet in chaps. ii., iii., that capture and destruction being brought about by the power of God in judgment.

In harmony with this, we are directed at the outset of this prophecy to God ; for it is apparently all one effusion. And if Nahum never again opened his mouth, God's saints would for ever have had cause to feel grateful to him as a minister of encouragement to

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\* According to the common computation in our Bibles, Nahum was contemporary with Isaiah, the capture of Thebes (iii. 8) being supposed to have been effected by Sargon. But Assyrian records discovered in late years describe the conquest of Thebes to Asshuabanipal, which necessarily makes Nahum some time later than Isaiah, since he was writing after its capture.



their hearts ; his own name, Nahum, which means *comfort*, being indicative of the right effect of his ministry on saints in his own day, as well as on saints in subsequent ages.

He writes of God—our God, what He is, and what He does. Who wants to know about Him? Ah, this concerns all. None can really afford to be indifferent to or ignorant about Him, whom *we* rightly call God. Terrible to His enemies, He is a refuge to His people. “The Lord is a jealous God, and avengeth,” so runs the Revised Version, which is here more exact in its rendering than the Authorised Version. “The Lord avengeth, and is full of wrath. The Lord taketh vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserveth wrath for His enemies.” Jealous, avenging, full of wrath, and reserving wrath for His enemies! No room is there here for such to hope for mercy. We can all understand what is intended to be conveyed, for there comes a time when showing mercy ceases to be in season. “Reserving wrath for His enemies!” How this speaks of a settled purpose to be carried out in its appointed time. “Full of wrath” is terrible to think of, but *reserving* it indicates that it is no passing emotion. Nor is this all. Even amongst men the combination of jealousy and wrath would be regarded as not a light thing to meet. “Wrath,” wrote Solomon, “is cruel, and anger is outrageous ; but who is able to stand before envy?” (Prov. xxvii. 4). Again, “Jealousy is the rage of a man ; therefore, he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom ; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts” (Prov. vi. 34, 35). Solomon wrote of men, Nahum of God. The truth of Solomon’s statements all will accept. The solemn announcement of Nahum must not be watered down to suit human conceptions of the Deity. It is true what he wrote. It will be made good in the day of the manifestation of divine power in judgment.

Nor should such a display of that which God is take men by surprise. For the prophet goes back to the revelation of God's Name made known to Moses on Sinai in the wilderness. "The Lord is slow to anger," or long-suffering; for, in the original of Nahum i. 3 and Exod. xxxiv. 6, these words are identical, as the readers of the Revised Version may assure themselves. "Slow to anger," how true. Nineveh had proved that in the past. But Nahum has to declare what God had revealed of Himself to Moses, and what Nineveh was also about to prove in the desolating judgment that awaited her, that, though slow to anger, God will by no means clear the guilty; for here again the prophet quotes from that passage in Exodus which acquaints us with the Name of the Lord, "He will by no means clear the guilty." Who then can hope to escape if God enters into judgment with him? Of course a person may profess to disbelieve the existence of God; but that will not annihilate the Eternal One. He may try, on the other hand, to persuade himself that God, being abundant in goodness (Exod. xxxiv. 6), cannot in consistency with that execute unsparing judgment on the impenitent; but no working of the human mind, nor supposition on the part of the creature, can change the nature and character of God. That must abide ever the same. And Nineveh certainly is a witness both that God is long-suffering, and also that He will not spare the guilty. Bowing under God's announcement of judgment in the day of Jonah, the Assyrian empire, as we have remarked, rose subsequently to a greatness it had never before reached. Made desolate in the days of Josiah, a place for beasts to lie down in, so that every one passing should hiss and wag the hand (Zephan. ii. 15), her mounds to this day attest the unsparing nature and abiding character of divine vengeance on the guilty.

What refuge, then, can there be for such in the day of the fierceness of God's anger? Who is He who taketh vengeance? He is the Creator, the

Almighty. Hence follows a description of His power, when He displays Himself in the character of a Judge. "The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind, and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet." The whirlwind and the storm, how they sport with men and things, carrying all before them! Before such power—the power of wind—men have to bend, and at times to hide themselves, as creatures unable to resist it. Hurricanes, tornadoes, cyclones come at the will of God, pass over the earth, and leave marks of devastation behind them. In such the Lord has His way, and the clouds are the dust of His feet. For as clouds of fine dust mark the passage of a troop of men, so the clouds, dark, gloomy, lowering as they may be, mark that of Jehovah. "Stormy wind fulfilling His Word," so wrote the Psalmist (cxlviii. 8), who was an observer of nature, and had witnessed, when an outcast, perhaps, in his native country, the devastating power of a tempest.

With the irresistible effects arising from the activity of the forces of nature Nahum was clearly acquainted, and, indeed, to such the history of his nation bore witness. The sea, whose inroads and power man cannot effectually curb, the Lord by His wind had dried up (Exod. xiv. 21) so as to make a passage for His people through the deep. Israel passed through as on dry land. The Egyptians essaying to do that were drowned. God's power opened a way for His people. God's enemies succumbed to the force of the returning waters. "They sank as lead in the mighty waters."

Then, too, waters, so needful for man's refreshment, and the sustainment of vegetation, the Lord drieth up. How little do we think of it, that the tiniest blade of grass is dependent on the Creator's continued provision for its nourishment. If He withholds it, and if the springs are exhausted, and the rivers become dry, Bashan will languish, and Carmel also—districts, as their names imply, noted for fertility. If God with-

holds the rain, no one else can supply it, for to give it is one of the marks that He is God, in contrast to idols (Jer. xiv. 22). Visitations of drought, as well as stormy winds and tempests, are from Him. Boisterous are the latter; whilst calms may be the precursors of the former.

But not alone are the heavens under His control. The God of heaven is the God of the whole earth. "The mountains quake at Him, and the hills melt, the earth is burned at His presence, yea, the world and all that dwell therein" (Nah. i. 5). How graphic, grand, yet solemn. "The mountains quake at Him, the hills melt." Nature is moved. His presence produces positive effects. The play of forces, which man can neither direct nor control, devastating in their action, and striking terror into the stoutest heart which knows not God, are as easily directed by Him as is the largest vessel by the steering wheel. Before Him nature trembles.

Stability, security, where can these then be found, if the very earth beneath our feet can be upheaved? If the forces of the winds, and the waters, when let loose, are terrible, the effects of earth's internal fire are more alarming still. One may hide from the storm, but who who can ensure safety in the earthquake? Where shall we hide when the ground gives way beneath us? Well then it may be asked, "Who can stand before His indignation, and who can abide in the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by Him" (6). Where on earth can men find a refuge in such circumstances? Some in the future will seek it, but in vain; calling on the mountains and the rocks to fall on them, and to hide them from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath, they will declare, is come, and who shall be able to stand? (Rev. vi. 16, 17). Refuge in created things *from* the wrath of the Creator it is manifest there cannot be.

Absolute power over all that He has called into being He must have. When then He arises up in anger, a hiding-place who can find?

Who can stand before His indignation? it then may well be asked. Man in the might of his own strength could not upheave a single hill, yet before the Creator they melt. Where then shall one find safety? Where possibly can it be found but in God? A terrible thought for those who know not God, and those who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus (2 Thess. i. 8). Yet how many will have to face that some day!

Who can stand before His indignation? the prophet asks. To withstand it is impossible. To be sheltered from it is possible. And this God has announced. "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knoweth them that trust in Him" (7.) So wrote Nahum, pausing in his announcements of judgment to tell of the refuge for any who will make use of it; and like an oasis in a desert, a green refreshing spot in the midst of desolation all around, these words find their place as the expression of the Spirit of God. For before and after this verse, the overpowering might of God in judgment is the theme. "With an overrunning flood He will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue His enemies" (8). "For while they be folden together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards (or, drenched as it were in their own drink), they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry" (10). Thorns when folden together, a tangled mass, it is difficult to break through; yet the fire of divine judgment will consume them as stubble fully dry. What refuge then can be found except in God, when once He rises up in His wrath?

Now it is this that He has revealed. Man, unaided by revelation, could never have thought of it. Of a refuge *from* God he may dream—a refuge *in* God divine revelation alone could make known. And this Nahum was commissioned to declare.

"The Lord is good" wrote the prophet. "The Lord

is good" the royal Psalmist had declared. Of this he loved to speak; yet till his day it seems to have been unmentioned;\* and between his day and those of his brother Psalmists till the days of Nahum it was a subject almost unnoticed.

"The Lord is good." True. But who can share in His goodness? Now this truth is connected in the Word with God's mercy and with His grace. "The Lord is good to all" writes David in the last Psalm in the Psalter which is ascribed to him, and which is entitled "David's Psalm of Praise,"† and His tender mercies, he adds, "are over all His works" (Ps. cxlv. 9.) And again out of the fulness of his heart he sings, "O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in Him" (Ps. xxxiv. 8). Good the Lord had shown Himself to be to sinners (Ps. xxv. 8), teaching them of His way. Good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all that call upon Him; in this light does David present Him in his *prayer* in Ps. lxxxvi. 5. So, whether in prayer or in praise, His goodness was a theme the Psalmist delighted to remember, and desired the Lord's people to celebrate in words familiar to us all, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, and His mercy endureth for ever" (Ps. cvi. 1; cvii. 1; cxviii. 1, 21). "For the Lord," he again writes, "is good, His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations" (Ps. c. 5).

How many a heart has gratefully poured forth its praise in this utterance of David in the hundredth Psalm. Nor is this theme by any means now exhausted; for when Christians will be found no longer on earth, and will be spoken of by men as extinct, for of them in this scene none will be found, the Lord's

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\* God had said to Moses, "I will make all My goodness pass before thee" (Exod. xxxiii. 19). Moses, however, never states that God is good.

† Fitting is it that the last Psalm in the whole book ascribed to David should have this unique title, "Praise," *t'hillah*; from which perhaps the whole collection received its name in the original *t'hillim*, *i.e.*, praises. With praise his muse in the Psalms closes its compositions.

people will be heard lifting up their voices in thanksgivings, and exhorting one another to praise Him, for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever (Jer. xxxiii. 11). That refrain, which we owe under God to the tongue and pen of David, will not die out while time shall last. "The Lord is good" said David. "The Lord is good" echoed Nahum. It was David's experience and comfort in all his vicissitudes. It was the prophet's stay in the thought of God's power in judgment which must overtake His enemies. For, if He is good, He will display it, and some will taste of it. So, starting from what the Lord is in Himself, Nahum goes on to what He can be in the time of trouble. This is an important matter, and as to it there is no doubt. Nahum's testimony is as clear as the sound of a silver trumpet. "The Lord is good. He is a stronghold in the day of trouble." What Nineveh would seek for in vain, a stronghold in her day of visitation (iii. 11),\* that Jehovah is, and will be to His people.

Was the prophet speaking of that stronghold as something new, previously unheard of? How often had David sung of it, having proved it in his own history, both celebrating it in his song of deliverance (2 Sam. xxii. 2, 3), and re-assuring his heart as to it when passing through trouble (Ps. xxvii. 1; xxviii. 8; xxxi. 3). Nor was he alone to experience it. Saints when in trouble because of the ungodly were to remember it, and be comforted (Ps. xxxvii. 39). And the godly remnant of the future will celebrate it, in the language already provided for them, in the prophetic Scripture of Isa. xxv. 4: "Thou hast been a stronghold to the poor, a stronghold to the needy in his distress." In all ages, then, this has been and will be true. Nahum spake of it as a *truth*. David tells that he had found it to be true. And the remnant, when all their trials and troubles will be matters of the past, will remember it as that which they had proved. And Jeremiah,

\* "Strength" in Nah. iii. 11 is really "a stronghold," the same word in the original as that in i. 7. See Revised Version.

who had seen affliction, told God that he was sure of it (xvi. 19). And we may turn to an earlier prophet than Nahum, Isaiah, or Jeremiah, even to Joel, the son of Pethuel, who in his prophetic utterance declares, in solemn, yet joyous strains, "The Lord shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of His people, and the strength (or rather, stronghold) of the children of Israel" (iii. 16). Things around may shake, but that stronghold is enduring and abiding.

It was then nothing new. "The Lord is a stronghold in the day of trouble." We can count on it, and, when needing it, prove it. And if allowed, like David in his song, to review God's dealings with us in the past, shall we not echo his words, and say, "God is my strength and power" (or, as the Revised Version gives it, my strong fortress), and that when it was most needed—in the day of trouble (2 Sam. xxii. 33.)

Further, "He knoweth them that trust in Him." What a gracious declaration! His knowledge of such, be it remarked, is noticed; not their knowledge of it, or of Him. The Lord reads the heart, and looks at it, and "He knoweth them that trust in Him." It is a characteristic of God that He knows those who are truly characterised as trusters in Him.\* Turning again to David's utterances, we learn how he confirms this. "Blessed is the man," he wrote, "that trusteth in Him" (Ps. xxxiv. 8); and surely it was not without point that he here selected that word for man, *geber*, which reminds us of strength, and not of weakness or of mortality. The man who might naturally rejoice, and confide in his own strength, is blessed if *he* trusts in the Lord. We can never really be independent of God, and of this are we reminded by One greater than David, who has inculcated the same lesson, using the pen of the royal Psalmist to express it. "Blessed is that man,

\* *Knoweth* and *trust* are here participles, and so intimate what characterises the Lord, and characterises the class referred to.



*geber*, that maketh the Lord his trust ; and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies" (Ps. xl. 4). He too could say, "I will put my trust in Him" (Heb. ii. 13), thus emphasising the importance of that which He would press.

"He knoweth them that trust in Him." Yes, indeed. And if He teaches us that we can never be independent of Him, has He not assured us that we can never be too low for Him to come in and lift us up? "I was brought low, and He helped," the composer of Ps. cxvi. 6, whoever he was, has told us. Nor is that all. For not only can the Lord then come in, but such a condition can be pleaded as a reason for His intervention. So David when in the cave pleaded with God: "Attend unto my cry ; for *I am brought very low*" (cxlii. 6). And when Jerusalem in a coming day shall have been captured, and the temple shall have been desecrated, men, too, riding roughshod over God's people, carrying all before them, as detailed in Ps. lxxix. the remnant will cry, "Remember not against us former iniquities, let Thy tender mercies speedily prevent us, for *we are brought very low*" (ver. 8.) Do any trust in Him? then almighty power is on the side of the weakest of men. Their refuge is in God, whatever may have been the cause of their low condition.

What God is in Himself—good ; what He can be in trouble—a stronghold ; whom He knows—them that trust in Him. Such was the gracious announcement by Nahum in the midst of that grand description of God's power in judgment—a refuge thus pointed out for any who would make use of it. C. E. S.

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

## “THE PRESENT TRUTH.”

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IN a fortnightly paper bearing the above title one is surprised to find an indictment concerning Brethren, for which the editors of *The Methodist Christian Advocate* are in the first place responsible, having published under the heading of “A Horrible Doctrine” the following indictment:—

### ANTINOMIANISM.

*The Methodist Christian Advocate* gives rather a vivid description of Antinomianism, and yet a true one, in an article under the heading “A Horrible Doctrine.” We commend the following words of the *Advocate* to our readers:—

“It is the most subtle heresy that has harassed the modern church. It was rife in Wesley’s day, and drew forth his most vigorous denunciation. The Plymouth Brethren are keeping it active now, and some travelling evangelists are reputed to be tainted with it.

“Antinomianism is the doctrine which makes void the law through faith. It holds that Christ abolished the moral law, and that, therefore, Christians are not obliged to observe it. Christian liberty, according to its notion, consists in liberty from the restraint of obeying the commandments of God. Believers are under no obligations to obey God or do good. Preachers are not exhorted to good works. Believers are not required to use the ordinances of God. They are not required to do anything except to believe. And if they believe, no matter what they do, they are entitled to eternal life. What a horrible soul-destroying doctrine is this!

“Now nothing is clearer than that the law which Christ abolished is not the moral law, but the ceremonial law of the Jews.\* Christ established the moral law, and made its principles for ever binding. Christian liberty is liberty from the ritual law of Moses, and from the law of sin. There is no such thing in Christianity as liberty from the moral commandments. They who proclaim this doctrine, or live in accordance with it, lift the flood-gates to all manner of abominations. The moment a man conceives the idea that he has nothing to do with the law of God, that he is not under the law, that moment he cuts himself loose from all restraints. He can imagine he has a right to everything in this world. . . . He can steal his neighbour’s goods, or violate any other commandments, and yet he does not sin. . . .

“In Wesley’s times the teachers of this vile theory confessed to just such extremes of license, and Mr. Wesley very appropriately styled them ‘wretches,’ ‘the firstborn children of Satan,’ ‘given up to the spirit of pride and blasphemy,’ ‘surrendered into the hands of Satan.’ In 1774 he declared that Antinomianism was the great flood which the dragon in that age was pouring out of his mouth; that it was a greater hindrance to the work of God than any, or all others put together.

We do not say that all persons who are tainted with this heresy are as bad as this doctrine would incline them to be. Many accept the doctrine without comprehending its true import. There is just enough of

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\* This distinction is a human one, utterly unknown in Scripture.—*Editor of W.S.*

truth in its beginnings to make it plausible, and enough of error in its endings to make it the foremost doctrine of devils. It is the Christian's duty to exalt the merit and love of Christ, and to rejoice evermore in freedom from guilt and sin, but not to discountenance the necessity of holy living and strict obedience to the commandments of God. 'Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works,' is the challenge of St. James, which no man has ever successfully met. True Christian faith is a faith which manifests itself in a pure life."

Without presuming to establish what is taught by Brethren, so called, on the difference between the truth of justification by faith (justified before God) and justification by works (justified before men), here assailed, seeing their teachings number a great many more than any other on the subject, and are also plenteously scattered and easily attainable, a few words on this present indictment may not be out of place. If we weigh its contents and the value of them in the light of but two Scriptures only, were there none others, we can see how useless it is for man to fight against the truth of God, seeing that he fighteth against Himself. Antinomianism, this horrible doctrine, this subtle heresy, is what Brethren are charged with. These are charges easily made, statements that are easily written, but support and basis upon which to found them will be vainly sought for in their literature.

(1) Rom. vi. 14: "For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under law, but under grace" (R.V.); and (2) Gal. iii. 10, 11, 12, 13: "For as many as are on the principle of works of law are under curse. For it is written, Cursed is every one who does not continue in all things which [are] written in the book of the law to do them; but that by law no one is justified with God [is] evident; because the just shall live on the principle of faith; but the law is not on the principle of faith; but he that shall have done these things shall live by them. Christ has redeemed us out of the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, Cursed [is] everyone hanged upon a tree) (R. V.)."

These are the two Scriptures that sufficiently meet such an article as the one before us, and are a good criterion as to its worth, being the unchangeable Word of God. To expose the false charges is not necessary, as they are so apparent; but to meet one or two statements is necessary,

and easily done. First, we notice the paragraph: "The moment a man conceives the idea that he has nothing to do with the law of God, that he is not under the law, this moment he cuts himself loose from all restraint," &c. That clearly is the idea of *man*, but how different speaks the word: "Ye are not under law, but under grace" (Rom.) "For ye are saved by *grace*, through *faith*; and this not of yourselves; it is God's gift: NOT ON THE PRINCIPLE OF WORKS, that no one might boast" (Eph. ii. 8, 9).

This is what the opponents to the truth of justification by faith stigmatise as a deadly heresy, naming it the foremost doctrine of devils. Romans iii. 21-28 runs thus: "But now without law righteousness of God is manifested, borne witness to by the law and the prophets; righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ towards all, and upon all those who believe: for there is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption which [is] in Christ Jesus; whom God has set forth a mercy-seat, through faith in His blood, for [the] shewing forth of His righteousness, in respect of the passing by the sins that had taken place before, through the forbearance of God; for [the] shewing forth of His righteousness in the present time, so that He should be just, and justify him that is of [the] faith of Jesus. Where, then, [is] boasting? It has been excluded. By what law? of works? Nay, but by LAW OF FAITH; for we reckon that a MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, WITHOUT WORKS OF LAW" (R. v.). This is Antinomianism according to the article quoted.

"Travelling evangelists are reputed to be tintured with it." One is glad to hear this, for none can make too much of the precious fact, that by grace we are saved, and that without good works on our part. A poor salvation ours, if it depended on some good works of our own superadded to the one great work of redemption and atonement wrought by Jesus Christ once for all, Who has been delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification. A good thing if all travelling evangelists and others also were well tintured with this. Do we ignore law because we are no longer under that, but under grace? Certainly not. What saith the Scripture? Rom. iii. 31: "Do we then make void

law by faith? far be the thought: [no], but we ESTABLISH LAW."

In the epistle of James, which treats so fully of justification by works, we have law also treated in its several characters, viz.:—The law of liberty, the royal law, and the whole law. The law of liberty is surely that which the new man delights in as Christ delighted in the will of God (Heb. x. 7), and was as willing to obey as God was to command. So the law of God was to Him the perfect law of liberty. That which is born of God cannot sin, *i.e.*, our new nature, but desires exactly what is the will of God, and is ever ready to obey, because the law of God is a perfect law of liberty for the new man. "For we are His workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus for GOOD WORKS, which God has before prepared that we should walk in them" (Eph. ii. 10).

The royal law, says the apostle, is "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (James ii. 8). The man that doeth this doeth well. The whole law extends very much wider in its application. I may keep the whole law, and yet only offend in one point to be guilty of the whole. Now, then, it is very clear that if a man is under law, he is responsible to keep the law; one offence, and he is guilty of having broken the law, and despised the will of Him who gave the law, by his disobedience.

But James insists on good works, and very properly so, for by my fruits only is my fellow-man to know that I have faith. The closing paragraph of the article on Antinomianism is, "It is the Christian's duty to exalt the merit and love of Christ, and to rejoice evermore in freedom from guilt and sin, but not to discountenance the necessity of holy living." Very true; but it remains to be proved yet that Brethren have ever discountenanced this; on the contrary, adequate proof and testimony is accessible to all that it is taught and *not* denied.

But they continue, "and strict obedience to the commandments of God." This sounds nice, no doubt; but it must be borne in mind our commandments are those of the New Testament. The words of the Lord Jesus to His own were these:—John xiv. 15: "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." John xv. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14: As the Father has

loved Me, I also have loved you : abide in My love. 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. I have spoken these things to you that my joy may be in you, and your joy be full. This is My commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, that one should lay down his life for his friends. Ye are My friends, if ye practice whatsoever I command you" (R.V.).

"Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, we have boldness towards God, and whatsoever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments, and practice the things which are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment, that we believe on the Name of His Son Jesus Christ, and that we love one another even as He has given us commandment" (1 John iii. 21, 22, 23). These, then, are commandments all true Christians ought thankfully to obey. Brethren have never taught differently, or denied the necessity of obedience to the truth of God.

But they continue by quoting the Scripture from James. "'Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works,' is the challenge of St. James, which no man has ever successfully met. True Christian faith is a faith which manifests itself in a pure life."

The Apostle is not making, by any means, a challenge there. His words are, "Some one will say" (James ii. 18). "Show me"; then it is a question of my justification before whom—God or man? Does God require an exhibition of my faith to know if the principle is right? Nay, it is impossible, since faith is the gift of God. He knows and reads the heart better than I know it myself. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God" (Rom. v. 1). But how is man to know that I have faith? My telling him will not suffice; then what will? My works, my walk, of course. He has a perfect right to expect from me an exhibition of the faith I profess toward God and our Lord Jesus Christ: hence it is man who says, "Show me." The whole argument of justification by works rest on those two words.

Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Now to him that works the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but of debt: but to him who does not

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work, but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness (Rom. iv. 3, 4, 5). But James tells us Abraham was justified by his works as well as faith. How is this? The answer is simple—Abraham's faith was displayed openly in his willingness to offer up Isaac. Thus faith produced works acceptable to God, and a living testimony that Abraham believed God, "and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness, and he was called the friend of God" (James ii. 23). Blessed title this—all springing from true faith, which manifests itself in a consistent walk in communion with the Lord here on earth. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments" (John iv. 15). "We love Him because He has first loved us" (John iv. 19). R. W. N.

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MY DEAR BROTHER,

Pearson attributes to the Son that He was the natural Son of God, begotten of God by natural generation, in which the divine essence was communicated unto Him, He becoming at once thereby God, and Son, and Heir of all. He attributes priority to the Father, the one original Person; and says "that there can but be one Person originally of Himself subsisting in that infinite Being, because a plurality of more persons so subsisting would necessarily infer a multiplicity of gods." "The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is originally God, as not receiving His eternal being from any other. Wherefore it necessarily followeth that Jesus Christ, who is certainly not the Father, cannot be a Person subsisting in the divine nature originally of Himself, and consequently must be understood to have the Godhead communicated to Him by the Father, who is not only eternally but originally God." "The Father hath the Godhead not from the Son, or any other, whereas the Son hath it from the Father: Christ is the true God and eternal life; but that He is so, is from the Father: *For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself, not by participation, but by communication.*" "The Father is greater than I: the Son equal in respect of His nature, the Father greater in reference to the communication of the Godhead."

I think I have not unfairly summed up in the foregoing the teaching of Pearson on the subject to which I called your attention. To that teaching I am strenuously opposed. It is the carnal reasoning of theology, propped up by an ignorant perversion of Scripture. There is scarcely a deduction made with which I am not at issue. (1) Where does Scripture attribute the being of the Son to natural generation? (2) Where does it speak of the communication of the divine essence? (3) Where does it speak of the priority of the Father? As you say, "there is nothing 'before' in eternity," and as you say again, Scripture declares Christ's *eternal* Sonship. Consequently, He being co-eternal with the Father, there could have been no derivation of His being from Him. (4) Where does Scripture suggest that the Father was originally God, but not so the Son? (5) Where that a plurality of Persons implies a multiplicity of Gods? If so, there would be that multiplicity now, for that there *is* a plurality of Persons cannot be denied. (6) Where does Scripture indicate that the Godhead was derived by the Son from the Father any more than it does that it was derived by the Father from the Son? In "natural generation" (properly so speaking) the priority of father to son is inevitable, and equally so derivation of being, but I totally refuse its application to the Divine Persons. To maintain it in reference to the Son is to deny His Eternal Sonship and His Eternal Godhead. I do not deny that He was "the only-begotten of the Father;" what I deny is that He was ever anything less, *i.e.*, that He was ever the *unbegotten* of the Father, or ever could have had to come into being, or to receive the Godhead as a communicated thing. I utterly repudiate, and with the strongest abhorrence, any such teaching, and I ask for a single Scripture which requires such an interpretation as this teaching carries. The Scriptures cited by Pearson bear no such interpretation. They are these:—"So hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." We have only to refer to John v., 21 to 27, to see that the Lord was not referring to His eternal being, but to His work amongst men upon earth. As in John i. 4, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." It is what He had in Him from the Father for us; see also 1 John v. 11, and 2 Peter i. 17.

"The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth



the Father do" (John v. 18, 19). The same answer will suffice. It is the Son as the sent One and servant of the Father.

"The Father is greater than I." "I know Him, for I am from Him." Here also it is the same; the Son in His humiliation and in His subjection thus to the Father, from whom He came.

The Scriptures you also cite present no difficulty. They are: "I came forth from the Father." That relates to His mission on earth. "The-only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father." That is eternal relationship in ever-unbroken ecstasy of enjoyment. "I proceeded forth and came from God." That again relates to His mission on earth. Not one of these Scriptures affords a bit of foundation for the dogmas I controvert.

You say that if Christ had the Godhead in Himself, then that is a denial of the *truth* that there is only One God. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One God." But why so? To affirm this is not to establish it. I hold that He had the Godhead in Himself, and so had the Father, and so had the Holy Ghost; and I say so because, as to this, nothing in Scripture (except what relates to creation or redemption) is predicated of the one that is not predicated of all. If there *are* persons in the Godhead, there have been such from all eternity. In what way do I by affirming this deny that there is only One God? If the existence of Divine Persons now, each equally possessing Godhead, does not deny the truth of One God, in what way does the affirming that it was originally and eternally so contradict it? I say again that, according to my conviction, these carnal reasonings are utterly unscriptural and Christ-dishonouring. The terms Father and Son as applied to the Divine Persons have no relation or reference to origination of existence, or communication either of Being or of Godhead. But God has been pleased to use such terms as being the best adapted to tutor our hearts in an apprehension of the relationship of joy and affection which the Divine Persons hold towards each other in Godhead glory and in the ineffable complacency of an infinite and eternal love.

These are truly sacred subjects, but I trust that I have not touched them with any irreverent hand.—Affectionately yours in Christ,

W. R.

DECEMBER, 1890.