

# WORDS IN SEASON.

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

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1892.

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## THE SECOND MAN, THE LAST ADAM, AND CHRIST IN GLORY.

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THINK of the angels who witnessed the creation, and the flowing out of the Creator's power in the perfection and beauty of Eden, having the thought that the One putting forth all this beauty and goodness would be the One to be nailed to the cross as a malefactor, and put into a cave in the earth, and nothing too bad for man to say of Him! Again, could there have been such a thought in heaven as that one treated like a malefactor, would not only be raised up and be in heaven, but be seated on the throne of God—God's delight? No! Never! And it is one of the most difficult things for me to get the thought that according to what I was in nature, it was as unlikely for God to work in me, and out of such materials to fashion a perfect vessel, as for His Son to come down and die.

There is no light like the cross to show out the real character of human nature; no act man ever did of which God could say, "That is what *man is*," till His Son was put to death and the light of heaven shone down upon a city of murderers. That cross just showed what we are in nature: but God looked into the pit of nature, and He came there because He is rich in mercy. Who can say anything if God chooses to take up such, and give them a new nature, a new life?

Adam's life in Eden was not a life beyond the grave—not that life in which the second Man, the Lord from heaven, ascended up where He was before. As Son of Man, Christ could and did die; but He gave up His life that He might take it again; and that is the life which a man taken out of nature gets. The first Adam could not have had such a life unless imparted by the last Adam: He communicates life—eternal life. There was no living fountain of water flowing down until Christ left the grave and ascended.

Eighteen hundred years ago a fountain was opened in heaven.

What is the great difference between the works of man and Christ's works? Christ's were all connected with the Father. He always looked up to the Father with a heart attuned to the mind of God. The works we want as the people of God are works that take in the mind of God. If you want to know what is *not* "worthy of God," you should ask, "Would the Son of God, if He were in the world, do it?" Are works connected in your mind with the thought, "I ought to do this *because I belong to God*"? One who has life in Christ cannot bring forth fruit without its being received by God. It is most important to judge our works—to see whether they are works that are worthy of Christ; good works, not according to man's thoughts, but according to the mind and thoughts of God, of such a character that we can say, "to me to live is Christ."

What can be more blessed than God's having unveiled the face of Christ to the heart, and the bright light of that face shining down and filling it! The Holy Ghost given to bring it always there. But, bright as it is, the treasure is in an earthen vessel, and we are still in the wilderness.

God knows nothing so beautiful as Christ: He would have us ever looking on Him, in whose all-perfect beauty the Almighty heart finds all delight. That God has unveiled that face and let all its light shine down into our hearts is indeed most blessed; but from that very thing responsibility comes in doubly. We have to walk as light-bearers. That Christ with uncovered face is a Christ whose light shines down in order to shine *out through* His people. All the light which they ought to give out is in the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. If you looked at responsibility as connected only with self, you would murmur and be miserable.

Whenever we look at responsibility, it makes us

feel the need of just such sweetness as we find in the thought, that we are left down here as witnesses for the Lord. As soon as He comes, He will fill the whole earth with glory; we must wait for that. Our present position is as a "flock for the slaughter" passing over the earth, letting light shine out. When He comes He will give the higher glory. What sweetness there is in the thought of being used by the Lord down here to give out light—serving His purpose; for He *will* have a light on the earth while He is away. When He comes, it will not be only the joy of His kingdom, but you will have the thought that you have served His turn in the wilderness, letting light (His light) shine out. And when He put you there, did He not know what the earthen vessel was? The weaker, the more feeble a people, the more will be their sense of His power.

Soon we shall be up there with Christ. God did not mean us to be happy without Him; but God would first have us to be witnesses for Him down here, to hold out as much light as we can.

Not only have I seen the face of Jesus Christ (see John xiv. 21), and, O, what a sight beyond all sights! but I have a connection with Christ in the light. I have not only to look away from things present and see that bright light up there, but I have to reflect it down here. I may be a very bad reflector; "never mind (Christ says), go on, *I* give thee power; I know you are nothing in yourself, and that you are in the place where it is night; but go on giving out light; soon you will be in God's day." That morning without clouds will usher us into the light where Christ now is. He is the bright and morning Star. For eighteen hundred years He has been dealing with a people down here: the night may be very dark, but the darkness does not reach up to the bright and morning Star. No cloud can cover Him: soon He will shine out. We are only on sufferance here, on our way to what lies farther on. He is *our* bright and

morning Star ; we shall *see* Him. He will take us up and guide us to the Father's house, before the sun shines out. It is that hope which gives one courage to go on in the midst of failure. To be sure, I have failed. Have I been a good light reflector ? No ! but I am to go on as I can till He comes, till I see Him as the bright and morning Star. It is not the looking for bright light reflectors at His coming (though we ought to be such), but the Holy Ghost in the Bride wanting Him to come. Does He hear you cry, "Come, Lord Jesus" ? Are your hearts so going forth as to be ever saying, "Come, Lord Jesus ?" You need not look round and wait for another, *you* may say it to Him. Ah ! cultivate communion with Christ in connection with that word, "Come !" I know nothing so fitted to raise up out of the world as having the soul in communion with Christ about that ; looking at ourselves as part of the Bride still on earth, and the Spirit in her saying, "Come !"

There may be failure and ruin of the Church, but there is the fact that I am part of a company which God has given to His Son, and because of that (not because of anything in me) I can be doing nothing but saying the live-long night, "Come, Lord Jesus, come !"

As soon as we are in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ we have got *God* ; God has introduced Himself as a living Person to the soul, and all our associations are connected with God.

When He separates any one to Himself, He plants the blood of Christ right behind them.

Christ's beauty will be displayed to us before He comes forth and takes His great power into His hand to smite the things of the world. He will come forth then to perfect victory. He is now sitting in heaven with all power about Him and in Him, but He does not exercise it now.

He has put us in the place He stood in on the earth

—as sheep for the slaughter. What a place to be in, kept by Him! We have a risen, ascended Lord who has made good His word, so that we can have a place; and He has so kept things on earth that, in spite of men and Satan, He has ever enabled a people to confess His name and to stand a few together in testimony, whilst He directs their service. He took Paul's especially into His own hands. In regard to the candlesticks also, He took all into His own hands. And so now He maintains communion with His people, and sets them moving in service. The limbs cannot move except the head acts in them. Satan himself cannot move a tongue without God's permission—God, as Ruler of everything. If God be for us, who then can be against us? Immense comfort is in that thought. It is no lack of power that keeps Christ back. He could come if He chose before Satan is cast down, and set up His kingdom. Israel's not being ready would not prevent His rising up from the Father's throne and coming forth. He is the One for whom God has planned everything, and we ought to connect everything with this blessed One. He is the Adonai. He can say, "The time will come when I shall deal with Satan." But now He waits, and says to one and to another, "I have set you in testimony—let the waters flow out where all is against you, and I will help you." I can look up and say, "I am one spirit with Him." If He was the Lamb, I must be a sheep. I can look up to Him to shelter me all the way through.

The One who comes in mighty power with all the angels, comes as One who was a pilgrim and a stranger. He can turn to Israel in the latter days and say, "I went through all that you are going through." And to us He says, "I have a heart to sympathise with all your sorrow." That is just what one knows of Christ as One who looks down, saying, "If you are a member, I am the Head; do not think of your weakness, but of My strength."

Who understood the wilderness as He did? Who was ever such a thorough pilgrim, drinking of the brook in the way? The "Man of sorrows" knows well how to lift up your head. How the power of His sympathy in our hearts lifts up His people's heads! He won't forget His backsliding people on earth either.

The heart of God is, with Christ, occupied with a people down here, having all power in heaven and earth to keep them standing in His strength. The Holy Ghost is down here: we have access to His heart; He has associated us with Himself and with what He is going to do in a way immeasurably deeper than Israel.

If you take the world *with Christ*, it will not destroy the foundation, but it will be the destruction of all your joy and service. You will be "saved as by fire."

G. V. W.

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## "CHRISTIANS, AWAKE."

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Christians, awake! salute the happy morn  
 When Christ, our Saviour, shall Himself return;  
 When myriad saints, arising at His call,  
 Shall see His face, and own Him Lord of all!

Them shall He bring with Him to meet on high  
 Their living brethren, those who ne'er shall die;  
 All changed, all fashioned to His body bright,  
 All glorified as saints in heavenly light!

Oh! happy morn! the fairest, brightest, best,  
 When we shall enter God's eternal rest;  
 When we shall grieve no more the Master's heart;  
 When we no more shall from His side depart.

Thrice happy morn! when Christ shall claim His bride;  
 His rights, His titles, honours, none denied;  
 When she with Him in manifest display  
 Shall share His glories in eternal day!

## FRAGMENTARY NOTES ON I TIMOTHY.

THE fact of flesh (*i.e.*, of the flesh being in us) does not make a bad conscience. It requires flesh in action, so as to produce outwardly what is bad to do so.

“ Holding faith and a good conscience ”—in this we have the doctrine of the epistle.

I may see what is beautiful in creation, and delight in it; but the moment I *rest* in it, I make it an object, and then sink down into it.

“ We know ” is a technical expression for Christian knowledge. It is not merely knowing objectively, but rather such and such is made a subject of revelation, and *we* have got it and know it.

“ Using the law lawfully ” is convicting sinners by it. The legalist *takes* that ground which the law proves he cannot take. The law never goes beyond the brazen altar, that is, *man's* responsibility as man.

The law condemns all that flesh produces, but not flesh itself.

The Sabbath—rest—is an integral part of man's relationship with God; God did rest in creation, but not now since man has fallen. The Sabbath is annexed to every thing (or order) that is set up (with man as man): but in the New Testament it is always set aside, as is the child of Adam fallen.

Paul calls himself the chief of sinners; that is, he was a rejector of the Lord after He was crucified and glorified; the Jew (properly speaking, is characterised as being) a rejector before He was crucified. Stephen's martyrdom was the closing scene of the dispensation for the Jew. The chief of sinners is an end of self, and we are in the same boat with Paul when we take that place.

The gospel of the glory (of Christ) is the highest point of grace as it reveals the glory to the person who is trying to destroy it; in preaching, however, you must go back to where the want is in the soul.

“Make shipwreck of faith” is running into heresy; backsliding, giving up a good conscience.

Not only man has fallen—there are fallen angels, and the heavens are defiled; all things had and are to be reconciled. Those that *are* reconciled do need a Mediator for intercession. A Mediator comes in with a broken relationship, an Advocate with a retained one.

In Ephesians we are called on to be imitators of God; in Colossians, like Christ; in Philipians, to walk as saints as personified in Paul.

An unmarried man might possess a gift, but he could not be an elder. Gifts are for the body; office is local. We have an example in Timothy of a young man who ruled elders. A ruler is a person who gets an ascendancy over others morally, and keeps their wills from working by the power of the Word in the Spirit.

Christianity takes up creation as God made it and sanctions it, and brings in another power, viz., spiritual power.

The snare of the devil, which is a bad conscience, brings in the same condemnation; the person is charged with the same thing Satan is charged with, viz., pride. (See Ezekiel xxviii.)

The precious stones are on the king of Tyre in creation (worldly glory); on Aaron in grace (the high priest); in the new Jerusalem, in glory.

The Holy Ghost dwells in the individual believer, and in the whole church, *only* as the house of God.

“Justified in the Spirit”—that is, the power of the Spirit characterises the justification. “Seen of angels;” it is only by Christ angels have seen God. “Believed on in the world,” that is, announced and received there by faith.

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“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.”—J. N. D.



“THEY THAT FEARED THE LORD.”

—*Mal.* iii. 16.

“THEN they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened and heard.” As an instance of His hearkening that memorable journey to Emmaus comes before us, when He joins in company for the express purpose of opening up the Scriptures that must show Him, although their eyes were holden in the meantime that they should not know Him. How much did they err, not knowing the Scriptures! This is our danger to-day. In spite of the enemy’s wiles, the fires that burned those who loved the Lord and thought upon His Name, the public forcible expulsion of those from this world who would cleave to His Word, the violence extended to them; all this but whetted the appetite, and nerved and strengthened His own, passing along as pilgrims here, to hold with spiritual vigour that Word that was more to them than property, dearer to them than their lives; thus He stood by them in their trial. With unshaken confidence in Him the pile would be mounted, without reviling, without calling upon Him to pour out wrath upon evil-doers under Satan’s power and sway, but esteeming it joy to suffer for Christ’s sake—gain of a kind to have His Word, and the needed grace to count that life did not and does not consist of putting on raiment, of running to excess of riot in eating, drinking, and revelling. The Word of God was life to them. Obedience to it was not so much duty, but a joy; instructions found there that suffice for all time, embracing all changes of scene. To walk according to them ever calls up malignant hatred and sore persecution from those who love unrighteousness, who know not Christ, and truth, and light, and would make away with that which exposes them.

Think of those who practised self-denial, pence being laid by until they accumulated to pounds with

this one object—not money saved for the love of it, but the glad and ready exchange of it for a copy of the Scriptures. What gainers were those who lived not for self, who have through grace supplied left their marks in the pages of this world's history, of whom the world was not worthy. Accounts have to be rendered yet as to doings. The blood of Christ, and those who live by Him and have followed Him, testify as to what man is capable of, has done, and will do.

Would you be tempted to think improvement has come about now that the rack, block, and pile are things of the past, now that the Scriptures no longer cost pounds, and call no more for much self-denial to possess a copy of them? What a change! Where is the reverence for the Word of God? It is counted common, treated worse than a fable. And have not we imbibed the spirit of the times we live in, by lightly esteeming the increased privileges we possess? Shall we not own that it is of Him and from Him, these extraordinary advantages to us? This turning right round from open hostility to feigned patronage and friendship from foes who love not the truth is no proof that foes are all gone: only disguised. The need is as He sees it, and He provides for us accordingly. What if we fail to miss His mind, and fall a prey to the wiles of the enemy, and count the precious Word more a toy to be taken at our pleasure or convenience, yet failing to confer and consult repeatedly, and more often than a navigator would his chart who travels in unaccustomed waters? Beloved, can we not get a better estimate of the precious Word of God by meditating upon Himself? what it was to Him, how He regarded it! what He did to that company He joined, the effect it had upon them! "And beginning at Moses and the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." Have we earned a chiding word from our blessed Lord? "O fools, and slow of heart, to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not

Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?"

Let me ask, is it so that we have more in imagination thought of God, of Christ, and heaven, which would rather account for the great amount of superstition existing, yet faith being lacking in this wonderful Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, made known in the Scriptures—whether the record be in Moses, the Psalms, the prophets, or New Testament? This being unknown, no wonder trouble and confusion is the issue. How full of shadow is the Christ and heaven of the mind unenlightened by the Word of God! How blessedly real the Christ in the Scriptures. What encouragement is given to read special portions—the Revelation, for instance. How popular the lie that it cannot be understood. The sword of the Spirit, the Word of God! May we indeed encourage to return to it, and regard it aright, that we may be subject to it, that affections and understanding may equally develop, that heart and mind may be for Him. "I have given them Thy word," He could say to His Father of those He left in this world, yet who were not of it.

Let me again ask that the labour for meat that perisheth may not lead His dear weary people to neglect that which is linked up so closely with His glory. To know Him from the Word is to know that grace was never given of Him to be abused, but that knowing Him, being with Him, desire should be to serve Him who is Lord of lords. Instruction He gives, that it may be intelligent service. May He in grace give us appetite to do as He did; as we get in Jeremiah also: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them: and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." How frail Timothy was instructed in the holy letters from his childhood; how they furnished him and made him the man of God he was, to walk amidst a maze of confusion, to His praise, who gives such ample direction that difficulties but exhibit the skill of His hand, the sufficiency of His

word in the path, and to meet all that would seek to impede one in it. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Isolated one, what companionship is yours, having the Word that tells of Christ. He gives the power for its enjoyment, the capacity we may enlarge by self-judgment and making room for His things. There are none to whom we cannot commend it—families and individuals, children and adults, for private study and meditation, for collective reading. But what need for that humility, meekness, dependence for blessing upon it, that it may not be turned into a snare. How many may weave a web of self-righteousness, or get puffed up with knowledge of the letter of it.

May it be love to Him that leads us to it, with desire to glorify Him while here and to be found doers of the truth, that He may have praise, and that we may have hearts to share in the sufferings for Christ's sake along with the glad tidings.

"The day is far spent," they said, as they constrained Him to tarry with them. "And it came to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him: and He vanished out of their sight." Oh, dear believer, shall I put it to my own heart and conscience? Is He more than out of sight to me? May the truth of His coming again have its place and power so that during this little while there may be dependence, and devotedness, and cleaving to His Word.

W. B.

One said to Thomas Hooker, when dying, "Brother, you are going to receive the reward of your labours." He replied, "Brother, I am going to receive mercy."

"If you and I walked in the light of eternity, everything that had not reality would be arrant folly to us."

## THE SPIRIT OF SACRED POETRY.\*

OF the Hebrew lyrics in Scripture—the oldest is the Song of Lamech (Gen. iv. 23). The next is that of Moses “chanted on the shores of the Red Sea, with a nation for its chorus,” and symbolic of a greater salvation than the redemption of Israel from Egypt. Exodus xv.: “I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously,” &c. Noteworthy are the songs of Deborah, of Balaam, and of Hannah. For grandeur of conception, majesty of diction, and force of imagery, where shall we find anything equal to chapters xxxviii. to xli. of Job? And throughout the prophetic writings there are marvellous bursts of poetic inspiration. David’s lamentation over Jonathan is a beautiful illustration of vocal grief, termed “the Song of the Bow” (1 Sam. i. 19). How wonderful is the description of the decline of life in Ecclesiastes (xii.):—

Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth,  
 Or ever the evil days come, and the years draw nigh,  
 When thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them :  
 Or ever the sun, and the light of the moon and the stars  
     be darkened,  
 And the clouds return after the rain :  
 In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble  
 And the strong men shall bow themselves,  
 And the grinders shall cease because they are few,  
 And those that look out of the windows be darkened ;  
 And the doors shall be shut in the street ;  
 When the sound of the grinding is low, and one shall rise up  
     at the voice of a bird,  
 And all the daughters of music shall be brought low ;  
 Yea, they shall be afraid of that which is high, and terrors  
     shall be in the way ;  
 And the almond tree shall blossom, and the grasshopper  
     shall be a burden,  
 And desire shall fail, because man goeth to his long home ;

\* The Editor is indebted to Mr. Frederick Saunders’ “Evenings with Sacred Poets” for much of this and succeeding papers.

Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken,  
 Or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern ;  
 And the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return unto God who gave it.  
 Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher ; all is vanity !

What glowing beauty and exquisite music mingle in the following description of spring : Song of Songs, ii. 10-13 :—

Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.  
 For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone ;  
 The flowers appear on the earth ; the time of the singing of birds is come,  
 And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land ;  
 The fig tree ripeneth her green figs, and the vines are in blossom,  
 They give forth their fragrance.  
 Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

How many saints of God in all ages since David's day have been solaced, succoured, and strengthened by the inspired strains of psalmody which he penned, and which have become a treasury of Hebrew lyrics for all time, and shall not be forgotten throughout eternity.

What strength and sublimity in the invocation at end of Psalm xxiv. :—

Lift up your heads, O ye gates ; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors :  
 And the King of Glory shall come in. Who is the King of Glory ?  
 The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle !  
 Lift up your heads, O ye gates ; yea, lift them up, ye everlasting doors :  
 And the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory ?  
 The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory !

What a sublime chant of adoration from the lips of

an Old Testament saint is found at the beginning of Psalm civ. :—

Bless the Lord, O my soul.  
 O Lord my God, Thou art very great ;  
 Thou art clothed with honour and majesty.  
 Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment ;  
 Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain :  
 Who layeth the beams of His chambers in the waters ;  
 Who maketh the clouds His chariot ;  
 Who walketh upon the wings of the wind :  
 Who maketh winds His messengers ;  
 His ministers a flaming fire.

Magnificent was the spectacle of Jewish worshippers, with their priests and musicians, as they moved in stately measures approaching the temple, chanting this anthem to Jehovah (Psalm cxxii.) :—

I was glad when they said unto me,  
 Let us go unto the house of the Lord.  
 Our feet are standing within thy gates, O Jerusalem ;  
 Jerusalem, that art builded as a city that is compact together ;  
 Whither the tribes go up, even the tribes of the Lord,  
 For a testimony unto Israel, to give thanks unto the name of  
 the Lord.  
 For there are set thrones for judgment, the thrones of the  
 house of David.  
 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem : they shall prosper that  
 love thee.  
 Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.  
 For my brethren and my companions' sakes I will now say,  
 Peace be within thee.  
 For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek  
 thy good.

Sublimely grand is Isaiah's reference to God as Creator (chap. xl. 12) :—

Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand,  
 And meted out the heaven with a span,  
 And comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure,  
 And weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a  
 balance ?

Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being His counsellor hath taught Him ?

Here is an exquisite passage from Habakkuk (chap. iii. 17) :—

Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines ;  
The labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ;  
The flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls ;  
Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation !

From the New Testament, three songs might be cited, that of the Virgin, that of Zacharias, and that of Simeon. Ere another could be added, the great victory "had to be won, not with songs, but with strong crying and tears, and unutterable anguish," by Him who from the cross exclaimed, "It is finished!" "Yet are these dying words the fountain head of every hymn of joy and triumph, which men have ever sung since Eden was closed, or ever will sing throughout eternity."

Jude's closing benediction is a beautiful burst of poetic worship and adoration :—

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.

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## THE GODLY SORROW OF DAVID.

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WHAT solemn changes in all *around* and *within* does sin work—what new relationships to places and persons it forces us to take.

This is sorrowfully experienced by David.

Nathan the prophet, who had been previously sent to him with words of approval and encouragement, was now sent with words of trouble, rebuke, and con-



viction (2 Sam. vii., xii.). Again, he has to listen to the reproaches of the vile a second time; but he could not answer them as once he had done—the *spirit of holy boldness had departed from him*—he could not reply to Shemei as he had replied to Michal (2 Sam. vi., xvi.).

And another feature in the changed condition of David appears in his relationship, as I may express it, to the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, of Lo-debar. In the day of his beauty and integrity, David sends to that house for Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, who was entertained there. With a noble heart he brings the son of his friend Jonathan home to him to Jerusalem, and makes him to eat continually at his own table. But afterward this same house of Machir at Lo-debar has to supply David with the commonest necessities in the day of his exile from Jerusalem, by reason of Absalom (2 Sam. ix., xvii.).

What bitter changes for the heart all these are! The more vain and proud the nature was, the more would they be felt. They would be all but intolerable. It would be "the sorrow of the world that worketh death."

With David, however, it was otherwise. It became godly sorrow that worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of. He did not feel it as *worldly* sorrow, sinking under it as such, but he bowed to the punishment of his sin, refusing the consolation of Zadok's presence, and suffering the iniquitousness of Shemei's presence. His sorrow became *godly*, and salvation was the end of it.

Had he taken up all this changed condition of things in reference to man or to the things around him, it would have been worldly sorrow. But he was willing to be humbled before men, knowing that it was the Lord, who might do with him as seemed Him good.

This is the difference between "godly sorrow" and "the sorrow of the world." How beautiful, how precious with God, when in circumstances like David,

the *first* prevails in the soul to the crushing or hiding or annihilating of the other. But O, how difficult; and the prouder and vainer the nature is, the more difficult.

If, however, moral mischief and misery thus work as testing David himself, so do they work as testing others.

Shobi the Ammonite, Machir of Lo-debar, and Barzillai of Rogelim stand this test, and have their grace or virtue illustrated. And very striking is this.

Shobi was the younger brother of Hanun, the king of the Amorites, who had treated David's courtesy with such wicked and injurious slight. And I doubt not Shobi had deprecated his elder brother's way on *that occasion, and been attracted by the grace and nobleness of David*—so that now, though David is humbled and degraded because of his sin, Shobi has still the right mind though in new circumstances, and joins in comforting the poor exiled king of Israel (2 Sam. x., xvii.).

So, Machir. He had, I doubt not, in a very right spirit received the poor lame son of that worthy son of Israel—Jonathan; and been a comfort to him in the day of the national trouble, when the house of Jonathan was going down. And so, when David is going down, the same right mind appears in Machir the son of Ammiel, and he joins in owning and comforting the poor humbled, sorrowing, self-accusing David (2 Sam. ix., xvii.).

And as to Barzillai, he never appears till David is *distressed*, as he is willing to *disappear* as soon as that distress *is over* (2 Sam. xvii., xix.). He was the friend *in need*. But though unknown before, his mind was under divine teaching, for he knows and takes the path of the Spirit in a moment when nature even in some of its refined and moral judgments would have gone astray. He treats David's sorrow as a *sacred thing*, and adds not to the grief of him whom God in holy, gracious *discipline* is wounding. J. G. B.

## THOUGHTS ON THE CHURCH OF GOD.

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IT is an immense comfort to meet with reality in this world, where everything is so confused and so many mixed motives at work. God looks for reality, and diligence is needed in order that our hearts may really care for His glory and be stayed upon Himself. How slow we are to realize the resource we have in our blessed Lord amid all the confusion and everything else which tends to ensnare the heart from Christ. Let us have it out with Him, beloved. Is it His glory alone which really concerns us? As we examine our hearts may we give the answer in His presence. Or is it activity? Oh, how much of it there is: associations without number, alliances and confederacies! Is this what the Lord Jesus prayed for in John xvii. 20, 21! Ah, no, there was to be a oneness when He, seated on the Father's throne, sent down the Holy Ghost, thus baptizing all believers into one body of which He was the Head. And this unity, how precious to Him; what a joy to His heart to see saints of God endeavouring to keep it in the uniting bond of peace. No creed of man to limit, and no slackness concerning His glory. These are questions of vital importance to each member of that body. Sad and solemn when such questions are treated as matters of indifference. With what meaning does Isaiah viii. speak to us; though literally referring to Israel, yet giving us a picture of what will take place in the latter day when Israel shall stay upon Jehovah (Isaiah x. 20, 21), and shall sanctify the Lord of Hosts Himself in their midst (Isaiah xii.). 2 Chron. xxviii. gives us further information as to the state of Israel at this time. Sad spectacle, indeed! but the Church of God presents to us a spectacle not less solemn to-day.

Could anything be more applicable to the existing state of the Church of God than what we find in Isaiah viii.? It is the insidious plan of the devil, if possible, to shift the true issue, that is, whether the

Lord Jesus Christ is to have absolute sovereignty over the affections, hearts, ways, and manners of His people. It is not a mere personal matter, or a mere difference of judgment, or disputation about this point or that. People may talk about *settling* things, but who can settle *hearts*? and it is hearts that need to be settled. It is the knowledge of His personal blessedness as an Object worthy of supreme occupation as Lord and Christ, worthy of the heart's subjection, glad and willing too to own His will and ways, sanctified to His obedience, thus delighting in the Father's delight. Well, such a blessed One is presented to us amid the strife. "He shall be for a sanctuary"! What is the contrast here? Associations and alliances form man's idea of unity which he calls strength; but we see the end of it. It comes to naught. What is it which is so much longed after by some, to obtain which it is proposed to surrender everything distinctive? Is it not to be carried into an unholy unity on the shoulders of compromise? It is leavening the Church of God to-day, it has crept in and is eating like a gangrene. What was it with reference to Israel? They would be like the nations around, and they gave up God and turned to human resources, and the result was perfectly plain.

People scoff at the thought that you must have nothing else but Christ—no human system, human ways, human learning, and intelligence, and this is growing under the devil's culture, so that at last it overpowers everything; that which is spiritual dies out, because that which is carnal has come in! But Christ remains the great test of it all; the test by which everything must and will be judged. To hearts that truly turn to Him, He becomes the stay, the cheer, sanctuary, and hiding-place. May we know the meaning of that wondrous title "Immanuel" in a far deeper way than ever we have done, so that His glory may concern us far more than ever yet, that He may appear to our joy who wait for Him. If these

questions exercise us and lead us to walk with Him in humility, blessing will be the result, and we shall in reality turn to Him in the attitude of Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24

May our blessed God get glory to Himself amid all the self-will and indifference which abounds, touching hearts as He alone can, for His Name's sake.

J. H. I.

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## THE MAN OF GOD UNDER DISCIPLINE.

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1 *Kings* xvii. 2-9.

DISCIPLINE is needed by us from the first moment of our lives until the last. The discipline of the Father is ours, because we are children. And the discipline of the Lord is ours too, in the character of servants; for He has as much to do in shaping the instruments He uses, as He has *by* them when they are shaped.

That discipline of the Lord never ceases; but still there are special seasons of it, and a special season we have here in Elijah's life. He has scarcely stood forth before the world before the Lord takes him away again, apart by himself. No doubt it was not a new thing for Elijah to be alone with God; but there are yet some new features in his present isolation. He is bidden to turn eastward and hide himself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. You know what Jordan means—the great typical river of death. Cherith means “cutting off.” The Lord brings him to that significant place and there makes him drink of the brook, sustained by the ravens who fed him there.

We have to take these illustrative names to help our understanding of the Lord's dealings here. They shew us Cherith as the prophet's Mara, where he had to drink in, as it were, the death from which as judgment he escapes. Miraculously sustained, he learns for himself “the terrors of the Lord,” and how sin has wrecked the first creation. And it is a lesson that we have to learn.

F. W. G.

## WALK AND TESTIMONY.

As a Christian, I have to know the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven, and to walk worthy of Him during the night, as a bird of the *day* and not of the *night*. The light of Christ's eye is coming right down upon me ; if there is one corner of my heart covered over, I am uncomfortable under it. I could not sit in the Father's house and have His eye meet one corner of my heart not brought out. I don't want one corner in it to be covered by the thinnest veil possible. It is a solemn but blessed thing to the soul to have the eye of God coming right down into it. It is a very blessed thing that the One who has washed you in His own blood, and has undertaken to conduct you to heaven, has an eye that sees down into all the recesses of the heart ; and it can detect the least budding of evil. When you have been what you thought good, He may have seen evil lurking, and Satan near you ; and He has discovered it to you and enabled you to judge it in the light, so that it will not have to be judged hereafter. He will go through all hereafter, if we don't do it now. He will talk to His people about their walk, and the effect will be perfect blessed confidence between your soul and the Lord. If I commit any sin now, the discovery of it in the light is attended with conflict and agony : *then* He will tell me how He met me and probed me, that I might have every thought brought out.

It is a solemn and blessed thought that God expects you to walk as one in His presence. A person's life may be perfectly blameless, yet that person may have to say, " Ah, but I want more of the power of Christ's life." He is the Head—it is not the question of a spot or blemish here and there, but I want more of the volume of the life of Christ and of His affections to be displayed in me, so that I may be practically witnessing down here for Him up there. Nothing should satisfy us but the power and testimony which *tells*

that Christ, our Head, is at God's right hand. What a difference between the testimony of one who, like Paul, has Christ in his heart, and counts everything else but dung and dross, who puts his foot wherever Christ left a footprint, to follow hard after Him, and the testimony of a man who is living after this world's course ; who is on the foundation, but who is building on it wood, hay, stubble, instead of gold, silver, precious stones. Immense difference between Abraham and Lot, in *this* life and in the next too—though Lot will be perfectly saved. "How beautiful!" I shall exclaim, when I see one like Paul manifested in the golden city ; one who when down here could say, "To me to live is Christ." Ah, there will be a recompense for works which are the fruit of grace and faith.

Paul knew his acceptance to be so perfect that he could look right up with an eagle eye into the light of God's presence, and say to all down here, "You have seen me dwelling in the light, and have seen the light shining out of me ; everything in the very bottom of my heart has been made manifest in the light."

G. V. W.

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### EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

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THE truth spreads ; but it is another thing to take up one's cross. And I observe that, when one does not act according to the truth, there is no solidity ; one trifles with religious views. When one follows the truth, difficulties are there and the opposition of the world. We must know how to give an account of our convictions ; then this does not suit the flesh ; and the truth must reign in the heart, in order for the victory to be won. Grace does not lend itself to levity and license in the doctrine itself. It is not bursts of steam ; the engine must move onwards, and move on with a good deal to be drawn. There is responsibility with respect to oneself, to the Lord's name and His work.

We must take into account this tendency in the present day. We find not a few who like to hear new truth, but who have no idea of walking in the truth in a practical way. We must have patience, we must have a large heart, but a heart which acknowledges nothing but Christ for its end, and follows Him, or, at least, seeks to do so. There is real dignity in the truth, which demands from one to respect it in a practical way. But you know it.

In these last days we need firmness, and a large heart which knows how to take forth the precious from the vile. Obedience is firm and humble; grace, meekness, love ought to be there. But the truth needs not man: man needs the truth. Love feels the need of seeking souls; but souls should submit to Christ and acknowledge His grace.

How strikingly the Lord, in John, always places Himself in a position where He receives everything from the Father—*Εαυτὸν ἐκένωσε*. We see Deity piercing through the veil, so to speak, in every phrase. We see that He and the Father are one; but He who is one with the Father now received everything from His hands. It is the voice of One who can speak with the Father as a divine person; but He does not say, I will glorify Myself; but, on the contrary, "Glorify Thou Me." "In three days I will raise it up;" but it is as separating, so to speak, His body from Himself, and speaking of it as of a temple in which He dwelt. His person has come before me of late in a very living way in reading that gospel. Moreover, the gospels have afforded me much food in these times. But how puny we are in comparison with all His grace and all that will reveal itself to us when we shall be with Him in glory!

May God teach us to take up our cross and follow Him who alone is worthy of it. Some would let go the truth, because it is difficult to reconcile it with charity. Hold it fast: we are sanctified by the truth. Christ Himself is the truth. I admit the difficulty,



but grace is sufficient for us. Cordial love to all the brethren ; may God keep them and bless them.—  
*Translated from L'Echo.* J. N. D.

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## FRAGMENTARY NOTES.

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**NEGATIVES** are universal, and are therefore hazardous things. If I say a thing is not in Scripture, I must know all Scripture to say so.

Mary was the mother of Him who is God ; not mother of God, as the Roman Catholics say.

It is most important to hold Christ's eternal Sonship for if I lose the eternal Son I lose the eternal Father also.

It is remarkable that in chapter i. of John's gospel, where you have nearly all the names of the Lord, you do not get His relative names, such as Head, Priest, &c.

In the parable of the talents in Matthew we have grace ; in that of the pounds in Luke responsibility.

It is only when the coming of the Lord is looked for that you will find bridal affections.

The consciousness of life could never be produced till after redemption.

When you have Gethsemane fully brought out, as in Luke, you find the Lord humanly above the sufferings at the cross.

The object is to get the good fish into vessels and throw the bad away—I must leave the tares ; that is, I discriminate, in a positive way, as to good and not as to bad.

We are to be transformed into the likeness of a glorified Christ, though we feed on a humbled Christ.

We have to do with a dead Christ at the Lord's table.

Being occupied with a glorified Christ makes one like a humbled Christ down here. Power is in the glorified Christ (Phil. iii.), character in the humbled (Phil. ii.).

Nature will neither receive the death nor the glory.

We could not have miracles now on account of the sects, because a miracle would be virtually saying, Here is the Church.

Deacons were only chosen to manage the distribution of money, and by those who gave it. Elders were authoritative and appointed from above.

Christ is Saviour of the body (that is, our body).

A broad path is not a broad heart, but a broad conscience, and that is an evil one.

Do we sufficiently understand, that though it was a poor woman speaking to Him, by His side, and talking to Him about her sins, that the Person to whom she was talking was God?

No sin of the saint, properly speaking, is wilfulness; it is the will of the flesh: the saint yields to it, no doubt. In another shape, all sin is wilfulness. But real wilfulness is determination to have one's own way in spite of God, which amounts to denial of God.

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## LETTER OF INTEREST.

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BELOVED brethren, while our conviction of the truth and importance of the *doctrine* of the Holy Spirit's dwelling in the House of God cannot be too profound, let me beseech you to remember that it is itself A FACT. It is simple faith in this we need. We are prone to forget this.

If we did but come together to meet the Lord; if we did but believe when we are assembled that He is really present, what an effect this must have on our souls. The fact is, that as really as Christ *was*

present with His disciples on the earth, *so really is He now present in the assemblies of the saints.* If in any way His presence could be manifested to our senses—if we could see Him as the disciples did—how would our souls be solemnized and subdued! What deep stillness, what reverent attention, what solemn waiting on Him would be the result. How impossible that there could be any haste, or rivalry, or restlessness, if the presence of the Lord were to be thus revealed to sight and sense. And is the fact of His presence to be less influential because it is a matter of *faith* instead of *sight*? Is He any less really present because unseen?

More and more am I persuaded that our great lack is that of faith in His personal presence. Have there not been times when His presence has been realised as a fact? and how blessed were such seasons! There might be, and there were, intervals of silence; but how were they occupied? In solemn waiting upon God. Not in restless anxiety, as to who was next to speak or pray; not in turning over the leaves of the Bible or hymn book to find something that we thought suitable. No! nor in anxious thoughts about those who were lookers-on, wondering what they would think of the silence that existed. God was there. Each heart was engaged with Him; and for any to have broken silence, for the sake of doing so, would have been felt to have been an interruption indeed. When silence was broken it was in a way which embodied the desires, and expressed the breathings of all present; a hymn, perhaps, in which all could with fulness of heart unite; or a word which came home to our hearts with power. And though several might be used in such ministrations, it was as evidently *one Spirit* who guided and arranged the whole, as though a plan of it had been made beforehand, and each one had had his part assigned. No human wisdom could have made such a plan. The harmony was divine. It was the Holy Ghost

acting by the several members, in their several places, to express the worship, or to meet the need of all present.

And why should it not be always thus? Beloved brethren, the presence of the Lord is a fact, not merely a doctrine. And surely if in fact He be present when we are assembled together, no fact can compare in importance with this. It is surely the grand, the all-absorbing fact, from which everything besides in the meeting ought to derive its character. It is not a mere negation. *He* must order it if *He* be present. It means more than that any one is at liberty to take part in it. *Nay, it means the opposite of this.* True, there must be no human restrictions: but if He be present, no one must take any part but that which He assigns, and for which He qualifies him. Liberty of ministry is liberty for Him to act by whomsoever He will. But if the usurpation of His place by one person be so intolerable, what shall be said to the usurpation of His place by a number of persons acting because there is liberty to act, not because they know it to be the present mind of the Spirit that they should act as they do? Real faith in the personal presence of the Lord would set these things right. It is not that one would desire silence for its own sake, or that any should be restrained from taking part by the mere presence of this or that brother. I would rather myself that there were all sorts of disorder, so as for the real state of things to come out, than have this repressed by the presence of an individual. What one does desire is, that the presence of the Lord Himself should be so realised as that no one should break silence except by the Holy Ghost and under His direction; and that the sense of His presence should thus restrain us from all that is unworthy of Him, and of the name of Jesus to which we are gathered.

W. T.

# THE CHURCH EDIFIED BY GIFTS.

## A CONVERSATION.

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*E.* I have heard that you assert that every brother is competent to teach in the assembly of the saints.

*W.* If I did so, I should deny the Holy Ghost. No one is competent to do this, who has not received gift from God for this very purpose.

*E.* Well, but you believe that every brother in the assembly of the saints has a *right* to speak, if he is able.

*W.* Indeed I do not. I deny *the right* to any one, save God the Holy Ghost. A man may in nature be very able to speak; and to speak *well*, but if he cannot "please his neighbour for good to edification," the Holy Ghost has not fitted him to speak, and he is dishonouring God and grieving the Spirit.

*E.* Well, what do you hold?

*W.* You may think it peculiar to me, perhaps, to believe, that as the Church belongs to Christ, He has, in order that its attention may not be wrongly directed, given gifts to it, by which it is to be edified and ruled,

*E.* No. I admit that, and only wish that there were a little more coveting of such gifts from God, and more caution to put a stop to the use of every other means, however accredited by human power or eloquence.

*W.* I hold also that the Holy Ghost gives gifts to whom He pleases, and also what gifts He pleases. And that the saints ought so to be united together, as that the gift of one brother should never make the exercise of the real gift of another irregular, and that there should be an open door for the little as well as the great gifts.

*E.* That is a matter of course.

*W.* Not so: otherwise 1 Cor. xiv. would be acted upon. Moreover, I assert that no gift from God has to wait for a sanction from the Church ere it is used. *If* it be of God, He will accredit it, and the saints recognise its value.

*E.* Do you admit a regular ministry ?

*W.* If by a regular ministry you mean a *stated* ministry (that is, that in every assembly those who are gifted of God to speak to edification will be both limited in number and known to the rest), I do admit it : but if, by a regular ministry, you mean an *exclusive* ministry, I dissent. By an *exclusive* ministry, I mean the recognising certain persons so *exclusively* holding the place of teachers that the use of a real gift by any one else would be *irregular*.

*E.* On what do you build this distinction ?

*W.* From Acts xiii. 1, I see that at Antioch there were but five whom the Holy Ghost recognised as teachers, Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, and Saul. Doubtless, at all the meetings it was these five, one or more of them, who were expected by the saints to speak. This was a *stated* ministry. But it was not an *exclusive* ministry : for when Judas and Silas came (xv. 32) they were pleased to take their place among the others, and then the recognised teachers were more numerous.

*E.* And what connection would this have with the giving out of a hymn, or with praying, or reading a portion of Scripture ?

*W.* These would fall, like the rest, entirely under the Holy Ghost's direction. Alas for the man whose self-will led him to give out a hymn, or to pray, or read a Scripture, without the guidance of the Spirit ! In doing these things in the assembly of the saints, he is professing to be moved and guided by the Holy Ghost ; and to profess this, where it is not true, is very presumptuous. If the saints know what communion is, they will know how serious it is to lead in prayer and singing. To address God in the name of the assembly, or to suggest to it a hymn as the vehicle for the expression of its real state before Him, requires great discernment, or else a most immediate guidance from God.—*Extract.*

## A SKETCH FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

TO THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION AND BACK.

Chap. viii. 13—ix. 50.

"WE" (so perhaps it should be read), "must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work" (John ix. 4). So spake the Lord in Judæa, at probably a later date in His ministry than that of His transfiguration. In perfect accord, however, with that announcement, we have the Lord starting forth on a new journey, when met by the Pharisees in the parts of Dalmanutha with a request for a sign from heaven, tempting Him. On this occasion, and it is the solitary instance in the gospels, the Sadducees combined with the Pharisees to tempt Him.\* This fact we learn from Matthew, and from Matthew alone.

To their united opposition the Lord was not indifferent. He refused, indeed, and justly, to give them a sign, who had witnessed so many of His mighty works, and in vain. Gracious in His ways, bearing with ignorance most patiently, He yet refused what those people had asked. There is a time when the wilfully blind should be left to themselves. In His judgment, that time for those before Him had come. So He left them. Yet their unbelief affected Him. In what light they viewed His treatment of them is unrecorded, and it matters not. All now will justify Him. But how He felt because of their unbelief is told us, and it is instructive: "He sighed deeply in His spirit." He knew, what they did not believe, the awful and eternal consequences of persistent unbelief.

Nor is this a solitary instance of Mark's carefulness

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\* Differing as the Sadducees did on some vital points from the Pharisees, denying a resurrection and the existence of angels and spirits (Acts xxiii. 8), yet their countenance and aid was not refused by the Pharisees, the professedly orthodox party of the Jews, if thereby they could hinder the Lord in His work. What an exposure of the Pharisees!

in noting the feelings of the Lord. From him we learn how in the synagogue (iii. 5) He looked round about on the Pharisees with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts. From the same evangelist we learn what the Lord felt when the disciples rebuked those who sought to bring young children to their Master, that He might touch them: "He was much displeased" (x. 14). In John we read of the sympathy and sorrow that He felt for those two at Bethany whom He loved: He wept and groaned. To weep with those who weep seems perfectly in season; but to sigh deeply at the persistent unbelief of those who were bitterly opposing Him, and were indifferent to their own everlasting welfare, speaks of a chord in His heart of which otherwise none would have conceived.

Crossing the lake with His disciples, they reached Bethsaida Julias, formerly a village, but rebuilt, and adorned by Philip the Tetrarch, and raised to the dignity of a town, with the additional name of Julias, in honour of the daughter of the Emperor Augustus. Here the Lord was met by some who desired His help on behalf of an afflicted creature. A blind man (Mark alone has recorded this miracle) was brought to Him, that He might touch him. When people have a real want they are wont to be simple, for they are in earnest. Doubtless those in that vicinity had not enjoyed the privileges of which those on the west side of the lake could boast. Bethsaida, on the western side of the lake, had been more highly favoured with proofs of the Lord's divine mission than Bethsaida Julias. Yet they doubted not in this last named town either His power or His willingness to help. With them it was no question of the need of a sign to establish His divine mission. They wanted His power put forth in healing that blind man, and in confidence of heart, without the slightest hesitancy, they brought him, assured that if the Lord touched him he would regain his sight. Cavilings



and unbelief characterized the Pharisees on the west of Jordan. Faith was manifested by those on the east. The latter were in earnest; the former were not.

Their request was immediately responded to. The Lord took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town, or village, as Mark described it. Then spitting on his eyes, and putting His hands upon him, He asked him if he saw ought. Looking up, the blind man said, "I see men; for I behold them as trees walking." Sight was returning, for it would appear from that which follows that he had lost it. The Lord then again "laid His hands on his eyes: and he looked steadfastly, and was restored, and saw all things clearly" (Mark viii. 25). The Lord had manifested great interest in that man. He took great pains with him, for He did not leave him till his sight was restored. He perfected that which concerned him (Ps. cxxxviii. 8). He acts in that way still (Phil. i. 6). Apart from the multitude He had taken the deaf one. Outside the city He led the blind man, and now was on His way to the extreme north-east of the land. His work in the synagogues in Galilee seems to have been over. Rejected by the leaders of the people, He worked outside.

Going on His way towards the mount of transfiguration—the great object, it would seem, of this circuit—He entered the villages of Cesaræa Philippi, situated under the shadow of Mount Hermon. As was usual, many followed, not disciples only, but a multitude also (Mark viii. 34). Eliciting first from the twelve the current thoughts of men about Him, all wrong as they were, though interesting as an evidence that man, unaided by revelation, could have no right thoughts about the Lord's person, He drew forth from Peter what the disciples knew about Him: He was the Christ, or anointed One of God. Now further revelations were vouchsafed; for though He was the Christ, nevertheless He would die. "The Son of

Man," He said, "must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." "And He spake that saying openly," so Mark has added, whereupon Peter "began to rebuke Him." The Lord immediately sharply rebuked His apostle. "Get thee behind Me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men." Unwittingly Peter was taking the place of an adversary, which the word Satan means, viewing the matter after human thoughts, and not as taught of God.

The rebuke administered, the Lord turned to the disciples, and to the crowd as well, and told them all that suffering, and willingness to suffer for Him, must characterize those who would follow Him. Martyrdom for Christ's sake, and, as Mark adds, "for the Gospel's," they must lay their account for. In that way they would save their life and not lose it, and that was most important; for if the soul, more precious than all the riches and honours of this life, is lost, no means will there be found for its recovery. "For what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" "Whosoever," the Lord goes on to say, "shall be ashamed of Me, and of My words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels" (viii. 37-38). The Son of Man, who would suffer, would also reign in heavenly and divine glory, for He is God as well as Man, the only begotten Son of the Father.

A word here ere, following the narrative, we go farther. The clue to Peter's conduct, which otherwise would have appeared very strange, contradicting as he did his Master, our evangelist is the only one who furnishes. It is found in the mention of the *crowd* which followed them, as distinguished from the *disciples*. The humiliation to death of the Son of Man must have been a startling announcement to them all; but the open declaration of it when a crowd

was within earshot would operate, so Peter perhaps feared, to the lowering of the Lord in their eyes. His rejection by the leaders of Jewish thought, and by the Sanhedrin, and His subsequent death, worldly wisdom might suggest were subjects to be kept in the background. Hence probably it was that, fearing the effect on the *multitude*, Peter deprecated the possibility of such rejection and humiliation. The Lord, however, at once rebuked the apostle; and then, calling the crowd around Him, announced in the plainest language what discipleship might involve, and the awful and final result of being ashamed of Him who *is the King*, and who will certainly appear in the kingdom.

Of this kingdom He next speaks, for the earnest of it some were soon to behold. So moving on to the spot where the great purpose of this journey was to have its accomplishment, He took Peter, James, and John into a high mountain apart by themselves, and was transfigured before them. They saw and they heard wonderful things. They saw Him for a brief space in His millennial glory, when His raiment, we learn, became exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth could whiten them (ix. 3). Mark tells us of His raiment, noting especially that. Matthew and Luke speak also of His face. Besides this they saw, whom none of their generation had ever beheld, Moses and Elias, and they heard them talking with Him of His decease, as Luke has recorded (ix. 31), which He should ere long accomplish at Jerusalem. It was then well understood in heaven that which men on earth had not yet apprehended. The three disciples knew Moses and Elias. In what company did they find themselves! And how striking it must have been to Peter to hear them talk with the Lord of that very matter for which he had rebuked his Master.

Peter desiring the prolongation of the scene suggested the making of three tabernacles, one for the Lord, one for Moses, and one for Elias. This is con-

firmed by Luke's account, which tells us that he spoke thus as Moses and Elias were departing (Luke ix. 33), and Matthew probably means us to understand the same, as he intimates Peter's readiness to erect the tabernacles himself, if we read with some good authorities. "I will make," &c. (Matthew xvii. 4). "But he wist not what to answer, for (as Mark here adds, supplementing the other account) they became sore afraid" (ix. 5). Transient, however, was the vision, for a cloud, the cloud of glory, overshadowed them, and a voice was heard proceeding from it—the voice of the Father attesting the Sonship of the Lord: "This is My beloved Son: hear ye Him." The scene was terminated. Moses and Elias had departed, having, as Luke states, entered the cloud. And Jesus was seen alone. The full import of the vision, as the Lord in Matthew (xvii. 9) called it, Peter has taught us in his second epistle (i. 16-18). On that one cannot here enlarge. The King of Israel, however, had been seen on the mount, whom Isaiah of old (vi.) had beheld as the Lord of Hosts (John xii. 41). David, too, had sung of this same One, who would be the King's Son (Ps. lxxii. 1), and, therefore, a man. Now all was made plain. The King was a man, David's son, but Jehovah too, God and man in one person. Man, so able to die, and about to die; yet the beloved Son of the Father as well—His only-begotten Son.

Coming down from the mount on the following day (Luke ix. 37), the Lord charged them to tell no man what they had seen, till the Son of Man was risen from the dead. "And," so adds Mark, "they kept that saying, questioning among themselves what the rising from the dead should mean" (Mark ix. 10). This truth was new to them. Resurrection *of* the dead was a doctrine with which every orthodox Jew was acquainted (Heb. vi. 2). Resurrection *from* the dead was to them all quite new. This last is Christian doctrine, connected with the truth of the two resurrections, of which the Lord first spoke (John v. 28, 29).

Resurrection unto life there will be for some; and resurrection only to judgment for others, raised as such will be to be finally judged, and to be everlastingly condemned (Rev. xx. 5, 11-15). It is plain then that these acts of the Lord's power—for He will call forth both classes from the tomb—need not take place at one and the same moment. In fact, as we know, they will not; for a long interval, even a thousand years, will intervene between them. Hence resurrection *from* the dead speaks of a resurrection whilst some are left still in their graves. A new truth this was, and the three disciples discerned at once that it was something new, for they questioned among themselves what the rising *from* the dead should mean. They did not, however, it would appear, bring this difficulty to the Lord for solution. In this case patient waiting would be rewarded. When He was risen they must have grasped the meaning of His words spoken on their descent from the mount.

But there was a difficulty they asked about. They had seen the Lord in His millennial, kingly glory. He was the Christ—the Anointed. He had come. Now the scribes taught that Elias must precede, and herald the advent of Messiah. Were the scribes right? Or was that current teaching to be abandoned? The Lord at once answered. The scribes were right. But the Baptist had come in the spirit and power of Elias. The Lord, it is to be observed, does not negative the thought of Elijah's appearing, but points to John the Baptist as His immediate forerunner, who came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke i. 17). For there are two advents of Christ, one in humiliation, the other in glory. The former had then taken place. For the latter Israel must wait. The scribes thought only of the latter, overlooking the prophecies about Messiah's humiliation and death.\* Hence the diffi-

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\* The Baptist declared, and rightly, that he was not Elijah (John i. 21). And though the Lord distinctly applied Mal. iii. 1 to John, yet iv.

culty, which was a real one: how could the prophecy of Malachi be harmonized with the fact of Messiah's appearance at that time, of which fact the three disciples had not the shadow of a doubt? "It is written of the Son of Man (Mark adds, ver. 12) that He should suffer many things, and be set at nought." Now had that been laid hold of by the scribes, they would have discerned that a path of humiliation, ending in death, must precede His advent in power (Isaiah lii. 13—liii. 12). And Elijah's appearing is connected with the great and terrible day of the Lord (Mal. iv. 5). That clearly had not come when the Lord was on earth, nor has it yet. A herald, however, was to precede Messiah (Isaiah xl.). The herald had come and gone; John the Baptist had appeared. Here was the solution of the difficulty. With the second advent Elijah is connected, and not with the first. Very possibly the scribes were using the non-appearance of the prophet to discredit the Lord's claim to be the Messiah. Hence the disciples asked their question, which the Lord here graciously answered. How startled would the scribes at the foot of the mount have been had they known what Elijah had been heard saying on the top of it! Care in discriminating differences is needed in the study of the Word. For lack of that the scribes were at fault. How often since their day has the same lack been manifested by opponents of the truth.

Rejoining the others below, it was seen what was occupying them.' A great multitude surrounded them, and scribes were questioning with them. The Lord's re-appearance turned the attention of all to Himself. They were greatly amazed, and, running to Him, saluted Him. Mark, it will be observed, has noticed what Matthew and Luke do not: the effect on the multitude at beholding the Lord at that

junction. He inquired what they were questioning with His disciples. What follows, we give in the words of our evangelist, and according to the better readings. It will be found that he records some most interesting details, which otherwise we might never have known.

“ And one of the multitude answered Him, Master (or Teacher), I have brought unto Thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit : and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him (or dasheth him down) : and he foameth, and grindeth his teeth, and pineth away : and I spake to Thy disciples that they should cast him out, and they could not. He answereth them, and saith, O faithless generation ! how long shall I be with you ? how long shall I suffer you ? Bring him unto Me. And they brought him unto Him : and when He saw him, straightway the spirit tare him grievously ; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And He asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him ? And he said, Of a child. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him : but if Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us. And Jesus said unto him, If thou canst ! All things are possible to him that believeth. Straightway the father of the child cried out, and said, I believe ; help Thou mine unbelief. And when Jesus saw that a multitude came running together, He rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee come out of him, and enter no more into him. And having cried and rent him sore, he came out of him ; and he was as one dead ; insomuch that the more part said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up ; and he arose ” (ix. 14-27).

Reading the above, who would not conclude that it comes from the pen of an eye-witness ? The scene so circumstantially described ! A crowd surrounding the disciples, with whom scribes were intermixed. A demoniac, for the child clearly was one, was in

their midst, brought by his father to get relief at the hands of the Lord, not finding whom, he appealed to the disciples to cast out the demon. But in vain. They could not cast it out. At last, then, it would appear that a demon existed which could successfully refuse subjection to that power which had by human instrumentality displaced so many (Mark vi 13). For now all saw that the disciples were powerless. A painful position for them to be in. Added to that, and this was calculated to lower them in the eyes of the multitude, scribes were questioning with them, perhaps emboldened to take advantage of their discomfiture, that they might gain a victory by arguments over the simple fishermen of the lake. At that juncture it was that the Lord re-appeared, and immediately addressed the scribes, inquiring what it was all about. The better reading in ver. 19—*them* for *him*—confirms what we have expressed, that the inability of the disciples to exorcise the demon gave point and apparent force to the attack of the scribes.

Now the Master was there; and to Him the father explained all. He had brought to the Lord his son, possessed by a dumb spirit, which tyrانىised frightfully over its victim, and had oftentimes attempted the child's destruction. The father described the case, stating the symptoms from time to time manifested: "It dasheth him down, and he foameth and grindeth his teeth, and pineth away." As yet the Lord had not seen the poor creature; but at His command the child was produced, when the power of the demon over its victim was again, but for the last time, displayed. "It tare him grievously, and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming." It was no delusion. It was demoniacal possession.

The father had correctly described the case (ver. 18). Now, in answer to the Lord's enquiry as to the duration of the affliction, he told Him that his boy had suffered thus from a child, and that often his life had been endangered by fire and by water. To the



last resource was the parent reduced. Ordinary human means could avail nothing. The disciples, too, had failed. Could the Lord give the desired relief? "If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us." How these few words tell of the heaviness of the affliction, in which, as the father expressed, he was not alone.

He had presented his case with all the urgency of parental feeling. What more could he do? The Lord next spoke, taking up the poor father's words and applying them to the suppliant, "If thou canst! All things are possible to him that believeth." The difficulty in the case lay not with the Lord, but with the father, who immediately replied, "I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." That was enough. There was faith in the father to count on divine power, and willingness on the part of the Lord to heal. Then seeing that a multitude came running together, the Lord addressed the demon with authority, "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee come out of him, and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him." The child was now freed from demoniacal possession, and that for ever, though it left him for the moment utterly exhausted, so that the more part of the crowd declared that he was dead. But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

Thus the day, which for the disciples had begun with apparent defeat, closed with signal victory. The father could rejoice, the disciples were cheered, the scribes were silenced, and the demon utterly worsted, and that by Him of whose divine commission Pharisees and Sadducees on the west of the lake professed to be in doubt.

The Prophet, or Teacher, was on earth, and He cleared up to His disciples a difficulty raised by the scribes. The King, too, was in their midst, whose dominion will be bounded by nothing short of the limits of the universe. The Son of God He had been

proclaimed by the One most competent to declare it—the Father Himself. And His absolute power over demons was openly acknowledged by that creature who had the greatest interest in denying it, the dumb and deaf spirit. Added to all this, the efficacy of faith to call forth what was needed had been illustrated in that child's case, as detailed by Mark. How fruitful had been that day and that journey in instruction and blessing! The One rejected by the leaders of the people, and before whom loomed the cross, dispensed favours to those who asked for them: the blind man's sight was restored, and the child was delivered from the demon's oppressive thralldom.

Retiring from the multitude into the house, the disciples asked the Lord privately, saying, "Why could not we cast it out?" His answer was an immediate one, "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer,"\* (ix. 28, 29). The efficacy of faith He had taught that father. The need of prayer He spoke of to His disciples, and His answer indicated the great power of that spirit, one of a class, whilst assuring all of the prevailing power of prayer. Passing through Galilee on His way to Capernaum, His own city, another announcement of His coming death He made to His disciples (vers. 31-32). Of His rejection by the elders, &c., He had spoken in viii. 31. Of men, which includes Gentiles, He now spake. "But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask Him" (ix. 32).

Re-entering Capernaum, this journey ended, and His ministry in Galilee, as far as Mark has related it, was shortly to close (ix. 33-50). But ere it closed, we get what in our evangelist is rare, when compared with the narratives of Matthew and Luke—warnings of coming judgment,† with that solemn addition

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\* And fasting should probably be omitted.

† The reader will find confirmation of the remark if he compares Matt. (iii. 10-12; vii. 22, 23; viii. 12; x. 15; xi. 21-24; xii. 31, 32, 36; xiii. 30, 39-42, 49, 50; xxi. 44; xxii. 13; xxiii. 37, 38;

peculiar to him, written probably but once, "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (48).

After that, beginning with chap. x., the Lord is seen leaving Galilee for the last time, to be there no more till He should meet His disciples after His resurrection on that mountain where He had appointed them (Matt. xxviii. 16).

C. E. S.

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## THE TWO CUPS.

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"My cup runneth over." That is to say, the blessing is greater than I can appropriate. "He is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup" (Ps. xvi. 5). It is infinite, it is Himself. Made ours for time and for eternity, filling the heart with worship and the lips with praise. Made ours, too, according to the purposes of His own love, and that we should be to the praise of His glory (see Ephes. i. 11, 12), in virtue of that *other cup*, which was sorrow indeed to Him, and that wrung from Him that marvellous and bitter cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"—the cup of divine judgment due to our sins. That too was a *full cup*, and to any but to Him, who was Himself infinite, it must have been overflowing and inexhaustible. But He drank it to the very dregs. It did *not* run over; not a drop escaped His holy lips; there was no miscarriage of justice with respect to sin, on the part of God on the one hand, nor any incapacity of endurance on the part of the blessed Lord on the other; all was infinite, all was perfect, in that terrible transaction, and the results to

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xxiv. 30, 37-41, 50, 51; xxv. 30, 31-46) and Luke (iii. 9-16, 17; x. 12-15; xii. 10, 45, 46; xiii. 24-29, 34, 35; xvi. 19-31; xvii. 26-37; xix. 27, 41-44; xx. 18; xxi. 34-36; xxiii. 30, 31) with Mark, remembering that the last part of Mark vi. 11 should be omitted. The consistency of all this will be evident, as it is borne in mind that Matthew presents the Lord as the King and Luke as Son of Man, with both which characters judgment is connected.

Him and to us are perfect too. He is ours and we are His in fellowship and in glory for ever and ever. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."—*Extract.*

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## THE COMING GLORY.

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O THE joy, the bliss profound,  
 How our hearts within us bound !  
 Life and light, and glory fair,  
 We with Christ Himself shall share !

We shall live because He lives,  
 Everlasting life He gives !  
 In His light shall we see light,  
 Basking in His glory bright !

He will claim His heavenly Bride,  
 Place her by His spear-pierced side,  
 Beauteous in her white array,  
 Glorious in her Lord's display !

"Glory, honour, power and praise,"  
 Myriad tongues to Him shall raise ;  
 "Alleluia" and "Amen,"  
 Blood-washed saints shall answer then !

That the day that ne'er declines,  
 Christ, its Sun, for ever shines ;  
 Light and temple He shall be,  
 Rapturous sight for us to see !

Heaven's high anthem we shall swell,  
 Who that wondrous bliss can tell ?  
 Ceaseless praises shall abound,  
 Heaven and earth with joy resound !

Oh ! explain it, ye who can—  
 Grace and glory given to man !  
 Hark ! the answer from above—  
 "God is light and God is love !"

## A NOTE ON MATTHEW V.

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IN the sermon on the mount we have set before us the principles which are to characterise those who enter the kingdom of heaven. First, we have the blessedness of those who are

- (1) "Poor in spirit" (verse 3).
  - (2) "Mourners" (ver. 4).
  - (3) "Meek" (ver. 5).
  - (4) "Hungering and thirsting after righteousness" (ver. 6).
  - (5) "Merciful" (ver. 7).
  - (6) "Pure in heart" (ver. 8).
  - (7) "Peacemakers" (ver. 9).
  - (8) "Persecuted for righteousness' sake" (ver. 10).
- The same as I Peter iii. 14.
- (9) "Reviled and persecuted for Christ's sake" (ver. 11). Same as I Peter iv. 14.

All such are comforted and cheered by a suited reward for their present exercises. Indeed, those who are "reviled and persecuted for Christ's sake" are told to "*rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is their reward in heaven*" (ver. 12). Not in the kingdom of heaven, but in heaven itself. Such are the *salt* of the earth, and if not *that*, they are useless and fit only to be cast out. (ver. 13). All this, I apprehend, is connected with God, and for the eye of God, the state of soul before God.

Then we get what is more open and manifest and for others; and *seven* things are to characterise us:—

- (1) Perfect *light* (vers. 14-16).
- (2) Perfect *obedience* (vers. 17-20).
- (3) Perfect *forbearance and agreement* (vers. 21-26).
- (4) Perfect *purity* (vers. 27-32).
- (5) Perfect *truthfulness* (vers. 33-37).
- (6) Perfect *yieldingness* (vers. 38-42).
- (7) Perfect *love* (vers. 43-47).

It begins with *light* and ends with *love*. This is the *nature* of God, light and love. "Be ye therefore

*perfect*, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (ver. 48).

When God revealed Himself to Abraham, He revealed Himself as the *Almighty*; and Abraham's perfection consisted in answering to that revelation. When He redeemed Israel and brought them out of Egypt to Himself, He revealed Himself to them as *Jehovah their God* (Deut. xviii. 13), and their perfection was to answer to that revelation, a revelation which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were ignorant of (see Exod. vi. 3). But now, in Christianity, He has revealed Himself as *Father* (Matt. v. 16, 45), hence perfection for us is seen in answering to that revelation and carrying out all these principles as before God as our Father, and thus shewing forth in our ways the very nature of our Father, and what was all seen so beautifully and *perfectly* in the life of the Lord Jesus. How blessed all this is! What a lot of honey there is to be sucked out of what may appear to be *dry flowers*!

Perfection is again spoken of as "full growth," or a full grown man, in contrast to babes (1 Cor. ii. 6; Phil. iii. 15). But *full Christian perfection* is to be like Christ in glory (Phil. iii. 12, 31; Rom. viii. 29). For this we long, wait, watch, and say,

"Come, Lord, and tarry not,  
Bring the long-looked-for day."

And as we hear Him say, "Surely I come *quickly*," our hearts respond, "Amen! even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. xxii. 20).

W. E.

*New Zealand.*

"THERE is no geography with God—no abroad; a soul here is as dear to Him as one in Africa or China."—*Rev. G. Gregson.*

"We commend those husbandmen who *cut straight furrows*; so that preacher is worthy of praise who *follows the rule of the divine Word*."—THEODORET (*the 5th century*).

## HEARTS UPLIFTED IN WORSHIP.

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WORSHIP and adoration are the fitting expressions of hearts which have learnt something of the preciousness of the Lord Jesus. "Unto you, therefore, which believe is the preciousness." What does this mean? It speaks not only of faith in the work accomplished, but it also tells out in some measure the knowledge of the Person who has accomplished it; and so we read in 1 Peter i. 8: "Whom having not seen ye love: in Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." But sad to relate, how many children of God know little or nothing of the preciousness to be found in Him. What hearts we have! Do we "want to see the Man that saved us?" The current of wickedness and infidelity grows stronger. The darkness thickens, and in the midst of it all the coldness and indifference of saints. We do well to have our "lamps trimmed," as exhorted by our brother in "Words in Season" for October.

But surely there is a chord in the heart of every saved one which is touched by the mention of His precious Name. There is the One who put away all my sins, who brought me into this blessed liberty. Yes, there He is, seated on the Father's throne, exalted, crowned with glory and honour! Weary one, is thy heart sad through the trials and difficulties of the way? Look up and see Him there. His Name! Yes; it tells of sympathy above. It speaks volumes to the heart. Oh, how He loves me! Can I fear or doubt with such an One? Yes, indeed, the thoughts of Jesus' love do cheer the spirit, do lift up the heart in thankfulness and praise. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. "Whom having not seen, ye love." Do we? Thank God for the grace that makes it so. In carrying out His desires will be the proof of this. Then is the glory of His Name our concern? Do we look upon any of His desires as trivial?

Dear Christian reader, He prizes thy love; wilt thou not seek to refresh His heart? "Where two or three are gathered," He says, "together in My *Name*, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20). Are you found there? *His Name*, remember. And if so, is it a joy for you to get there, in His presence? Then His Name avails us in our supplications to our God and Father. If you see then the darkness, the will of man asserting itself, of saints turning aside, think of Him; is He worthy of your love? Think of that tender, pitying eye upon you as if He were saying, "Will ye also go away?" Ah, to whom should we go? No, beloved reader, let us hold fast His precious Name, and in so doing we shall not deny His Word. Hold fast what thou hast. He is coming soon. Let that thought cheer us, that we shall soon be conformed to His image.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand. The bright and morning Star will soon appear. And then to praise Him, no more to pain the Lamb once slain. Think of it, dear reader. Oh, let it hold us. Let your attitude be uncompromising towards aught that slights Him. Shall we put saints before Him? No; in all things He must have the pre-eminence. But what grace should characterise us, what patience, what forbearing one another in love. Blessed Saviour, we adore Thee, for Thou art worthy to receive all the praise and homage these hearts can give! We do long to see Thee to praise in full measure!

"Jesus! how much Thy Name unfolds  
To every opened ear!  
The pardoned sinner's memory holds  
None other half so dear.

"The mention of Thy Name shall bow  
Our hearts to worship Thee!  
The chiefest of ten thousand Thou,  
Whose love has set us free."



## NOTE OF INTEREST FROM BAHAMAS.

## GREAT HARBOUR, ABAÇO.

READERS of "Words in Season" will welcome news of God's precious word being prospered along the shores of this group of islands. An extract from letter to hand recently tells us what goes on there at times:—

"No doubt you have heard of the mob the people made during our brother Pearson's stay in Great Harbour. One man came up to me and gave me a blow in the back of the neck, and another struck brother H—— R—— on the cheek-bone, and broke it: he still suffers from it. Four or five of them got my brother T—— down to the ground, tore part of his clothes off, and bruised him very badly. While they had him down, he, like Stephen, prayed for them, asking God not to lay it to their charge, and to give him courage; and said, Although they slay me, yet will I trust Thee. This was one afternoon at a gospel meeting on the street, or an intended gospel meeting, but we only got as far as the reading of a portion in Proverbs; but many got their eyes open. . . . If you have tracts that you can spare for free distribution, I can give away a good many. Please let us know if you are expecting to come this way soon."

The perpetration of this outrage on the Lord's servants was not by those we consider lewd, of the baser sort, but sober, industrious, chapel-going ones, professed followers of Christ.

The islands are small; nothing in this way is done in a corner; lip and life combine and testify of Him—mighty to save, able to keep! The humble pursuits of farming and fishing give scope for reflection, and these things, brought to the hearing of black and white without money. Free salvation and eternal salvation is all against the forms and ceremonies that have been unchallenged too long, leaving poor deluded souls in

false security until the truth is sounded in the hearing of all. Hence the commotion and persecution. They have no rushing commercial enterprises, no great theatres or pleasure resorts to go to, where they might seek to hide away from God, or endeavour to drown the thought, so horrible, they are sinners before Him; even the religion they follow affords them no satisfaction, but rather are they reminded of their unfitness for His presence by those who seek by grace to preach His Word faithfully.

If any desire fellowship in the way our brother suggests, tracts for free distribution, and, I might add, portions for the young and unestablished, would be forwarded on sending to W. B., 27, Lancefield Street, London, W.

Let us remember before Him those who proclaim the Word of God as well as those who have received it.

W. B.

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## LETTERS OF INTEREST.

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DEAR Brother in Christ,—Comforters you have; all praise to Him! and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulations: heaviness and groaning now, but all hindrance will soon be for ever removed, for we too shall be *with Him*. What a meaning there is in these words! how full of beauty, and their reality how deep at such a time. *With Him!* What an exchange! Could we possibly suggest a recall? How selfish, how unkind! Would we not rather desire that all were with Him? How well! Oh for the grace to attract to Himself; and may such partings but deepen our attachment to Him for such love in taking us out of this scene, who were one time part of it, but now of His household, strangers here!

He knows how to sympathise; He will not withhold. The tears and prayers are precious to Him—the groans He will interpret and answer, and in His time *hush*. Hope how bright, sorrow in hope; the

sorrow of the world how different! Death is ours! May our hearts and minds retain these things, and adore for such grace and mercy. What can I say but "Look up"? What mercy, what wisdom to attract our gaze upward! We look around, and faint at the horrible spectacles; but beyond, to where *with Him* means paradise; what gain to His loved one! Our desires are apt to find expression, "Oh to be with Him too"; but may He give grace to say in all truth, "Thy will be done." May He come in at this time and comfort each in His wondrous, gracious way, and get to Himself praise and adoration, for how worthy is He!—Yours in Him,

W. B.

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BELOVED BRETHERN,—There are two points on which I desire to make myself distinctly understood. First, as to the difference between ministry and worship: the essential difference between which is, that in the one, man speaks to God; in the other, God speaks by His servants to men. Our only and all-sufficient title to worship, is that all-abounding grace of God which has brought us nigh by the blood of Jesus; so nigh as to know and worship Him as our Father; so nigh as to be kings and priests to God. In this all saints are alike. The feeblest and the strongest, the most experienced and the veriest babe are all alike in this. The most gifted servant of Christ has no better title to draw near to God, than the weakest saint among those to whom he ministers. To suppose the contrary, would be to do what has been so largely done throughout Christendom, viz.—to institute an order of priests between the Church and God. One great High Priest we have. The only priesthood besides His which exists at present, is that which all saints share, and which all share alike. I could not suppose, therefore, that in an assembly of Christians the giving out of hymns, and prayer, thanksgiving, and praise (the expression of these I mean) should be confined to those who are qualified of God to teach, or

to exhort, or to preach the gospel. God the Holy Ghost may use others of the saints to give out a hymn which really expresses the present worship of the hearts of those assembled; or he may use them in prayers which really express the present need and desires of those whose mouth they profess to be. And if God be pleased so to act, what are we that we should say Him nay? Still, while these exercises cannot be confined to gifted persons, they must surely be subject to the present guidance of the Holy Ghost; and they all come within the range of those principles laid down in 1 Cor. xiv., such as that everything must be in order and to edification.

Ministry, that is ministry of the word—ministry in which God speaks by His servants to men—is the result of a special deposit with the individual of a gift or gifts, for the use of which he is responsible to Christ. Our title to worship is that in which we are all *alike*. The responsibility to minister flows from that in which we *differ*. "Having, then, gifts DIFFERING according to the grace that is given to us" (Rom. xii. 6). This, of itself, establishes the contrast I refer to between ministry and worship.

The other point is, as to liberty of ministry. The true, scriptural idea of liberty of ministry, not only includes liberty for the exercise of gifts, but also for the development of them. It implies that we so meet in the recognition of the Spirit's presence and supremacy, as to present no hindrance to *His acting* by whomsoever He will; and it is quite clear that in the first development of gift, it must be His acting by those who have not been previously so used of Him. Any principle which would interfere with this would, as it seems to me, be alike subversive of the Church's privileges and of the Holy Spirit's rights. But, then, it must at once be obvious, that if saints meet together thus, on ground which leaves scope for the Holy Spirit to lead to a hymn by one, prayer by another, a word of exhortation or a doctrine by a third; and if room must

be left for the Spirit to develop, as well as to use, gifts for the edifying of the Body, this cannot be done without affording opportunity for forwardness and self-sufficiency to act without any guidance of the Spirit. Hence the importance of knowing how to distinguish between that which is of the flesh and that which is of the Spirit. I shrink greatly from the hackneyed use of such terms as "ministry in the flesh," and "ministry in the Spirit;" and yet there is all-important truth embodied in those expressions, soberly used. In each Christian there are two fountains of thought, feeling, motive, word, and action, and these are denominated in Scripture "flesh" and "spirit." The part we take in the assemblies of the saints may flow from one of these sources or from the other. It is most important rightly to distinguish between them. It is important for those who take part in the meetings to judge themselves as to this. It is important for all saints, seeing that we are exhorted to "try the spirits;" and on the assembly must rest eventually the responsibility of owning what is of God, and of discouraging and discountenancing what proceeds from any other source.

It is to some of the broad and principal landmarks by which we may distinguish the guidance of the Spirit from fleshly counterfeits and pretensions, that I would now solicit your attention. And first, I would mention several things which are *not* a warrant for our taking part in the meetings of the saints.

The mere circumstance of there being liberty to act is no warrant for acting. This is so self-evident that nothing need be said to prove it; and yet we need to be reminded of it. The fact that there is no formal hindrance to any one taking part in the meeting, renders it possible for those whose only qualification is that they can read, to take up a principal part of the time in reading chapter after chapter, and hymn after hymn. Of course, any child who has been taught to read can do this; and there are few amongst

us, indeed, who cannot conduct the meetings, if ability to read hymns and chapters be all the qualification that is requisite. But while it is easy enough to read a chapter, to know which is the right one to read, and which is the right time to read it, is quite another matter. It is easy enough to give out a hymn, but to give out the hymn which really embodies and expresses the worship of the saints is what can only be done by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Silence, for its own sake, cannot be too much deprecated. It may become as complete a form as anything else. But silence is better than what is said or done merely to break the silence. I know well what it is to think of persons present who are not in communion—perhaps not believers—and to feel uneasy at the silence on their account.

Again, one's individual state and experiences are no certain guides as to any part we may take in meetings of the saints. A hymn may have been very sweet to my own soul, or I may have been present where it has been sung with great enjoyment of the Lord's presence. I am not to conclude from this that it is my place to give out the hymn at the next meeting I attend. There may be no suitability in it to the present state of the assembly. It may not be the mind of the Spirit that any hymn should be sung. "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms" (James v. 13). The hymn must be expressive of what those assembled feel, or there is no sincerity in their joining to sing it. And who, but He who knows the actual state of the assembly, can guide to a hymn expressive of that state? Then as to prayer: when one prays in the assembly, it is as the vehicle for the expression of its wants and its requests. I may have burdens of my own to cast on the Lord in prayer, which it would be very improper for me to name in the assembly. The only effect, probably, would be to drag down all my brethren to a level with myself. On the other hand, my own soul may be

thoroughly happy with the Lord ; if that be not the state of the assembly as such, it is only by identifying myself with the actual state of the assembly that I shall be enabled to present its requests before God. That is to say, if I am led by the Spirit to pray in the assembly, it will not be as in my closet, where none are present but the Lord and myself, and my own wants and my own enjoyments form the proper subjects of prayer and thanksgiving ; but I shall be enabled to offer such prayers, and make such confessions, and present such thanksgivings, as are suited to the actual state of those whose mouth I become in thus addressing God. There cannot be a much greater mistake than to suppose that self, and what relates to self, is to be our guide the meetings of the saints.

A portion of Scripture may have interested my own soul greatly, and I may have profited by it, it does not follow that I am to read it at the Lord's table, or in other meetings of the saints. Some particular subject may be occupying my own attention greatly ; and it may be well for my own soul that it should do so ; but it may not be the subject to which God would have the attention of the saints generally drawn. You will observe, I am not denying that we may ourselves have been specially occupied and exercised by subjects which God would have us bring before the saints. Perhaps this is often, or even commonly the case with God's servants ; but what I would affirm is, that this, *of itself*, is no sufficient guidance. We ourselves may have necessities which the saints generally have not ; and they may need what would not meet our own case.

The hymns to which the Spirit of God leads us in joint worship will be the expression of that in which all are agreed who unite in the act. At all times, but in the assembly at all events, let us endeavour to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." And let us remember that the way to do this is to walk "in all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love."

Here let me recall to your minds, that in singing, prayer, or worship of any kind, it is the assembly, whoever may be its mouth or organ, that speaks to God. It, therefore, can never be truly or sincerely beyond the state of the assembly, but must be expressive of it. True indeed, blessed be God, He may by the Spirit strike a higher note, with which immediately all hearts chord, and so the tone of united worship is raised; and this He often does. But if the assembly be not in a state to respond at once to such a key-note of praise, there can be nothing much more painful than for an individual to go on with exalted strains of thanksgiving and adoration, when all other hearts are sad and cold, wandering and distracted. The one who utters the worship of the assembly must have the hearts of the assembly with him, or there is no reality in what takes place. On the other hand, ministry, being God's voice to us, may be ever so much in advance of our state. It is an individual speaking as God's mouth, and if it be really so, it will often be to minister truth we have not as yet received, or to recall to us truths which have ceased to act in present power on our souls. How evident, that in either case, and in every case, it must be the Spirit of God who guides.—Affectionately in Christ Jesus,

W. T.

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In Heb. xii. there are two dangers of a chastened soul: one to despise the chastening—this Job did, through being filled with good thoughts of himself, as a God-fearer,—the other to faint under it, and this is to lose the sense of grace whilst taking the chastening to heart. If the effect of the chastening is to make me *lose confidence in God*, that is not His end at all. It is sent to bring to light, and to free from some hidden spring of confidence in self, the real root of "the needs be" for it, and of all discouragement. Chastening is *never judgment of my person*, it is of my ways, because my person will never be judged.—J. R.



THE history of Naaman teaches us of divine grace, and of that flowing out to a Gentile (Luke iv. 27); yet from it we learn nothing of the way of forgiveness, nor of the value and sufficiency of sacrifice for one's sins. It is not of guilt that we are by it reminded, but of the presence of evil within, from which deliverance is desired. So of that side of the gospel—deliverance, not of forgiveness—is this history a foreshadowing. Yet whilst that is the case, it is nevertheless instructive to us, as it illustrates certain points in connection with the gospel of God's grace for the guilty. To this let us turn.

Naaman, as far as this world goes, had been a prosperous man. He was a successful warrior and an eminent captain. He had evidently plenty of wealth and emoluments. He was in high favour with his sovereign, and looked up to and respected by his countrymen. "A great man," we read, "and honourable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria" (2 Kings v. 1). A remarkable statement is this. For as yet he knew not the Lord, neither did his master honour and worship the God of Israel; yet God favoured him in war, and gave success to the arms of the idolatrous king of Syria, the professed worshipper of Rimmon. Israel was at that time virtually in apostasy. God therefore had worked outside His people, and against them, for the maintenance and for the wider display of His own glory and grace.

Great and powerful as was this captain of Syria's host, God had even greater blessing and honour in store for him than Syria could bestow. He therefore laid His hand upon him. So he became a leper. This was doubtless the trial of his life, and no light one either; for though the Mosaic legislation about leprosy had no validity in Syria, yet, as afflicted with that disease, there was a worm at the root of all his

greatness, opulence, and comfort. God, who had favoured the arms of Syria, and to whose power he owed his victories in war, had laid His hand upon him, and Naaman could not remove it. He was a leper. Just one word in the original expresses the condition of his person. All his greatness and glory first stated, the verse ends with that word which tells of the sad affliction which had befallen him. Suggestive is this.

Prosperity in this life may become clouded by some dire calamity sent by the Almighty, though sent, as in this case, for blessing. Maybe he writhed under his affliction, but to no purpose. Very probably it was to him inconceivable why he had been thus stricken. Such a successful man otherwise, but now, alas! a leper! He was, however, to learn the reason of the stroke, and the end that God designed by it for his richest blessing.. This the history brings out.

God often, but not always, works out His purposes by successive steps, circumstances one after another proving to be links in a chain by which His design is perfected. So looking back at times at the past, we may trace an order in the chain of events which has led us into spiritual blessing; though, whilst that was uncoiling link after link, we did not understand God's purpose in that which was taking place. How mysterious must it have been to Joseph to be a slave in Potiphar's house, and then to sink lower as he was cast into the prison-house, though he had done no wrong. For years he was, as it were, the sport of circumstances, yet he was wholly guiltless. Thirteen years of his life were thus passed, in Egypt, before God disclosed even to him His purpose by all that he was going through. He had been sold by his brethren to the Midianites, and sold again by them to Potiphar, and subsequently thrust into prison, ere the train of events was fully laid which was to usher in his deliverance and exaltation. For it was in the prison that he made the acquaintance of the chief butler, and proved

to him that he could rightly interpret dreams. At length, though for a season neglected by that butler, his time came, and he was delivered. So with Naaman. Events had to take place ere the chain of them was completed which would lead to the removal of God's hand from off him.

Now one link in the chain was a successful raid of the Syrians into Israelitish territory; another link was forged when the armed bands carried off as a captive a little maid from the land of her birth; and another when that little maid was taken into Naaman's house to wait upon his wife. What was the anguish of that little maid when ruthlessly torn from her home? What were the feelings of her family when they knew of her captivity, carried away by those from whom they could not rescue her? Strange, surely, if she reflected at all, must she have thought her lot. Why was she a servant in Naaman's house? Such questions she might at first have asked, and asked in vain. Why that isolation? Why that captivity?

This little maid a captive! Her name, her tribe, the place of her birth, her immediate belongings are all to us unknown. Yet what we read about her is most interesting. We learn what she said in the house of her master. Who cares to know her name, if we know the service she rendered, and the link she was in that chain of circumstances which ended in Naaman becoming a worshipper of the One true God? By the Syrians the Israelites had been plundered, that by one of that chosen people, and she but a little maid, God, the God of Israel, should be glorified in a Gentile land and in a Gentile house.

Naaman a leper! The physicians of Damascus could not cure him. Mineral waters could not heal him. Idolatrous incantations could not chase away the dreadful disease, which, if unchecked, would sap all vitality, and in the end carry him off. Abanah and Pharpar were powerless. All the wealth, too, and the

influence that he had could not have purchased one day's freedom from its presence in his frame. But that little maid knew, what others never thought of, that God's prophet was in Samaria, and that he could recover her master of his leprosy. She did what she could by making known what she knew. Like Mary of Bethany, she had her opportunity, and she used it. "Would God," were her words to her mistress, "my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria, for (or, then) he would recover him of his leprosy" (2 Kings v. 3). It was little in appearance that she did, but it was enough. A few words crossed her lips. Her service for God in that matter was finished. She had done just that which was wanted. The words of the little maid were carried to the presence chamber of the king. Isolated she was from her family and kindred. Now it began to be evident why. God, the God of Israel, had work for her to do in the land and in the house of her captivity. The Syrian king's acquiescence was readily gained—to Samaria Naaman was to go.

But how should he travel? He was to be sent with a retinue as befitted his rank. With horses and chariots he started forth, and with money and garments, for presents, in abundance. The king evidently would spare nothing to get him healed; and Naaman, what would he not be willing to pay as the price of deliverance from this heavy affliction? Upwards of £14,000 was the value of the precious metals he took with him. For in earnest was Naaman about his cure; he would travel to Samaria to get it. In earnest, too, was the king of Syria. But, though in earnest, they both shewed their ignorance of God in supposing, like another at a later period, that the gift of God could be purchased with money (Acts viii. 20). God's grace is free, without money and without price. How slow is man to believe this, and to act in accordance with it. Does the question rise up for any reader of these lines: how shall I act in accordance with that? Let such be content, be willing to receive of divine grace

freely and fully. "Incline your ear," is the prophetic invitation, "and come unto Me. Hear, and your soul shall live" (Isaiah lv. 3).

With the goodly retinue above named, and with such wealth, Naaman traversed the territory of Israel to Samaria. Very likely he had entered the kingdom of Israel in former times as an enemy. Now he went as a suppliant with a letter to the king of Israel from his master, the king of Syria. The little maid had spoken of the prophet, and not of the king in Samaria. Very probably the king at Damascus supposed that God's prophets were as subservient to the will of Joram as idolatrous prophets were to heathen monarchs. So to king Joram, Ahab's son, Naaman carried a letter, and delivered it. The king of Israel was dismayed, for he really knew not God. Elisha, however, heard of the matter, though apparently not from Joram, and sent to tell the king to make Naaman come to his house, who would learn, what Joram had surely forgotten, that there was a prophet in Israel.

Before the prophet's door the traveller halted. Now he was to learn about God. With great wealth had he come, willing evidently to expend much on his cure. The prophet, of whom the little maid had spoken, remained in his house, whilst Naaman was outside. But not one talent of silver, nor one piece of gold did Elisha ask for, nor one change of raiment did he indicate his desire to receive. He was the prophet of God, who in grace acts freely. This was one lesson that the captain of Syria's host was to learn. All his wealth, or even all the gold and silver in the world, could not have bought his cure. That was to be free of charge, and the fruit of obedience of faith in him. Moreover, he, a suppliant for divine compassion, must take a suppliant's place. Elisha would not see him. Humbling for Naaman. At home he was the captain of the host; in Samaria he was but a leper. This was another lesson for him.

He thought to receive distinguished honour from Elisha, expecting that he would come out to him, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike (or wave) his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Who before had let Naaman wait at his door without coming out to do him honour? Naaman was the servant of Benhadad; Elisha was the prophet of Jehovah, who is no respecter of persons. So he would not see the leper, but sent him a message which told him what to do, and assured him of healing if he did it. "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean" (2 Kings v. 10).

Elisha said no more, but he could say no less. He could not leave Naaman for one moment in ignorance or in uncertainty; for God never does that with a suppliant for grace. But his manner of procedure tested Naaman's obedience. Would he do such a simple thing as wash to be clean? Naaman was now tested as people are tested by the gospel. Would he obey? Wash in Jordan seven times! Was that all? Had he travelled so far, accompanied by such a retinue and with such wealth, just for that? And Jordan, too! Were not Abanah and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? If only washing was needed for his cure, why travel further—to the Jordan? Colder, brighter, and clearer than the Jordan were probably the rivers of his native land. Too simple seemed the prescribed means of cure. Too simple is the gospel way of salvation by faith many have supposed. It is simple as regards the making nothing of man or of his works, and hence many have stumbled over its simplicity, to find out later through mercy the folly of such conduct. So with Naaman. His pride was aroused, and his anger was manifested as, turning away from the prophet's door, he spurned the simple directions of washing seven times in Jordan to be clean.

But why in Jordan? What medicinal virtue was

there in it? None that we know of. Would water, procured from some spring, have done as well? It would not. Would living water from another river have been equally efficacious? No; there was but one river on the face of the earth in which he could wash to be cleansed, and that was Jordan. For Jordan, as we learn from the teaching of the book of Joshua (iii.), is typical of death. Now, where it is a question of the evil nature, death is needed; but where it is the question of guilt, the blood of the sin offering is required. In both cases it is the death of Christ that must take place, but for different purposes. "Once in the end of the ages hath He appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" is one divine statement; "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" is another, and a different one (Heb. ix. 26, 28). In Naaman's case there was no question raised as to his guilt, but of what was within him. Now the death of Christ on the cross was needed to put away in the future the evil nature from each one of us who believe; and in the meantime, as we practically own that we have died to sin, and died with Christ, because in Him, we get freedom from the working of that nature (Rom. vi.). Hence for deliverance from sin's power, as in future from its presence, death is requisite. The prophet's directions, then, with the light we have from the New Testament, become intelligible. The death of Christ was before the mind of God when He guided His servant to send Naaman to Jordan; for in Jordan, and in Jordan alone, could Naaman wash to be clean.

He had travelled to Samaria as a leper, desiring and hoping for a cure. Would he return home as he went, despising the prophet's message? It was just the alternative of going to Jordan, *washing* in it seven times, or of retracing his steps homeward a disappointed and an angry man. Now his servants interposed; they perceived his folly. How often does a bystander discern that which one deeply concerned

does not! His servants saw his mistake, and endeavoured to get him to correct it. "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?" (2 Kings v. 13). Naaman perceived his folly, and went off to the river without further delay, and dipped in it seven times. *Wash*, said Elisha; he *dipped* in it is the description of his act, indicating perhaps that he did it thoroughly, and that seven times as commanded, to ensure the perfectness of a cure. He now reaped, and at once, the fruit of obedience of faith, thus illustrating that simple gospel principle over which so many have stumbled. All that Elisha had foretold came to pass: his flesh came again as the flesh of a little child; he was clean. All, too, that the little maid had said was correct: her assurance was not misplaced. And Naaman by his obedience proved it.

Now a subject of divine grace, a witness, too, that a Gentile could share in it, he returned to Elisha, healed, and taught likewise of God. He had learnt something about God at Elisha's door. He came to know that Jehovah was the only true God on the banks of the Jordan. With a heart overflowing with thankfulness, he reached Samaria, and went to Elisha's house. This time the prophet came out, not to a leper, but to a clean person, and that one a subject of Jehovah's grace. All was from God, Naaman felt and owned. And Jehovah was that One living and true God. A subject of grace, he came to know God. "Behold, now I know, that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel" (v. 15). What a confession! How simply and effectually is a soul taught when it partakes of sovereign grace! Naaman was as clear as Elisha that Jehovah He is God. But of the freeness of grace he must be taught fully. He offered the prophet a present. He would take nothing. God acts freely in grace. His servant would not even now receive anything at Naaman's hands.



Now Naaman prepared to return, yet not as he came. He came a leper; he returned healed. He came with God's hand on him; he left with that hand removed. He crossed the frontier of Samaria as an idolator; he left that kingdom as a confessor of the true God. Grace had taught him, as arguments never would, who was the true God. Is it not the same still? Those who become subjects of grace come to know God. For them speculative difficulties, fruit of infidel teaching, are quickly dispersed: light has shone into the soul; life is shared in by them. They *know* Him that is true; and, like the blind man of John ix., they can say, "Whereas I was blind, now I see." How confident was Naaman now about the God of Israel. Idols were lying vanities to him. The controversy between idols and the true God was settled in his soul. He had shared in divine grace; henceforth he would burn offerings and sacrifice to no other God, for there was none in all the earth but in Israel. Hence he craved for two mules' burden of earth, wherewith to rear an altar in his house to God. He had asked Elisha to receive a present. That offer was declined. He next solicited the earth; that was not denied him; and then he turned to go home, as far as Elisha was concerned as rich as he came, but with two mules' burden of earth as well.

Great and honourable he had been at home, a successful and a favoured man. Now more honour was put on him, greater favour by far than had previously been shown him. He had served faithfully, and had won the esteem of his sovereign. Now he had been healed by God, and was honoured, and privileged to confess and worship Him in his own country and in his own home. The great conqueror of the past would henceforth bow low before the Lord Jehovah.

Now the reason of his affliction must have been clear to him. God laid His hand upon him that he might be brought openly to confess and to worship

Him. Now, too, the reason of that little maid's isolation from all her belongings, and for her captivity amongst idolatrous Gentiles, was to be seen. God had used her as a link in the chain, that would end in the bright conversion of the husband of her mistress. What joy must have reigned in Naaman's house on his return, healed of his leprosy! But that little maid must have had a joy, to which even the wife was a stranger, as she saw the two mules' burden of earth, and witnessed the erection of an altar to her God. Henceforth there werè two, if only two, in that household who owned Jehovah as the true God—that little maid and her master. Did Naaman ever after regret his leprosy? Impossible. Did she regret her captivity and isolation? She had done what she could not have done at home, viz., directed the great captain of Syria to the prophet in Samaria, which was productive of such blessed results.

Here the history of both ends. Of Naaman's victories and battles we know no details. All that has been long buried in oblivion, being of no profit now to anyone. What is for profit alone remains. The little maid is remembered, as one who did what she could. Naaman stands out in history an illustration of the obedience of faith. He just did what he was commanded, and received the permanent blessing that he desired. To how many may it still be said, "Go, and do thou likewise"? Not wash in Jordan, for that is not the word for the day, but believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved (Acts xvi. 31).

C. E. S.

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I AM sure the saints, at their best, are but strangers to the weight and worth of the incomparable sweetness of Christ. He is as new, as fresh in excellency every day, to those who search more and more in Him, as if heaven could furnish us with as many new Christs (if I may speak so) as there are days betwixt Him and us, and yet is He one and the same.—*Saml. Rutherford.*

## CAMPBELLISM AND SCRIPTURE.

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THE apostle Paul had to say in his day, in writing to the Galatians, "There be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. i. 7-9). Now this is very strong language; and in this day of false charity and "departure from the faith," it would be set down as an evidence of the uncharitableness, intolerance, and bigotry of an infatuated religionist. But is it too strong if we think of what was at stake? The very foundations of the faith were being undermined by those Judaising teachers; and "if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Ps. xi. 3). When Christians fail to see eye to eye with each other on points of doctrine which are *not* fundamental, patience and forbearance are called for, and Phil. iii. 15, 16 is the principle which must be acted on, while we pray for one another that light may be vouchsafed to those who may be in darkness and error. But when the *foundations* are touched, there can be no fellowship with the teachers or holders of such doctrines. A decided stand must at once be taken. *Neutrality* there can be none. It must be *for* or *against* (Matt. xii. 30).

The epistle to the Galatians was written to meet the anti-christian teaching of those men who went down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (Acts xv. 1). And Paul shews that such teaching was "another gospel" (Gal. i. 6, 7); for "if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing" he had to say to them (chap. v. 2-4). Now this was serious error they sought to bring in. It was *adding*

something to that sacrifice which is both *perfect* and *permanent*; and Christ and His sacrifice cannot be added to (Eccles. iii. 14; Heb. x. 12-14). No wonder, then, he used such strong language.

Blessed be God, that sacrifice stands alone in all its solitary grandeur and perfection, upholding the very throne of God, meeting the deep and desperate need of the sinner, and putting his conscience in harmony with that throne. By it we have everlasting life, and shall never come into judgment (John v. 24). By it we have forgiveness of sins (Acts x. 43) and cleansing from all sin (1 John i. 7). By it we have a purged and perfected conscience (Heb. x. 2-14). Yea, *every* Christian blessing belongs to the one who has owned his guilt and looked to Christ; *faith alone, without works*, being the channel through which these blessings are received (Rom. iv. 5; Eph. ii. 8, 9). This we must ever insist on, and strenuously oppose the bringing in of anything whatever—whether baptism or anything else—to add to the sacrifice of Christ, or to secure to the believing sinner the salvation of his soul (Titus iii. 5; 2 Tim. i. 9).

Now in these days there are still to be found perverters of the gospel, men who do not hesitate to preach, Except ye be baptised, ye cannot be saved; and, like their predecessors in Paul's day, they go not out into "the highways and hedges" to reclaim the poor outcasts from their life of sin, and get them saved from "the wrath to come," but they direct their efforts and are most successful in recruiting their ranks from the young converts which others have been blessed to—souls not yet established in the truth, and whose love for Christ in its first glow leads them to do anything if they think it is for Him and to please Him. Thus proselytes are made, and the young converts robbed of all the joy and brightness of their first love; their usefulness, too, is all gone; and instead of communion with Christ and the joy which is consequent thereon, cold, dry doctrines are

put in their place ; and instead of being known as warm-hearted Christians, they become cold, critical, and argumentative, more taken up with discussing baptism than ministering Christ ; men whom one cares not to meet, as they never talk about Christ alone. Instead of turning the water into " wine which maketh glad the heart of man " (Ps. civ. 15), they turn the wine into water, and their whole conversation must be about baptism. How truly may it be said of them, " They have taken away *my Lord*, and I know not where they have laid *Him*." Instead of Christ being the Saviour alone, baptism is, or at least is an essential element in salvation ; and heaven has become an island to them, to which there is no way but by water.

It is not that baptism is not a truth taught in Scripture. It surely is, and has its place ; but when any truth is distorted and misplaced it becomes serious error. They may think it gospel to preach, Except ye be baptised, ye cannot be saved ; but the Spirit-taught soul will reject it, and say at once, " It is not even another *gospel*. It is *no* gospel, and certainly is not to be found in Scripture." It is to *add* to the finished work of the Son of God ; and to add circumcision, baptism, or anything else to it, is to deny its perfection. The eternal song of the redeemed will be : " Unto Him that loveth us, and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood " (Rev. i. 7). Not washed them away by *baptism*, but by His own *blood*. O, dear young converts, beware of such unscriptural and Christ-dishonouring doctrines, and may the Lord graciously deliver His saints who are ensnared by them.

Those people who preach baptism as one of the " steps " essential to salvation, do not understand the Scriptural teaching of baptism. They connect it with a person's *state*, and thus indirectly with heaven. This Scripture *never* does, but connects it with a person's *place*, and on *earth*, and this we shall see presently.

Thus starting wrongly, all their conclusions about it are wrong also.

I know that many will *not* say that only those immersed are saved. It is too glaring a statement to make. But it is true, according to their views, whether they like to say it or not. For if you look at the various steps which they lay down as constituting the plan of salvation, if souls have not taken those steps, and they *really* constitute God's way of salvation, it follows that they have not *believed* (Mark xvi. 16), have not *obeyed* the gospel (1 Pet. iv. 17), have not taken God's way, but their own (Prov. xvi. 25), consequently they must be doomed, or God's word is not true. Nor can this be disputed, if they be honest. If there are four steps necessary—say, quickening, repentance, faith, and baptism (never mind the order of them or the number of them)—and these four steps constitute God's way of saving a soul, should *one* of these steps not be taken, then it follows that the bridge is not crossed—God and salvation are *not* reached. It is man having his own way, and *not* taking God's way, and it ends in death.

Now this is a serious thing; for no matter what evidence souls may have given of conversion to God, no matter though they have lived holy lives and died triumphant deaths, if this doctrine be true they have been all deluded and are lost for ever, seeing they were not immersed in water, which to these people is not only *one* of the steps in their bridge across the gulf to heaven, but is the *chief step*. Not only so, all the dear infants that have died have perished, as *they* could not give evidence of their faith sufficient to warrant their being immersed (and *sprinkling* with these people is no baptism at all); hence they, too, have perished.

Let the Campbellite Baptists take comfort from this if they can, that all their own unimmersed children and relatives that have died have perished if their doctrine be true. All sober-minded Christians, how-

ever, will reject such a terrible doctrine. We know men are not saved by baptism when we speak of the salvation of the soul and fitness for heaven, but by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone (Acts xvi. 31 ; Rom. iv. 5).

But let us look at some of the Scriptures which they believe teach their doctrine. They tell us that John iii. 5, "Born of water and of the Spirit," means that men are *quickened* by the Spirit, but *born* by baptism. Now this is a most curious idea. Nay, we might rather say, foolish one ; but it only shews the miserable shifts to which men are driven to support their theories. Verse 6 of that chapter says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." But as these people are not born of the Spirit (they are only quickened by it they say), but by water baptism, then it follows that that which is born of water *must be water*. But this we scarcely expect them to admit, however consistent the reasoning.

What then is the meaning of the expression in that verse, some might ask? It simply means the word of God ; and this is put beyond dispute by the general teaching of Scripture. I shall adduce a few passages in proof.

In Psalm cxix. 9 we read, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy word." Just as water cleanses the body, so the word of God by being heeded morally cleanses from all unsuited to Him. Again, "Then will I sprinkle *clean water* upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you" (Ezek. xxxvi. 25). Now who in their senses believe that God will literally sprinkle the people with clean water? Surely no one. Yet all may easily see the force of the expression when they think of the cleansing effect of the word applied to them in power. This is made even clearer in the New Testament, when the Lord

Jesus said to His disciples, "Now ye are *clean* through the *word* which I have spoken unto you" (John xv. 3). Again, "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and *cleanse* it with the washing of *water by the word*." Now from these passages it is clear that *water* is used in a figurative way to express the *cleansing power of the word*.

When we turn to James, we get still further and fuller teaching on this subject, and which demonstrates the absurdity of the "new-birth-by-baptism" theory. We read, "Of His own will *begat* He us *by the word of truth*" (James i. 18); while Peter shows that not only are we *begotten* by the word, but we are *born by the word*, for he says, "Being *born again*, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the word of God*, which liveth and abideth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Peter i. 23, 25). Surely this is conclusive.

The Word itself without the Spirit would be like stagnant water; but when used by the Spirit, it becomes living and operative (Heb. iv. 12, New Translation). It cleanses by removing our own thoughts and making room for God's thoughts, and thus, by *the Spirit and the word*, a new life is imparted, a new birth takes place—a spiritual birth. And just as that which is born of the flesh is flesh, our natural birth into this world; so that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and we have a new spiritual life and nature.

One other point I would just notice, which in itself ought to settle that John iii. 5 is *not* baptism. Christian baptism is set forth as *burial*. "Therefore we are *buried* with Him by baptism unto death" (Rom. vi. 4). Again, "*Buried* with Him in baptism" (Col. ii. 12). Now John iii. 5 is a *new birth*, not a *burial unto death*. How then can it teach baptism? How can a *birth* be a *burial*? The fallacy of this theory is seen at once; and the evidence I have adduced from Scripture is conclusive that John iii. 5



teaches no such thing as baptism, but speaks of a new birth by the *word* and *Spirit* of God, and it will satisfy the mind of any honest seeker after truth.

There are, however, a few other texts which they press into their service to subvert the faith of young souls, which we must look at briefly. "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved" (Mark xvi. 16). "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii. 38). "Arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins" (Acts xxii. 16). "The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save *you*" (1 Peter iii. 21, New Translation).

Now these texts are made to apply to the salvation of the soul and the eternal forgiveness of sins. But it is all a total blunder. They have nothing to do with a person's *state* and what is *eternal*; but with their *place* and what is *governmental*. If salvation and forgiveness, in the eternal sense, were obtained by baptism, then Simon, the sorcerer, was a forgiven and saved man when Peter told him he was "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity" (Acts viii. 23). Is this so? And how comes it, we might well ask, that Cornelius and his friends had both these things *before* they were baptised? (Acts x. 43-48). Not only so, think of the numbers of cases of persons baptised who have turned out to be spurious cases of conversion; yet if baptism confers or insures the forgiveness of sins and the Holy Ghost to those baptised, in the sense we speak of it and as they mean it, then all these people, living in their sins, will be in heaven at last; and we are bound to conclude that men can live in sin, make false professions, and yet be really saved. But who, that knows what sin, holiness, and the grace of God really are, could believe such a monstrous thing?

The fact is, the whole of this salvation by water theory of the Campbellites is a mere human inven-

tion, and not to be found in the pages of God's word. It is the ordinary Baptist theory run to seed. It makes something of man, and gives him a salvation by *works*, and denies that it is "by grace through *faith*, and not of works" (Eph. ii. 8, 9). Besides, it falsifies Scripture, by making baptism a *command* to the person baptised instead of to the *baptiser* (Matt. xxviii. 19). Now a command to obey ordinances was suited to Judaism, but is certainly foreign to Christianity. The latter is wholly privilege, and a *command* to enjoy privileges is foolishness. The only Christian ordinances are baptism and the Lord's supper, and both are privileges. There is no command to eat the Lord's supper; and the command in baptism is to the one who does the work—the *baptiser*, and not the baptised.

Now if baptism had been a *command* to the *baptised*, would not the disciples (I mean the one hundred and twenty—Acts i. xv. and ii. 1) have been the first to have obeyed it? Surely they would. But who baptised them with Christian baptism?\* No one! We never read of *their* being baptised; and when the subject is understood, we see at once how it could not possibly have been; and this in itself might well shew the fallacy of this hyper-baptist idea.

Baptism is the initiatory rite of Christianity. It introduces the subjects of it on to Christian *ground*—brings them into the place of privilege. But it does *not*, *never did*, and *never can* put them into the Christian condition. *Faith alone does that* (Gal. iii. 26). Baptism merely puts them into the *outward place*, and makes them professing Christians on earth. It admits them into *the house of God*—the place where the Holy Ghost dwells (Eph. ii. 22; 1 Cor. iii. 16). It does not put them into the Body of Christ; baptism with the Holy Ghost does *that* (1 Cor. xii. 13).

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\* I do not speak of that of John, as it was not Christian baptism, and those who had been baptised with it were re-baptised with Christian baptism.—See Acts xix. 3-5.

Neither does it make them *living stones* in the house of God (1 Peter ii. 5)—(another view of the house); conversion or *life* does that. Who, then, put the one hundred and twenty disciples on to Christian ground by water baptism on the day of Pentecost? No one! No one could, for the simple reason that *they formed* this new thing themselves. God the Holy Ghost on that day took up His abode *among them*, and thus *constituted them* the house of God on earth. Then, when the thing was formed, all others had to enter it by water baptism.

All this is simple enough when we are willing to be taught by Scripture. There was, and is, an eternal forgiveness of sins, eternal life, eternal salvation, which Scripture announces to "whosoever believeth" (John iii. 16; Acts x. 43; Eph. ii. 8), based on the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, and which the believing soul receives from God alone when faith is exercised, and apart from any works, any baptism, or anything else of any kind. It is *preached* to souls (Acts xiii. 38, 39), and they are *justified by* God and *before* God wholly on the ground of *faith, without* the deeds of the law (Rom. iii. 26-28).

But there is another thing. There is an actual *place* on earth where God the Holy Ghost dwells, in contrast to Judaism and heathenism; and into this place God gathers all who accept the testimony of His grace; and in that place alone, which is entered by water baptism as the door, persons are looked upon as being Christians, as being forgiven and saved, as before men, and wholly independent of their *state*. These things at the start were administered to them in a governmental way when they came in. They were not recognised as either forgiven or saved, so long as they continued on Jewish or heathen ground. But as soon as they submitted to the rite of baptism, then they changed their ground, and were looked upon as Christians, and as possessing these blessings, in contrast to being Jews or heathen.

This is seen more clearly still if we take the three thousand on the day of Pentecost. Now, I presume, there is no question that all the three thousand were converted to God, that they each had received individually for themselves, by faith alone, salvation from God, so that, had they died before baptism, they would have gone straight to heaven as the thief did. But suppose that out of that three thousand, one hundred of them had refused to be baptised, would *they* have been recognised *on earth* as Christians? Would they have been owned as forgiven and saved persons? Surely not! Yet in the *state* of their souls before God they *were* that. This lets us see at once that baptism admitted into a *place on earth* where people were looked upon as Christians, forgiven and saved, &c. Whether they were really in that condition or not was not the question. They might or might not be. Simon, the sorcerer, was *not*. Cornelius and others *were*. But consequent on baptism they were all equally in *the place of privilege* on earth.

The moment this is seen it explains all these mis-used texts of the Campbellites. The 3000 came by baptism into *the place* where these blessings mentioned were, and consequently were viewed as having them, *before men on earth*. They left Jewish ground and all belonging to it by their baptism, and came on to Christian ground. Paul, too, did the same, and left his sins behind him, in a governmental sense, and came on to Christian ground. Burial with Christ is to leave the ground you have hitherto occupied, whether Jewish or heathen, to take up a new ground. A Jew then and there ceased to be a Jew, and left all his old associations behind him, and came upon Christian ground, a professed Christian. And so with a Gentile. This, of course, as to their profession only, and as before the world, as it was all an *outward* thing, and had nothing to do with their condition, but with their *place*. Multitudes are in *the place* whose condition has

never been changed, and many are in the condition who have never yet been baptised and who are not yet Scripturally in the *place*. This is easily seen, and must be admitted when Scripture is understood. But I have said enough to show the fallacy and unscriptural character of Campbellism; and I have sufficiently set forth the Scriptural idea of baptism to give the enquirer a start, at least, in his investigations on the subject, an investigation which will amply repay him if conducted in the fear of God, with the only desire to learn His mind, and not to give baptism a more prominent place than Christ and His precious blood. God thinks everything of Christ, and makes Him the great test for all we *do, think, or say*; and He will not allow anyone or anything to displace Him. May we ever keep *Him* before our souls. Paul could say, "Christ sent me *not to baptise, but to preach the Gospel*" (1 Cor. i. 17). How strange this is, if the Campbellites' view be right. With them baptism is *part* of the gospel, and an *essential part* too. Yet Paul was not sent to do it, and thus he omits an essential part of the gospel. They might well charge Paul with "not preaching the gospel," as they charge all to-day who do not preach baptism; but that would be too bald, and expose them!

Rest assured, dear reader, that this evil use of baptism is not of God. Refuse it, then. If you have never been baptised in any form, you ought to be; but if you have, you cannot be again. Then make Christ and His glory your object. Seek the salvation of the lost. Preach Christ, and shun vain and profitless discussions about baptism, while acknowledging its place in the Scriptures. Seek "to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope" (Titus ii. 12, 13). The Saviour's last word was "quickly" (Rev. xxii. 17). And "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom. xiii. 11). But ever keep prominently before your soul in connection with such a subject,

that "in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature (or creation)" (Gal. vi. 15). W. E.

## THE SPIRIT OF SACRED POETRY.

THE earliest known Christian hymn is that ascribed to Clement, of Alexandria, who suffered martyrdom A.D. 217. We subjoin some portions of the English rendering by the Rev. Mr. Plumptre:—

<p>Shepherd of sheep that own          Their Master on the throne,          Stir up Thy children meek          With guileless lips to speak,          In hymn and song, Thy praise,          Guide of their infant ways.          O King of saints, O Lord!          Mighty, all-conquering Word;          Son of the highest God,          Wielding His Wisdom's rod;          Our stay when cares annoy,          Giver of endless joy;          Of all the human race          Saviour of boundless grace,—              O Jesus, hear.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">. . . . .</p>	<p>Lead us, O Shepherd true,          Thy mystic sheep, we sue:          Lead us, O holy Lord,          Who from Thy sons dost              ward,          With all-prevailing charm,          Peril and curse and harm;          O Path where Christ hath              trod,          O Way that leads to God,          O Word abiding aye,          O endless Light on high,          Mercy's fresh-springing flood,          Worker of all things good,          O glorious Life of all          That on their Maker call,—              Christ Jesus, hear.</p>
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After Clement, we have no account of any other Greek hymnist till Ephræm Syrus, of Mesopotamia,— "that land beyond the flood," in which the "father of the faithful" was called to be a pilgrim. Ephræm is supposed to have died about A.D. 378.

The following funeral hymn by this sweet Syrian singer, formerly sung at the death of children, is replete with touching pathos, and beautifully portrays the strife of Christian faith with natural affection, and the triumph of the former in resignation:—

Child, by God's sweet mercy given to thy mother and to me,—  
 Entering this world of sorrows, by His grace,—so fair to see:

Fair as some sweet flower in summer, till Death's hand on thee was laid,  
 Scorched the beauty from my flower, made the tender petals fade.  
 Yet I dare not weep nor murmur, for I know the King of kings  
 Leads thee to His marriage-chamber,—to the glorious bridal brings.  
 Nature fain would leave me weeping, love asserts her mournful right ;  
 But I answer, they have brought thee to the happy world of light !  
 And I fear that my lamentings, as I speak thy cherished name,  
 Desecrate the Royal dwelling,—fear to meet deserved blame,  
 If I press with tears of anguish into the abode of joy ;  
 Therefore, will I, meekly bowing, offer thee to God, my boy !

The following lines are by Gregory, of Nazianzum:—

Christ, my Lord, I come to bless thee, now when day is veiled in night ;  
 Thou, who knowest no beginning, Light of the Eternal Light !

Thou hast set the radiant heavens with Thy many lamps of brightness,  
 Filling all the vaults above ;  
 Day and night in turn subjecting to a brotherhood of service,  
 And a mutual law of love !

Our last selection from Gregory shall be from his lament over the weakness and desolateness of his old age:—

Where are the winged words? Lost in the air.  
 Where the fresh flower of youth and glory? Gone !  
 The strength of well-knit limbs? Brought low by care.  
 Wealth? Plundered : none possess but God alone !  
 Where those dear parents, who my life first gave,—  
 And where that holy twain, brother and sister? In the grave !

But Thou, O Christ, my King, art fatherland to me :  
Strength, wealth, eternal rest,—yea, all,—I find in Thee !

Anatolius, of Constantinople, who lived in the fifth century of the Christian era, wrote the following terse hymn. The translation is by the lamented J. Mason Neale.

Fierce was the wild billow, dark was the night,  
Oars labored heavily, foam glimmered white ;  
Mariners trembled, peril was nigh :  
Then said the God of God, " Peace, it is I ! "

Jesu, Deliverer ! come Thou to me ;  
Soothe Thou my voyaging over life's sea :  
Thou, when the storm of death roars sweeping by,  
Whisper, O Truth of Truth, " Peace, it is I ! "

Another eminent ecclesiastical poet of the East, Cosmas, the Hierosolymite, surnamed " the melodist," is the author of the following majestic and glowing stanzas :—

In days of old, on Sinai the Lord Jehovah came,  
In majesty of terror, in thunder-cloud and flame !—  
On Tabor, with the glory of sunniest light for rest,  
The excellence of beauty in Jesus was expressed.  
All hours and days inclined there, and did Thee worship  
meet ;  
The sun himself adored Thee, and bowed him at Thy feet :  
While Moses and Elias upon the Holy Mount  
The co-eternal glory of Christ our God recount.  
O holy, wondrous vision ! but what, when this life past,  
The beauty of Mount Tabor shall end in heaven at last ?  
But what, when all the glory of uncreated light  
Shall be the promised guerdon of them that win the fight ?

Theoclistus, of the ninth century, is the author of these grand lines, translated by Dr. Neale :—

Jesu,—Name all names above,—Jesu, best and dearest,—  
Jesu, fount of perfect love,—holiest, tenderest, nearest !



Jesu, source of grace completest,—Jesu, purest, Jesu,  
 sweetest,  
 Jesu, well of power divine,—make me, keep me, seal me,—  
 Thine !

The following is by John, of Damascus :—

'Tis the day of Resurrection ! earth, tell it all abroad !  
 The Passover of gladness ! the Passover of God !  
 From death to life eternal, from earth unto the sky,  
 Our Christ hath brought us over, with hymns of victory !  
 Our hearts be pure from evil, that we may see aright  
 The Lord, in rays eternal of Resurrection light ;  
 And, listening to His accents, may hear so calm and plain  
 His own "All Hail !" and hearing, may raise the victor strain.  
 Now let the heavens be joyful ; let earth her song begin ;  
 Let the round world keep triumph, and all that is therein !  
 Invisible or visible, their notes let all things blend ;  
 For Christ the Lord hath risen, our joy that hath no end !

One of the grandest outbursts of sacred song which  
 Dr. M. Neale has rescued from the long-buried past,  
 is the following, by Stephen, of S. Sabbas :—

Art thou weary, art thou languid, art thou sore distress ?  
 "Come to Me," saith One,—and "coming, be at rest !"  
 Hath He marks to lead me to Him,—if He be my Guide ?  
 In His feet and hands are wound-prints, and His side !  
 Is there diadem, as monarch, that His brow adorns ?  
 Yea : a crown, in very surety,—but of thorns !  
 If I find Him, if I follow, what His guerdon here ?  
 Many a sorrow, many a labour, many a tear !  
 If I still hold closely to Him, what hath He at last ?  
 Sorrow vanquished, labour ended, Jordan past !  
 If I ask Him to receive me, will He say me nay ?  
 Not till earth, and not till heaven pass away !  
 Tending, following, keeping, struggling, is He sure to bless ?  
 Angels, martyrs, prophets, pilgrims, answer, Yes !

As to the sixth line, our readers scarcely need to be  
 reminded that our adorable Lord is now "crowned  
 with glory and honour" (Heb. ii. 9).

## A WORD ON DEVOTEDNESS TO CHRIST.

IN a day of disquietude and restlessness, when men are following men, how sweet for one to turn to the word, and from there to see examples of dear saints who stood firm for God, in spite of numbers and carnal reasoning. Before turning to that to which I desire to call attention, let us ask ourselves the question, what is our real purpose and object just now? Do we *walk by faith* and not by sight? or is it that we are carnally minded, and *walk as men*? Do we drink into the spirit which characterised those faithful ones of old? or are we governed by the spirit and principles of a godless, Christless world? If we desire to pursue a *path of whole-hearted consecration to God* we must abstain from the pleasures of the world, and crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. To deny ourselves of that which we have no interest in naturally is no sacrifice; but to count all things loss, *especially our natural desires*, that we may gain Christ, is precious in the sight of God. It is said of Caleb that he *wholly followed the Lord God of Israel*, and this fact is recorded no less than four times (Numbers xiv. 24; Joshua xiv. 8, 9, 14). He stands firm in the day of trial; and though six hundred thousand are against him, yet God is with him, and he, along with Joshua, know whom they have believed. Blessed example for us to-day, beloved! May it cheer and encourage our hearts. Is God with us? Then what strength! what a resource! Then are we *walking in the path which the vulture's eye hath not seen*?

*"He knows the way He taketh,  
And I will walk with Him."*

Faith always has its reward, and it endures as seeing Him who is invisible, and so Caleb is rewarded (Joshua xiv. 13). "And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, Hebron for an inheritance. Hebron therefore became the inherit-

ance of Caleb, the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, unto this day, because that *he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel.*" Surely nothing but confidence in God could have sustained him, and then during those forty years he patiently waited God's time. A beautiful illustration that through faith and patience he inherited the promised possession.

"And the name of Hebron before was Kirjath-arba ; which Arba was a great man among the Anakims." How appropriate that Kirjath-arba, a city of the hero or *follower* of Baal, should be the possession of this *follower of God.* "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Surely this is an encouragement for us to walk in the truth : for what a blessed example too our blessed Lord has left us, that we might *follow in His steps.* We know also that this path will lead us into our incorruptible and undefiled inheritance. Then let this thought encourage us, as we look unto Him who endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down ; and let us be found faithful to Him in the midst of the strife. May it be said of each one, as of Caleb, that he wholly followed the Lord his God. What a portion is ours now, beloved ; may we enjoy it. *Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children,* and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.

J. H. I.

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"Enjoyed much, yesterday, this thought, that God cannot but work when a soul sits in silence with the eye upon Him to do so. No matter what the emergency, when the soul turns from the raging billows in the truth of death in self, but in the joy and confidence of life and resurrection in Christ, to the glory of God, the answer is sure to come with the sign and seal of the Most High."—J. A.

THE Lord hath told you what you should be doing till He come; wait and hasten, saith Peter, for the coming of the Lord; all is night here, in respect of ignorance and daily ensuing troubles, one always making way to another, as the ninth wave of the sea to the tenth: therefore sigh and long for the dawning of that morning, and the breaking of that day when the shadows shall flee away. Persuade yourself that He is coming; read His letter sent before Him (Rev. iii. 11): "Behold, I come quickly." Wait with the wearied night, watch for the breaking of the eastern sky, and think that you have not a morrow; as the wise father said, who, being invited against to-morrow to dine with friends, answered, For these many days no morrow at all have I had. Show yourself a Christian by suffering without murmuring, for which 14,700 were slain (Numb. xvi. 49). In patience possess your soul; they lose nothing who gain Christ. I commend you to the mercy and grace of our Lord Jesus, assuring you that your day is coming, and that God's mercy is abiding you. The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.—*Samuel Rutherford.*

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NEW CREATION.—My thought is that new creation was inaugurated by Christ rising from among the dead as the Beginning of the creation of God; that He then assumed Headship of race, and the disciples when He breathed upon them were in Him—new creation. Headship of His body, the Church, is in like manner connected with His ascension. But a believer now has no sooner accepted by faith the gospel of our salvation than He is justified, or accounted righteous before God, and, if so, is sealed with the Holy Ghost; and every such justified person is in Christ—new creation. Equally also is He in union with Him as a member of His body, the Church; but of course this is another line of truth.

## JESHURUN AND CHRIST.

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MANY and great were the blessings which a gracious God showered down upon His people of old, and to assure one's self that those blessings were neither few nor small, one has but to trace with the memory the history of this people from Egypt, across the Red Sea, through the howling wilderness into Canaan. Jehovah had brought them to the borders of that land "flowing with milk and honey," and on the eve of their passing into it, He, through Moses, disclosed to them what would be the effect upon their hearts of all His love past, present, and future. This disclosure is made in Deut. xxx.-xxxiii., and who can read these chapters without being powerfully convinced of the truth, that "every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually"? (Gen. vi. 7). The result of all God's love so lavishly bestowed was that Jeshurun (Israel) "waxed fat, and kicked." He must assert his own will, and break through the restraints which God in mercy had imposed as a barrier against the indulgence of his heart's lusts. So "he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. They provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they Him to anger. They sacrificed unto devils" (see margin), "not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not. Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee."

What a disclosure for these, Jehovah's people, to listen to! How terrible, too, those judgments that were to fall upon them as they sank into wickedness! Alas, these unfoldings were apparently unheeded, for Scripture abundantly testifies to the truth of these revelations. Can we not enter into the spirit of that cry: "O that they were wise, that they understood

this, that they would consider their latter end " (Deut. xxxii. 29).

Great as were Israel's blessings, yet how they fall into insignificance before those which we, by grace, enjoy. What can compare with the possession we have in Christ and all the glories which cluster around His blessed name? And warnings have we not had as distinct as ever Israel had? Yea, is not Israel's whole history a warning to us? Yet with these advantages so wondrously transcending all that God's people of old possessed, how are *we* acting? Look around upon the Church of God; and may we not exclaim of ourselves, O that we were wise, that we would consider our latter end! Have we not Jeshurun's counterpart in the turgid language of Laodicea: "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing"? (Rev. iii. 17). Have we not grown self-willed, and are we not kicking against the narrowness of the way? Is not the desire among the Lord's people becoming more general to make the line of demarcation between the Christian and the world less distinct? Latitudinarianism and expediency are coming in on every hand, and soon (how soon?) may we expect the full tide of worldliness to break in upon us and sweep away those distinctions which a Christian, at all hazards, is called upon to maintain (John xvii. 15, 16). Weakness (so called) and smallness of numbers must *necessarily* result from a walk separate from the world; but what of that? Weakness! "My strength is made perfect in weakness. MOST GLADLY, therefore, will I rather boast in my weakness that the power of Christ may dwell upon me" (2 Cor. xii. 9). Most gladly! Can you say that, my reader? Then as to smallness of numbers; again, I ask, what of that? "Where *two* or *three* are gathered unto My name, there am I in the midst of them." Is His presence not sufficient? Has the odour of His blessed name lost its fragrance? God forbid; yet we shall do well to take heed. The

apostle Paul in his day could say, "All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Phil. ii. 21); "the mystery of iniquity doth already work" (2 Thess. ii. 7). John also tells us that even before he left the scene, there were many antichrists (1 John ii. 18), and Jude speaks of "certain men crept in unawares" (Jude 4). Truly this is enough to compel us to doff our plumes of self-conceit and trail them in the dust; and sorely we need to emblazon upon our banners the words: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. x. 12).

Let us now "consider Him who endured so great contradiction from sinners against Himself, that we be not weary, fainting in our minds." The grand features of this blessed One's life may be summed up in the words, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. x.), and thus He could say, "I do always those things that please Him" (John viii. 29). He waxed not fat nor kicked, as did Jeshurun, but as He hung upon the cross we are permitted to hear His own heart-whisperings: "I may tell all My bones, they look and stare upon Me" (Psalm xxii. 17). What a contrast! Well may we of these Laodicean times gaze upon the picture here presented, while the proud boast rings in our ears: "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" (Rev. iii. 17). If aught could humble us, this should; and at the same time reveal to us the cause of many of the sorrows which afflict the Church at the present moment. "I came down from heaven not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (John vi. 38) are His own words; and in vain shall we search to discover any expression of His own will until His days on earth were drawing to a close. And then what read we? "Take away this cup from Me; nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt" (Mark xiv. 36). What depths of love! The first three gospels record this expression (Matt. xxvi. 39; Mark xiv. 36 · Luke xxii. 42), but John significantly

passes it by, and just as significantly bears testimony to the only other expression of His will: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (John xvii. 24). This was not, nor ever will be, withdrawn; but will, in very truth, be realised to the eternal glory of His own name and to our everlasting joy.

Who can contemplate the lowly, obedient Son of the Father, Christ Jesus our Lord, without emotion? What soul is there that loves Him but mounts to ecstasy as it pores over such prodigality of love, such unspeakable humility? Rich, indeed, we are through Him. "Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. viii. 9).

In the presence of such an One, self-will cannot lift its insolent head; hushed are the murmurings which weakness and smallness of numbers too often engender, and the chafed mood, which a temporary isolation frequently begets, cannot but be transformed into one of worship and adoration. In Him is present and eternal satisfaction (Psalm xvii. 15), and to be SATISFIED with Him is to know that "when I am weak then am I strong."

"God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. vi. 14).

A. C. H.

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### A NOTE ON JOHN XI. 24-26.

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IN answer to Martha's remark in verse 24, the Lord said, "I am the resurrection and the life" (ver. 25). Why resurrection before life? First, it was the subject He was speaking of at the moment, and necessarily came first. Second, it is God's order. They were speaking of Lazarus *rising*. Jesus said,



"I am the resurrection," adding, "and the life." Then He said, "He that believeth on Me, though he were *dead*, yet shall he *live*;" and next, "Whosoever *liveth* and believeth on Me *shall never die*" (vers. 25, 26).

The same order is observed by Paul in 1 Thess. iv. 15-18: "*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.*" Thus the dead saints rise first, answering to "I am the resurrection." Then those who are *alive and remain* do not die. "Mortality is swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. v. 4), and answers to the other part of the verse: "And the life." In comparing these passages I think we can easily see why resurrection comes before life, and we have the meaning of the passage: "I am the resurrection and the life."

*New Zealand.*

W. E.

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## ARE THEY MINISTERS OF CHRIST?—

*2 Cor. xi. 23.*

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THE Apostle was forced into speaking of himself and his service, through the place and hold the false teachers were getting among the Corinthians. But he could speak of himself in a way these false teachers could not. Had they penned that chapter, or written down the proofs of their being ministers of Christ, doubtless, like ourselves, they would have commenced with the most astonishing thing—as having been caught up to the third heaven, and talked about the visions and revelations given them by God, and made themselves look as important in the eyes of others as they possibly could. Not so, however, with this man of God. He begins with what would take all the pride out of man, and certainly that which no mere natural man would boast in, and thus gives a crushing answer to these men who were boasting themselves against him.

If I might so speak, Paul was like an old veteran ; he could show the proofs of his service, and wear his medals ; just as in Gal. vi. 17, speaking of himself as the Lord's slave, he says, "Henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body *the marks* of the Lord Jesus." He carried, as it were, the brand of his Master. So in 1 Cor. iv. 9-13, we have again a similar thing, where the apostle has to contrast his trying path with that of the Corinthians themselves, who had forgotten their calling, and were living in ease and luxury, and reigning as kings (v. 8). Alas for us all ! for we seem to-day to have made the same mistake, and have taken the *throne* instead of the *cross*. Then in 2 Cor. vi. 3-10, we have another similar passage, "Approving ourselves as the ministers of God" in all the various things mentioned there. And so here, "Are they ministers of Christ? So am I," &c. ; and he shews how far he was beyond them all in what characterised a true minister of a *rejected Christ*. Not a Christ accepted by the mass and reigning, but one rejected by the mass, whose name was scorned and disowned. It was no light matter to be a minister of such an One !

Notice, too, the contrast between the end of chap. xi. and the beginning of chap. xii., "*let down*" and "*caught up*." What great man would glory in having to be let down in a basket to save his life from a mob? Paul did not need a thorn in the flesh, in chap. xi., to keep him humble ; but he did in chap. xii. Then chap. xii. opens with a man in it caught up to paradise to receive revelations, and a thorn in the flesh to steady him when he comes back ; and closes with men in Christ acting in the flesh, and the rod to steady them and call them to their senses. How we need grace, whether for ordinary daily life or special service ; and how sweet are those words, "My grace is sufficient for thee," and "He giveth *more* grace."

## SPIRIT OF SACRED POETRY.

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"GREGORY the Great" (A.D. 590) was one of those whose lyric bursts of holy song mark so beautifully the tidal flow of the Christian life. He earnestly commended to both clergy and laity the study of the sacred Scriptures. He said the sacred words should, by constant intercourse, penetrate into our being. "God does not now answer us by angelic ministrations," he continues, "or special prophetic voices, because the holy Scriptures include all that is necessary to meet individual cases, and are constructed so as to mould the life of later times by the example of the earlier. The answer, 'My grace is sufficient for thee,' was given to Paul, that it need not be particularly repeated to each one of us."

Contemporary with "Gregory the Great" was Venantius Fortunatus, the writer of some hymns "which have taken root in the heart of Christendom, and have been chanted often, doubtless, with deep and solemn feeling, during many centuries." Fortunatus was an Italian by birth, yet his life was, for the most part, spent in Gaul. He was born in the year 530, and died A.D. 609.

We give a part of Mrs. Charles's fine rendering of the "Pange, lingua, gloriosi:"—

Spread, my tongue, the wondrous story of the glorious  
battle, far!

What the trophies and the triumphs of the cross of Jesus  
are,—

How the Victim, immolated, vanquished in that mighty war.  
Pitying, did the great Redeemer Adam's fall and ruin see,  
Sentenced then to death by tasting fruit of the forbidden  
tree,

And He marked that wood the weapon of redeeming love  
to be.

Thus the scheme of our redemption was of old in order  
laid,

Thus the wily arts were baffled of the foe who man betrayed,  
And the armor of redemption from Death's armory was  
made.

The following is a free rendering from the Latin, of his hymn on the Resurrection,—“*Salve, festa Dies.*” In this sweet poem spring time (figure of Resurrection) is supposed to welcome her risen Lord.

Hail, Day of days ! in peals of praise,  
Throughout all ages owned,  
When Christ, our God, hell's empire trod,  
And high o'er heaven was throned.  
This glorious morn the earth new-born  
In rising beauty shows ;  
How, with her Lord to life restored,  
Her gifts and graces rose !  
The spring serene, in sparkling sheen,  
The flower-clad earth arrays ;  
Heaven's portal bright, its radiant light,  
In fuller flood displays ;  
From death's deep gloom, from earth's dark tomb,  
The Lord in triumph soars !  
The forests raise their leafy praise,  
The flowery field adores,  
As, star by star, He mounts afar ;  
And hell imprisoned lies.  
Let stars and light, and depth and height,  
In hallelujahs rise !  
Lo ! He who died,—the Crucified !—  
God over all, He reigns !  
On Him we call, His servants all,  
Who heaven and earth sustains !

Bede, styled the Venerable, for the sanctity of his character, was born A.D. 672, and died in 735.

Here is the translation of one of his hymns on the “Ascension of our Lord” (“*Hymnum canamus gloriæ*”):—

A hymn of glory let us sing :  
New hymns throughout the world shall ring ;

By a new way, none ever trod,  
Christ mounteth to the throne of God,

Calm soaring through the radiant sky,  
Mounting its dazzling summits high !

May our affections thither tend,  
And thither constantly ascend,—  
Where, seated on the Father's throne,  
Thee reigning in the heavens we own ;  
And, as the countless ages flee,  
May all our glory be in Thee !

A notable and worthy name here meets us in the order of time,—that of Bernard, born, A.D. 1091, at Fontaines, near Dijon, of a knightly family.

Let us now rehearse some of his sweet lines, translated into our vernacular :—

Jesus, Thou joy of loving hearts !  
Thou Fount of life ! Thou Light of men !  
From the best bliss that earth imparts,  
We turn, unfilled, to Thee again.

Thy truth unchanged hath ever stood ;  
Thou savest those that on Thee call ;  
To them that seek Thee, Thou art good ;  
To them that find Thee, all in all !

We taste Thee, O Thou Living Bread !  
And long to feast upon Thee still ;  
We drink of Thee, the Fountain-head,  
And thirst our souls from Thee to fill.

Our restless spirits yearn for Thee,  
Where'er our changeful lot is cast ;  
Glad, when Thy gracious smile we see ;  
Blest, when our faith can hold Thee fast.

O Jesus, ever with us stay !  
Make all our moments calm and bright ;  
Chase the dark night of sin away,  
Shed o'er the world Thy holy light.

The above is a beautiful translation of parts of Bernard's famous hymn, "Jesus, dulcedo cordium," by Dr. Ray Palmer, of New York.

The following is an excellent translation by Mrs. Charles of a portion of another of his works :—

Hail, Thou Head ! so bruised and wounded  
 With the crown of thorns surrounded,  
 Smitten with the mocking reed,  
 Wounds which may no longer bleed,  
     Trickling faint and slow.  
 Hail ! from whose most blessed brow  
 None can wipe the blood-drops now ;  
 All the flower of life has fled,  
 Mortal paleness there instead ;  
 Thou, before whose presence dread  
     Angels trembling bow !

Let me true communion know  
 With Thee, in Thy sacred woe,—  
 Counting all beside but dross,  
 Dying with Thee on Thy cross :  
     'Neath it would I lie !  
 Thanks to Thee with every breath,  
 Jesus, for Thy bitter death :  
 Grant Thy clinging one this prayer,—  
 When my dying hour is near,  
     Gracious God be nigh !

Several instances are on record of the comfort this hymn has afforded Christians at the time of death. It was especially such an evangel in the case of the missionary Schwartz, whom the native Christians in India solaced, by singing it in their own Tamil, into which language it had been translated. Bernard's other noted "passion hymn" is entitled "Ad faciem Christi in cruce pendentis ;" which has been rendered into German by Gerhardt, and into English by Alexander and others. Bernard died, A.D. 1153, aged sixty-two. His last words were, "For ever with the Lord." His

first, or some of his first converts, were his own father, brothers, and personal friends. He closed his father's eyes in peace, and then had to witness his brother Gerard's departure to his rest. His touching lamentation over him is replete with pathos and poetic beauty. "Who could ever have loved me as he did? He was a brother by blood, but far more by religion. . . . God grant, Gerard, I may not have lost thee, but that thou hast preceded me; for of a surety thou hast joined those whom in thy last night below thou didst invite to praise God; when suddenly, to the great surprise of all, thou, with a serene countenance and a cheerful voice, didst commence chanting, 'Praise ye the Lord, from the heaven; praise Him, all ye angels! At that moment, O my brother! the day dawned on thee, though it was night to us; the night to thee was all brightness. Just as I reached his side, I heard him utter aloud those words of Christ, 'Father, into Thine hands I commend my spirit!' Then repeating the verse over again, and resting on the word 'Father,' he turned to me, and, smiling, said, 'Oh, how gracious of God to be the Father of men, and what an honor for men to be His children.' And then, very distinctly, 'If children, then heirs;' and so he died: and so dying, he well-nigh changed my grief into rejoicing, so completely did the sight of his happiness overpower the recollection of my own misery."

Another renowned writer of sacred poetry was — Bernard, of Cluny. His great poem, of three thousand lines, is entitled "De contemptu mundi." This poem, by some critics, has been ascribed to Jacobus de Benedictus; but we leave this question with them to determine. This production was written about the year 1145. It is a severe satire on the vices of the times; but it also is one of the sweetest religious poems of the age in which it was written, or of any age. Many a cloistered monk took up the soul-stirring theme, and sang anew the glory-song of the new Jerusalem. From Dr. Neale's masterly trans-

lation of this poem, we select some of its expressive lines,—lines, perhaps, unparalleled for their energy, fervor, and sublimity :—

That peace,—but who may claim it? The guileless in their  
way,

Who keep the ranks of battle, who mean the thing they say,—  
The peace that is for heaven, and shall be for the earth ;  
The palace that re-echoes with festal song and mirth ;  
The garden, breathing spices,—the paradise on high ;  
Grace beautified to glory, unceasing minstrelsy.

There nothing can be feeble, there none can ever mourn,  
There nothing is divided, there nothing can be torn ;  
'Tis fury, ill, and scandal, 'tis peaceless peace, below :  
Peace endless, strifeless, ageless, the halls of Syon know !

. . . . .

Brief life is here our portion, brief sorrow, short-lived care :  
The life that knows no ending, the tearless life, is there !

. . . . .

Thou hast no shore, fair Ocean ! thou hast no time, bright  
Day !

Dear fountain of refreshment to pilgrims far away !  
Upon the Rock of Ages they raise thy holy tower ;  
Thine is the victor's laurel, and thine the golden dower !  
Jerusalem the golden, with milk and honey blest,  
Beneath thy contemplation sink heart and voice oppressed !  
I know not, oh, I know not, what social joys are there !  
What radiancy of glory, what light beyond compare !

. . . . .

They stand, those halls of Syon, conjubilant with song,  
And bright with many an angel, and all the martyr-throng ;

. . . . .

The song of them that triumph, the shout of them that feast ;  
And they who, with their Leader, have conquered in the  
fight,

For ever and for ever are clad in robes of white !

. . . . .

New mansion of new people, whom God's own love and  
light

Promote, increase, make holy, identify, unite !



Thou city of the angels ! thou city of the Lord !  
 Whose everlasting music is the glorious decachord !  
 And there the band of prophets united praise ascribes,  
 And there the twelfefold charms of Israel's ransomed tribes,  
 The lily-beds of virgins, the roses' martyr-glow,  
 The cohort of the fathers, who kept the faith below.  
 And there the Sole-begotten is Lord in regal state,—  
 He, Judah's mystic Lion,—He, Lamb Immaculate !  
 O fields that know no sorrow ! O state that fears no strife !  
 O princely bowers ! O land of flowers ! O realm and home  
 of life !

It was the same pious recluse that wrote these comforting, quickening lines, who would sometimes stop, and say, "Dear brethren, I must go: there is some one waiting for me in my cell." That "some one," it need hardly be stated, was the object of his devout affection,—his Lord and Saviour. "The name of Jesus," says Bernard, "is not only light, but food; it is likewise oil, without which all the food of the soul is dry; it is salt, unseasoned by which, whatever is presented to us is insipid; it is honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, joy in the heart, medicine in the soul; and there are no charms in any discourse in which His name is not heard."

Adam of St. Victor, who was a contemporary of Bernard, has been regarded as the most fertile of the hymnists of mediæval times; a native of Brittany, or, as some critics think, of Britain. Yet from the fact that the great seat of Latin poetry, in the twelfth century, was France, it is fair to infer that Adam, one of the chief of the band of clerical scribes, had his birth among the French. The year of his death is not ascertained, but is believed to have been between 1173 and 1194. Here are some specimen-lines of a translation. The subject is "Affliction."

As the harp-strings only render  
 All their treasures of sweet sound,—  
 All their music, glad or tender,—  
 Firmly struck and tightly bound ;

So the hearts of Christians owe  
 Each its deepest, sweetest strain  
 To the pressure firm of woe,  
 And the tension tight of pain.

Spices crushed, their pungence yield,  
 Trodden scents their sweets respire ;  
 Would you have its strength revealed,  
 Cast the incense in the fire :  
 Thus the crushed and broken frame  
 Oft doth sweetest graces yield ;  
 And, through suffering, toil, and shame,  
 From the martyr's keenest flame,  
 Heavenly incense is distilled !

The following beautiful stanzas are part of a translation of the celebrated hymn, "Jam lucis orto sidere." This admirable hymn is still sung in the original, at Whitsuntide, by the scholars of Winchester College, prior to their vacation. The translation is as follows :

Now that the sun is gleaming bright,  
 Implore we, bending low,  
 That He, the uncreated Light,  
 May guide us as we go.

No sinful word, or deed of wrong,  
 Nor thoughts that idly rove,  
 But simple truth be on our tongue,  
 And in our hearts be love.

And while the hours in order flow,  
 O Christ ! securely fence  
 Our gates beleagured by the foe,—  
 The gate of every sense.

And grant that to Thine honor, Lord,  
 Our daily toil may tend ;  
 That we begin it at Thy word,  
 And in Thy favor end !

Damiani, bishop of Ostia, said to have been a zealous reprover of the vices of his time, died in 1071.

The great hymn on the Joys of Paradise, often attributed to Augsutine, is his. Here it is :—

In the Fount of life perennial the parchèd heart its thirst  
would slake,  
And the soul, in flesh imprisoned, longs her prison-walls to  
break,—  
Exile, seeking, sighing, yearning, in her fatherland to wake.

Who can utter what the pleasures and the peace unbroken  
are,  
Where arise the pearly mansions, shedding silvery light afar ;  
Festive seats, and golden roofs, which glitter like the evening-  
star !

There, the saints like sons are radiant, like the sun at dawn  
they glow ;  
Crownèd victors after conflict, all their joys together flow ;  
And, secure, they count the battles where they fought the  
prostrate foe.  
Putting off their mortal vesture, in their Source their souls  
they steep ;  
Truth by actual vision learning, on its form their gaze they  
keep ;  
Drinking from the living Fountain draughts of living waters  
deep !  
Time, with all its alternations, enters not those hosts among ;  
Glorious, wakeful, blest, no shade of chance or change o'er  
them is flung ;  
Sickness cannot touch the deathless ; nor old age, the ever  
young !  
There, their being is eternal ; things that cease, have ceased  
to be ;  
All corruption there has perished ; there they flourish, strong  
and free :  
Thus mortality is swallowed up of Life eternally !

Ever filled, and ever seeking, what they have they still  
desire ;  
Hunger, there, shall fret them never, nor satiety shall tire ;  
Still enjoying whilst aspiring, in their joy they still aspire !

There, the new song, new for ever, those melodious voices  
sing;  
Ceaseless streams of fullest music through those blessed  
regions ring,—  
Crownèd victors ever bringing praises worthy of the King!

This twelfth century, which was the great era of the Crusaders, was also most vocal with these Christian melodies.

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## THE WONDERFUL GRACE OF GOD TO GUILTY SINNERS.

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NONE will deny that Israel was and is a guilty people. She had enjoyed privileges of a peculiar kind, such as no nation before or since has ever enjoyed. But as though glorying in her shame, she, who alone had by revelation a knowledge of the true God, cast Him off and sunk down to grovelling idolatry. We, too, as a people, have had peculiar privileges, for the light and teaching of Christianity have in these islands been specially and widely displayed for centuries. Have we used our privileges for the glory of Him who has bestowed them so graciously? Alas, this nation, looking at the masses, is Godless and Christless, and has become the cage of unclean birds. If, then, as a nation, we are like Israel, guilty before God, it will be a profitable lesson to learn from Scripture what are the ways of God towards so utterly degenerate and depraved a people.

In Isaiah lvii. God addresses to them by the mouth of His prophet a remarkable word, ver. 15, "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy: I dwell in the high and holy place." Thus God speaks of His own majesty and supremacy; but, lest this should alarm and appal His feeble creatures, He instantly adds: "with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." How beautifully and blessedly suited is this to allay anxiety and to

encourage every seeking soul. Though He dwells in supreme exaltation He condescends to domicile Himself with all those who in lowliness of spirit seek His face. And He even discloses His motive in this, and what a soul-cheering motive it is, "to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones"—God in His greatness and glory stooping to the broken in spirit that He may fulfil this service towards them, that they may live before Him and He dwell with them. Never can God cease to be the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy. Before His works of old ; from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was ; before ever anything was created, He was the high and lofty One, whose name is Holy, and who inhabited eternity. But He has made a new dwelling-place for Himself, and, what a wonder of wonders ! it is with him who is of a humble and contrite spirit ; and He has undertaken a new service, even that of reviving the spirit of the humble and reviving the heart of the contrite ones.

And then this gracious God even tells us why He has entered upon these new ways with a guilty and rebellious people, thus manifesting unsought mercy, because of His own inherent goodness. "For," says He, "I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before Me, and the souls which I have made." It reminds us—this having pity on the works of His hands—of the way in which He relented towards Nineveh: "Thou hast had pity," said He to Jonah, "on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow ; which came up in a night and perished in a night ; and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city?" Surely in both these cases we learn what the Psalmist teaches, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.

God, then, puts a limit on His own anger, and in unsolicited mercy announces how He will meet and

bless the guilty. But He plainly declares what had provoked His anger, what it was that had brought Him into conflict with His people. It was for "the iniquity of his countenance" that He had smitten him, and for the frowardness of his heart that He had been wroth with him. God had hidden Himself, but Israel had not been hid from Him. He says, "I have seen his ways." Surely it is a solemn thing, if we are going on in the way of an evil heart, to be reminded that every such way God sees; but what a blessed conjunction of things is here: "I have seen his ways," says God, "and *will heal him.*" Not, as He might fittingly have said, "I have seen his ways and *will destroy him,*" but "I have seen his ways and will heal him." Oh! surpassing mercy, yet such is the mercy we are privileged to announce to every poor sinner who takes his true place in brokenness of spirit and contriteness of heart before the God of all grace, who beseeches him to be reconciled.

"I will lead him also;" no sooner do we live before God, possessing eternal life, because He has healed us, than we are objects of the Lord's guiding eye and His protecting hand. He opens a path for us, and He keeps our feet, if we be obedient, in the way of His steps. As the Shepherd of His lambs and His sheep, He goes before them, our Forerunner and blessed Example in the path of faith.

But He says also that He will "restore comforts unto him and to his mourners." What tenderness and love does this suggest to us. If we are His, we are the fruit of His love, and whom He loveth He loveth to the end. We are objects of His imperishable love, and of the tender succour which He delights in ministering to His own.

Then, summing up, He says, "I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near." How blessed is this far-reaching scope of divine grace!—addressed to those *afar off*, poor sinners of the Gentiles, and to Israel who were

dispensationally *near*. Peace, peace to both, and, says the Lord, regarding them as one—all alike guilty before God—"I will heal him," a second time declared. Oh! what grace to the guilty and the perishing. Then warning on the other hand: "The wicked are like the troubled sea that cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

Dear reader, here is the alternative, "Peace, peace" on the one hand, "no peace" on the other hand. Which will you choose? God says, *I will heal; I will lead; I will comfort*. Oh! can you? yea, how can you? reject the God of such grace and the grace of such a God! May His abounding love win your heart for eternity.

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### SCRIPTURE NOTES.

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LUKE xix. 38.—"Peace in heaven," compare Isaiah xxiv. 21-23. This extends to the judicial overthrow of the power of wickedness in the heavenlies, as well as of the kings of the earth upon the earth. The objects of the judgments in their moral order are, according to Isaiah:—

Babylon, power of organized corruption, where the people of God are captive (chap. xiii.)

Assyria, the public, open enemy of God and of His people.

The Philistines, the inward enemy (chap. xiv. 25).

Moab, the pride of man (chap. xv. and xvi.).

Damascus, that which has been the enemy of God's people, but allied with the apostate part of that people against the faithful part (chap. xvii.).

From all these the people are delivered.

Then Egypt, the world in its state of nature, the wisdom of which is lost in confusion (chap. xix.).

Babylon, now desert in the midst of the nations.

Dumah, the liberty, the independence of man.

Jerusalem, the professing people (chap. xxix.).

Tyre, the glory of the world (chap. xxiii.).

Finally all on the earth, and (to sum up all power) spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places, and the kings of the earth upon the earth (chap. xxiv).

J. N. D.

Rev. v.—A new song (celebrating the Lamb) in connection with redemption ; this was in and of *heaven* ; those who sing are kings and priests, the heavenly saints.

Rev. xiv.—A new song before the throne and living creatures and elders, in connection with victory over the power of evil by patient endurance of suffering ; redemption in connection with *earthly* blessings. It is the song of the distinctively *Jewish* remnant (that of the Psalms, especially i. to xli.) redeemed from amongst men before Christ comes to the earth.

Rev. vii.—The sealed 144,000, a perfect number of the remnant of *Israel* (the 12 tribes) secured for subsequent blessing according to God's purpose, and set apart by Him.

J. N. D.

## JESUS COMMITTING HIMSELF TO NICODEMUS.

WE do not find any miracle in John i. Andrew and his companions, Peter, and Philip, and Nathanael, were all brought to Jesus without miracles. The work was in their souls. The word, "Behold the Lamb of God," had awakened their going to the Lord—and to seek Him as the "Lamb of God" is to seek Him as sinners, as those who have discovered their *moral* condition. This is far different from having been drawn to Him by a wonder (see Acts viii. 13), and the difference that followed was great. The Lord gives Himself to them who seek Him, and reach Him (chap. i.) ; but He will not commit Himself to those who believe on Him in chap. ii.—*i.e.*, only because they saw His miracles.

So, again, we may observe in chap. iv., there is no



miracle under the eye of either the Samaritan woman or the villagers of Sychar. Conscience was stirred. They receive Him as "the Saviour," and He is at home with them at once. He commits Himself to them, as He does not to those in chap. ii.; but as He received Andrew and his companion to His dwelling-place in chap. i., so now He goes to the dwelling-places of the Samaritans in chap. iv.

And may we not judge that from thenceforth Nicodemus was one to whom Jesus committed Himself? (see chap. iii.).

Do we know that Jesus has committed Himself to us?

J. G. B.

"THE Lord hath told you what you should be doing till He come; wait and hasten, saith Peter, "for the coming of our Lord:" all is night that is here, in respect of ignorance, and daily ensuing troubles, one always making way to another, as the ninth wave of the sea to the tenth: therefore sigh and long for the dawning of that morning, and the breaking of that day of the coming of the Son of man, when the shadows shall flee away. Persuade yourself the King is coming; read His letter sent before Him, Rev. iii. 11:—"Behold, I come quickly." Wait with the wearied night-watch for the breaking of the eastern sky, and think that you have not a morrow; as the wise father said, who, being invited against to-morrow to dine with his friends, answered, for these many days I have had no morrow at all. I am loth to weary you; show yourself a Christian, by suffering without murmuring, for which sin fourteen thousand and seven hundred were slain (Numb. xvi. 49). In patience possess your soul; they lose nothing who gain Christ. I commend you to the mercy and grace of our Lord Jesus, assuring you that your day is coming, and that God's mercy is abiding you. The Lord Jesus be with your spirit."—*Rutherford.*

“YOU have also a promise, that Christ shall do more than meet you, even that He shall come Himself, and go with you foot for foot; yea, and bear you in His arms. Oh then! oh then, for the joy that is set before you, for the love of the Man (who is also God over all, blessed for ever) who is standing upon the shore to welcome you, run your race with patience. The Lord go with you.”—*Rutherford.*

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“BUILD your nest upon no tree here; for you see God hath sold the forest to death; and every tree, whereupon we would rest, is ready to be cut down, to the end we may flee, and mount up, and build upon the rock, and dwell in the holes of the rock.”—*Rutherford.*

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BE as a little child. Children have no cares—all is managed for them, and they rest safe and happy in their father's care.

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## LETTER OF INTEREST.

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### ON MINISTRY.

BELOVED BRETHREN,—Scripture gives us ample instruction as to what are the marks of true ministry. And it is to some of the plainer and more obvious marks that I wish now to solicit your attention. Some of them apply to the matter or substance of what is ministered, and others to the motives which induce us to minister, or to take any part in the meetings of saints. Some will afford a test to those who do thus act, whereby they may judge themselves; others will furnish criteria whereby to judge what is of the Spirit, and what from other sources. Some will serve to show who are Christ's gifts to His Church, for the ministry of the word; and others may aid those who really are so, as to the important question when to

speak and when to be silent. My comfort is, that one's "sufficiency is of God," and that "Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." Let all I write be tested by this all-sufficient standard; and if anything will not bear this test, God grant you, beloved brethren, wisdom and grace to reject it.

The guidance of the Spirit is not by blind impulses and unintelligent impressions, but by filling the spiritual understanding with God's thoughts as revealed in the written word, and by acting on the renewed affections. In early days, there were indeed God's gifts which might be, in their use, unconnected with spiritual intelligence. I refer to the gift of tongues, where there was no interpreter. And it would appear that because this gift seemed more marvellous in men's eyes than the others, the Corinthians were fond of using and displaying it. For this the apostle rebukes them. "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all; yet, in the church, I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue. Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men" (1 Cor. xiv. 18-20). The least, then, that can be looked for in those who minister, is acquaintance with Scripture, the understanding of God's mind as revealed in the word. There may be this, observe, without any gift of utterance, without any capacity to communicate it to others. But without this, what have we to communicate? God's saints are surely not assembled from time to time in the name of the Lord Jesus, to have crude and undigested human thoughts presented to them, or to have retailed to them what others have spoken or written. Personal acquaintance with God's word, familiarity with Scripture, understanding of its contents, is surely essential to the ministry of the

word. "Jesus saith unto them, have ye *understood* all these things? They say unto Him, Yea, Lord. Then said He unto them, Therefore every scribe, instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old" (Matt. xiii. 51, 52). When our Lord was about to send out His disciples as His witnesses, it is said, "then opened He their understanding, that they might *understand* the Scriptures (Luke xxiv. 45). How often we read of Paul, when preaching to the Jews, reasoning with them out of the Scriptures (Acts xviii. 24). If the apostle addresses the Romans as able to admonish one another, it is because he can say of them, "And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another" (Rom. xv. 14). Where the action of the Spirit in the assembly is most definitely treated of, as in I Cor. xii., it is not to the exclusion of *the word*. "For to one is given by the Spirit *the word* of wisdom, to another *the word* of knowledge by the same Spirit" (I Cor. xii. 8). Where the apostle enumerates the marks by which he and others approved themselves the ministers of God, we have mentioned in the wondrous catalogue, "by knowledge, by the word of truth, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left" (2 Cor. xi). If you look at what that armour consisted of, you will find truth as a girdle for the loins, and "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. vi. 14-17). The apostle speaks of what he had afore written to the Ephesians, "whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ" (Eph. iii. 4). Where the same apostle speaks of the admonishing one another, see what he mentions first as an essential pre-requisite. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with

grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. iii. 16). To Timothy he says, "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained." He exhorts him, "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine; meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear unto all." "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. iv. 6, 13, 15, 16). In the second epistle, Timothy is exhorted thus: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (ii. 2). As to himself, we have these words: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (ver. 15). Among other qualifications of the bishop, or overseer, as they are given in Titus i., we have this: "Holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." From all this it is evident, my brethren, that it is not merely by little scraps of truth, brought out whenever some impulse to that end visits us, that the church is to be edified.\* No, they by whom the Holy Ghost acts to feed and nourish and guide the saints of God, are they whose souls are exercised habitually in the word of God; they, "who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. v. 14).

Knowledge of God's word, however, is not sufficient. There must be its present application to the consciences of the saints, so as to meet their present need.

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\* God forbid that any should be discouraged from ministering the least word tending to real edification. But such as are used of the Lord thus, would be the very last to suppose that theirs was the only ministry, or that by which the need of saints is principally supplied of God.

For this, as some one has in substance observed, there must be either acquaintance by intercourse, &c., with their state (and this could never be very perfect or accurate), or else direct guidance from God. This is true of those who are in the fullest sense, and most manifestly, the gifts of Christ to His Church, as evangelists, pastors, or teachers. It is God only who can guide them to those portions of truth which will reach the conscience and meet the need of souls. It is He only who can enable them to present the truth in such a way as to secure these ends. God the Holy Ghost knows the need of each and all in the assembly; and He can guide those who speak to speak the suited, needed truth, whether they have the knowledge of the state of those addressed or not. How important, then, implicit and unfeigned subjection to Him.

One thing which would always mark ministry in the Spirit, would be the promptings of personal affection for Christ. "Lovest thou Me?" was the twice repeated question to Peter, connected with the injunction, as oft repeated, to feed Christ's flock. "For the love of Christ constraineth us," Paul says. How different this from the many motives which might influence us naturally. How important that we should be able each time we minister to say with a good conscience, "My motive for speaking was not a love of prominence, or the force of habit, or the restlessness which could not be content unless something was being done; but love to Christ and to His flock, for His sake who purchased it with His own blood." Surely it was this motive which was wanting in the wicked servant, who hid his Lord's talent in the earth.

Then, further, ministry in the Spirit, or indeed any action in the assembly to which He leads, would always be marked by a deep sense of responsibility to Christ. Let me put it to you, my brethren, and to my own soul as well: suppose we were questioned at any time after the close of a meeting,—Why did you give

out such a hymn, or read such a chapter, or offer such a prayer, or speak such a word? Could we with a clear, good conscience reply, "My only reason for doing so was the solemn conviction that it was my Master's will?" Could we say, "I gave out that hymn because I was fully persuaded it was the mind of the Spirit, that at that juncture in the meeting it should be sung? I read that chapter, or spoke that word, because I felt clear before God that it was the service my Lord and Master assigned me? I offered that prayer, because I knew that the Spirit of God led me as the mouth of the assembly to ask those blessings which in it were implored?" My brethren, could we answer thus? Or is there not often the taking this part or that, without any such sense of responsibility to Christ? "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God," says the apostle Peter. This does not mean, let him speak according to the Scriptures, though this be of course true. It means, or rather says, that they who speak, are to speak *as oracles of God*. If I cannot say in speaking, "This is what I believe I have been taught of God, and what God has given me to speak at this time," I ought to be silent. Of course a man may be mistaken in saying this, and it is for the saints to judge, by the word of God, all that is spoken. But less ought not to induce any one to speak, or take any part in the meetings, than the solemn conviction before God, that God has given him somewhat to say or do. If our consciences were exercised to act under such responsibility as this, it would doubtless prevent a great deal which does take place; but at the same time, it would make way for God to manifest His presence, as we are not wont to witness it.

How strikingly do we behold this sense of direct responsibility to Christ in the apostle Paul. "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (1 Cor. ix. 16). How

affecting his words to the same people! "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling" (ii. 3). What a rebuke to the lightness of heart, and self-sufficiency, with which, alas! we all too often handle God's sacred word. "For we are not as many," he says again, "which corrupt the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ" (2 Cor. ii. 17).

One other point I would touch upon. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1-7). The spirit of a sound mind. A man may have little or no human learning, he may be unable to express himself in an elegant diction, or even with grammatical propriety. All this he may lack, and yet be "a good minister of Jesus Christ." But the spirit of a sound mind he must have. And may I now, while on this topic, mention what in other places, as well as among ourselves, has sometimes made me very sad? I mean the confusion between the Persons in the Godhead, which is often made in prayer. When a brother has commenced by addressing God the Father, and has gone on to speak as though it were He that had died and risen again; or, addressing Jesus, has given thanks to Him for sending His only-begotten Son into the world, I confess to you I have said to myself, "Can it be the Spirit of God who leads to such prayers as these?" Surely all who express the worship of the saints need so much of the spirit of a "sound mind" as to avoid confusion like this. No one believes that the Father died on Calvary, or that Christ sent His Son into the world. Where, then, is the collectedness of spirit, the soundness of mind, which should characterise those who take the place of being the channels of the saints' worship, when they use such language?

I am, yours affectionately in Christ Jesus,

W. T.



## GOD IN GOVERNMENT.

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OUR blessed God holds the reins of government, restrains man in his mad, downward course, and writes upon his works, set going without Him, Babel-confusion. Shall our tongues refrain from praise for the quiet we enjoy, for the measure of immunity from harm? O that our eyes were ever and always anointed to see His wonderful works with the children of men! In the midst of suffering through strikes, severe weather, &c., have we thought of Him in these critical times putting on bit and bridle, holding in men devoid of understanding?

If everything favoured man in his departure, were funds unlimited, weather all fair, strength unflagging, do you think there would be room for you to intrude upon these city and tower builders with brick and slime for stone and mortar; would there be any toleration of a word like this: "You need Christ—to know Him"?

Our God! delight in His wisdom! He blows upon all man does, with some grand exceptions—that which the Lord Jesus Christ did as the obedient, subject One, always doing the things that pleased Him; that which is wrought (through grace supplied) by His redeemed ones, who have life in Him, the energy of that life, the love of Christ constraining, doing good works that shall abide.

Have you wished the biting cold away, or yourself in some sunny clime? But there, where all seems fertility and fragrance, much produced with little labour, He holds the reins also, using different means to remind what folly to try and take ease, or build anything great or small without His Christ, whom in love He sent, and would in the energy of that love press upon the many restless, dissatisfied masses to accept, and be at peace. It is war all round; at enmity with God, and biting and devouring one another also.

He has resources everywhere. He is not limited to

snow and frost, hurricane and shower, mildew and blight. We have lately seen the former used, yet we cannot say to what extent man's operations in evil are checked and suspended. Three or four brief years ago there was a marked stoppage in commerce in some big cities of America. For many hours men were held captive in their ceiled houses; business operations ceased; tram, train, telegraph, telephone, and many skilful inventions refused to answer to the touch or call of the trained handlers of cunningly wrought instruments. How few, in times like these, know how to blush for shame, or own their many inventions furnish them no security, no shelter from His searching eye? They are taken in their craftiness—naked, empty, restless, toiling, placing gain for godliness.

How corrupt, how blind, no eye to perceive, no mind to comprehend the writing by Him of confusion upon this building of man's devising. May we seek grace to approach our fellows, and present Him who says, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

This noise of war is heard everywhere. A message from New Zealand says it is there; same word comes from the far West; here it is the same; and, sad to say, it is not limited to ungodly men—saints of God have imbibed the spirit of the age, and sorrowful reaping times are now upon us—how large a harvest of corruption. What folly to refuse to be "imitators of God, as dear children." "Do all things," says the apostle by the Holy Spirit, "without murmurings and reasonings, that ye may be harmless and simple, irreproachable children of God in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation; among whom ye appear as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of Life, so as to be a boast for me in Christ's day, that I have not run in vain nor laboured in vain" (New Translation).

How much strength is spent for worse than nothing.

With all the toil, how little has His word place—saints being the opposite of harmless and simple—many to be marked and avoided. What shame should cover our faces as we think of vain labour and present day service, instead of serving, having Christ's day in view. "For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." How sufficient should this be for every servant to refuse all that would intrude self, commending only Him, and withdrawing quietly when any danger arises for the servant being mistaken for the Master. John was about to do homage to an angel, and immediately word came, "See thou do it not." Paul was thought to be a god by the barbarians. Doing miracles with his co-worker, Barnabas, it came to their knowledge that the people were about to sacrifice in honour of them. When Barnabas and Paul heard, they rent their clothes and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, "Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless, He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people that they had not done sacrifice unto them." Also in the case of Elias, lest he should be venerated unduly, word is given us: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one bring him back, let him know that he that brings

back a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and shall cover a multitude of sins."

Satan would seek so to arrange for our pride that we glory in our shame. It is not rare to hear, "We are few because of our faithfulness to His word." It is a proof, some say, that He is with us and for us. Consciences may be improperly soothed under this, not exercised, and a lie believed because disguised as truth. This will not pass current, dear people of God, if we are willingly deceived when opportunity after opportunity has been given for recovery. He abideth faithful. Do we still refuse to hear the rod? Is it laudable to follow in the wake of evil workers; and when the same unerring hand writes confusion over the evil work of His people as He does over that of the unsaved, to refuse to judge our ways and take these things transpiring around us as admonitions? How much of His holy mind are we missing.

Report says "latter rain" has fallen copiously and regularly for three years in Palestine, and that, at the rate of 10,000 per annum, the Jews are finding their way back to a land that until now would furnish them no food, the opposite of flowing with corn and wine, milk and honey. The word itself, however, is enough without signs of times. He comes quickly. He is preparing to receive back again those who have been cut off through unbelief. "Thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee. Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

May He grant, during the Lord's absence, a laying to heart our ways, our unpreparedness for His shout, a recovery of sight, and deliverance from snares into which we have fallen. Surely when hearts are not right and true to Him, it is well He puts to shame, gives correction for our profit that we might be

partakers of His holiness. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." See Heb. xii. W. B.

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## JERUSALEM.

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WE are in the holy city; at the centre where the story of heaven and earth most touch each other—the place where the sacred events were enacted which have most wrought themselves into our personal experience, and formed our happiest hopes. A gracious providence has rested over this city of the ages, retaining in it so much which illustrates the language and ideas of holy Scripture. Its very desolation is instructive. Some one has said contemptuously: "Jerusalem is a Mohammedan filth city" (Dreckstadt). So be it, and yet its very rubbish piles and filth set forth the truth of prophecy. Dear readers, let us take time with each other to learn to know as well as possible the place concerning which the Psalmist exclaimed with an enthusiasm fired by the Holy Ghost Himself: "If I forget thee, O *Jerusalem*, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to my mouth; If I prefer not *Jerusalem* above my chief joy." And in order to feel at home in the city so highly honoured by the Bible itself, we cannot, perhaps, do better than begin with a description of our own house in Jerusalem.

We were greatly favoured in the home arranged for us during our stay in the holy city. Most travellers live in tents or hotels in the suburbs, but for us quarters had been prepared in the German Hospice, in the very heart of the city. As already stated, this extensive house is built on arches over the junction of two of the most important streets of Jerusalem, which, with all their noise and confusion, lie beneath it. A long

flight of stairs, therefore, leads up to the first floor of the house. Many other Jerusalem houses are built in the same way, with vaulted streets beneath them. At the top of the stairs we pass through the house-gate, which slightly reminds one of a fortified entrance, and come out upon a little paved court, upon which there opens what is the servant's room, and, at the same time, the sitting-room for poor pilgrims who are entertained gratuitously. A tall cypress tree, planted in a box in one corner of this little yard, makes us feel as if we were on the level of the street, while, in fact, we are high above it. We cross this little interior yard, pass under a second walled entrance, and are now in the larger yard of the house itself. It is a stone-paved and pleasant place. Large stone boxes filled with earth are fixed along the sides and down the centre of this inner yard. They give it the appearance of a garden, which in the case of some houses is still further produced by a fountain playing gently amid the little thicket of orange trees and cypress and pomegranates, and flowering plants. This yard is high above the street, which passes underneath it, and it is quite cut off from the outer world. The rooms of the house open upon it with their doors and windows.

I often thought, as I viewed these arrangements, of that bitter night when our Saviour suffered reproach before the Jewish Council, and when even His chief disciple denied that he knew Him. A house like ours in Jerusalem explains all the outward features of that memorable occasion. The Apostle Peter sat with the servants in their outer court. He could thence look into the yard, and possibly through the open doors and windows see something of what was going on within. It is practicable that Annas lived in the same place with his son-in-law Caiphas. In order to send Jesus from the one to the other, it would only be necessary to take Him across the inner yard. In this way the Saviour would be brought near enough to the poor,

fallen apostle to catch his eye, and give him the special look of sorrow and yet of forgiving kindness. Through the portal near by the penitent man escapes into the street below. Oriental streets are very dark at night ; and around our house, busy and frequented as it is in the daytime, Peter could have found many a place to weep his heart's fill, without being seen or disturbed by anyone.

Or we recall another peculiar Gospel story, and again our house arrangements form the frame, as it were, into which to put it. Only we must think of a simple house, more like the one we visited in Nazareth in Galilee. The inner yard is full of people. The large room opening into it is likewise full. Nobody can pass through this crowd. In the room, scribes and Pharisees are seated cross-limbed on the rugs, narrowly watching Jesus as He teaches the words of life. There is a wooden verandah at the front of the room, between it and the inner yard. A company of four eager men, coming up an outside stairs, or from a neighbouring flat roof-top, hastily remove the boards that cover this porch, and let a poor paralytic down to the Saviour's very feet, in order to hear first the gracious word for his heart, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee ;" and then the blessed message for his palsied body : " Arise, take up thy bed and walk."—*Rev. Edward Rondthaller, D.D.*

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## THE DAY IS AT HAND.

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LIFT up your hearts, ye saints ;  
 Lift up your heads, ye sons ;  
 Our God a Tower of refuge is  
 To which the righteous runs.

He never will deny  
 To faith a listening ear ;  
 To glory will He bring His sons,  
 The Father's house how near !

Oh ! to His love repair,  
 Cast on Himself your dread ;  
 His joy it is to calm the heart  
 And to lift up the head.

Rejoice, ye saints, rejoice ;  
 Again, saith He, rejoice ;  
 For Christ your Lord is nigh at hand,  
 Soon shall ye hear His voice !

Be diligent for Him,  
 Till toil and sorrow cease ;  
 Then blameless in His sight shall ye  
 Be found of Him in peace.

Wait ye His sure return ;  
 Keep vigil through the night ;  
 E'en now is He faith's Morning Star,  
 E'er dawns the morning light.

Let not your souls repine,  
 Nor speak of His "delay" ;  
 He that shall come will surely come  
 And bring a glorious day !

My Lord delayeth *not* ;  
 The shadows flee the morn ;  
 Like roe or hart on Bether's heights  
 Will He with speed return.

Upon the hills He skips,  
 Upon the mountains leaps ;  
 Hark, 'tis the voice of our Beloved,  
 Who now His harvest reaps !

Who shall His love declare ?  
 Who shall His joy portray ?  
 His boundless bosom filled with sheaves  
 For glory's endless day !

"THEY cast him out." Cast out? Yes; but where to? Into the bosom of Jesus. Oh! that is cast *in!* Never mind the Pharisees.



## ACROSS THE JORDAN TO JERICHO.

—*Mark x.*

IN company with His disciples, the Lord, having left Galilee, proceeded towards Jerusalem by the farther side of Jordan. On His way several incidents that took place are related, each of which, as He journeyed to Jericho, was made to furnish instruction for the disciples. Marriage, children, this world's wealth, and the true spirit of service, these are subjects which came up as they went along. And first of marriage. Multitudes resorted to the Lord, and He received them; healing them, as Matthew (xix. 2) writes; teaching them, "as He was wont," as Mark (x. 1) informs us. These two evangelists, who alone record the Lord's deliverance on the subject of marriage, thus describe His occupation in their own characteristic way, as we have previously pointed out (*Words in Season*, vol. 5, pp. 199, 200). Presented as the Messiah in Matthew, that evangelist tells us how the Lord was healing the sick. In Mark, brought forward as the Prophet, or Teacher, this evangelist notices that He was engaged in teaching. But as now in the work of God, so then, interruptions were attempted (surely that was of the enemy), to hinder, if possible, its progress. And again the Lord's persistent opponents, the Pharisees, are the tools employed to bring that about.

A question was raised by them concerning marriage; why, exactly, is not made plain to us. "Is it lawful," it was asked, "for a man to put away his wife?" The insincerity of the questioners is made manifest. They put that question tempting Him. Now who instituted marriage? We all know, and they knew. It was God. What then was the divine mind on the matter was the real question, not what any one, however famous as a teacher, might enunciate. And this the Lord upheld, as He turned them to the Word of God. "What did Moses command you?" He

asked them. They replied, and correctly. Then they knew that divorces were allowed to the Jews. Why did they come to the Lord to question Him about it? It was hypocrisy.

Now the same lawgiver who sanctioned divorces had, in a previous part of the Pentateuch, made known the original institution of marriage, in which there was no clause permitting divorce to be practised. Both portions (Deut. xxiv. 1; Gen. ii. 23, 24) were God's Word. The former was a provision for the hardness of their hearts, and doubtless often made use of without the qualifying ground therein stated, "Because he hath found some uncleanness in her" (Deut. xxiv. 1); the latter (Gen. ii. 24) taught the sacredness and the real character of the tie. This latter was God's original institution. The tie, except for fornication (Matt. xix. 9), should be held inviolable. "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" is the Lord's declaration about marriage. We are thus taken back to its original institution, and are reminded of the light in which God regards it—two made one flesh, whom He has joined, and whom therefore man must not sever.

The Pharisees apparently left Him, unable to find any ground on which to found an accusation. Subsequently the disciples, in the house, as Mark carefully notes, asked more about it; and the Lord reaffirmed the inviolability of the tie, if neither party had virtually broken it. To this last Matthew only refers. "Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her; and if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery" (Mark x. 10-12). Thus, whilst the law permitted divorces, the disciples of Christ were to remember the original institution of marriage, and the Lord's deliverance about it (ver. 9). How the rights of the wife are safeguarded as well as those of the husband, hers being the first mentioned! And in this matter of marriage, as of the woman's position

on earth, and in the assembly, we are taken back by God in His Word to the order established at the beginning. Scripture was to guide the disciples, and is to guide us. And the question of the Pharisees furnished the occasion for an authoritative announcement to guide Christians in this important matter.

Next of children do we read (Mark x. 13-16). Mothers, or those interested in them, brought some to the Lord, that He might touch them. The disciples rebuked them, resenting, apparently, such an intrusion and encroachment on their Master's time and attention. The Lord saw that, and, as Mark alone has told us, "was moved with indignation." His feelings were deeply stirred at their unauthorised conduct; the evangelist here using a term concerning Him which is elsewhere only found as descriptive of the disciples (Matt. xx. 24, xxvi. 8; Mark x. 41, xiv. 4), of the chief priests and scribes (Matt. xxi. 15), and of the synagogue ruler (Luke xiii. 14). He evidently felt this keenly. But though Mark notices that, and has given elsewhere several proofs of, as we believe, his personal observation, there is one interesting fact for the knowledge of which we have to thank St. Luke. He tells us that the Lord, after rebuking the disciples, Himself called the little ones to Him. Then, in the presence of such a troop, He announced His willingness to receive them. Creatures of God, whose angels do always behold the face of His Father in the heavens, they must even on that account have been of interest in His eyes. But He seized the opportunity to instruct all as to the character which becomes those who shall enter the kingdom: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me; forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein" (x. 14, 15). The disciples looked on them just as babes (Luke xviii. 15). The Lord saw in them a character which should be true of the children of God, that

childlike simplicity and confidence so pleasing to God.

Having thus spoken with all the little ones about Him, He graciously responded to the desires of those who had brought them, and took them up in His arms and blessed them. Many a parent undoubtedly has rejoiced in heart over this account. Their young ones, so dear to them, are not beneath the notice of the Lord; and though Matthew and Luke have put this fact on record in common with Mark, the last evangelist only it is who has told us how the Lord took them up in His arms and blessed them (16). What interest did He show in them individually! What a sight to have witnessed, babe after babe taken into His arms by the Saviour! What parents are there who care for their offspring, but will be thankful for the touches in this picture to which they are indebted to Mark? What disciple is there who may not find this history speak also to his heart? The parent can know that the Lord will receive a little child. The disciple may be reminded of that which becomes him as a child of our Father who is in heaven.

The Lord proceeded on His way, the disciples accompanying Him. Next, one came running to Him, and fell on His knees before Him (x. 17). The earnestness, the eagerness, thus displayed in running, and the position immediately assumed on bended knee before the Lord, are just such notices as an eye-witness would be likely to record. In Mark's gospel only are they found. Now in that attitude the question was put which the young ruler, as Luke tells us he was, seemed so desirous to have answered. "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" As man, the Lord challenged the appellation "Good." "Why callest thou Me good? There is none good but One, that is God." Men too often delight in such an address. The perfect Man refused it. "One there is who is good" (Matt. xix. 17). The

young ruler profited by the Lord's reply, for when next he addressed Him, he dropped the appellation, Good (ver. 20). But he must be answered, and disciples taught; so the Lord proceeded to deal with him.

Now his question was a virtual assumption that no light could be found in the written Word on the important subject—how to inherit eternal life. If so, God had left His people for fifteen centuries without any guidance concerning it. Was that credible? The Lord by His further reply repels such a suggestion, as He reminds him of the seventh, the sixth, the eighth, the ninth, the tenth, and the fifth commandments, telling him, "If thou wilt enter into life, \* keep the commandments." For the dispensation of the law was in force till the cross. Now both the law (Deut. xxx. 15, xxxii. 47) and the prophets (Ezek. xxxiii.) held out life as the fruit of obedience, leaving for the New Testament to teach how it is now received, *viz.*, by hearing the voice of the Son of God (John v. 25).

The Lord had thus turned him to part of the decalogue. The young man declared he had kept all that from his youth. He thought he could stand that test. Was his heart really right with God? We know, as the sequel shows, it was not. But how could that be demonstrated? Wisely, indeed, was he dealt with. A beautiful natural character he surely was, yet he was born in sin. And Mark tells us, what neither of the others have recorded, that the Lord ere again replying, "looking on him loved him" (21). There was that in him, the work of God, which

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\* "If thou wilt enter into life," He said, not into *everlasting* life. It would have been everlasting if the commandments had been really kept. But taking him on the ground of law, the term everlasting would not have been in place, for obedience in that case must be continuous to enjoy life. One can understand, therefore, why in the law that designation of life, telling of its enduring character, is not used. In the Old Testament, we only meet with that thought in connection with millennial times (Ps. cxxxiii. 3; Dan. xii. 3). We know we have it now as soul blessing, looking for it in its fulness for our persons (Jude 21) in the future.

was attractive, so the Lord loved him. He was, doubtless, what we should call a naturally, loveable person. There are such in the world; and natural amiability of character, though very different from the fruit of the Spirit, is part of the Creator's work. We all feel it to be attractive. The Lord evidently marked it. He loved him.

But such a character is not everything. So desiring his everlasting welfare, the Lord once more addressed him, and tested that ruler in a way he had not expected. To convict him by the second table of the law seemed, humanly speaking, hopeless. He now tested him, to show on what his heart was set. "One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, \*follow Me" (21). Was Christ more to him than all his possessions? "He was sad at that saying, and went away grieved; for he had great possessions" (22). His heart was probed, its state was detected. He left the Lord. In a moment that which had appeared so fair became clouded, and the bud of promise never opened into a flower, but withered away. He who had run to the Lord with such eagerness, turned from Him with a sad and burdened heart. What an appeal to the law did not effect, Christ as a touchstone demonstrated. The heart of the ruler was not right with God. Surely the lesson thus taught, of the way of dealing with such a character, was not lost on the disciples. Is it not a lesson still for us?

Here, as far as we know, his history ended, yet not the instruction to be deduced from it. For now, looking round, as Mark relates that the Lord did, the disciples get a word, the moral of that history: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" The effect of the Lord's answer on the young man we have seen; the effect of the Lord's words to the disciples we are also to learn. "They

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\* "Take up the cross" should very probably be omitted.

were astonished." He repeated them, "Children, how hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (24, 25). What apparent eagerness had that young ruler displayed; like the early dew, how quickly did it pass away. How earnest was the Lord to use the occasion to teach His disciples a needful lesson, repeating, as He did, what He wished to impress upon them. It was the part of a teacher to do that; and Mark it is who, in harmony with the special character in which he presents the Lord, alone notices this. Vivid, too, is his delineation of the scene. We can almost picture it: first the Lord looking on the young man in a manner which unmistakeably evidenced that He loved him; then His looking around on all the company just after the ruler had left Him; and His looking again on the disciples when they were expressing one to another their great astonishment at His announcement, saying, though not to Him, "Then who can be saved?" The Lord's answer put the case in its right light. "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible." It becomes a question of the heart and nature, and not of wealth; God only can deal with the former.

Granting, as is commonly supposed, that Mark may have got much information for his gospel from Peter, we cannot but think, as we study it, and note the touches of the artist's pencil with which it abounds, that he must have been an eyewitness of this and of other scenes, and had them indelibly fixed in his remembrance. He wrote of them as if still under his eye, and so presents pictures from real life, and not merely facts derived from another.

At the Lord's reply Peter comes forward. They had done what that rich ruler would not. Such conduct, Matthew tells us (xix. 28), will not be forgotten. Mark, however, passes over that, and records, but in a

fuller way than either of the others, the rest of the Lord's reply: "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sister, or mother,\* or father, or children, or lands, for my sake, and for the gospel's sake, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come, eternal life. But many that are first shall be last, and the last first" (x. 29-31). We should mark the disjunctive conjunction *or* in ver. 29, and the copulative conjunction *and* in ver. 30. One might be called to surrender "houses, *or* brethren, *or* sisters," &c. Such shall, receive an hundredfold, which is amplified into "houses, *and* brethren, *and* sisters," &c. These two little words, *or*, *and*, add point and weight to the gracious declaration.

Thus teaching as He journeyed on, going up to Jerusalem with the twelve, the Lord led the way going in front of them all. His position in relation to the company Mark thus notices, and acquaints us, likewise, with the feelings of the disciples: "They were amazed, and, as they followed (or, as some read, they who followed), were afraid" (32). Of persecution to be expected He had just spoken, yet He stedfastly went forward to Jerusalem. The disciples were afraid, nor would their fear be lessened, for He now, for the third time, and more in detail, announced His rejection and death, pointing out the different parts that would be played by the Jews and by the Gentiles. But, as before, He also foretold His resurrection on the third day. "After three days," were His words, "He shall rise again."

At this juncture, as both Mark and Matthew agree, the request for the two sons of Zebedee was preferred. Matthew tells us their mother, Salome, the Virgin's sister, preferred it. Mark mentions James and John as presenting it. Evidently they looked for a personal

\* "Or wife" should be here omitted, as also in the parallel passage in Matthew. It is met with really only in Luke.



reign of the Lord, a thought which He fully confirmed by His answer (ver. 40); and the near advent of the kingdom in power was at that time a very common expectation (Luke xix. 11). The cross for Him, and subsequent suffering for His followers, lay, however, between it and the then present. So He challenged the petitioners: "Ye know not what ye ask. Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? or be baptized \* with the baptism that I am baptized with? and they said unto Him, We can." The cup and the baptism He promised them; the places of honour He did not. They were not His to give, but are for them for whom they have been prepared.

Indignation moved the rest when they heard what had been asked. The Lord, then calling all to Him, drew the contrast between the great ones of earth and the greatest in His kingdom. These will be they who follow Him the closest. "Whosoever will be great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever of you will be the chiefest (or first among you), shall be servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; and to give His life a ransom for many" (x. 43-45)

How all in the Master's hand turned to gold! The question of the Pharisees, the forwardness of the disciples, the incident of the young ruler, the request of James and John, each furnished an occasion of which the Lord made use to bring out important teaching, of which all disciples have need to be reminded; and the last, not the least important, nor the least precious. The example of the Master, and the way He spoke of it, must ever be precious to His own. He "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; and to give His life a ransom for many." That should for ever silence any thought of self-seeking on behalf of His followers.

Jericho was next reached, an important stage in this journey to Jerusalem. The three evangelists,

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\* This reference to His baptism is also peculiar to Mark. It should be omitted from Matthew's account.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke, all take notice of it. There grace was manifested to two blind men, writes Matthew, whilst Mark and Luke tell us only of one of them, whom Mark mentions by name, the son of Timæus, and therefore called Bartimæus. A blind beggar he was, and sitting by the wayside where Jesus was to pass as He was leaving the city. For this fact, also, Mark makes perfectly plain. And as one who was present might naturally write, if a careful observer, he informs his readers that a great crowd was with the Lord, which he distinguishes from the disciples. Bartimæus could not see, but he could hear. The noise of a crowd passing by where he sat attracted him, and he asked what it meant. Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. For him that was everything. He was the Son of David; as such he claimed His help: "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." Many, however, as they passed, rebuked him, that he should hold his peace. Why should he trouble the Master? Ah, but they had no want; Bartimæus had a crying one; he was blind, and desired sight. He had faith, too, as to the power and the willingness of the Lord. The present was his opportunity; he took it. "He cried the more, a great deal: Thou Son of David, have mercy on me."

One knows what noise a passing crowd makes. The tramp of feet, and the talking one to another, could easily drown the voice of a wayside beggar. The Lord, however, heard it. No one, it appears, told Him of it. No noise, however great or distracting, hinders a petition for mercy reaching His ear. "He stood still." All progress was arrested at the sound of the beggar's voice. The Lord spoke, saying, as we should probably read, "Call ye him." All for Bartimæus was at once changed. Rebukes ceased; encouragement followed. And as Mark has put on record the Lord's word of command, he, and he alone, has preserved the words of the crowd: "Be of good comfort; rise, He calleth thee." Nor that only; for from

him we learn of the ready response on the part of Bartimæus, who, "casting away his garment, sprang up, and came to Jesus." How graphically described! The company arrested, the word of command uttered, the language of the crowd changed, and the blind man starting up. What a scene: a blind beggar in the presence of the Lord, the crowd looking on, and the narrator of the history an eye-witness, and probably near to the Lord; for he wrote, "He *came* to Jesus." A few words from Christ, an immediate reply from Bartimæus, and the favour was accorded: "Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole." He received his sight. He did go his way, but that way was to follow his benefactor, a living example of His power and of His grace. For it was grace—sight freely given—grace to a beggar, but grace to one who had faith to count on the Lord's power, and on His willingness to meet him. It is the same still, though it be spiritual blessing which is desired and is received.

Mark next carries on his readers to the Mount of Olives, to describe the Lord's triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

C. E. S.

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## SCRIPTURE NOTES.

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1 John iii. 12 shows that hatred of a brother is fed by the sense one has that his works are good, and one's own evil.

1 John iv. 12.—God dwells in everyone who confesses that Jesus is Son of God, and he dwells in God. What an encouragement for a timid believer! what a rebuke for a careless one!

1 John iv. 17.—He who will judge in righteousness is our righteousness. We are in Him the righteousness according to which He will judge. Truly this can give us perfect peace.

1 John iv. 18.—*Perfect love* is that which God is, and which He has fully displayed in Christ, and given us to know and enjoy by His presence in us, -so that we

dwell in Him. The positive proof of its complete perfectness is that we are such as Christ is in this world. It is manifested towards us, perfected in us, and made perfect with us.

1 John v. 6, 11.—The Holy Ghost came down from a risen and ascended Christ, and thus we know that eternal life is given us in the Son of God. The apostle wrote these things in order that they who believed in the Son might know that they had eternal life. He does not give means of examination to make the faithful doubt whether they had eternal life; but—seeing that there were seducers who endeavoured to turn them aside as deficient in something important, and who presented themselves as possessing some superior light—he points out to them the marks of life, in order to reassure them; developing the excellence of that life, and of their position as enjoying it; and in order that they might understand that God had given it to them, and that they might be in no wise shaken in mind.

J. N. D.

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“YOU complain of deadness, and want of the bestirring power of the life of God: but courage; He who in the garden made Adam hear His voice, will also make you hear a more sweet word. Yet you will not always hear Him when He walketh. You are, like Jacob, mourning the death of Joseph, when he was living. The new creature, image of the last Adam, lives in you; yet you are mourning the supposed death of the life of Christ in you. Ephraim is bemoaning and mourning (Jer. xxxi. 18), thinking God is far off and heareth not; yet God, like the bridegroom (Cant. ii. 9), stands only behind a thin wall, and lays to His ear; for He saith Himself (v. 18), ‘I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself.’ I have good confidence, that Christ Jesus, whom your soul, through forests and mountains, is seeking, is within you; yet I speak not this to lay a pillow under your head; or to dissuade you from a holy fear of provoking and stirring up the Beloved before He please.”—*Rutherford.*

## LETTER OF INTEREST.

BELOVED BRETHREN,—May I remind you, that whatever takes place in a meeting for mutual edification ought to be the fruit of *communion*. That is, if I read a chapter of the word, it is not that I have to look through my Bible to find one suitable ; but being more or less acquainted with the word, the Spirit of God brings to my mind the portion He would have me read. So if a hymn is to be sung, it is not that I feel the time is come for singing, and so look through the book for a nice hymn to sing. No ; but out of the measure of my acquaintance with the hymn-book, the Spirit of God leads me to give out what is fitting.

Then, secondly, if this were well understood, it would follow, as a matter of course, that when any one was seen opening his Bible or his hymn-book, it would be known to be with the thought of reading a portion of the word, or giving out a hymn. The word, "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another" (1 Cor. xi. 33), would then quite preclude the thought of any one else taking part in the meeting, till the brother who had evinced his thought of doing so had either carried it into effect, or laid it aside. This brings me fairly to the subject of mutual dependence, on which we may well and properly meditate for a little.

The question as to the Corinthians, in 1 Cor. xi., was not as to ministry, but as to eating the Lord's supper. The question of ministry comes on in chap. xiv. But the moral root of the disorder, in both cases, was the same. They failed to discern the Body of Christ, and so each was occupied with his own individual self. "For in eating, every one taketh before other his own supper" (verse 21). The result was, "And one is hungry, and another is drunken." The principle of self was here permitted to produce fruits so glaring and so monstrous, as to shock one's natural sensibilities. But if I come to the meetings, and sit

in the meetings, thinking of the chapter I am to read, the hymn I am to give out, the part I am to take, self is as entirely in spiritual things, the hinge on which my thoughts and solitudes turn, as though, like the Corinthians in natural things, I having a supper, brought it and ate it, while my poor brother who could not afford this, went away without. It is in the fellowship of the One body of Christ quickened, actuated, taught, and governed by the One Spirit, that we meet together; and surely the thought of our hearts in thus assembling, should neither be the supper I myself have to eat, or the part I myself have to take, but the wondrous bounty and grace of Him who will not fail, if humbly waited on, to assign each his proper place and part, without any restless anxiety in us. In the body of Christ, each one is a member; and surely if the Corinthians had discerned and realised this, the one who had a supper would have tarried for those who had none, to share it with them. In like manner, if my soul realises this precious unity of the body, and my own humble place in it, as an individual member, I shall not be in such haste to act in the assembly as to prevent others acting: and if I feel I have a word from the Lord, or a call from Him for some service, I shall still remember that others may have the same, and so leave room for them: and most of all, if I see another with his book open, I shall wait, and not be in a hurry to get opportunity before him. "Tarry ye one for another," will surely apply to this as well as to the breaking of bread. And in the 14th chapter we find that when prophets were speaking in the meeting by immediate revelation, there was to be so much deference of one to another, that in the very act of speaking, if anything was revealed to another that sat by, the first was to "hold his peace." Besides, the general, moral bearing of such a word as "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak" (James i. 19), would teach us thus to tarry one for another.

Then, thirdly, the object of our assembling is *edification*. This is the point pressed in 1 Cor. xiv. In the 12th chapter we have the body of Christ in subjection to Him as Lord, and the witness here of His Lordship, by virtue of the indwelling and inworking of the Holy Ghost, who divides to every man severally as He will ; closing with the catalogue of gifts, apostles, prophets, &c., set of God in the Church in their several places of use, or service, for the whole. To covet earnestly the best gifts is enjoined, but a more excellent way referred to, namely, the charity, or love, of chap. xiii., without which the most splendid gifts are nothing, and which must regulate the exercise of all gifts, if edification is to be the result. This latter is the subject of chap. xiv. The gift of tongues was what seemed to man the most wonderful, and the Corinthians delighted in displaying it. Instead of love seeking the edification of all, it was vanity seeking to display its gifts. They were real gifts—gifts of the Spirit. And here, beloved brethren, is the solemn thing for us to weigh, that there may be the power of the Spirit for service, without the living guidance of the Spirit in its exercise. The latter there can only be when self is crucified, and Christ everything to the soul. The object of the Holy Spirit is not to glorify the poor earthen vessel which contains His gifts ; but by the humble, gracious, self-renouncing use of these gifts to glorify Christ from whom they flow ; and this is accomplished in the edification of the whole body. How beautiful this self-renunciation in Paul. Possessed of every gift, with what singleness of heart he sought not to exhibit his gifts, but to exalt his Lord, and edify the saints. "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all : yet in the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." How forcible, from the pen of such an one, those words of the Holy Ghost, "Let all things be done unto edifying." "Even

so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church."

Then again, every servant, to be faithful, must act under his master's directions. Hence the importance, that if I act in the assembly of the saints, it must be on no lower ground than that of a full and solemn persuasion in my own soul before God, that it is my Master's present will. "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Rom. xii. 3). The measure of what I do is to be the measure of faith God has given me; and God will take care that His servants know thus what He would have them do. Nothing less than a firm and solemn conviction that it is His will, can be a warrant for my acting in the assembly, or indeed anywhere, as the servant of God. In the assembly, however, there is a divine check or guard on the abuse of this principle:—viz., the provision made in such a word as "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge" (1 Cor. xiv. 29). It is for my own soul in the first place to judge, and know whether the Lord calls me to speak or to act in the assembly; but when I have so spoken or acted, it is for my brethren to judge, and in the vast majority of cases, it must be by their judgment that I abide. The case is a rare one indeed, in which I should be warranted in continuing to take part in the meetings, if my doing so were disapproved by my brethren. It is quite evident, that if God has called me to minister in the meetings,—if it be really from Him that my conviction of being led to do so proceeds,—it is as easy for Him to dispose and prepare the hearts of the saints to receive my ministry, and unite in my prayers, as it is to dispose my own heart for such service. If I am really led of the Spirit thus to act, the same Spirit who leads me and acts by me dwells in the saints; and in ninety-nine cases out



of a hundred, the Spirit in the saints will respond to ministry or worship in the Spirit on the part of any. Ordinarily, therefore, if I found saints burdened and troubled by my taking part in the meetings, instead of being edified thereby, I should be warranted in concluding that I had mistaken my place, and that I was not called thus to act. In the second place, suppose that what made the ministry of any one for a time unacceptable, was to be found in the state of the assembly, not his own state: suppose that he is so much more spiritual than the assembly, that they cannot enter into or appreciate what he ministers to them,—what of such a case as this? It is not a very common one, and when it does arise, it may be for such a servant of Christ to enquire, whether he has not to learn to be like his Master, and to teach and “to speak the word unto them, as they are able to hear;” whether he does not need a little more of Paul’s spirit, who could say, “we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children;” who says, too, in another place, “I have fed you with milk and not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.” If, with such discriminating care and tenderness as this, his ministry is still not received, it must indeed be trying to the faith of such a servant of the Lord; but seeing that edification is the object of all ministry, and that saints cannot be edified by a ministry that does not commend itself to their consciences, there could be no good in forcing it upon the saints whether they can receive it or not. The general weakness and disease of one’s body may produce the dislocation of some particular joint. The body, in such a case, will not be benefited by forcing the dislocated joint into action. It may be deplorable that it cannot act; but the only way for its use to be restored, is to give it perfect rest for the time being, while the general health of the body is sought to be restored by other means. So in the case supposed; continued ministry where it is not

received, even if the cause be the low state of the assembly, only adds irritation to the generally bad condition of things, and thus makes it worse. The servant of the Lord, in such a case, will find that to be silent is his wisdom, or it may be to him the intimation of his Master's will that he should serve elsewhere.

On the other hand, let me earnestly warn you, beloved brethren, against what, probably enough, Satan may now seek to make a snare to us, *the spirit of criticism*. His effort is always to urge us from one extreme to another ; and if we have erred on the side of indifference, as though it made no matter what took place, if only the time was filled up, it is more than likely we shall now be in danger on the other side. The good Lord, in His mercy, keep us. Nothing can be more deplorable, as to the state of heart it indicates, and nothing can be a greater hindrance to blessing, than a captious, criticising spirit. We assemble to worship God and edify one another, not to occupy ourselves in determining who ministers in the flesh and who ministers in the Spirit. Where the flesh does manifest itself, let it be judged. Sorrowful and humiliating work it is to discern and judge it, in place of our own proper, happy privilege of mutually enjoying the fulness of our blessed Saviour and Head. Do let us beware of a spirit of fault-finding. \*There are lesser gifts as well as greater ones, and we know Who it is that has bestowed more abundant honour on the parts that lacked. The actings of a brother in the assembly are not, of necessity, all fleshly because he acts in the flesh to some extent. On this point, it would be well for us all to ponder the words of one most highly honoured amongst us :—"There is great need of this, namely, that we attend first to the nature, and, secondly, to the measure of our gift. While on this last, *i.e.*, the measure of gift, let me say that I do not doubt that many a brother's gift would be recognised, if he did not go beyond his *measure* in it. ' If he prophesy, let him prophesy *according to the*

*proportion of faith.*' All beyond *that* is flesh, and putting himself forward, and this is felt, and his whole gift rejected ; and this because he has not known how to confine himself to it ; and therefore his flesh acts, and his speaking is attributed to it—and no wonder. It is also true as to the nature of a gift ; if a man sets himself about to teach, instead of confining himself to exhorting (if he exhort), he will not, and cannot, edify. I would especially desire the attention of every brother who ministers in the word to this remark, which, from lack of faithfulness in his hearers, may never reach him in any other way."

It is to brethren who minister that these words are addressed, but I quote them to you, beloved brethren, that we may learn not to condemn everything that any one says or does, because something of the flesh is discernible in it. Let us thankfully own what is of the Spirit, distinguishing it from all else, even in the ministry or actings of the same individual.

Then as to rule or oversight in the Church, and indeed as to the qualifications to be looked for, in any who act in ostensible service amongst saints, 1 Tim. iii. and Titus i. ought to be prayfully studied by all of us. There is one particular in 1 Tim. iii. 6, which it may be well to be reminded of. "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil." It is possible for the call of God and the gift of Christ to be found with a young man like Timothy (or if we go back to the Old Testament, with a Jeremiah); and "let no man despise thy youth" would apply to any such in the present day, even as to Timothy of old. But it is to Timothy the words quoted "not a novice," &c., were addressed. His youthfulness was to be no encouragement to those to act, who had neither the gift nor the grace which had been bestowed on him. And there is even a natural fitness and beauty in the young taking the place of subjection instead of rule, which seems to me to be sadly overlooked sometimes. "Likewise, ye younger,

submit yourselves unto the elder ; yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility ; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble " (1 Peter v. 5).

The Lord, in His mercy, beloved brethren, grant us to walk humbly with Himself, and thus may no hindrance be presented to the working of His blessed Spirit amongst us.—Yours, in unfeigned affection,  
W. T.

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" IF God have given you the earnest of the Spirit, as part payment of God's principal sum, you have to rejoice ; for our Lord will not lose His earnest, neither will He go back, nor repent Him of the bargain. If you find at some time a longing to see God, joy in the assurance of that sight (howbeit that feast be but like the passover, that cometh about only once a year), peace of conscience, liberty of prayer, the doors of God's treasury open to the soul ; and a clear sight of Himself looking out, and saying, with a smiling countenance, " Welcome to Me, afflicted soul." This is the earnest that He giveth sometimes, and which maketh glad the heart, and is an evidence that the bargain will hold. But, to the end you may enjoy this earnest, it were good to come oft in terms of speech with God, both in prayer and hearing of the word : for this is the house of wine, where you meet with your Well-beloved ; here it is where He kisses you with the kisses of His mouth, and where you meet the perfume of His garments, and they have indeed a most fragrant and glorious smell. You must, I say, wait upon Him, and be often communing with Him, whose lips are as lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh, and, by the moving thereof, He will assuage your grief ; for the Christ who saveth you is a speaking Christ ; the Church knoweth Him by His voice, and can discern His tongue amongst a thousand."—*Rutherford.*

## "WHERE I AM."

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"TELL me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon : for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of Thy companions? If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents " (Song of Solomon i. 7, 8).

The language of the earthly bride in this passage is free from all obscurity. She has Himself, the object of her heart's delight, and she converses with Him. But because He is known to her, and is the joy and delight of her heart, the One whom her soul loveth, she covets to learn what she can only learn from Himself, the place of His habitual resort ; for there would she abide with Him. This is fitting and beautiful ; for it is the quality of true affection to seek out the environment of its object, the scene in which it moves, and responsive love delights to answer to so clear an evidence of the affection it has inspired. Hence we find the two disciples, who had been attracted to the person of the Lord by the overflowing appreciation of Him by the Baptist, when he exclaimed "Behold the Lamb of God," being asked by the Lord "What seek ye?," with unaffected simplicity made answer, "Master, where abidest Thou?" the beauty of which is only excelled by His equally simple reply, "Come and see. They came then and saw where He abode, and they abode with Him that day." Surely it was the quintessence of the Christianity that should be according to God ; the divine drama rehearsed. For there is (1) Himself, known in His sacrificial character as God's Lamb ; (2) He is followed ; and (3) dwelt with where He dwells. His work, His person, and His place all ours. If I have, through grace, a valid claim to one, I have equally so to all. The title and the estate go together. The more then I value Himself, the more I seek to be where He is ; and if that be in its full character

denied me for a time, yet I cannot be denied an interest in the scene where He abides, nor be prevented in spirit abiding with Him; for I have an undeniable title, in the plenitude of His grace, to His own portion for ever.

It would be easy to trace this principle through Scripture. The innocent man had his Eden; lawless man, a cursed earth; the typically redeemed nation, a land flowing with milk and with honey; the really redeemed of Old Testament times had heaven. And the Church has the prepared place in the Father's house, in a word, "Where I am." The Lord not only taught this to His beloved disciples in distinct terms, but He fortified and comforted their hearts with it, in view of His being about to leave them. "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and *where I am*, there shall also My servant be." Again, "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." And finally, in that wonderful John xvii., "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me *where I am*; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." The deep significance of this is most precious, and for us is full of joy. As He said, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father." We have not to wait for Him to take His place; He fills that place already. "Being by the right hand of God exalted," as the glorified Man in the presence of God, He but waits now the word of the Father to come forth and fetch His beloved saints to where He Himself is. The greater result of His divine work is already wrought—this taking His place as man in the scene which His own presence fills and illuminates. The lesser result only is what remains—the bringing us there also, which is but the complement of that

glorious act of divinely surpassing power which the God of our Lord Jesus Christ wrought "when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. i. 20, 21.)

The very fact that He as Son of man has passed through death and resurrection, and now occupies a place in the Father's house as our "forerunner," assures that place to us, according to the counsel of His will who has predestinated that He and we shall be glorified together. The deep significance of this is most precious, being full association with Himself in His own acquired place, both now and eternally.

Nor are we left till the day of glory for an apprehension of what such blessedness will be. Its present enjoyment in character and quality, though by no means in its adequate degree, is assured to us in the words, "*Where* two or three are gathered together in My Name, there *am I* in the midst of them." Accordingly we have when so gathered the "where I am" made good to us even now, in a way incomparably blessed for saints while on earth. This side the glory no scene can rival the blessedness to us, and the unique joy to Him, of the gathering together of Himself and His saints; and at such a time the Spirit of God loves to conduct our hearts right onward to that still fairer scene, and that still happier occasion, when we shall walk with Him in white, and when the "where I am" shall be peopled with His blood-washed ones, His companions in unfading glory, Himself in their midst in His many-phased beauty and supremacy, the centre and the spring of their exceeding joy for ever!

May our hearts, under His exquisite touch, be moved by the Spirit of God to cherish and to cultivate a joyous and hallowing anticipation of the approaching blessedness of His unclouded presence, which is "fulness of joy."

## PSALM IV.

DAVID, the instrument that God employed to give us the Psalms, as also the other psalmists, passed through the circumstances of which they speak. Hence there are found in them more experiences than prophecies. They are all prophetic, no doubt, but at the same time they characteristically give us experiences. It is the Spirit of Christ which by means of the prophet thinks and speaks of these experiences. The prophet meets with like circumstances, and the Holy Spirit gives him to express his feelings. One knows the circumstances which occasioned several of the Psalms; but the Spirit of God has an object to which the circumstances correspond. The first verses of the psalm contain ordinarily the summary.

David, seeing his glory defamed, figures the Messiah here. The circumstances are like those of Jesus before Herod. David is in a strait. The proofs of the power of God with respect to Israel fail him; he was also according to man in despair. All the authorities were against him. He had lost all with those who followed him. The Amalekites had swept everything away. David had nothing left but the Eternal. The soul and the Church find themselves in like circumstances.

The latter half of verse 6 is the answer to the demand, "Who will shew us any good? Jehovah, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us." When the soul rests entirely on the Eternal and has nothing but God, it enters into peace and joy. It is easy to bless God when the circumstances are as we wish. But if God leaves us there, He leaves us far from Him, pre-occupied with the things that perish. Eden is now impossible. If man is content with what he finds here below, he is content with death, with that which passes away. The soul is ever pushed to the point of saying, "Who will shew us any good?" There is nothing that abides the stay of the soul.



One finds oneself outside Eden ; God seems not for us ; Satan is against us. One must be driven there to understand that all around is far from God, without seeing any good in self or any resource outside it.

If God reveals Himself to the soul, it feels its condition, and that instead of escaping from God, it must find Him. Outside Him is no rest. It is then the soul can say, "Lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us." If the soul withdraws from God, it occupies itself with things here below as its object. God exercises discipline to recall from such a state. Faith finds in Him the same answer. When the soul gets back to God, it has no more other resources or other desires. It says, Lord, lift Thou up, &c. It is entirely satisfied with being in the light of God's countenance. When in the midst of hankerings and difficult circumstances the soul turns to God, a great work is already done in the heart. Sin is come into the world, and there is nothing that is not infected with it. God can find nothing in the world to enrich us with, nothing that does not fill the hand of death which seizes all. He gives and makes known Christ, and thus sets apart the godly for Himself with the confidence that He hears us (ver. 3). Thus by Him we learn the truth as to all.

The moment Christ is thus recognised by virtue of the Holy Spirit, the heart attaches itself to Him, and finds its treasure in Him, seeing that there is nothing good in itself. The more one sees in man the ignorance of spiritual things, the more also one feels the necessity of knowing what we are. This discovery of the state of our souls makes us understand that all is vanity by the revelation of that which fixes and attaches us to God in His unchanging goodness. For as Christ has been judged for all that was evil and vain in us, so God discovers to us all that He is in our favour. We have always the assurance founded on Christ that God will lift on us the light of His countenance. There is in Him no variableness nor shadow

of turning ; and we know that He has before Him the Beloved, and has chosen us in Him.

After creating all, God rested from His work ; but sin has spoiled it all and turned it into vanity, so that God cannot any longer rest there. There is one only man, Jesus, in whom He finds His good pleasure. He does not change the world, but chooses the Beloved before His face. There is the Rock of our assurance—Christ and His work on our behalf. Faith finds its rest and peace in God, whatever be the difficulties. To enjoy the favour of God and the light of His countenance is our sole good. This goes deep into the heart—whether we are content with all if God lifts upon us the light of His face. There is what gives uprightness.

If I look to the countenance of God, the opinions of men do not shake me. If we think there is any good thing in us, we are still in rebellion against God. The world is content to receive good things from God, but the moment they cease, the heart's rebellion and ingratitude are manifest. It is in Christ alone that God has all His complacency, because the world is all alienated from Him. He is also our Beloved, for He has reconciled us to God. The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me. The Beloved of God is my Beloved.

Are we content whatever the circumstances, provided that God lifts upon us the light of His face? If we are not, there is still in us something which the Holy Spirit condemns. If the heart acts on the circumstances, happiness is lost when they change, and one cannot say, Lord, lift Thou upon me the light of Thy countenance. When the heart is attached to Christ, we find in Him all that can be conceived, yea, all that God can reveal of blessedness. A Christian ought not day by day to desire any other thing than Christ. Then we enjoy the light of God's countenance shining on us, and reject all that is inconsistent with Him and His glory.

J. N. D.

## LUKE XIV.

“AND it came to pass, as He went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath day, they watched Him.” What a position for men to have taken in relation to the lighted candle, and what a place for Jesus to be in as the light in the Pharisee’s house, to act in love. “And, behold, there was a certain man before Him which had the dropsy.” Before He can be at home with this man, He must first use the lesser light of the law in this house, and search out the hidden corners of their hearts and ways, who were ready to restrict the outflow of His grace and pity by the letter of the law, which had long ago condemned them and killed them. Still, if they are ignorant or dishonest in relation to the law and themselves, the candle will bring it into the light. So Jesus “spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? and they held their peace. And He took him, and healed him, and let him go.” The light has displayed itself in a love, towards the man with a dropsy, that put glory upon the law which could not command it, or forbid it; for there was proof enough in the healed man before their eyes, that He who had wrought it must be lord of the Sabbath day.

If they cannot settle the question between Him and the Sabbath, because of His being what He was, they can settle it, or hold their peace, by discovering what they were. So He gives them the parable of their own ox, or ass, fallen into a pit on the Sabbath day, demanding which of them would not pull him out; and “they could not answer Him to these things,” for their own self interest, in what was their own, brought to light their selfishness, to which they had more respect than to the Sabbath. Yet again the light rests upon “those who enter” into the Pharisee’s house, and marks how they chose out the chief rooms;

and by the parable of the highest room, and the lowest room, and the more honourable man than thou—together with the change of room, by the decree of the bidder, "Give this man place," and "Friend, go up higher"—Jesus makes way for this new moral principle of the kingdom of God, "Who-soever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." The candle on the candlestick has to shed its light not only on those who entered into the house, which it has done, but to bring the chief Pharisee near its rays, to let the light in which this illustrious Guest was acting in grace shine into his heart. "Then said He also to him that bade Him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, &c., lest they bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee." The kingdom thus changes its outward forms and estimations, according to its Head and King in rejection; its seats of honour cannot be by birth and genealogy at this time, for that would be to recognise what was born of man, and to set up flesh and blood in it, and make a Hebrew of the Hebrews, the highest man, in the chief place. The great Teacher leads away from all this, into acquaintance with Himself and His ways as the meek and lowly One, and says, "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: but thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

These are the new principles of the kingdom of God, as taught by the heavenly Man to those whom He is thus separating off unto Himself inwardly, by moral and spiritual power. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." The resurrection of the just is before the heart of Jesus, and he would have all our motives drawn from Himself where He now is, that our actions might be like His where we are; and as to recompense (if there can be any other than pleasing Him), let it be

beyond and outside all present considerations, and a thing for the resurrection.

“And when one of them that sat at meat with Him heard these things, he said, Blessed are they that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God ;” and doubtless this is but the truth ; nevertheless, the object of Jesus is to gather His own into the place below and above which had been prepared for Him, and which He had opened to them with Himself on the earth He was leaving, and which He would presently open to them in heaven, when His “lifting up” had put Him there.

These were the two places, according to the mind and counsel of the Father, and now brought into light by Jesus, and presented to His disciples and to the elect, in communion with His own love, which would have them with Him in every step which He took, that their experiences of sorrow and of joy might not be according to mere man, or a godly Jew (both of which they had been), but like those which Jesus knew, and had made for Himself and them, by His perfect obedience and devotedness to God and men. But the light and the love have not yet done their work in this precious chapter xiv. ; but grace must tell its own wondrous story, and reveal itself in its own ways, at the supper which now follows.

They had all been familiar with the Feasts of the Lord, and their establishment with the nation from the day they entered the land of Canaan, under Joshua's leadership ; and some of these were still outwardly kept at their appointed months and seasons, when Jesus was going in and out among them. All this, however, was drawing to a close ; for Jerusalem itself was to be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled. And Jesus knowing all things that were at hand for Himself and for them, brings up this peculiar relation of Jehovah with Israel, and the Feasts which He had provided, that such grace and goodness might confront them and convict them in their rejection of Jesus—Jehovah in their midst.

Then said He unto them, "A certain man made a great supper, and bade many : and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come ; for all things are now ready." And what was this voice, which told out this in a parable to them, but the voice of the servant Himself, who had come to lead them in. Who, and what were they, as regards the inviter, or the bidder, but the very men "who with one consent began to make excuse," and staid away? And what was "the piece of ground" that led one off to see it? or what the "five yoke of oxen" that carried another away to prove them? or what the man "who had married a wife," and therefore could not come? but each and all so many proofs of the goodness of Him, in their basket, and in their store, and in their house, who had met all their desires to the full, and who now called them to eat and drink with Him as in olden days. What could the servant do but shew His lord these things respecting them? Could they not read their own state and condition, whether viewed in the light of the grace and goodness that had always passed before them in Moses' day, or in Joshua's time, or now with their Messiah? If not, could they understand it by the light which had come into their house, although it convicted and condemned them? What was Jesus saying and doing day by day in His intercourse with them, but calling them back to God? What had His ministry been, and that of the twelve, and of the seventy, but a declaration that all things were ready? What was His continuous presence with them but a continued invitation? Yea, He had just said to Jerusalem herself, How often would I have gathered you, and ye would not! "The God of glory" who had appeared to Abraham was the God of grace who had come to them, and was standing before them, in the veiled person of the sent One ; but they neither saw the Jehovah of olden times, nor the Messiah Jesus of to-day, nor the fulness of the grace that had made a great supper for them ; but

they excuse themselves, and so throw away their opportunity of renewing the Feasts of the Lord, at His invitation, and of keeping them with the Messenger of the Covenant. "Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind;" for the fulness of the grace, of which Jesus was the servant and the witness, overflowed its banks, and refused its old dispensational and narrow channels, which limited its blessings to Israel and the circumcised according to the flesh.

Jesus had counselled "one of the chief of the Pharisees" that the order which He had marked in the house, when "He went into it to eat bread on the Sabbath day," need be changed from friends, and brethren, and rich neighbours, to the poor, and the lame, and the blind; and now the time was come for "the great supper" itself to be furnished after this new order, and the doors of the kingdom thrown open with to "Whosoever will, let him come." "And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said to the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."

The spirit of prophecy in Isaiah had foretold these things of the Servant, and of Israel's refusals. "And now, saith the Lord that formed thee from the womb to be His servant, to bring Jacob again to Him, though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and My God shall be My strength. Behold My servant whom I uphold, Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth. I have put My spirit upon Him; He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." A new object has been declared by the God of all grace, as to Himself and His house, and His kingdom, viz.: that they "should be filled," for this is after the new order of the rejected One of the earth. The time was already come for the

highways and the hedges to be swept of their occupants, as in this "great supper;" and when Jesus should be actually received up, "the great sheet" would be let down from heaven, in strictest harmony with the common and unclean things of the highways and hedges of the time, as a notice to Peter that the house was to be yet filled, and a warrant to him to do as the elect servant had done below. Israel had been externally separated off as an holy nation; *now* God would cleanse the uncircumcised Gentiles; for the new order of the bidden guests was not to be thy brethren and kinsmen, according to the chief Pharisee's house, but all manner of creeping things and wild beasts, &c. This "fisher of men" was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but let down his net at *this* bidding, as he had done before, when the Lord was with him in the boat on the lake of Gennesaret, and enclosed a great multitude of fishes.

Nor must this new order of the great supper, and the great sheet let down from the heaven to the earth, when the Son of Man was on high with the Father (and done three times, too, in token of the grace and the draught, that the house may be full), be allowed to stop at this new commission to Peter, by which he went down from Joppa to gather in the Gentiles, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. There remained still a further revelation to be made of the mind of God, and the house, and the kingdom, now that the Son of Man had been lifted up, and seated beyond and out of the range and reach of governmental distinctions, and dispensational walls of division as to flesh and blood, and an earthly order of things, which could never fill the house to the full. This last commission was given to Paul by Christ from the heavens, as the new centre and head to whom all are now gathered, and with whom they are made one in life, and righteousness, and glory, and preached by the great apostle of the Gentiles "to every creature under the heavens."



The Master of the house "being angry" at the refusal of the bidden guests, calls in the unbidden ones from every quarter, under the power of a "heavenly calling" with the Lord who is gone there. He leaves everything under the sun, as it was in the times of David's rejection, to the formal order of Saul and his kingdom, with their sons, appointed by him to his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and their daughters to be confectionaries, and cooks, and bakers; but with a cave in Adullam for any and all who can by faith come outside to David, as the hidden one, during the existence of Saul's kingdom; to be his disciples in the days of his retirement, but his mighty men in the time of his second coming. And thus Jesus turned and said unto the multitude, "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple;" and so He fits them for His own company, and to be with Himself, whether in the cave of David's day, or hidden in the heavens as now. But this present connection with Christ is only by the decease on the cross, and therefore discipleship can only be by following on in the same track, and this He tells them, saying, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple."

By the similitude "of the tower" and its cost He would have them sit down and count whether they have well reckoned up the outlay before they begin to build; and also by the figure "of one king going to make war with another king," He bids them as disciples to consult upon the ways, and means, and power of resistance, and whether *he be able* to meet him and overcome him? This new mode "of making war" on the one hand, and "of building a tower" on the other, is made successful by the setting aside of self, and all the weights and hindrances that the flesh ties down to, and by which the real disciple becomes impoverished. "So likewise," Jesus says,

“whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple.”

The salt and its good savour is introduced, as to its preserving quality towards that which it seasons; or else, all goes away with it as neither fit for the land nor the dunghill. “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear,” are the last words of the great Teacher upon this new doctrine concerning discipleship, and a walk with Him outside the camp, and into the heavens with Him, till He comes forth the second time in His own glory, and the glory of His Father, to resume and establish the kingdom with His earthly people, which He postponed on the day of His mountain transfiguration. In these words and ways of Jesus, the Son of God, we have traced how He was at the first given out from above as the Child born, and then accredited and anointed by the Holy Ghost and the opened heaven as the beloved Son of the Father’s good pleasure, for His service and ministry in the midst of Israel and the people.

The narrative in the various and varying chapters of His daily life is but the copious record of the great fact, “that He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him.” Besides what Jesus thus was, both towards God and men, He resisted and overcame the tempter, as the lonely and the hungry Man in the wilderness, and disputed, yea, denied Satan’s right to possess man any longer, by casting out the devils into the sea; He refused the kingdoms of this world and all their present glory, when presented by Satan; and finally, He morally set aside man in the flesh, whether in his ideas, or motives, or objects, or pursuits, be they expressed towards man as a neighbour, or uttered about God as the Creator.

J. E. B.

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CHRISTIAN *conduct*, to “do well”; *experience*, to “suffer for it”; *trial*, to “take it patiently”; *encouragement and recompense*, “this is acceptable with God” (1 Peter ii. 20.)

## REPAIRERS OF THE BREACH.

GOD cannot accept anything which is not a sweet smelling savour of His beloved Son. It is well to remember this ; for how much hypocrisy there is to be found amongst us—trying to appear what we really are not, forgetting that all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. We cannot, therefore, offer that to God which He can accept if it be not a savour of Christ. Beloved, has not this thought crept in among us, and all we endeavour to do is to keep up appearances. Alas ! to what a state we have come. “ He that *doeth truth* cometh to the light ; ” “ And the fruit of the *light* is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.” Is it possible that we are in such a state that we cannot bear reproof ? It is blessed to get in the *light* of the word. Just let us turn to Isaiah lviii. We find there (as it ever is) God’s way of blessing. First the light exposes and makes manifest. May we turn this portion on ourselves a little, that we may consider our ways. “ Cry aloud, spare not.” God cannot tolerate iniquity. Here is a people going on in sin and transgression, and yet keeping up a form which, no doubt, was very fair to look upon. “ They seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways, *as* a nation that did righteousness ; . . . they take delight in approaching to God.” What hollowness is here. Beloved, it won’t do. Our God will have reality. Do we not see a picture of ourselves in these first five verses ? “ Behold ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness.” “ Is it such a fast that I have chosen ? ” Verses 6 and 7 tell us what was needed. God wants a practical life answering to His Word. Now this cannot be without communion and fellowship with Him. The very fact of coming into God’s presence to try and deceive Him as to our state, only proves the depth to which we have fallen.

Do we realize Him as the One who searches the heart? Have we forgotten Acts v.?

Oh, beloved saints of God, is it possible we can be satisfied to go on as we are doing? Have we nothing to thank Him for? Do we want Him to do more than He has done? Bear with me for a little. Are we stronger than He? that we want our own way. How many turning aside only reveals the truth of this, declaring *the path to be too narrow*. Can we resist the longing of His tender heart, so full of love? Let us each go to Him confessing our waywardness, with a desire to refresh His heart. Blessed Lord, Thou art the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. How could we ever slight such a love as Thine?

What encouragement he holds out to us when we cleave to Himself with purpose of heart (ver. 8). "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and *thine health* shall spring forth speedily." Can we resist His appeal to give Him full possession of these hearts? "And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and *satisfy* thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones." It is a weary day, a testing time; but, child of God, *He* will guide thee. *HE will satisfy thee*, yea in such a time of drought, "and thou shalt be like a *watered garden*, and like a *spring of water*, whose waters fail not." And further, beloved, "they that shall be of thee shall *build the old waste places*: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, THE REPAIRER OF THE BREACH, the restorer of paths to dwell in." What a name! What a title! Do you see the ruins, dear reader? Well, you shall build the old waste places. Only seek Him, walk with Him, commune with Him, and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach.

Let it be our one untiring desire henceforth to live for Him, bearing His interests on our hearts, and so let one response come from each heart to glorify His name. "And thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in." J. H. I.

## SPIRIT OF SACRED POETRY.

WE subjoin a portion of Mrs. Charles's translation of a beautiful hymn supposed to have been written in the thirteenth century :—

Lo, the Day,—the Day of Life !  
 Day of unimagined light,  
 Day when Death itself shall die,  
 And no more shall there be night.

See the King desired for ages,  
 By the just expected long ;  
 Long implored, at length He hasteth,  
 Cometh with salvation strong.  
 Oh, how past all utterance happy,  
 Sweet, and joyful it will be,  
 When they who, unseen, have loved Him,  
 Jesus, face to face, shall see !

There shall be no sighs or weeping,  
 Not a shade of doubt or fear ;  
 No old age, no want or sorrow,  
 Nothing sick or lacking there.  
 There the peace will be unbroken,  
 Deep and solemn joy be shed ;  
 Youth in fadeless flower and freshness,  
 And salvation perfected.  
 What will be the bliss and rapture,  
 None can dream and none can tell,—  
 There to reign among the angels,  
 In that heavenly home to dwell !  
 To those realms, oh, Saviour, call me !  
 Deign to open that blest gate,—  
 Thou, whom, seeking, looking, longing,  
 I, with eager hope, await !

That pious recluse, Thomas à Kempis (from the name of his birthplace,—Kempin, in Holland), was the author of a fine Christian lyric on "The joys of Heaven." He was born in 1380, and died in 1471,

in his ninety-first year. He sings to us thus sweetly of the glories of the heavenly state :—

High the angel choirs are raising  
 Heart and voice in harmony ;  
 The Creator-King still praising,  
 Whom, in beauty there they see.  
 Sweetest strains, from soft harps stealing ;  
 Trumpet-notes of triumph pealing ;  
 Radiant wings, and white robes gleaming ;  
 Up the steeps of glory streaming :  
 Where the heavenly bells are ringing  
 Holy, holy, holy ! singing  
 To the mighty Trinity !  
 Holy, holy, holy ! crying ;  
 For all earthly care and sighing  
 In that city cease to be !  
 Every voice is there harmonious,  
 Praising God in hymns symphonious ;  
 Love each heart with light enfolding,  
 As they stand, in peace, beholding  
 There the Triune Deity !  
 Whom adore the seraphim,  
 Aye with love eternal burning ;  
 Venerate the cherubim,  
 To their Fount of honor turning,  
 Whilst angelic thrones adoring  
 Gaze upon His Majesty !

“ Scarcely have the tones of one hymn died away before another has been grandly swelling upon the ear of Christendom. In the fourteenth century, the music of the Church was becoming faint. Truth was sending out its messages but in undertones. Spiritual religion was keeping up its struggling existence within narrow retreats.” \*

We are again indebted to the able pen of Dr. J. M. Neale for the translation of the following, one of the latest of the notable Latin hymns :—

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\* Christophers' Hymn-writers.

Sing victory, O ye seas and lands !  
 Ye floods and rivers, clap your hands !  
 Break forth in joy, angelic bands !  
 Crown ye the King that 'midst you stands,  
 To whom the heavenly gate expands !

Bow before His Name Eternal,  
 Things celestial, things terrestrial,  
 And infernal !

Sing victory, angel-guards that wait !  
 Lift up, lift up the eternal gate,  
 And let the King come in with state !

And, as ye meet Him on the way,  
 His mighty triumph greet, and say,  
 Hail, Jesu ! glorious Prince, to-day !  
 Who is the King of Glory blest,  
 Effulgent in His purple vest ?

With garments dyed in Bozrah, He  
 Ascends in pomp and jubilee.

It is the King, renowned in fight,  
 Whose hands have shattered Satan's might !

Bow before His Name Eternal !  
 Things celestial, things terrestrial,  
 And infernal !

The following beautiful lines are part of a translation by Professor Longfellow, of a Latin hymn, written by the celebrated Francisco Xavier, who, for his zeal in the Eastern missions, was styled the "Apostle of the Indies :"—

O God ! my spirit loves but Thee :  
 Not that in Heaven its home may be,—  
 Not that the souls who love not Thee  
 Shall groan in fire eternally ;  
 But Thou, on the accursèd tree,  
 In mercy hast remembered me.  
 For me the cruel nails, the spear,  
 The ignominious scoff, didst bear ;  
 Countless, unutterable woes,—  
 The bloody sweat, death's pangs and throes,—  
 These Thou didst bear, all these for me,  
 A sinner, and estranged from Thee.

And wherefore no affection show,  
 Jesus, to Thee, that lov'st me so?  
 Not that in heaven my home may be,  
 Not lest I die eternally,  
 Not from the hopes of joys above me ;  
 Nor even as Thou Thyself didst love me :  
 So love I, and ever will love Thee ;  
 Surely because my King art Thou,  
 My God for evermore as now.

There is another celebrated ode, of very ancient origin, "a voice of all ages," entitled "Cælestis urbs Jerusalem." This fine old hymn not only possesses great poetic merit, but also a singular charm for many a Christian pilgrim. It is richly freighted with touching and beautiful memories and associations. Its plaintive and melodious words have been lisped by multitudes, who, amid the sorrows of earth, longed for the beatitudes of the "better country ;" by once breathing lips that have long since ceased to make melody on earth, but whose spirits are now with the Lord. It was the favorite refrain of the Cameronian martyrs and Covenanters, who sang it in the glens and on the mountains of Scotland ; and it has been made the vehicle of devout aspiration, alike by prince and peasant.

This hymn was originally entitled "The New Jerusalem ; or, the Soul's Breathing after the Heavenly Country." From Mr. Prime's interesting work on this hymn, we extract some portion of it, the entire poem extending to thirty-one stanzas :—

O mother dear, Jerusalem ! when shall I come to thee?  
 When shall my sorrows have an end, thy joys when shall  
 I see?

O happy harbour of God's saints ! O sweet and pleasant soil !  
 In thee no sorrows can be found, no grief, no care, no toil.

Jerusalem the City is of God our King alone ;  
 The Lamb of God, the light thereof, sits there upon His  
 throne.



Thy turrets and thy pinnacles with carbuncles do shine,  
With jasper, pearl, and chrysolite, surpassing pure and fine.

Thy walls are made of precious stones, thy bulwarks  
diamonds square ;

Thy gates are made of Orient pearl,—O God, if I were there !

The prison-cells of that storied old "Tower," on the banks of the Thames, are covered with the marks and memorials of many a hapless victim of tyranny and persecution. It was there, probably, towards the close of the reign of Elizabeth, that this long prison-song was written, which now is treasured as a sacred relic in the British Museum. The winged words of this glorious old hymn have, however, long since found their way into thousands of Christian hearts, both in Europe and America ; and to many it has become ministrant of grace. A young Scotchman, who was on his death-bed at New Orleans, says the American biographer of Whitefield, was visited by a Presbyterian minister, but continued for a time to shut himself up against all the good man's efforts to reach his heart. Somewhat discouraged, at last the visitor turned away, and, scarcely knowing why, unless it were for his own comfort, began to sing "Jerusalem, my happy home." That was enough ; a tender chord was touched ; the young patient's heart was melted ; and with tears he said, "My dear mother used to sing that hymn !" He no longer refused the good offices of his friend, but listened to his spiritual counsel ; and his blessing ensued.

In closing this section, we may remark that we have had to omit many notable and beautiful pieces, as, for example, the "Dies Iræ," on account of the erroneous doctrines they teach ; and even of those we have indicated to the reader, our extracts have been necessarily brief, on this account. The worship of the virgin Mary, the dogma of transubstantiation, intercession of saints, and the superstitious addresses to

the material cross, which characterize so generally Mediæval hymnology, have deprived us of the privilege of more largely quoting from otherwise masterly productions. We do not, of course, wish to imply that the middle-age theology was wholly corrupt, and ought to be placed under ban: there was a small streamlet that still was preserved in its pristine purity. For the sake of this, therefore, and the natural desire we all feel to know something of what the Church was during her thousand years' eclipse, we have made our citations as freely as we might. "In Romanism, we have the residuum of the Middle-age Church and theology,—the lees, after all, or well-nigh all, the wine was drained away. But, in the Mediæval Church, we have the wine and the lees together, the truth and the error; the false observance, and yet, at the same time, the divine truth, which should one day be fatal to it, side by side."\* The ever-living Church of God, whether in the Catacombs or among the Swiss Alps, is one. May we not say of these early Christian poets:—

"Their song to us descendeth:

The Spirit, who in them did sing, to us His music lendeth.

His song, in them, in us, is one;

We raise it high, we send it on,—

The song that never endeth"?

The gems of the hymn literature of those remote times we gather from many a hidden mine; and they flash frequently across a chaos of ignorance and darkness. It has been well said, "We need only study the sacred poetry of the Middle Ages, to understand why the Reformation was needed."

Thus far our rapid survey of the sacred poetry of Latin Christianity has verified the remark of a great thinker,† that "it is but feebly, and as afar off, that the ancient church came up to the majesty and the wide compass of the Hebrew worship, such as it is indicated

\* Trench's Sacred Latin Poetry.

† Isaac Taylor.

in Psalm clxviii. Neither Ambrose, nor Gregory, nor the Greeks have reached, or approached this level. As to the powers of sacred poetry, those powers were expanded to the full, and were quite expended too, by the Hebrew bards. What are modern hymns but so many laborious attempts to put in a new form that which, as it was done in the very best manner so many ages ago, can never be well done again, otherwise than in a way of verbal repetition?"

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## LETTERS OF INTEREST.

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APRIL 18th, 1891.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—“It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins” (Heb. x. 4) intimates that the sacrifices before the Cross were *anticipative* of the real and efficacious one. When resumed in accordance with God’s mind, they will be commemorative of the Lord’s death upon the cross.

In proof that they will be again offered up one turns naturally to those Scriptures written especially for Israel—*i.e.*, Old Testament Scriptures; as for the abiding efficacy of the one perfect Sacrifice one turns to those written especially for Christians—New Testament writings.

Ezekiel is the plainest, because the fullest witness of the restoration of the sacrificial ritual, when the Lord, as predicted in xliii., will have returned to dwell in the temple for ever, a fact which has never yet been true since the Babylonish captivity. For the glory which left the house (Ezek. x. 19) and the city (xi. 23), by the way of the Mount of Olives, will return by the same way that it left, never again to leave it (xliii. 1-4, 7). Certainly this has never been fulfilled, spiritually or literally; for the Lord on earth declared, “Behold, your house is *left* unto you desolate” (Matt. xxiii. 38), *i.e.*, in the state in which

He found it, without the Shechinah. That state will continue till He returns, of which Ezekiel (xliii.) has prophesied. Consequent on that the sacrificial ritual will again be in use. The altar will be purged (xliii. 19-26) by the blood of sin-offerings, and burnt-offerings will be added. In xliv. 15, priests, we learn, of Zadok's line shall offer the fat and the blood, and eat the meat-offering, the sin-offering, and the trespass-offering (29). In xlv. 18-25, the feasts of Pass-over and Tabernacles are restored (not Pentecost), and at their observance sacrifices will be offered. In xlvi. we read of the sabbatical offerings, and of those at the new moon, and on the feasts, as well as those appointed for the daily sacrifice (3-15), and variations may be marked in the ordinances about them and those same offerings of old. Each offering has distinct variations, and whilst of old there was an evening burnt-offering as well as a morning, no evening one is now mentioned.

Now, are these variations and these ordinances just ideal? Why such variations in that case? What need of such minute directions if they are never to be put in practice? To suppose them ideal is surely to draw a large draft on the credulity of people, a draft which I for one should refuse to honour.

Are all these things of the past? They never were practised. Where in the past was the prince, the family man (since the throne was overturned) who had land where the prince of the future will have it, to bestow on his children? Shall we spiritualize it? But how spiritualize this prince, a family man with children, who never enters the holy place, but only stands at times at the threshold of it? (xlvi. 2.)

Further, Isaiah (lvi. 7, lx. 7) writes of animal sacrifices in a future day; and Zech. xiv. 21 intimates that animal sacrifices will be offered again, and the feast of tabernacles kept, at which Ezekiel declares animal sacrifices will be offered. Shall we spiritualize it all?

Then we must spiritualize the Lord's return in person to the temple, and really give up the hope of His second coming; for Ezekiel connects the Lord's return and the actual observance of these ordinances together. See xliii. 7-11; see, too, verses 9, 11: "I will dwell in the midst of them for ever." "Write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and *do* them." How *do* these ordinances of xliii.-xlv. if they are ideal, or to be spiritualized? And if they are to be spiritualized, the Lord's return so closely connected with their observance must, as I have said, be spiritualized too.

Again, the people who are to do these ordinances will be living in the full enjoyment of the new covenant. It will be made with them. Do the blessings of it necessarily militate against a sacrificial ritual? It is for those who will be under that covenant that such a ritual is prescribed. They will know their sins are forgiven, yet will bring animal sacrifices. And there will be an annual day of atonement, and provision then made for every one that erreth and is simple (xlv. 20). Spiritualize all this, and what provision remains for one that erreth? To found any argument against the restoration of animal sacrifice on the fact that Christians do not need that, because they know of perfect acceptance by the death of Christ, is to confound between those who are called with a heavenly calling, and those who are not—those in the past who were not so called, and those in the future who will not be, worship by sacrifice. It is the normal way for such to worship. No thought is there in the Word of any other. There are just two ways instituted by God, by which the need of Christ's death is owned—sacrifice and the Lord's supper. This last is *till* He come (1 Cor. xi. 26). Declare the abolition for the future of the former, and the saints for a thousand years will have no divinely appointed way of owning their need of the death of Christ. Is that credible?

An important point should here be noticed. God gave to Phineas the covenant of an everlasting priesthood (Numb. xxv. 13). By Jeremiah God declares (xxxiii. 17-22) that the Levites in the future shall never want a man to offer burnt-offerings, and to kindle meat-offerings, and to do sacrifice continually. I say in the *future*, because evidently verses 17, 18 are closely connected with the growing up of the Branch, whereas ver. 21 refers to the covenant made in the past in Numbers as regards the Levites, and is a different revelation. So, again, the close connection between the return of the Lord to reign and a sacrificial ritual is seen. And Ezekiel xliii.-xlvi. shows the way it will be carried out. Now, if all in Ezekiel is ideal, what becomes of the covenant made with Phineas? Can God break His covenant? *Intermission* of sacrifice has been known; in Jeremiah's day that was experienced; but *extinction* of it is a very different matter. God's Word forbids the latter. Now any theory which upholds the extinction of sacrifice\* denies the literal restoration of it, and, therefore, maintains the breaking of the covenant with Phineas, which God shows should be everlasting. If any one takes that ground, I, for one, should not follow him. The word I have referred to forbids it.

And, as to Isaiah, in the same section xlix.-lvii. in which the Remnant's knowledge of forgiveness of sins is declared (liii. 5), we read of animal sacrifices (lvi. 7). The knowledge of the one will not be incompatible with the observance of the other. The Lord's death understood (liii.), Jerusalem blessings are set forth (liv.), grace then to all who will receive it (lv.), and blessings for any consequent on obedience (lvi.). Let it be seen that sacrifices may be *commemorative*, and all difficulty vanishes. And Heb. x. 4 helps one to all that. Verse 18 in no way militates against their resumption. For by one offering for sins

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\* I am not speaking of the eternal state.

is plainly meant an offering to deal effectively with them, which the sacrifice of Christ alone does. There never was, there never will be, intrinsic value in the blood of animals. Hence what was anticipative may be in the future commemorative.

Then as to spiritualizing Ezekiel xl.-xlviii., I do not understand how one could do it. To set forth a typical meaning of what has been done all can understand. So we get instruction from the Levitical ritual. But how to spiritualize the offerings, a burnt-offering as distinct from a meat-offering, &c., I do not understand; and how we can spiritualize the boiling of the sin-offering and the baking of the meat-offering, both of which are commanded (xlvii. 20), I cannot say. The directions in these chapters are too minute and distinct to admit of such a practice. I suspect it will be found, that spiritualizing these chapters is just a name for using words without meaning.—Affectionately in Christ,

C. E. S.

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DEAREST,—Do we give its true force to this fact, that Jesus LOVES us? If it were an earthly friend who loved us, how real and palpable a thing it would be! How confident we should be of His thoughts ever being upon us, and how we should expect Him to rejoice greatly at seeing us! Why do we not thus live in and on *the love of Christ*? *His delight* is in us. Do we believe it? Alas, no. Why? Because our delight is so far from all in Him. But ere we had being, "His delights were with the sons of men." When on earth He said of the saints, "*All My delight* is in them." And in the song, "How fair and pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!" And how sweet to find the bride resting in this His love. "I am my Beloved's, and His desire is toward me." "Set me a seal upon *Thine heart*, as a seal upon Thine arm, for love is strong as death," &c. Ah, having tasted His love, she wished to be bound by it close to His heart and for ever. Love never relaxes its

grasp ; it is fervent and priceless. Dear——, let us seek to know for ourselves *the love* of Christ, as the food and nourishment of our hearts day by day. He restoreth our souls. He is always doing it, just because He desires our love. And never can we restore it. My love to——and——. Tell them to come and bathe in this ocean—the love of Christ. Our little vessels would soon get filled. J. R.

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## THE LOVE OF CHRIST AND THE GLORY OF HIS GRACE.

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HOLY, blessed, peerless Saviour,  
 While we wait Thee from above,  
 We would bathe beneath Thy favour  
 In the ocean of Thy love !

But we long to see Thee, Saviour ;  
 Long to hear Thy welcome voice ;  
 Then with what adoring fervour  
 Shall we rapturously rejoice !

Oh ! the vision of Thy beauty !  
 Oh ! the glory of Thy grace !  
 Can it be these eyes shall see Thee,  
 Gaze for ever on Thy face ?

Oh ! resplendent scene of glory  
 Where the eye shall weary not !  
 There, blest Lord, shall we surround Thee,  
 Heavenly bliss our endless lot !

Precious Saviour, we adore Thee,  
 Long to see Thy beauteous face ;  
 As Thou art shall we behold Thee  
 When Thy glory crowns Thy grace !

Yea, Amen and Alleluia !  
 We shall endlessly adore ;  
 Yea, again say Alleluia,  
 Joy and praise for evermore !



## GRACE AFTER FAILURE.

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EZEKIEL, the son of Buzi, a priest, dwelt in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar.\* Like Daniel, he was a captive, taken away by Nebuchadnezzar, and never prophesied in the land of his fathers. Like him, too, he was contemporary with Jeremiah.

Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel; in this order did they begin the exercise of their prophetic office. In the thirteenth year of Josiah, Jeremiah opened his mouth; in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's sole reign, Daniel came into prominence as the interpreter of the king's dreams; whilst it was in the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity, that God took up Ezekiel as a prophet to the captives by the river Chebar, upwards of thirty years after Jeremiah's first prediction, and some eight years after Daniel was made to rule over the whole province of Babylon, and sat in the king's gate. The times then of the Gentiles had begun to run, as well as the seventy years of the Babylonish captivity (Jer. xxv. 11), before the heavens were opened to Ezekiel, and he saw the visions of God (Ezek. i. 3). With him the overthrow of the Jewish monarchy was a settled thing. The cause of it, and the certainty of it he declared to the captives. But announcing that (v.-viii., xi.-xii., xxi.), he was privileged to be the mouth-piece of God to foretell the restoration of the nation as such, and not the return only of the Jews. He looked onward to what is still future. And leaping over the intervening time, for he gives no hint of the return under Zerubbabel from Babylon, he saw through the vista of ages the twelve tribes again located in the land of their inheritance (xlviii.).

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\* Opinions seem divided: whether to identify Chebar with the Chaboras, the modern *Khabour*, or with the royal canal made by Nebuchadnezzar, *the Nahr Malca*. The former is many miles north of the latter, so the mention of Chaldea (i. 3) has been held by some to favour the opinion that the royal canal was intended.

Clouds, thick and dark, hovering over the city and over those still in the land, we read of as we commence the book of his prophecies. The sky clear, the atmosphere serene, no evil occurrent, and the nation basking, and that for ever, in the sunshine of divine favour, these are pictures presented to us as we near the end of it. The Shechinah, the cloud of glory, Ezekiel saw leaving the temple and the city by the way of the east (xi. 23); lingering, indeed, as if unwilling to depart (x. 3, 18, 19), yet forced to go because of the abominations of the people. That same cloud Ezekiel saw returning by the way of the east (xliii. 1-7), and he heard the voice of the Lord God proclaiming His final re-entry to the place of His throne, and the place of the soles of His feet, where He will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever. This speaks of grace, and it is to the unfolding of that divine grace, in the closing chapters of the book (xxxiv.-xlviii.), that we desire to draw attention, and especially to xxxiv.-xxxvii.

Ezekiel was to be dumb (iii. 26), so as not to reprove the people of the captivity, for they were rebellious. He was to remain in that condition till someone escaping from Jerusalem should bring tidings of the final capture of the city by the Babylonian army (xxiv. 26, 27). Now a messenger with tidings of the city's fall reached the prophet more than a year after the event (xxxiii. 21-22). Then Ezekiel's mouth was opened, and he was no more dumb. But what had he to say? The city was taken, the temple was burnt, the throne was overturned, the national existence of Israel with a land, a king, and an altar, seemed at an end. Hope might have been buoyed up whilst the kingdom of Judah remained. But David's throne was overturned, and the temple in ashes; God was seen to be against them. What could the prophet say? It was just at that time that his mouth was opened, and restoring grace became his joyous theme. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. How true! And how beautifully was that illustrated on this occasion!

The few left at home after the capture of the city and the exile of so many of their countrymen, were thinking that the land was theirs; and they would possess it alone. Vain conceit. For them there was not one word of encouragement, but the reverse (xxxiii. 23-29). Was then the nation to perish? Had it fallen never to rise? No. That nation was an elect one. It would live, and outlive all vicissitudes. God had a people, a flock, sheep of His pasture. That people, that flock, those sheep, were of the nation of Israel. Accordingly in xxxiv., after the prophet had denounced the shepherds for their treatment of the flock, all are to know that God cares for His own sheep. "My flock," "My sheep," the Lord calls them. Captives, exiles, scattered abroad, all this they might be, yet they were God's flock; and six times over in xxxiv. 8-10 does God thus call them. How comforting to those suffering for their own and the nation's failure! Shepherds had wofully failed in their duty. God then would do the shepherd's part by the sheep. The passage is so beautiful that we quote it at length: "Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search My sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all countries where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed My flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen

that which was sick : but I will destroy the fat and the strong" (vv. 11-16). What is there of a shepherd's service that God will not do for His sheep? Seeking, gathering, feeding, binding up, strengthening, and saving, all this does He promise. And further, He will set up one Shepherd over them who shall feed them, even His servant David. "I the Lord will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them" (24). What a blessing to be numbered amongst God's sheep!

And this comes out as the following chapter (xxxv.) is perused, which treats of the final destiny of the land of Esau in consequence of the Edomites' irrepressible enmity to Israel. Two nations sprung from the same ancestry, Isaac and Abraham, how different is their end! When the one will be proving the blessedness of Jehovah's shepherd care, the other will be experiencing rejection by God; the former emerging out of trouble into endless enjoyment, the latter sinking under the weight of divine displeasure. Now why this difference? Has Israel deserved the better portion? No; but it was an elect people, which Esau's race was not. Is there not the appearance of design in placing the end of each of these two in juxta-position? No cloud to dim the brightness of Israel's prospects. No light to lessen the appalling darkness of Edom's future. It is God's election which makes the difference. There man must stop in his researches after the cause of the difference. God has a right to choose whom He will; nor need He, nor does He, explain the reason of His choice. "I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau" (Mal. i. 2, 3) tells us all we can know, and bars all further inquiry. So with the doctrine of election on a far larger scale. To it the creature must bow, and prove, if willing to do that, whether he is a subject of it or not in the way marked out by the Lord, whose words are as follows: "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me, and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast

out" (John vi. 37). He who acts in accordance with the second clause will soon learn whether he has an interest in the subject of the first.

But the tale of grace is as yet but half told out. So the prophet proceeds. God's owning the people as His sheep, His flock, will necessitate their restoration to their land. Accordingly, we next read of the land to be prepared for their reception. "Ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to My people of Israel; for they are at hand to come. For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown. And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded: and I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit: and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, even My people Israel; and they shall possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them of men" (xxxvi. 8-12). No apology is needed for quoting this passage at length, which attests God's faithfulness to His word.

God has said by Moses, writing of Israel's future blessing, "I will remember the land" (Lev. xxvi. 42). One here learns how that will be carried out. And this passage in Ezekiel explains an allusion in Psalm lxvii. 6, when rightly translated (see Revised Version), "The earth *has yielded* her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us." Now the preparation of the land is in perfect keeping with God's ways throughout. He never, we may say it with reverence and with thankfulness, brings His people into a place not previously prepared for them. Adam could attest that, as he found himself placed in Eden, in a garden planted by the Lord God, with every tree that was pleasant to the sight, and good for food (Gen. ii. 9).

Israel proved the same when they entered the land naturally fruitful in all its productions (Deut. viii. 8, 9), but stored for them beforehand with all that they needed—houses built, crops maturing, cellars filled with wines and oil, vineyards too, and oliveyards stocked with fruit-bearing trees (Deut. vi. 11). We shall prove the same thing, viz.: that our place is prepared for us, when we shall enter the Father's house, whither the Lord has gone to make ready a place for us (John xiv. 2). What thoughtfulness and love on God's part towards those who deserve it not does such gracious care indicate!

Brought back to their land, will they be able to continue in it? This is an important matter, when we consider what man is. Almighty power will restore them unto, as of old it took them into the land. But divine grace will be needed, a work within them must take place for the people to continue in the enjoyment of their inheritance. Of this we next read (xxxvi. 24-28). Cleansed from all filthiness and idolatry, a new heart will God give them, and a new spirit will He put within them, taking away their stony heart and giving them a heart of flesh, putting too His Spirit within them, causing them to walk in His statutes, and to keep His judgments, and to do them. Needful will all this be, and God, assuredly, will do it, leaving nothing undone, that they may continue in their land for ever. What an evidence of man's state by nature, that all this should be imperatively required! What a proof of grace, that all this should be provided by Him against whom they have sinned! Grace indeed! as the prophet goes on, "Not for your sake do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you" (ver. 32).

Now all this signal favour will be shared in by the nation as a whole, and not by the old kingdom of Judah only. Israel as a whole, not Jews only, will re-occupy the land. So a further revelation is vouchsafed by a vision of dry bones seen by the prophet in

the valley, that probably in which he had stood years before \* (iii. 22). Human bones all dry, the hope and expectation of their owners was apparently cut off. But the prophet, as he was commanded, prophesied; then bone came to his bone, and flesh and skin clothed them. As he prophesied again, breath came into the slain and they lived (xxxvii. 7-10). It is the national resurrection of Israel that is described, of which Daniel also (xii. 2) wrote, when she will once more take her place among the living nations of the earth, with a country, a king, and a sanctuary. And then there will be one king over them all, God's servant—David, the breach between the tribes having been healed; and they shall be Jehovah's people, and He will be their God (Ezek. xxxvii. 23). Beyond this in time Ezekiel does not go.

Grace after failure. Yes, indeed, and what grace! And now follow two verses which summarise it (25, 26). The land which their fathers lost by their sins they will dwell in *for ever*. The throne overturned in the days of Zedekiah will be restored, and that *for ever*. A covenant of peace will God make with them, which shall be *everlasting*, and His sanctuary will be in their midst *evermore!* No failure then. These blessings will be theirs for ever.

But when? Ezekiel indicates in ver. 27 that it is millennial times of which he writes, for he mentions God's tabernacle as something different from His sanctuary. Of old they were together; then they will be plainly distinguished. "My tabernacle shall be *over* them," so the words of the prophet may quite well, we believe, be translated,† whereas the sanctuary will be *among* them. This we can understand, who have the book of Revelation to confirm it; for in chap. vii. 15 of that prophecy we read of God

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\* The Revised Version in the margin confirms this. See also *The Speaker's Commentary* on this passage.

† See Revised Version in margin.

in millennial times tabernacling *over* saints upon earth ; and in chap. xxi. we learn what His tabernacle will be—the New Jerusalem, in which He will dwell without a temple in its midst. To us then all is clear, and the reason of Ezekiel's distinction is manifest, though in his day, certainly, it was not generally, if even by him, understood.

We have said that beyond this Ezekiel does not go. Yet his prophecies do not end with chap. xxxvii. What follows, however, confirms the truth of the summary of their blessings to which we have just referred. The land is to be dwelt in by them for ever. No fresh captivity, no expulsion will ever again be experienced. How strikingly is this displayed by chapters xxxviii.-xxxix., in which we have an account of the last effort of the enemy to dispossess them. His undying enmity to Israel because she brought forth the man child (Rev. xii. 13) causes this last, this tremendous effort. The northern army of Daniel, the Assyrian of Isaiah, having been already defeated as foretold, Jewish hate will burst out again, when the people are beginning to dwell securely as if there was no adversary, nor evil occurrent. Signal, crushing defeat follows this effort. The power of God will be put forth (xxxviii. 21-23), and complete discomfiture will follow, without loss or injury to the people (xxxix.).

Besides this, God's sanctuary is to be in their midst for ever. There follows in consequence in chapters xl.-xlviii. a detailed account of the millennial temple, seen by Ezekiel as reared up and ready for use, their worship restored, their ecclesiastical year re-arranged (xliii.-xlvi.), and the twelve tribes, each in its possession in the land, but in an entirely new order here revealed by God (xlvii.-xlviii.). Then the book, which had opened with the preparation for the departure of the Shechinah, and the justification for such a step on God's part, closes with a notice of the city's new name, "The Lord is there." For the Shechinah will have



returned, and the Lord will dwell in the midst of His people uninterruptedly for evermore.

The temple rebuilt, the sacrificial ritual will be restored, though with variations from the old arrangements. Feasts will be kept, viz., the Passover and Tabernacles, the feast of Pentecost being dropped (xlv. 18-25). The daily burnt-offering will be renewed, but only, it appears, in the morning, no notice being found of an evening sacrifice (xlvi. 13-15). The Sabbatical offering will be also resumed, but six lambs will be offered in the place of two (xlvi. 4). The offerings at the new moons will also be different (6). Priests will officiate at the altars, but only of the line of Zadok (xlv. 15), thus preserving as of abiding validity the covenant with Phineas (Numb. xxv. 12, 13). An earthly prince too there will be, a family man, with a portion of the land for his inheritance conferred on him by God (xlv. 7 ; xlvi. 18), but neither he nor the people ever enter into the holy place (xlvi. 2, 3). Hence the character of worship suited for a people who do not enter into the holiest will be again in order, viz., a sacrificial ritual, symbolising that the way of approach to God is by sacrifice, but never able to express in their worship that they are in God's immediate presence, as we know and do, entering into the holiest through the veil, the flesh of Christ. To worship by sacrifice has always been appointed for those who had not a heavenly calling. It will be the same again. And as sacrifices in the past were really *anticipative* of the one perfect sacrifice, for they never could take away sins, so those in the future will be *commemorative* of that one sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. In all this there is really no difficulty, and Heb. x. 4, which affirms the inability of blood of bulls and goats to take away sins, is sufficient for us to understand that such offerings may be resumed as commemorative in the future.

Space, however, fails us to enter more at length into this. And our subject is *grace after failure*. Grace indeed it will be. But this is only for Israel, some

may say. True, yet it is for our instruction as well. For what God is in grace to one who has failed, that He can be, and in various ways, to others. And it is our God of whom we here read. So it is written for "our instruction, on whom the ends of the ages are come" (1 Cor. x. 11). C. E. S.

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"THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGETH  
SALVATION."—*Titus* ii. 11.

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WHEN I behold the wondrous grace  
Which beamed so brightly in the cross,  
I long to see my Saviour's face,  
And deem the world but dust and dross.

It cannot satisfy the soul,  
It cannot give the conscience peace ;  
My sins, my sores on Christ I roll,  
He, He alone can give release.

No other Name on earth is found,  
No other Name found under heaven ;  
Send forth, send forth the joyful sound,  
A Saviour-God a Saviour's given !

Salvation, too, the gift of God  
Through faith alone, let all men see ;  
Oh ! take it then upon His word,  
That you may henceforth happy be.

The blood of Christ for sin atones,  
It cancels all the sinner's guilt ;  
Believing this the sinner owns  
That for himself that blood was spilt.

Then flee to Christ if sick and sore,  
For Christ alone can ease your smart ;  
As Lord and Saviour Him adore,  
And rest for ever on His heart.

## THE DIVINE NATURE.

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PETER speaks of our becoming partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter i. 4), but does not expound it; Paul, who expounds it (Ephesians), does not speak of it; John, who neither speaks of it nor expounds it, nevertheless, gives us its essential elements (1 John i. and iv.) It is a wonderful thing that God should have made it possible to us, but *He has*, and it surely should be coveted. Is it, then, an acquired thing? Assuredly it begins where all our blessings spring, in divine grace, but it is to be cultivated under the fructifying energy of the Spirit of God, and is thus a matter of growth and fruit bearing.

I have said that John gives us its essential elements; they are these, "God is light," "God is love." Together they characteristically express the divine nature. If we turn to Ephesians we see how these things are interwoven as warp and weft, and form the very texture of the epistle. It begins, as we know, with God's counsels, "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be *holy and without blame*" (light) "*before Him in love.*" We cannot fail to see that God's counsels require that we should be eternally before Himself as partakers of His divine nature, morally like Himself. This we must clearly distinguish from the possession of His eternal attributes—omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, &c.; as finite beings we never shall and never could possess what is proper to Him only who is the infinite and the eternal God. But, nevertheless, we are born of God, by faith we are His children, His begotten ones. "And," says John, "every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of Him." Why is this but because of parity of nature? The begotten are of the same nature as Him who begat them. Let us ever hold fast, then, this cardinal truth:

we are born of God, partakers morally of His divine nature now, and, according to His everlasting counsels, for the glory of Christ we have been chosen in Him (Christ), that we should be eternally before Him (God), according to all that His nature demands—light and love.

Pursuing the order in which they are unfolded in Ephesians, we will take the last of these first. In chap. iii. 17, 18, we read, "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"—in other words, all the infinitude of God's thoughts and counsels for the glory of His eternal Son.

In chap. iv. we come to very definite, practical lessons on this head of our subject—love. Verse 2 says, "Forbearing one another in love." Verse 15 says, "Speaking the truth in love." Verse 16 speaks of "Increase of the body unto the edifying itself in love." Nor are these un-needed lessons. Our forbearance with one another must not be the cold and distant forbearance that chills the heart, but that which springs from the nature of God working in us. Our speaking the truth is not to be in the way of theologic dogmatism, but according to the nature of Him who is its ever-flowing source, or otherwise, instead of attracting and winning the hearer, it may stumble or repel him. And as to "increase of the body," if it be not "*in love*" (*i.e.*, practically exhibited and maintained in the bonds of brotherly fellowship and brotherly affection) instead of being a transcript, it will be but a travesty of what the body of Christ is in the eyes and heart of God. Beloved, these are intensely practical things; God must have His nature displayed by those whom His grace has made partakers of it—those who are born of God.

John says, "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked" (1 John ii. 6). For the walk of His children God has no lower standard

than the walk of His Firstborn. Not one of us comes up to it; we have all with shame, grief, and contrition to confess this. But there is the standard, which God can never lower. The children are bound to walk even as walked the Firstborn, the Son of His love. The Ephesian teaching in chap. v. follows up this: "Be ye therefore imitators of God as beloved children, and walk in love, even as the Christ loved us, and delivered Himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (New Translation). Here it is that God's beloved children must imitate God; they are partakers of His divine nature, and therefore, as His children, are bound to imitate Him whose children they are. And because He is love they are bound to walk in love. And this is further and most blessedly unfolded in the words, "Even as the Christ loved us." Thus we put together these connected things in the Scriptures referred to. We are partakers of the divine nature; are begotten of God, and consequently have the nature of Him who has begotten us. We must imitate Him, therefore, whose children we are. We can only do this by walking as Christ walked, for He is the firstborn Son, and always pleased the Father, perfectly doing His will. We can only please God by walking thus; with this standard, that is, before our souls. If children of God, we must imitate God; if brethren of Christ, must walk as Christ walked. The divine nature being given us, the divine standard is put before us. Thus walking, we walk *in love*, according, that is, to the nature and character of our Father, for He is love, and the full measure of that love in which we are to walk is "even as the Christ loved us."

This, then, is the way in which this element of God's nature—love—is unfolded in the Ephesians; thereafter we get the other element—light. Verse 8 reads, "For ye were once darkness, but now light in the Lord; walk as children of light, for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth, proving what is agreeable to the Lord." It will be seen that

the principle here maintained is the same. Grace has made us light in the Lord, the children of light; we are bound to walk as such children, children of that which expresses God's nature. The walk of God's children, the Holy Ghost insists, must be according to God's nature—light and love—and according to Christ's example, wherein God was as such displayed. Only therein and thereby do we prove in any practical way "what is agreeable to the Lord." The 13th verse shews us that the effect of light is to expose on the one hand, as the 14th verse shows its effect in illuminating on the other hand. It exposes all that is *reprovable*; it lights up, also, as with the glory of a glorified Christ, all that is *agreeable* to God. Then "wake up, thou that sleepest, and arise up from among the dead, and the Christ shall shine upon thee."

How blessedly are set forth in these Scriptures, first the positive, and then the practical side of the truths advanced. As to love, the positive side brings in the counsels of God from eternity, and the grace which has rooted us and grounded us in love, and wrought towards us for the glory of His Son (Eph. i. 3, 4, 17-19). Then the practical side is seen in forbearance in love, speaking the truth in love, edification in love, walking in love (chaps. iv. and v). Similarly as to light, the positive side is that we are, through grace, light in the Lord (ver. 8); the practical is that we must walk as children of light, for the fruit of the light is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth, proving what is agreeable to the Lord. The positive side is, again, that light exposes whatever is reprovable; therefore the practical side is, we must slumber no longer among "the dead." Awake and arise, and Christ shall illuminate thee!

Oh, may we recognise fully and practically that "the God who spake, that out of darkness light should shine, has shone in our hearts," not for our sakes only, but "for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

## PSALM CXIX. 141.

“ I AM small and despised : yet do not I forget Thy precepts.”

These are wonderful words found in our chart-book which has been given to guide us through a more troubling and surging sea than has ever been crossed by the mariners of this world.

Read them again — softly, reverently. Whose words are they? Why! they are the words of the One who was and is no other than Jehovah's fellow ; but who in the fulness of time became a Man, that He might save all who should come to Him.

He lived thirty-three years and one half here below. He lived not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. This “manner of life” made Him “small and despised” by man ; “yet,” He was able in the fullest way to say, “Thy precepts have I not forgotten” (N. T.).

He knew how man esteemed Him, a root out of dry ground, no form nor comeliness, no beauty ; a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised of the people ; looked and stared upon, and laughed to scorn in His dying agony. What a picture God has caused to be preserved in His Word of the Holy Sufferer! Surely His people knew not the day of their visitation, nor who was their Visitor!

All the way on, till the hour when these things were fully accomplished, He was the obedient Man—never had a thought, never said a word, never went a step without a word from His Father.

Now He is on the right hand of power. He who was “small and despised” has been highly exalted, and received a Name which is above every name. Yes, the One so lightly esteemed on earth by His creatures has been received up into glory, and by Him has been sent from the Father, and also by the Father in the Son's Name (John xv. 26 ; xiv. 26) the Holy Spirit, to gather from among the nations a people

to His Name, calling them to follow in His way and seek after His Word and will until He comes for them.

When on earth, He taught the people that unless they received the kingdom of God as a little child, they would never enter it (Mark x. 15). And in another place, we find Him correcting His disciples regarding their contest as to who should be greatest. His plan of doing this was to take a little child and say to them, "Whosoever shall receive this child in My Name, receiveth Me, and whosoever shall receive Me, receiveth Him that sent Me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great" (Luke ix. 48). Thus, that which was "small," and of little account by the wise and learned of this world, is His model for teaching what was perfectly to be seen in Himself.

Still, we do not take well with it, to be counted "small and despised." I do not set this before anyone as an object, but I write these lines to call the attention of those who desire in the midst of much weakness (in whatever nook or corner they may be found, or whatever name they may be called by man) to be friends of Christ, to a wonderful character we find in our verse attached to the Lord, resulting from abiding by the Word of Jehovah.

The current, which is rapidly increasing in strength around us, is contrary to the Word of God in every particular. It began to flow outside Eden well-nigh six thousand years ago. It has been hourly since that time growing in force; and, Christian, you go with it if you stop to parley. You will overcome if you resist it strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Only yield a little word, only overlook its guidance in our daily path, and we are sowing a crop which shall cost us dear to put out of sight. A *present* advantage gathers many laurels, but they will not be found unto praise at the day of Jesus Christ. I finish with a prayer made ready to the hand, which may the Lord make the desire of all our hearts: "Let my heart be sound in Thy statutes, that I be not ashamed" (Psalm cxix. 80).

D. S.



“THE WORLD, THAT THEN WAS, BEING  
OVERFLOWED WITH WATER,  
PERISHED.”—2 *Peter* iii. 6.

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THE end was approaching. God looked down upon the spreading demoralization, and saw that it would be necessary, at the close of the year's respite, to sweep man and beast, creeping thing and fowl, from the face of the earth. Evil had made such fearful progress, that all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth. Then He foretold the impending ruin to Noah, who alone found grace in His sight, and instructed him how he might avoid the universal doom. It may be that men felt a momentary uneasiness at the first utterance which Noah made to his prophecy of woe, for he was instructed to proclaim the coming of a speedy catastrophe. We can readily picture the contempt and derision which must have been poured upon the prophet. Our own times will teach us how the men of science soon proved that such a thing as a universal flood was an absolute impossibility, contrary to all the known laws of nature. And since Noah persisted, the world doubtless settled down into a belief that he was a weak-minded fanatic, void of intellect, and altogether unworthy of notice.

But Noah was not only directed to foretell the approaching doom ; he was also bidden to make open preparations for avoiding it ; preparations, too, of vast magnitude, and such as must have attracted general attention. And a grievous burden it undoubtedly was to endure the scoffs and deridings with which he must have been continually assailed while building his immense ship on dry land, far, it may be, from any water ; but by faith he persevered, and at last the days of his trial drew to a close.

None had listened to his warnings ; not one beyond the inner circle of his own family. But the ark was

now completed, and he was instructed to enter it with his wife, his sons, and their wives, and all the creatures which were impelled by God to go in with him. He was at no loss to understand the significance of the command. He knew well that the wrath of God was being restrained, and we can imagine his feelings as he watched the long procession slowly filing into the ark; and at length he followed in its rear, leaving the unconscious world, friends and foes alike, in the inexorable grasp of destruction!

It may be that after entering he returned to the door, appalled at the thought of what was about to happen, and impelled to make one more effort, one last impassioned appeal, if perchance he might constrain a few, at least, to flee to the shelter. But if he did, he found the entrance to the ark closed. God had shut the door: there was none that could open it. Affrighted crowds might gather around, imploring admittance, but Noah had no longer the power to aid them. The separation had been made. Eight persons were safe within the ark; the whole remainder of mankind was shut out for judgment. The acceptable year had passed by, the days of vengeance were come.

And yet, as our Lord Himself tells us, the doomed multitudes knew it not. They had often heard, *but had refused to listen*: the voice of the prophet had seemed to them as the voice of one that mocked. Even on the morning of the fatal day earth resounded with the noise of revelry and merriment; men were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. They were absorbed in the pleasures of the moment, and discerned not the slowly rising spectre of death amid the gathering clouds, the destroyer with uplifted scythe, about to mow down all flesh at one stroke!

But their dream of security was at length rudely dispelled: the shouts of riotous joy and laughter were first softened into whispers of breathless anxiety, and then exchanged for shrieks of despair. For on the

day in which Noah entered into the ark the windows of heaven were opened, and the waters that were above the firmament began to descend. The world wondered, and then, remembering the words of Noah, trembled at the fast falling rain-drops, *the first they had ever beheld.*

Nor was this all. A fearful roaring from the sea announced that some mighty convulsion, equally beyond the calculation of the scientific men of the day, was going on in the great deep. All its sealed fountains were breaking up. God had removed the bounds of the ocean. Its proud waves were no longer stayed, but were rising with prodigious tumult, and beginning to advance again upon the dry land. What scenes of horror must have been presented beneath the dismal rainfall at this awful time! What affrighted groups! What countenances of dismay! What shrieks of terror! What faintings for fear! What headlong flights to any place which appeared to offer safety!

The waters continued to increase: the ark was upborne upon them; and it may be that for a time its inmates ever and anon heard, mingling with the roar of the elements, the cries and prayers of some still surviving crowd of miserable ones who had taken refuge upon a height near to which they were floating. But this was soon over, and earth was again almost as it had been before God's six days' labours, covered above its highest mountain-tops with a shoreless ocean, on the surface of which were drifting the dead bodies of the men who had transgressed against God, and the carcasses of the creeping things and fowls which had been involved in their ruin. Woeful was the proof that man, if unrestrained, if left to his own devices, is not merely incapable of recovering his innocence, but will rush madly down the steep of sensuousness and impious self-will until he finds himself engulfed in the abyss of perdition.—  
*G. H. Pember, M.A.*

## THE SEA OF GALILEE.

*Mark iv. 35-41; vi. 30-52.)*

WHAT a moment it must have been, when the Lord stilled the wind and the sea on the Lake of Galilee! What an expression of ready obedience there was in those angry elements! It must have been wondrous and beautiful to have witnessed it, as it is in its measure now to think of it. People may talk of the necessary force of principles, the laws of nature, or the course of things; but it is surely the law of nature to obey its Lord in the midst of even its wildest ways. As here, in the twinkling of an eye, the sea of Galilee felt the presence of One who transfigures at His pleasure the course of nature, or by a touch unhinges it all.

When the same Jesus (Psalm civ.) by and by roars over His prey like a lion, the thunder, though it was asleep the moment before, utters its voice (Rev. x.). For all the forces of nature are equally, either still or alive, at His various pleasure. And so at the end, from His presence, when enthroned in white, or for judgment, the heavens and the earth in like instinctive readiness will pass away (Rev. xx.).

I observe a difference in the style of the action in Joshua, when the sun and the moon stood still in the midst of heaven. It was the Lord who listened to the voice of man there. Joshua prayed and got the power of God on his side, and the occasion was full of wonder, no day being like it. But Jesus acts at once and from Himself, and no wonder is expressed by the inspired evangelist. All the wonder which waits on the occasion comes from the unprepared hearts of [men or] the disciples.

Many a wind; I may say, has blown over the same water since the day of Mark iv., and the heart of many an alarmed disciple has again cried out: but there has been no answer. Many and many a trying and terrible storm of affliction still sweeps across the path

of the people of God, and there is no command to it from Him who has right and power still. But this we may learn that, though there be "need of patience," and Jesus appears still to sleep, yet is He as truly with us now as He was for the disciples in the face of the danger then.

And this same mystic water was not always disturbed. Often it witnessed the successful fishing of the disciples of Jesus. At the command of the same power which then quieted the waters, they again and again yielded their treasures, and nets-full were given to them without any toil of theirs. As now, in the changeful scenery of life, it may be peace and abundance, and again danger, disturbance, and fear. But oh the comfort, could we but embrace it! It is the presence of the same Jesus which faith is entitled to know, whether in smooth waters, in allayed waters, or in waters which still rage and swell without a voice to command them. He may be active in the one case, and asleep in the other; but He is equally in the ship, whether acting or sleeping.

And I have thought that the communion which the disciples had with their Lord after they had waked Him, was not equal to that they would have had if their faith had left Him still asleep. They were, it is true, at the end of their fears from the wind and enjoyed the fruit of His power; but they had fears from Himself, and were not at ease in His presence, for He had rebuked them, and they could not but remember that they had disturbed Him. Had they let Him sleep on, they might have sat and gazed at Him on His pillow, and through that gaze have learnt the intimacy of His interests with theirs, and seen themselves as bound up into one bundle of life with Him. But all this was now lost to them. Losers spiritually, gainers providentially. So with us oft-times. The Lord comes down to our level, to the place where our fears have brought Him, in the delivering operations of His hand, but it is with the loss

of the light of that elevation where He was—the place up to which faith would have taken us. Has not my soul known something of this?

Fear or unbelief at times hinders communion with the Lord, and separates the soul from the enjoyment of what He is to us. It is a worse thing still, when selfishness is the hindrance.

We know these things ourselves, and we hear of them in the recorded experiences of others. In a previous scene on the sea of Galilee, the disciples, through fear, lost what their Lord would have been to them; here, on the same sea, they lost Him through selfishness.

They had returned to Him after a day's toil, and He had retired with them, that they might rest and be refreshed. But their privacy was soon disturbed by the multitude.

In the perfection of His ways, He at once turns from them to wait on the deeper need of the people. They were as sheep without a shepherd, and He begins to teach them.

This was perfect, and therefore the only path the Son of God could take. He turns from the less to the greater necessity, from the fatigue of the disciples to the spiritual wants of the multitude.

In taking this direction, the disciples suffer. Yet this is not the fault of their Master, but the result of the perfection of His way.

This is so continually with us. And we are offended. Our selfishness makes us intent on our own part in the great scene around us, and we are not with Him, in wisdom and love, surveying and weighing it in all its relationships.

So was it here with the disciples. They are offended by the multitude being thus waited on, and they propose to their Master, after some little space, that He would send them away.

Hence there was a moral breach between Him and them. Their selfishness, their narrowness of heart,

had wrought it. He cannot take the course they prescribe. He feeds, instead of dismissing, the multitude.

The discipline, then, comes in due season. After feeding the people, the Lord tells the disciples to go forth and cross the sea of Galilee. As their selfishness would fain have separated Him from the people, His discipline must now separate them from the joy and strength of His presence. They launch on the sea, and He pursues His perfect path, taking leave of the poor shepherdless flock, retiring to the mountain for prayer, and then descending to walk on the sea, which all this time, by reason of contrary winds, had cost them toil in rowing.

This was separation indeed. They see, but they do not share, the triumph of their Lord. In principle, this carries with it all the difference between judgment and salvation. For a moment their souls have to taste somewhat of this. They do not discern Him. They cry out. They are sore amazed above measure and wonder. They see their Lord in the place of strength and victory, but they are not with Him there. This is real separation. They behold Him, and with fear, riding over all that mighty maze and tempest, which was giving them such toil and distress.

This carries all the difference between judgment and salvation. For what is salvation but a share in the victory of the Son of God? And what will judgment be, but a seeing of that victory in its glorious fruit, without a share in it, and driven from its presence with confusion and amazement?

Selfishness had wrought this in the experience of the disciples here. It puts their hearts for a moment in the place of judgment. His previous way, as we saw, was perfect, but their narrowness had quarrelled with it; and at the end, when His glory is displayed, they are outside of it. They are made to experience judgment for a moment. They behold the glory and the triumph of the Son of God without sharing it.

The sea of Galilee may picture the Christian's life to us. The surface was smooth at times, rough at times, asking for toil in rowing at times, affording propitious sailing and successful fishing at times, and at times awakening fear. But change as it may, Jesus is there with His people. His way may vary, but He is always with them there or joins them there. He may at times be prospering their nets, directing their labours, asleep as though He heeded them not, the companion of their gentle passage across, or walking in strength over what was too much for them. But still He is with them: whether sailing, fishing, rowing, or buffeting the wind in fear, He is ever with them. Let us remember this. J. G. B.

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### LETTER OF INTEREST.

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"BEFORE I fell asleep last night, I saw four things which had not the place in my heart which they have in the Word, and which they ought to have in our hearts and never to lose, in virtue of their own intrinsic excellency and glory, and that, too, even apart from many of the ends and issues resulting from them. These are:—the Incarnation, the sufferings of Christ, His resurrection, and the coming down of the Holy Ghost.

"If we only think of the state and condition of man and of the world at the time of the Incarnation, what a heavenly glory will it throw upon it all from the sad and fearful contrast!—or, rather, in what a heavenly glory will the Incarnation appear from the dark background.

"Just think of the sin of man—of the Gentiles who were without God—sunk in superstition and idolatry, and the helpless prey of all their bad passions. Then the Jews worse, because in secret quite as bad, as entirely the slaves of sin and Satan, and yet pretending to be in relationship with God and in His favour. Then think of the misery, that shoreless sea



of sorrow and distress in which all were plunged by sin ; and think of the utter darkness as to God and as to all way out of it ; and, what was more fearful still, that hatred of God in which man was born and which was his very life ! O what a scene ! How wretched the contemplation. And, if it appalled one who was in the midst of it, this must have been one of the bitterest ingredients in the cup, that he himself was *of it*, that he was morally in living association with this scene of death and sin, and had no power to help himself, nor did he know where to turn for help. The law shining in the midst of it only made the case more hopeless, as showing man's utter alienation from God, and the impossibility of his being with Him in the condition in which he was.

“Now lift your eye from this gloomy picture to the glorious vision which the shepherds saw on the plains of Bethlehem, and oh, listen to that surpassing melody which sounded in their ears, ‘Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill to man!’ O what glad tidings of great joy ! A SAVIOUR is born ! *To you* is born a Saviour. *This day* is born a Saviour—the Christ, the Lord ! This is a sign : You will find the *babe* wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a *manger*. Well might Simeon say, when he took the babe in his arms, Now I may go, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation !

“How lovely to trace the path of this blessed One from the time He appears on the scene till the close ! What grace, tenderness, unwearied love, patience, holiness, upgiving of Himself in every way to the doing of His Father's will ! Not less precious to see His power—the power of God—for God was with Him, healing all that were oppressed of the devil, binding the strong man and spoiling his goods ! And then, to know that this blessed One came from heaven for us personally, to deliver us from all our bondage, and to bring us to be with Himself in the Father's house ! To know that He is ours and that we are

His! And to have Him with us now, even as He had the Father when here!

“Well, but what a character does the very glory and blessedness of the Lord Jesus give to man's condition and sin and guilt! Surely all will flock to this precious One! Surely they will leave all and follow Him! Surely they will welcome Him and deliverance with eager joy and delight! Alas, no. ‘He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.’ ‘No man receiveth His testimony.’ ‘O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not.’ And at last, not content with despising this ‘chiefest of ten thousand,’ they must crucify Him. ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into *the hands of men.*’ They did to Him whatsoever they listed. Alas! alas! poor man! ‘If Thou hadst known, even Thou, the things that belong to Thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes.’

“But though man is thus manifested to have no heart for the blessing, or for the Blessor, the purpose of God must stand. Jesus living is rejected; Jesus dying is the power of drawing even His murderers to God. If the life of Jesus was the forthshining of the love and glory and goodness of the blessed God in the midst of sin and sinners, and if there was no beauty in Him to their besotted hearts why man should desire Him, the death of Jesus is the revelation of this—that grace much more abounds where sin has abounded. If Jesus living is rejected by man, Jesus dying will draw man to Himself. If man won't have Jesus living, Jesus dying must have man. ‘I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.’ This leads to His sufferings—not His death merely, but the forsaking of His God, and this out of love to us. Oh, who can fathom the world of woe and distress which was concentrated in those three hours of darkness? Who, but He who bore it, and He who

in love to us gave Him to endure it! Blessed be His Name, we shall never taste of death. But what did it cost Him! Well, how little place has this in our hearts! That 22nd Psalm and the 53rd of Isaiah—are they our heart's ease at all times—our beloved resort? Alas! no; our affections take the blessing, and pass lightly over the cost to the Blessor. But it is our loss. Let us revert to Gethsemane, to Calvary; not now in mysticism and superstition, but that our hearts may learn to enter into and to estimate the love of Him who so loved us as to pass through it for us, and that we may learn what sin is, and be in spirit separate from it wholly, and attached to that blessed One who bore it for us in His own body. How sweet to meditate on these blessed subjects as given of God *to us, ourselves*, not as things far off, but nigh! But how little place have they at all times. Well, God give them a firmer hold on our affections than ever—give *Him* this place Himself! .

“As to resurrection, it is like a second Incarnation as to its glory—now a glory which will never fade. The hopes which the Incarnation raised were all, alas! clouded by the death of the Lamb of God—and that because of man's sin; but no cloud will ever pass over the living One more, for He has put all clouds aside, and now is in a glory which will wax brighter and brighter as His many crowns will be put on His head. Now nothing is built *on* man, or *in* the scene of sin and death; all, all is reared in resurrection. The stones were taken out of Jordan, but built in Canaan. Everything is linked up with the Son of the living God. ‘On this rock will I build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.’ ‘Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead.’ What peace it would give and what triumph! We should sing our songs beforehand. *He* is risen, and *we*, too—wondrous truth—are risen with Him; we are of God and from above—here on a mission of love, but waiting to be caught up.

"I had to leave off in the middle, and lost the thread a little; and now my paper is done, and I am tired, so only add that the Holy Ghost is with us, and shall be with us till we go to be with Jesus. The Lord give you the comfort and joy of all this." J. R.

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

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HOW far before us were the first disciples of our Lord in one thing—the one thing, I may say—unbounded attachment to His person. He was indeed their *all*. Little light and little everything, but adoring thoughts of Him. They had all in Him, and they liked to have it so. I have just been reading Luke viii., "the Sower," and thinking that one reason of our barrenness in all else is our sad backwardness in this attachment to the "person of the Friend of sinners"—"God manifest in the flesh." And one reason of that is that the Word which reveals Him and attaches to Him has not an *undivided* place in the soul. The cares and riches and pleasures of *this life* choke the word which communicates that life, and which associates with another world *as all*. Verse 10 gives us to know that understanding is *given* to such as cleave to Him. The Lord Himself anoint our eyes that we may see the things of faith, and walk as blind to all else.—J. R.

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# "IT IS THE FATHER'S JOY TO BLESS."

LUKE XV.

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THE Lord leads His disciples now into another sphere of gracious service, outside and lower down than the one out of which He has been rejected. He departs with them from the scribes and Pharisees and the rulers of Saul's kingdom, having oftentimes "played with His hand upon the harp" before them, and spoken in their midst "as never man spake," when the evil spirit was upon them, and had refreshed them as one who played skilfully upon an instrument with ten strings; but they remained the same evil and adulterous generation.

He quits them, and rises up to go to another company, where He may be more at home in the activity of His own grace. The bidden guests refused His invitation to come to the great supper, and with one consent made excuses—making even the good things which He had plentifully bestowed their reason for accepting a present enjoyment with His mercies, instead of Himself. They would leave nothing behind them for companionship with Him, but would turn their backs on Him, and excuse themselves in doing so by the wife, or the oxen, or the piece of ground. What a lesson from that time to this touching discipleship, and what a picture of these last times, and may we not say for *this* last day!

Outside all this, the Lord now goes with His disciples either to seek that which is gone astray, or to find that which is lost. "Then drew near to Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him," and down into this region He goes, that upon the low level of publicans and sinners He might declare the grace that defied this level as its measure or limit, yea, would turn it into the garden of the Lord, and make it yield its pleasant fruits. It is not by digging and dunging that He gathers up these right-hand plants,

but by seeking and saving that which is morally lost. And how at ease and at home the Lord is in each and all the cases of necessity which this chapter xv. records, we have all delighted to notice. Indeed, Jesus has been acting in the title and largeness of His own personal grace here and there, since the voice from the excellent glory uttered the words, "Hear Him;" and in this character He acted as the journeying Samaritan to the man who fell among the thieves—a measure and a manner of grace that was foreign and unlawful in Israel, and in which no one could have rightly acted but one who was not straightened.

So in like manner *here* (whatever His old enemies, the scribes and the Pharisees, who were looking on, may think or murmur) He enters, and goes through this scene in the liberty of His own personal grace to be, or to do, whatever may be for the glory of God, in making His own love, and His Father's, triumphant over sin and unworthiness, yea, and by means thereof. And these are the heights and depths of this chapter—Himself in going after that which has gone astray, or was lost; and His Father's welcome, and kiss, and reception into His house, as soon as ever it was found, or even in sight.

Nor is this all, for the joy He has in finding what He goes after is akin and equal to the joy of the Father in receiving it under His own care in the house. The Shepherd's shoulder, the lighted candle and the diligence, as also the Father's eye and hand and heart, tell equally and alike the same tale of love that gets its sweetness, and imparts it too, from the sheep that was lost and was found, the piece of money that by sweeping the house was recovered, and the prodigal who was dead and is alive again.

Take away the sheep from the Shepherd, or the piece of money from the woman, or the prodigal from the Father's embrace, and you rob each of its individual delight, and of the widespread joy and rejoicing

among the friends and neighbours who were called together to enter into these new-born sources of delight, even to the angels of God, "over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance."

The recovery and the restoration of the sheep to the fold, and especially the unupbraiding love of the Shepherd, who carried it uncomplainingly every step of the way back, is a wonderful comment, and rebuke too, upon the wanderer then or a backslider now. Indeed, it is the return journey, and such an one as *this*, that breaks the heart and reaches the conscience in a language which is indelibly written on the fleshy table within.

Sometimes one has thought, if the Shepherd, or the woman with the lighted candle, or the Father would but acknowledge the burden and anxiety, by saying what a trouble each had given, it would be a relief to the lost and the stray one, because it would be so like ourselves and *our* thoughts on the matter. But instead of this, to find out that every act or deed, by hand or foot, is increasingly one of joy to the One who has come after the lost thing, as the fold or the house is neared in the distance; and that when the last action restores the lost one to its right place, the joy and the rejoicing superabound, and is made the occasion of delight everywhere, it is the triumph of love that melts the heart by the deep lesson of grace abounding over sin. As the angels of God waited on Jesus after the temptation by Satan, and in the garden of Gethsemane, and again in the sepulchre, and finally attended Him to the heavens, they must have seen the failure of their jubilation as they announced Him at His birth, and that the glory to God, and the peace on earth, and the good pleasure to men which they celebrated, had travelled away with Him out of the earth for awhile. Their new objects of interest and satisfaction must change in like manner with Christ's, and they would find them not with the sons of men, as

such, but amongst repentant sinners, where their Lord was gathering His own delights; and this He declares, "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Their joy is expressed in other strains and upon other subjects than creation afforded when the first Adam entered as its lord, and every living thing came to him to be named, for now they are sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.

The heavens are connected with the earth by redemption, and by the lifted-up and departed Son of Man whom they have received "till the times of the restitution of all things, of which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." The earth refused to be responsive to the angelic hosts and the Child born into it at Bethlehem, but gave the occasion of joy to the angels of God in heaven by the sinful man in the boat with Jesus, or as now by one sinner that repenteth. "Peace on earth" could not be at home in such a world as this, which could find no room for the Babe but in the manger at the opening out of His life, and refused Him any other place than the cross at its close.

By the way of His sepulchre and His resurrection He has established "grace on earth" and "peace in heaven," and these are the new lessons for angels in heaven and repentant sinners on earth. The grace of God by "the decease" can alone supply the ground for joy, or provide the fatted calf for the house, and fill it with music and dancing.

This is the character of Jesus, and these are His actings in each of these parables. Indeed, the ninety and nine just persons who needed no repentance, and whom He left in the wilderness, are as much in season to prove this, by His refusal of them in their own legal righteousness, as the unwearied grace in which He sought and found the lost one whom He carried to His own home. The



elder brother (who did not need repentance like the prodigal), who remained in his self-righteousness outside his Father's house, is one of the same type as the ninety and nine left in the wilderness, whilst the lost sheep, the piece of money that was lost, and the son who was lost become the occasion of joy and rejoicing. And why? Because "divine grace" is seeking that which suits itself till He find it, and when Jesus has found it He fills the heart of the lost one, and His own heart, and all in heaven, and those who can sing this new song upon earth, and the friends and neighbours, with new wine out of the new vessels.

May we not say this was the daily controversy raised with Jesus by the elder brother and the self-righteous nation, who made its boast in the law and yet knew not how to submit themselves to the righteousness of God, which condemned them? For this is what Jesus was doing in His own person and intercourse all the time of His ministry with the twelve and the seventy. The ninety and nine just persons said peace, peace, when there was no peace, and in self-righteousness connected peace with themselves and the law of Moses. But how could the law of works give peace? much less could their own legal attainments warrant it. They attempted to use it even against Jesus, as being more righteous in the outward observance of its commands than Himself. Yea, the Pharisees and scribes, like the elder brother, murmured, saying, "This Man receiveth sinners and eateth with them."

They might take the uppermost seats and be called Rabbi, and make broader than ever their phylacteries, but Jesus walking in their midst convicted them, and exposed the hypocrisy of the rulers and the nation. Peace refused association with a hypocritical people, and when offered them in Jesus, the "beloved Son," they did not know Him, and could not bring peace into the earth as a righteous nation, because they

rejected their Messiah in whom it had come. They have lost peace, and henceforth the only road to it is by accepting Jesus, the messenger and channel of the grace of God, come into the far country after the younger son who was in rags, and to seek and save the lost sheep. It is the knowledge of grace, and grace only, that brings the lost ones into joy and peace.

Beyond, however, the three things which we have remarked in this ministry of grace—viz.: the seeker and the sought one, the finder and the found one, and the receiver and the received one—there remains yet the love which, having welcomed the younger son to the father's bosom and to the house, finds its own delight in suiting him to itself. It is this in particular which supplies to us what the other two "lost ones" could not, and perfects this outflow of the riches of God's grace by shewing what it brings forth and puts upon the one who was lost and is found, who has been welcomed by the kiss and received into the father's house. Nothing but the grace of Christ, which seeks the one sinner that repenteth and brings him back, can open out divine love and hand forth the reserves of God's glory, either to adorn or suit the returned one with his new relation and standing to his Father as "dead and alive again." The manner of the love is given out to the servants: "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry." The ninety and nine cannot even understand results like these, for they cannot spread such a feast; for how can "just persons" taste this grace, much less be at home in it, to eat and drink and be merry with the Father in His full and unhindered love? The elder brother refuses to enter in, for he knows full well that he would be as much out of place in the house at such a season as the house was out of keeping with himself. How can a man that never "transgressed at any

time his father's commandment be at home with his younger brother, or with his father's ways in putting the best of everything in the house upon the worst person in it? His own self-righteousness shuts him off from divine grace, introduced even by Jesus, and displayed where alone it could be in the one who "would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat," but no man gave to him; and it is by the return of such an one as this, that the house and heart of the father welcome back the object that fills each from the top to the bottom with music and dancing. The elder son is not low enough down in his self-judgment to touch divine grace with the soles of his feet. How then can he stand in grace with his father and the younger son, or have access into this grace in common with them, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God? There is no alternative left him but to accuse and condemn his father and the house too, though his father came out and entreated him; but he refused to taste this grace, and never entered the house in this new character with the fatted calf therein; nor would he have communion with his father's love in this heavenly pattern of perfection, though it had been opened out before his eyes, and he had heard with his ears the melodies that rung from within. He would not, and could not, begin to be merry with them: for the knowledge of Jesus and the grace that has come down to seek and save the lost one, as a repentant sinner, are but the hand of the skilful David upon the instrument again, by which the evil spirit is cast out, and the house filled with these new songs and their melodies of present grace and the crowning glory.

The elder brother, sinning against his own soul and against grace, retires upon the ground of his own conduct and legal righteousness with the ninety and nine just persons who needed no repentance, and once more completes the hundred in the wilderness. He is content to have all that his father has,

and to be owned as an elder son ; but he never knew what his father *was* in himself, nor lived in the love of the father's heart and home as the younger brother did. And alas ! how easily does the natural heart cling to its own sayings and doings like this young man, and lift itself up by its own works of righteousness, and thus shut out the grace of God and redemption through Jesus, the Saviour. Indeed, this is what the nation consummated when at last they cast Him out and nailed Him to the cross. They would neither have the Messiah in the day of His humiliation, nor the grace which He brought and dispensed ; but took part with the elder brother and stood aloof, and there they are to this day, outside the house, and "the wrath of God come upon them to the uttermost."

J. E. B.

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BRIGHT Morning Star, Lord Jesus !  
 Arise in every heart ;  
*Let deep desire pervade us,*  
 To see Thee as Thou art.

"Come," says the Bride and Spirit ;  
 Ye hearers, join the cry ;  
 What bliss we shall inherit  
 When with Thee, Lord, on high !

The night is long and dreary  
 Of Thy rejection, Lord ;  
 Yet let us not grow weary,  
 But trust Thy faithful word.

Speaks Thine own voice, Lord Jesus !  
 The "Yea, I quickly come."  
 "Amen," we say ; come, take us  
 To Thine eternal home.

J. S.

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THAT love of God which knows no end never knew a beginning.

## THE REVELATION.

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THERE are three conditions in which the Word presents the Lord consequent on His incarnation. He was here in humiliation. That culminated at the cross, and was terminated by His death. He is now risen and ascended, the accepted One by God, and seated on Jehovah's throne, where no one of course can be but He who is God. Yet He who is there is Man, and waiting till His enemies be made His footstool. By-and-by He will come again as Man—the Son of Man, but in power and divine glory, to reign over earth, and to reduce all things in heaven and on earth to order and subjection to God. Of this last the Revelation treats, acquainting us, however, with events on earth through God's dealing with men in judgment which must precede the Lord's manifestation in power.

In what follows it is attempted to set forth the *plan* of this prophetic book, in the hope that the unfolding of that may help some to a better acquaintance with its orderly arrangement.

“Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so. Amen” (i. 7). Of His return, then, there is no doubt. He came into this world in the past, when men were for the most part asleep; He will return in the most public way, “coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matt. xxiv. 30). With events which must precede this advent He desires people to be acquainted. So we have this book, entitled, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John” (i. 1).

Now into three divisions the Lord Himself divides it. He told John (i. 19) to write “the things which

thou hast seen ;" and next "the things that are ;" and then "the things which shall be hereafter" (*lit.*, after these). What John had seen was the vision of chap. i. 10-18. "The things which are" were the churches addressed by the Lord in chapters ii., iii. "The things which shall be after these" are the events which begin to be described from chap. iv. Authority for this is furnished by the words (iv. 1): "Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter" (or, after these). Into the epistles to the seven churches we do not intend here to enter. We may, however, remark with reference to the order in which they are each time named, that, had we taken a tour to visit them, starting from Ephesus and following the high road, we should, going first northward, have reached Smyrna and then Pergamos ; after which, following a high road southward, we should have reached Thyatira, then Sardis, then Philadelphia, and last of all Laodicea. Naturally, therefore, might they be mentioned in the order met with in this book (Rev. i. 11 ; ii. ; iii). We can, however, trace a design in the arrangement, as we learn how the characteristics of these different assemblies, and the order in which they are presented, furnish us with a moral history of the Church of God upon earth from apostolic days to the close of its earthly existence. These two chapters, therefore, are for the Church of God what the blessings of Jacob's sons (Gen. xlix.) are for Israel. The former furnish us with the Church's moral history ; the latter sets forth an outline of Israel's political history till the Lord comes to reign.

Ere, however, that takes place, judgments must be poured out on this scene. God has a controversy with men. That must be settled. And we learn that the way of its settlement is by judgments. But these necessarily cannot take place whilst the Church of God, which is the Body of Christ, is upon earth. The rapture of 1 Thess. iv. must precede the opening

of the seals; for all true Christians must be kept "from the hour of trial which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (iii. 10).<sup>\*</sup> Hence in chapters iv., v., just previous to narrating the details of the things which shall be on earth "after these," we have a scene in heaven. The elders are there, their number all completed, having already left earth, the destined scene of divine operations in judgment. And those judicial dealings begin when the Lamb takes the book and opens its seals one by one.

Now these judgments are threefold, symbolised under events following the opening of the *seals* (vi. ; viii. 1); next, those consequent on the blowing of the *trumpets* (viii. ; ix. ; xi. 14-18); and last, those which are the results of the pouring out of the *vials*, or bowls (xv. 5—xvi. 21). So to grasp the order of the book we have simply to remember that in the time of the opening of the seals, of the blowing of the trumpets, and of the pouring out of the bowls, the chronological events subsequent to the rapture and preceding the advent in power are all comprised. Let the reader mark this, and he will find the chronological order in chapters vi. ; viii. ; ix. ; xi. 14-18 ; xv. 5—xvi. 21 ; xix. 11—xxi. 8, the rest being parenthetical portions explanatory of certain matters introduced to the reader's notice. Seals, trumpets, vials (or bowls), in this order are the different judgments revealed, and in chronological sequence, preparatory to the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We would now point out the bearing of the parenthetical portions. In vi. 9 we learn, under the fifth seal, that persecution followed by martyrdom will have already taken place upon earth subsequent to the rapture of the saints. A fresh testimony for God must, therefore, have been begun, after the Holy Ghost shall have left with the Church of God (Rev.

<sup>\*</sup> The *dwellers* upon earth in this book are a moral class—the worst in it, seemingly apostates, who have had the offer of the heavenly calling, but have deliberately chosen earth as their portion instead.

xxii. 17); a testimony carried on of course by His power, but in a scene in which He will not then be personally dwelling. Martyrs, we learn, when that seal is opened will have already been slain, and more will follow. But are all saints then to lose their lives? An answer to this is furnished by chapter vii., which discloses that far reaching on earth will be the new testimony, and that an elect company of the twelve tribes will be kept true to it to the end (vii. 1-8). Nor that only, for a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, will be kept steadfast likewise, to enjoy millennial blessing and special favour, it would appear, on the part of God (vii. 15). "He that sitteth on the throne will *tabernacle over* them," so the seer of Patmos wrote, and not "shall  *dwell among* them." Amongst Israel nationally, and amongst Gentiles, God will work and keep alive this testimony, which having begun after the rapture will be continued till the Lord appears. The reason for this parenthetical portion it is then easy to understand. And that these saints in chapter vii. are on earth, not in heaven, will be apparent as we read verses 16, 17. No need would there be thus to write of those on high.

The next parenthetical portion commences with chapter x. 1, and ends with xi. 13. Things are now viewed as drawing to a close. So the angel, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow on his head, with his face as the sun and his feet as pillars of fire, announces there will no be longer delay, as the words "that there should be time no longer" (x. 6) really mean. For "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath announced the glad tidings to His servants the prophets" (7.) The MYSTERY OF GOD it is said, for He will then begin to deal *openly* and *directly* with the apostate power upon earth. This the vials shew. And the need for this is manifested by what we read, in chapter xi. of another testimony raised up by God



the centre of which will be at Jerusalem (xi. 8), and which the Beast will ineffectually attempt to extinguish, slaying, as he will be permitted to do, God's two witnesses at Jerusalem, over whose death the dwellers upon the earth will make merry (xi. 3-10). Thus there will be, we here learn, a testimony for God carried on during the time of the trumpets more restricted in the area of its operation than that referred to in vi. 9; vii., and quite distinct from it. Made acquainted with this by chapter xi., another parenthetic portion is called for, which commences at xi. 19, after the blowing of the seventh trumpet, and continues to xv. 4.

As this fresh testimony has Jerusalem for its centre, Jews have specially to do with it. But why are they thus the object of the Beast's hatred? Chapter xii. explains this by telling us of the devil's undying hostility to the nation of Israel, because, in the language of the passage, the woman brought forth a Man-child who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron (5.) Baffled in his attempt to exterminate the nation, he will make war with the remnant of her seed which keep the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus (xii. 13-17). So fierce will be the persecution, and all the more because he hath but a short time (xii. 12). In chapter vii. we saw that the testimony there referred to concerned both Jews and Gentiles. This one under the trumpets concerns especially the Jews. And the political power employed against them, we have learnt in xi. 7, is one called the Beast who ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, *i.e.*, the abyss. Now, who and what is he? This question is answered in chapter xiii. 1-10. He is the ruler of the Roman empire in its latest form, which will be confined to the western or Latin part of the old empire, and the chief agent under him is another one also called a Beast (xiii. 11-18), who will endeavour to make all that he can reach worship the first Beast, those refusing to do that

to be killed, and no one allowed to buy or sell unless he bear on his person the mark of the Beast. Rigorous, relentless persecution will be carried on. Will it succeed in extinguishing the faith? No. For chapter xiv. 1-5 tells us of 144,000 who will appear at the end with the Lamb on Mount Zion, kept faithful by God throughout that awful period.

But the book is prophetic, not historical. So it speaks to those who will be here after the rapture of the saints, and would impress on them the need of keeping steadfast to the end. This is done, first, by the announcement of the preaching of the everlasting Gospel to take place at that time by angelic agency, witnessing to all that the kingdom in power will come (xiv. 6-7). Next, the certainty of judgment overtaking the impenitent is affirmed, both by the announcement of Babylon's fall (8), and by the solemn warnings against apostacy, the snare for so many in that day. And if martyrdom should stare them in the face who were expecting millennial blessing on earth, they must not shrink from it. The patience of the saints will be tried, but faithfulness to the end is insisted upon, with the fullest encouragement not to give way. For a voice from heaven was heard by John, saying, "Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; for (not "and") their works do follow them" (9-13). Death to such will involve no loss. Then, to show the certainty of the Lord's return and of judicial dealing on His part, we have mention of the harvest followed by the vintage (14-20).

One more prophetic scene completes this long parenthetical portion. We have read in xiv. 2 of harpers in heaven harping with their harps, and of a song sung which only those 144,000 on earth can learn. We have read, too, of the blessedness of those who will then die in the Lord. Now we witness the reality of this, and see that company with their harps (xv. 2-4)

standing on the sea of glass. It is the company of those martyred under the Beast, who sing a song in heaven, which those only who have experienced a like persecution short of death can have part in. Here then the third parenthetic portion ends. Its importance, and help to the understanding of what had been referred to under the trumpets, all will, we think, perceive.

Passing by the outpouring of the vials, or bowls (xv. 5—xvi. 21), the next parenthetic portion commences at xvii. 1 and ends at xix. 10. It is occupied with the history of the whore, "Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth," who is seen in this book in contrast to the true Church, the Bride of the Lamb. Of Babylon we have had mention in xiv. 8; xvi. 19. Her history is now recounted, and her destruction by the apostate power foretold. Then follows a lamentation over her end by the kings and merchants of the earth (xviii.). After which we learn, first, in what light her overthrow is regarded in heaven, and then have the announcement of the coming marriage of the Lamb (xix. 1-10). Over Babylon's fall much people in heaven will rejoice (xix. 1), and the four-and-twenty elders and the four living creatures will thereupon fall down and worship (4). A voice, too, will come forth from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, small and great" (5). And then a wondrous anthem peals forth, "as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready" (6, 7). This parenthetic portion now ended, the chronological order of events connected with earth is resumed, and without further break runs right on to the eternal state (xix. 11—xxi. 8).

The Lord next appears in person, coming in power

and great glory (11-18). The apostate power on earth is dealt with (19-21), and the devil shut up in the abyss\* for a thousand years (xx. 1-3). The millennial reign commences, and all the heavenly saints, here mentioned under three classes,† live and reign with Christ, being sharers, and comprising all who do share, in the first resurrection. Millennial times over, the devil will be let out of prison. The last attack on the saints upon earth will take place. God frustrates it, and the resurrection and final judgment of the ungodly dead follows (xx. 7-15).

Very rapid is this sketch, as the reader will perceive, for events mentioned elsewhere, as the judgment of the quick (Ps. 1; Matt. xxv.), as well as the inroad and destruction of the King of the North, and subsequently that of Gog of Ezekiel (xxxviii.-xxxix.), are passed over as outside the range of the seer's vision. Then he passes on to dwell a little more fully than has been done elsewhere on the eternal state, when God, as we read (1 Cor. xv. 28), shall be all in all. Beyond the beginning of the eternal state God's written revelation does not conduct us.

But now another, the last parenthetic portion, is met with (xxi. 9—xxii. 5). We have read of the marriage of the Lamb (xix. 7-9). We have read, too, of the New Jerusalem in the eternal state (xxi. 2). We are now to learn about her in millennial times. Without this her history would not be complete. So her place at that time in relation to earth is disclosed, and her appearance, too, when she will be displayed to all in heaven and on earth as the Lamb's wife, the dwelling place, too, of God—the holy temple and

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\* The abyss, or bottomless pit, is a distinct place in the universe, the prison house of demons. To this the demons in Luke viii. 31 (see Rev. Ver.) referred. Out of it locusts come forth (Rev. ix. 1-2). In it the devil will be confined. His being bound then is not merely moral, but actual; the *place* of his imprisonment being designated.

† The three classes the Revised Version makes plain. 1st, the elders, *i. e.*, Old Testament saints and Christians; 2nd, those beheaded (vi. 9); 3rd, those who had not worshipped the Beast (xv.).

the metropolis of the kingdom. At some length is this dwelt upon, and that after the whore with all her meretricious adornments is seen to sink under divine judgment. Into this portion of Revelation we cannot here enter at length. Nor is it within the purpose of this paper to dwell on the concluding portion of the book, full of interest though it is, beyond pointing out that three times over within the compass of these verses (xxii. 7-21) the Lord's coming is announced (7, 12, 20). With that hope to which the apostle John responded (20) the Revelation concludes, and with it the New Testament and the canon of Scripture are completed.

And now, in closing this outline of the *plan* of the book, we would remind the reader that between the rapture of the saints and the appearing of Christ there will be three distinct judicial dealings of God connected with the seals, the trumpets, and the vials, the second following the first, and the third the second. There will be also two different testimonies raised up by God, and carried on through grace. The fruits of the first are seen in vi. 9; vii., and those of the latter in xi.; xiv.; xv. And two powers on earth, inveterate opponents to God, will meet with their doom. First Babylon, the centre of ecclesiastical corruption, will be destroyed. Then the apostate power under the guidance of the Beast and the false prophet will be dealt with by the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. Much, therefore, must take place on earth after the Church has been caught up, though the time in which all this will be developed will necessarily be short.

C. E. S.

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SAID old Scotch Jeanie on her deathbed, when a visitor asked "if she had any glimpses of Jesus?" "Gang awa' with your *glimpses*, mon. I've kenned my Lord for mair than saxty years, and I'm aboot to see Him face to face. It's nae *glimpses* He gives me, but His ain dear self to lead me through the valley."

## "THAT GREAT SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP."

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O PRECIOUS Saviour, holy Lord !  
 For ever be Thy Name adored ;  
 To Thee be glory ever given  
 By all on earth, by all in heaven.

Most gracious Shepherd, Refuge, Rock !  
 Look down upon Thy feeble flock ;  
 Thy tender lambs, Thy wayward sheep  
 Do Thou in mercy feed and keep.

Thou know'st, O Lord, if we know not,  
 The flow'ry mead, the fertile spot ;  
 Thou guid'st Thy sheep to pastures green,  
 Where flocks and herds have never been.

To living waters oft-times led,  
 By Thee who art our living Bread,  
 Those quiet streams, so clear, so cool,  
 Refresh, revive, re-lift the soul !

Thy faithfulness we would record ;  
 Thy rod, Thy staff, most blessed Lord !  
 Thou hast stretched forth to guide, restore,  
 And prove Thy goodness more and more !

Thou lead'st in paths of righteousness,  
 That we may prove their blessedness ;  
 And this Thou dost for Thy Name's sake,  
 That we may of Thy joy partake !

And though our path be deep in shade,  
 Thy presence hath the valley made  
 A trysting place, nor can we fear,  
 For faith knows well that Thou art near !

Thou midst our enemies, O Lord,  
 Hast spread for us a bounteous board ;  
 Our head anointed by Thy hand,  
 Our cup o'erflows at Thy command !

Goodness and mercy all our days  
 Shall cause our hearts unceasing praise ;

And we for ever shall abide  
 (For ever like Thee) at Thy side !

And this because Thy life was given,  
*Good Shepherd*, for our joy in heaven ;  
 For us Thy precious blood was shed,  
*Great Shepherd*, risen from the dead !

Thy lambs and sheep Thou soon wilt fold,  
 The travail of Thy soul behold ;  
 Then, satisfied in glory, Lord,  
*Chief Shepherd* Thou, belov'd, adored !

Thus, gracious Lord, eternal Word !  
 We worship Thee with one accord ;  
 To Thee be praise and glory given,  
 By saints on earth, by hosts in heaven !

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## RELATIONSHIPS.

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I HAVE been enjoying so much "Relationship with God," reprinted from *Words in Season*, that I could wish for every reader to re-read such truths in His presence, and that hearts might so expand as to communicate portions to those dear to Him, near and far, that their joy might be full, and more intelligent praise His for such grace ; not so much occupation with this truth at the expense of others equally precious and important, but progress cannot be very sure without knowing whose we are, and the relationships we are brought into through abounding grace.

We get some unfoldings of relationship—but oh, to learn of Him, to see what He does, to have ears and hearts for His word, and energy to follow Him, that our ways might be in consonance with the wondrous relationships we are brought into, and so accord with the confession of His Name, telling we are children of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

"No man hath seen God at any time ; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John i. 16). Dear reader,

although God manifest in flesh, a Man on earth, dependent, obedient, He was always the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father. The Father who had not been seen at any time was now to be made known. His love was to be told out; but words never express this, it must be manifested in other ways, in deeds. "God so loved the world, that HE GAVE His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Later on in John's gospel He is saying, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world and go to the Father." He honoured His Father, and the hour was come when He could say, "Glorify Thy Son." We are permitted to hear: "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." "No one cometh unto the Father but by Me. If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also. . . . Philip saith unto Him, Lord, shew us the Father. . . . He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

"*That they might know Thee.*" Is this what we lisp out in our joy amidst the deep, deep sorrow, for we, too, are placed in the same scene where tribulation is the common lot of those who are not of the world? Why tribulation? Here we find a scene of falsehood, the whole world lying in the wicked one, which will not be rebuked, which will not be shewn in grace the true God, feeling rather slighted by the introduction of Jesus Christ, who came to seek and save the lost. Yet He has uttered words that will stand for ever, and such expression in the opened ear has found its answer. Through grace many a reader of these lines in all meekness can in truth exclaim, "I know the true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent."

Children of God, saints too, are startling words for children of disobedience to hear; such do not fail to watch the carriage and listen to the utterances of those who make such bold assertions, and cleave to



them with a tenacity and assurance not readily gainsaid.

“That they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.” One, at any rate, knew how desirable this knowledge of Persons who have authority over all flesh, who dispose of gifts so wonderful as eternal life. There is greater readiness to accept gifts—salvation free—than to show, as He, those marks of subjection and obedience, that dependence upon God for words to make reply to such as came tempting Him. Refusing such counsel as making stones bread to satisfy His hunger, He honoured His Father. And this, dear child of God, is the part we miss so much. The letter that killeth is held fast ; but where, oh where, is the spirit of that One shewn—the manner of life, the absence of rudeness, the refusal of will, of one’s own personal pleasure, likes and dislikes ; the joy of waiting upon Him for guidance in a scene so strange, where there can be nothing but suffering, sorrow, toil—where is there the treading in His steps? the learning of Him the Father? Where the suffering for His Name, refusing those marks that are only for sight and sense that brutes need? Redeemed ones we have His word and exhortation to walk by love, that no stumbling-block be put in the way of another, and are privileged by faith to honour and give Him joy who has marked out our path, each to have the detail filled in as He may be pleased to arrange.

Satan would come in even through such as were chosen of God and had given good confession of Him. “Pity Thyself, Lord,” comes through Peter ; be it this path of suffering for us, and then no wonder the same subtle whisperings come to us through many apparent angels of light. “PITY YOURSELVES.” Many do to His dishonour. The offence of the cross is humbling, shameful—to shew us the Father He must endure it. That loving Father knew the One He sent, knew His ability, knew Him to be in touch with

all that had to be done to open up that new and living way, that access to His holy presence where home and rest in reality only is possible ; but it was not these things only which we are so ready to catch at, but what He desired was that we might know Him and that blessed Son who made Him known.

What anxiety for natural parents who have sons, but instead of being a constant, continual source of delight and joy to them, the contrary is the case. They come to years, they express *their* wish, *their* desires, "give *me* the portion that falls to *me*." Farewell, father ; goodbye, mother—away to dishonour those who observed that decorum by keeping son or daughter in place, servants in their departments ; yet such go out of the bosom of those who have rightly nourished and cherished, to bring shame and dishonour upon them !

We have Him if we would see a pattern Son, if we would know obedience ; if we would know the joy of keeping in that love no discharge would be taken from suffering here. The wretched heart of unbelief would say, I know Thee to be hard and austere ; look what He puts His Son to, see how He suffers, behold, He weeps. The infidel depicts Christians with long faces and sad countenances, Christianity responsible for the bloodshed and misery of the past that exists still ; but this line of thought comes from beneath, not above. Yes, dear reader, powerful minds denounce in eloquent words the monstrosity of permitting Him who was holy and true, separate from sinners, to bear the ill, to suffer the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God. But God knew the Captain of our salvation could be trusted. He knew He would come out triumphant, victorious, and so it followed ; and He has a company, if need be (He has given example), to lay down their lives for the brethren. But do for His honour, for the truth's sake, for God's glory, do seek grace to talk much less about being Christians, and in all meekness confess and commend Him in ways.

It is a common remark, "I'm sorry for his or her bringing up." As children of God remember this, the shame falls upon Him when there is turning aside to questions to no profit, strifes, bickerings, whisperings. And let it be out of love to Him who first loved us and brought us into His household, made us members of His body, and one of another, though the less loved loving the more, untiring in serving, and quite willing that reproaches should fall upon us.

Who has shown you the true God? It is most important to know who has instructed you. There are representations of God in this so-called Christian land that would bring a blush to the face of poor degraded heathen people, and fill them with alarm at such daring fool-hardiness in the light of His word, to do what they do under the eye of the true God. Some who had gods many turned from idols to serve the living and true God, and wait for His Son from heaven when He was made known by His servants. Have you supposed by all that surrounds you that anything will do for Him, that He will put up with all kinds of grossness so long as we straighten up at times? How that argument was met long ages ago. "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Far be the thought. We who have died to sin, how shall we still live in it?" Because the world is going on headlong to woe, is that sufficient reason for those who professedly preach the Word, preach Christ, to stop and try and adjust matters that are so confused between masters and men, in families, among companies of the Lord's people? Did Peter argue thus? When the murmuring arose, did He turn from prayer and ministering the word? What need to grasp these things in communion with Him, and seek grace to be doers, and not hearers only.

Is it nothing to us that men are emboldened by their false systems to approach God apart from that One perfect offering, and that children of saints

gathered to His precious Name are left to learn in this pernicious way the true God, who is ever and always falsified? Who can wonder at the surroundings, infidelity increasing? But Oh! may we feel humbled when we think of adding to the confusion, and adore Him whom we know to have perfectly shown us the Father, and seek grace, too, to worship Him revealed in this relationship of Father, who will be worshipped in spirit and in truth. W. B.

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### THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST.

“One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after.”  
—*Psalm xxvii. 4.*

#### I.—*Acts ix. 5.*

FROM amidst the dazzling glory,  
Brighter than the day,  
Hear the words of Saul of Tarsus,  
Stricken on the way!  
“Who art *Thou*, Lord?” was his question,  
And the answer came—  
“I am Jesus;” and his spirit  
Bowed to that blest Name.

#### II.—*Phil. iii. 10.*

Years have passed—a Roman dungeon,  
And a felon’s chain;  
Suffering, shame, desertion, spite,  
These his present gain:  
Failure all to sight! But nothing  
Faith’s clear eye can dim;  
All as loss he calmly reckons—  
“That I may know Him.”

#### III.—2 *Tim. i. 12.*

Lo! still faithful, Paul the aged  
Nears a martyr’s death,  
Only Luke to stand beside him  
As he yields his breath;

All in Asia now have failed him,  
Brethren have deceived :  
Still " I know," we hear him saying,  
" Whom *I have believed.*"

W. B.

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## HAVE WE A HEART FOR CHRIST?

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TRULY how manifest is the lack of purpose among the people of God, especially when we bear in mind the zeal and energy which characterized the dear servant of Christ in Phil. iii. 13, 14. How many giving up, turning aside, fainting by the way; and others going on aimlessly and indefinitely!

What grace our God has bestowed upon us; and what a privilege is ours that He should have laid down in His Word precepts which are to regulate our actions, and stimulate to deeper devotion to Him who is to be the motive spring of our hearts as we journey on to the Father's house; thus laying up for ourselves treasure, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where, in the coming day of display, the little while we may have spent (through His rich grace) in this scene shall be found to His honour and glory. Will it be nothing, beloved, to our hearts to look back and to trace that in some measure His Word was dear to us, and we found delight in treading the path upon which it shed a light?

Paul cheered the dear saints at Thessalonica by presenting the hope of the Lord's speedy return, when those who had fallen asleep through Jesus would rise first, and all be caught up together to meet Him in the air. The place which the Word had with them we are told (1 Thess. ii. 13). After reminding them they were children of the light and the day (v. 5), he exhorts them not to sleep as do others, but to watch and be sober, and to put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. Reminded of these necessary principles, he goes on to exhort them to love and good works; and, beloved,

let us weigh this word in our hearts as those who specially need it. He would have them honour and hold in high esteem those who laboured among them. No jealousy, no desire for vain glory, no provoking one another, no envying one another, but to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. As servants of Christ they were to have a very real place in their hearts. Are there any misgivings in our hearts as we take this to ourselves? Will not the marks of such servants be manifest? Will not the example left us by the Lord in John xiii. be seen in them? How could there be any doubt about it?

And then, on the other hand, lest anyone should seek a pre-eminent place, and so disturb the saints, causing discords, the word comes, "Be at peace among yourselves." And we find, also, similar exhortations in Rom. xii. 3 and 16. Ah, beloved, it almost seems, does it not? as if such a word did not exist. The neglect of this precept, what ruin and sorrow has it caused! The Apostle Paul counts upon their being in sweet communion with Christ. Who but such could carry out verses 14-21? How the soul is tested which seeks to do so. Wisdom, long-suffering, patience, and grace all brought into action. What a living, real epistle these dear saints were. Waiting for the Son of God from heaven. This blessed hope permeated them, so to speak. They had indeed an object, and their life declared what that was (1 Thes. i. 5-10). It is nothing less, beloved, than the Word of our God, the power of which should make our hearts rejoice, which declares to us what the Lord Jesus is, telling us of a love which knows no change, and which has obtained for us a rich and everlasting portion in Him. How real it would make us! How it would tear away the cloak of hypocrisy which seems so tightly wrapped around us! And these divine precepts to which we have drawn attention would open channels by which the love begotten in our hearts would flow out. Yes, the Thessalonian saints had an object; the beloved

apostle Paul had an object as he pressed forward (Phil. iii.).

And what shall we say of Him, *who for the joy set before Him* endured the cross, despising the shame? Well may we hide our faces with shame that we so often forget His marvellous love and grace. Let us, beloved, cleave to Him with purpose of heart, and may our lives express the determination to know Him. Think how precious in the sight of God at such a time, when the person of His beloved Son is attacked on every hand, when the flood of infidelity is rising higher and higher, if we cleave to the person of the Son of God, having Him as the undivided object of our hearts. Remember, too, that no man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost. What grace displayed by our God and Father in this, attracting us to the object of His heart's delight! What privilege in allowing us to share such fellowship with Himself. Oh, to praise Him, to adore and worship Him! He is our all, beloved. Thus has our God laid down divine precepts in His Word, that our hearts, overflowing with praise and adoration to our blessed Lord, may form channels, through which the love He has begotten shall flow in blessing on our brethren. And while we have the Lord Jesus filling our hearts it ever will be so.

*"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"* (Phil. iii. 13, 14).

Be Thou the object bright and fair  
 To fill and satisfy the heart!  
 My hope to meet Thee in the air,  
 And never more from Thee depart;  
 That I may undistracted be  
 To follow, serve, and wait for Thee!

J. H. I.

## GOD'S GIFT OF A BURDEN.

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A BIBLE STUDY.—*Heb.* xii. 6, 7.

2 Cor. xii. 7-10.—God's *gift of a burden* ("a thorn in the flesh") to believers.

THE BURDEN—2 Cor. v. 4.—We that are *in this tabernacle* do groan, *being burdened*. Rom. viii. 23.—Groan within ourselves, waiting for the redemption of *the body*. Ps. cxix. 25.—My soul cleaveth *unto the dust* (or, *unto the body*, for "dust thou art")—Gen. iii. 19.

IS A GIFT—Phil. i. 29.—Unto you *it is given*, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also *to suffer* for His sake.

Q. *What shall we do with the burden? the gift?*

Ps. lv. 22.—Cast **THY BURDEN** (margin, "THY GIFT") *upon the Lord, and He shall sustain THEE*. 1 Peter v. 7.—Casting *all your care upon Him, for He careth FOR YOU*.

Q. *How cast IT?* By prayer with thanksgiving in *everything* (Phil. iv. 6.)

Q. *How will God sustain us? How will God care for us?*

*The peace of God, which passeth, &c., will keep YOUR HEARTS AND THOUGHTS in Christ Jesus* (Phil. iv. 7).

And *God Himself teaches us* "how to pray" (Rom. viii. 26, 27), "how to cast our care upon Him" (Psalm lxiii. 8).

He teaches us *by the word* (Ps. xix.) and gives the peace through the word (Ps. cxix. 165), so that we are able "to pray *in Spirit* and in truth," for "Thy word is truth."

"Most gladly therefore will I rather glory *in my infirmities*, that the *power of Christ* may rest upon me" (2 Cor. xii. 9). Hallelujah. E. F. B. B.



## EXERCISES OF SOUL.

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GOD'S nature never changes. There are times when the saint needs especially to be reminded of this, to keep his feet in the path that he should follow.

An instance of this is furnished us in Ps. lxxiii., a chapter, one may call it, out of the book of the personal experience of Asaph. He was a Gershonite, and one of the three chief leaders set by David over the service of song (1 Chron. vi. 31, 39). He was also a seer (2 Chron. xxix. 30), so could write prophetically as well as experimentally, furnishing God's saints in a day yet future with deliverance from a snare that will beset them when apostacy will be rife, and prosperity outwardly attend those who forsake God.

What there was in Asaph's history which corresponded in any degree to this, we know not. He may have witnessed the decline in the days of Solomon, when idolatry was openly practised, and even encouraged by the king (1 Kings xi. 4-8). At all events, he has written a psalm to encourage saints in similar circumstances to remember the unchangeableness of the nature of their God.

God is light ; He changes not. "Truly," then writes Asaph, "God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart" (Ps. lxxiii. 1). But why put this on record, which no saint would naturally question? Because he had been in danger of forgetting it, as he saw the prosperity of the wicked (3). Thereupon he describes their appearance and ways (4-9), and the effect all that had on many professors of the true God. The path for the godly was a difficult one ; and many, to purchase temporary ease and prosperity, were carried away into apostasy. "Therefore His people return hither : and waters of a full cup are wrung out to (rather, by) them" (10). Nothing is more ensnaring than apparent success. Men seek for an easy path, and shrink from one which involves

suffering and rejection; forgetful that the path of the Master was characterised by that, and the disciple should not be unwilling to be as his Master, or the servant as his Lord (Matt. x. 25).

With the crowd people like to go. It is easy, and involves no trial, at least they think that. Now, in this psalm, we see how far such a principle may lead people, even into apostasy, and to a bold, defiant denial of any cognisance on God's part of that which they do (11). A full cup! Yes. They may for the moment get freedom from trouble, and may purchase at such a cost, but how dearly, a little outward prosperity.

Had God changed His nature? Had He ceased to be Light? Did He favour such people? Was He indifferent to their ways? It might seem like it. Apparently He was taking no notice. Apostates were flourishing. Depressing, dispiriting that would be to any saint who just looked around. Asaph evidently felt it. And we read of the effect the survey of matters may make on the soul. "Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning" (13, 14). It is questioned whose words these are, whether the utterance of those led away into apostasy, or the unuttered thought of the psalmist, who proceeds: "If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of Thy children." Inclining to the latter view (and verses 21, 22 would seem to confirm it), we would read them as the effect produced on the mind of the saint as he beholds the prosperity of the wicked, contrasting, as he does, his lot with theirs.

But the important point for instruction remains to be stated. Did he *speak* thus, he owns that he should offend against the generation of God's children. Restraining, then, the utterance of such thoughts, was he still to cherish them? Or should he get them

corrected? But how was this last to be brought about? He tells us. He entered into the sanctuary of God, and then he understood the end of those men (17). In the presence of God all became clear. God had not changed. The wicked are allowed to prosper for a little. But their triumph is short. Suddenly will they come to an end. For God will, as it were, wake up and despise their image. As for the saint, now continually with God, he will be held up by His right hand; and guided now by God's counsel, he will afterwards be received to glory, or, perhaps, honour.

Thus he gets out of his mistaken thoughts by getting into the presence of God. There all is clear, and his faith gets re-established. And how beautifully he now speaks of God: "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever" (25, 26). All evidently is settled in his soul, and there is an entire reversal of his foolish thoughts. "Surely in vain have I cleansed my heart, and washed my hands in innocency." Had such been his thoughts? Now he can say, "It is good for me to draw near unto God: I have made the Lord God my refuge, that I may tell of all Thy works" (28). It is good to draw near to God; in His presence things are seen in their right light. And what helped the psalmist will help the remnant in the future, and saints as well in the present time—the getting God's mind about things from getting into His presence.

To Ps. lxxvii. let us next turn, which is also ascribed to Asaph. In it we have the cry of the heart in trouble, and the way it got comforted; for it was trouble, not sickness, that had afflicted the writer. For the second verse, which might seem to favour the latter thought, should really be translated, not *my sore ran*, but *my hand was stretched out*.

Deep, indeed, had been his trouble, so with his

voice he cried to God. There are times when the soul under great pressure finds relief in audible prayer to God. We find here encouragement in that, as we learn what another has done before us. "I will cry unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and He will give ear unto me. In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my hand was stretched out in the night, and slacked not: my soul refused to be comforted" (1, 2). What burden, what pressure was he under! Sleep fled from him, and at length silence succeeded to speech (4). Of the past he thinks, the days of old. He remembers, too, his songs in the night. Still there is no comfort. The remembrance of joyous times in the past cannot console him in the present. Thoughts crowd in on his soul, and he asks (but what questions to put): "Will the Lord cast off for ever? And will He be favourable no more? Is His mercy clean gone for ever? Doth His promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies?" (7-9). What questionings can crowd in and weigh down a heavily-burdened spirit! All his hope was in God. Had He failed him? He had proved, and evidently rejoiced in, tender mercies in the past. But that *was* the past. The present was dark; the affliction was severe.

What relief could he find? What deliverance could there be? His resource he knew was in God. But where was God for him, if His tender mercies were really shut up? Now relief comes; not by recalling his songs in the night, but by remembering God's intervention on behalf of His people of old at the Red Sea. Then He shewed Himself to be their God; then He manifested Himself in the character of a Redeemer. Could He drop His people? No. Could He cancel the redemption? No. Changed at once is the tenour of the psalmist's thoughts, and the utterance of his mouth. His trouble, his heaviness, his depression, of these had he spoken, and questions

about God, the fruit of unbelief, had escaped him. Now he speaks of God and of His ways in the past on behalf of the people, "the years of the right hand of the Most High." That gives him relief. What freedom of spirit where heaviness had reigned! All questioning had subsided; and now, in beautiful language, he describes the dividing of the waters of the Red Sea. "The waters saw Thee, O God; the waters saw Thee: they were afraid. The depths also were troubled." But why speak of this, which was ancient history? The truth comes out. The Creator is the Redeemer of Israel. All power He has. The remembrance of redemption sets him free (15). God was the God of Israel. "Who is a great God like unto God? Thou art the God that doest wonders: Thou hast declared Thy strength among the peoples. Thou hast with Thine arm redeemed Thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph." Jacob was the exile, Joseph the rejected one. Their sons had been redeemed.

The burden was gone, dejection of spirit was removed. He who had wrought of old for His people could work still. He was God, and there is none like Him. That same One, Christians can say, is our God; for they, too, share in redemption. He has been, and He is for His people. The language of the psalmist (vers. 11-20) is language for God's earthly people in trouble. The language of Rom. viii. 28-39 provides fitting expression for Christians in theirs. God's purposes do not alter; nor, as we have already seen, does His nature change.

To another psalm let us turn, and this time to one penned by David (cxxxix.), which tells us how he got to be perfectly at home in the consciousness of being ever under God's eye.

God had searched him and known him, the royal singer declares. His very thoughts God understood afar off. His path, his lying down, His ways, with all these He was acquainted. Nor was there a word in

his tongue that the Lord did not know. Before and behind God beset him, and laid His hand upon him. But more. Could he hide from this One of whose omniscience he was so conscious? Impossible; for God, he owns, is omnipresent. Would he flee from His presence? But whither? To heaven? But God is there. To Sheol, *i.e.*, the under-world? God is there. In the depth of the sea would he sink? Yet there God's hand would lead him, and His right hand uphold him. Nor could darkness hide him, for darkness and light are both alike to God. Such thoughts are overwhelming. An eye ever on one; a Being from whom nothing can be hid!

What can give a sinful creature confidence and rest in the consciousness of all this? His thought about God's omniscience and omnipresence will never do that. God's thoughts, and God's thoughts about him, these can. Of these he now makes mention, and in the remembrance of them, and in the enjoyment of them, he finds perfect freedom of spirit. Liberty is known, because God's thoughts have their place in the soul (13-18). And the first expression of praise flows from the remembrance, that God knew all about him before ever he was born (13-16). Nor was that all. A revelation had been vouchsafed. With God's thoughts He was made acquainted. "How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with Thee" (17, 18).

Overwhelmed had he been with the sense of God's omniscience (6), and conscious, too, of His omnipresence. To both he is still fully alive, for God is God. In Him is no change. A change, however, had come over the psalmist's spirit, for God's thoughts are now before him. Would he wish to hide from Him? "When I awake," he says, "I am still with Thee" (18). Had he been troubled at being searched by an omniscient Being? "Search

me," he now says, "O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts;" &c. (23). How different is the end of the psalm from its commencement. And David lets all know why. Thoughts about God may oppress the soul. God's thoughts revealed in His word can give liberty before Him.

Different experiences these three psalms describe; but in each we see the way into liberty of spirit—not by a change in the circumstances, for in none of them was that the case; but by turning to God, getting into His presence, remembering what He has done for His people, and letting God's thoughts have their place in the heart. It was in each case the ministry of the Spirit suited for the occasion, God ministering to His servants as needed. He does that still; and when occasion calls it forth, one may find the reality, and power, and blessing of such ministry to the heart.

Are any tempted to seek a smooth path by going with the stream? God's nature never changes, and in His presence light will be found for the saint if he seeks it. Do doubts of God's continued favour throw their dark shadows over the soul? We are redeemed, and redeemed by blood. That can never alter. And it is God's thoughts, when allowed their place in the heart, which minister liberty, where otherwise there would be bondage and slavish fear. C. E. S.

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In the above the Revised Version has in places been followed, as representing better the original.

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## THE MORNING STAR.

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I BELIEVE dark days are not far in the distance. But there is another object in the heights; I mean "*The Morning Star.*"

"The morning star" is the symbol of the Church's hope. And there is beauty in this thought, derived as it is from Rev. ii. 28, and xxii. 16.

The characteristics of the morning star are *brilliancy* and *solitariness*. It glitters lovely, off in its distant sphere, but it is all alone. It does not command the notice of the world, as the sun does. It is only the watchman that sees it. The season for its appearing is quite its own—it is neither night nor day. It fills a moment that is quite its own, and it is only the watchman, or the child of the morning, the one that is up before the sun, that has to do with it.

Is there not a voice in this, dear brother? does it not tell your inmost soul of a coming that is to precede the sunrise?—of the appearing of One who does not belong to the world, whose business is not with the earth, or with the children of men, but with an elect people who wait for an *unearthly* Saviour?"

J. G. B.

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## THE HEART RIGHT WITH GOD.

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IT ought to be an immense comfort to the saints of God that the Lord reads the heart. For however much He may find there to disapprove, integrity, at least, should not be wanting. We are of Him; His seed remaineth in us (1 John iii. 9). Thus Peter, at a moment when he looked to himself more morally ugly than ever before, could say in his exigency, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." When he could not say one word for himself as to his *conduct*, his comfort and his plea was that the Lord could read his heart, could see Himself enshrined there. Thus John writes, "And hereby we shall know that we are of the truth, and shall persuade our hearts before Him—that if our heart condemn us," *as surely Peter's heart was painfully doing*, "God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. 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 practise the things which



are pleasing in His sight" (1 John iii. 19-22, New Translation). Now this as clearly *was not* Peter's state at the time contemplated, as the other clearly *was*.

What I suggest is that in the deepest depths of the saint's experiences, whether from one's own self-rebuking heart within, or from cruel, undeserved reproach without, there is boundless comfort in this, that the Lord reads our hearts. In the former case—the heart condemning, but God greater than the heart—we have a salient instance in Peter; in the latter case—the heart uncondemning, boldness toward God, asking freely and receiving accordingly, keeping His commandments and practising all that is pleasing in His sight—we cannot but call to mind the Lord Jesus as a Man, in all the grace and perfection which characterised His life on earth. The cruel and undeserved reproach that fell upon Him caused Him to exclaim, "Reproach hath broken My heart" (Psalm lxix. 20); and was it not a cheer to Him at such a moment that Jehovah could read His heart, and see there every deep desire for His glory which animated and actuated Him, whether in diligence of service through life or devotedness unto death?

Wherever, then, there is integrity, comfort will be found in this, that God "knoweth the secrets of the heart" (Psalm xlv. 21). Thus, David being in communion with God, expresses himself in feelings and language suited to his dispensation: "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee? and *am not I grieved* with those that rise up against Thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them *mine enemies*" (compare 2 Chron. xix. 2). Here we see David walking with God, taking sides with Him as to the *outward* opposition of the enemies of the Lord. But from this he proceeds—and here we can follow him profitably—to that which is *inward*. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead

me in the way everlasting" (Psalm cxxxix. 21-24). Instead of "wicked way" we read, in the margin, "way of *pain*, or *grief*;" and, referring to the prayer of Jabez to the God of Israel (1 Chron. iv. 10), we find him saying, "Oh that Thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may *not grieve me!*" Connecting these, we see the two things that grieved David, the man after God's own heart (1 Sam. xiii. 14; Acts xiii. 22). One is the opposition of the Lord's enemies without, and the other the working of evil within his own heart; these are the things which grieved David. But as to the latter, as much as to the former, he can call upon God; yea, he can even ask God to search him and to try him; evident proof, surely, of his integrity. Because there was this integrity, however much there was also of undeniable failure; because there was really truth in the inward parts, though coupled with infirmity and inconsistency, he frankly and freely discloses himself to God, opens his bosom and practically lays his heart bare before Him, saying, "*Search me,*" "*know me,*" "*try me,*" and, finally, "*lead me in the way everlasting.*"

And herein we see plainly what it is to have the heart *right with God*. There is instruction as to this found in Psalm lxxviii. 31-37. God had because of the sins of the people smitten "down the chosen men of Israel. For all this they sinned still" (vers. 31, 32). But we read concerning them after this a number of things that appear to claim commendation. They are these: "they sought Him;" "they returned and enquired early after God;" "they remembered God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer." Surely, we say, how good was all this; and to human judgment, left to itself, it could not possibly be otherwise. But we next learn, concerning it all, the exposure and the judgment of Him that "knoweth the secrets of the heart;" and what is His scathing commentary upon this "fair show in the flesh"? Hear what the heart-reading God of Israel says,—"*Nevertheless they did*

flatter Him with their mouth, and they lied unto Him with their tongues"! What a commentary this!

And we may say in passing how, amongst other things, it exposes the true character of much of the religion of *this day*, the professedly pious and religious thing called "public worship" or "divine service," but which is, alas! in many cases, in God's sight a false and spurious thing; a mockery and delusion of Satan for blinding "the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. iv. 4). How solemn, indeed, to hear God saying, They flatter Me with their mouth, and they lie unto Me with their tongues! That which is added as to Israel is that which also expounds the secret of it equally in our own day, "*For their heart was not right with Him.*"

Oh! may He in His unspeakable mercy grant to every reader of these lines the blessedness of carrying about from day to day throughout the pilgrim journey, as to accusations from within or reproaches from without, *a heart that is right with God!*

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## REJOICE IN THE LORD.

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BRETHREN in the Lord, rejoice,  
 Sweetly sing with joyful voice;  
 Christ, our Life, who lives on high,  
 For His saints will soon draw nigh.  
 Day by day let us prepare  
 For our meeting in the air;  
 Soon shall we our Saviour see—  
 Soon like Him, and with Him be!  
 Come, Lord Jesus; come, Lord, come,  
 Take Thy saints for ever home.

Every trial, when it's past,  
 Brings us nearer to our last;  
 Every cloud that hurries by  
 Leaves the fewer in our sky;

Every storm by which we're pressed  
 Bears us onward to our rest.  
 Let us, then, in Christ rejoice,  
 Singing with united voice—  
 Come, Lord Jesus ; come, Lord, come,  
 Take Thy saints for ever home.

Brethren in the Lord, rejoice,  
 Bride of Christ by sovereign choice ;  
 Gaze ye upward, look on high,  
 Hail your Bridegroom drawing nigh.  
 Lifted 'bove this groaning world,  
 Haste the coming of your Lord ;  
 Let your hearts, your hopes, be there,  
 And, while watching, this your prayer—  
 Come, Lord Jesus ; come, Lord, come,  
 Take Thy saints for ever home.

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"LET MY PEOPLE GO."

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ANOTHER has said, "He who will have men account for every idle word used no idle word Himself." To our ears it seems strange that our God, who has all power and might, should send a message by His servant to Pharaoh to release His people. In the light of the New Testament we see God has His arrangement for government on earth, and gives word—"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves judgment." Pharaoh, then, is king, we read; the Hebrew people are his subjects. But, you say, he was a despot, a murderer, his decrees unrighteous. Those taught of God obeyed, yet were no parties to the evil he devised; the midwives, fearing God more than the wrath of the king, spared the male children; and then follow orders from the throne for "every son to be cast into the river." Moses was born at

this time, and hid for three months, yet eventually committed to the river in an ark of bulrushes for God to deliver and preserve. Marvellous, providential care. He goes to the house and is nurtured where he lives who issued the decree for his life to be taken. He is nourished and tutored; and when he comes to years, the pomp and splendour of the palace-house, with all its affluence and pleasures, the adopted child of a princess, are not sufficient to hold him. He identifies himself with another people; a poor, beaten, despised people, whom the Lord says, "Israel is My son, My firstborn; and I say unto thee, Let My son go, that he may serve Me." What think you of this?

The need, too, God had of Pharaoh to humble, discipline, and detain for Him a people whose ways were not right; and then, again, showing the proud heart of one of His servants, responsible to act under Him, lifting itself in rebellion against God, and refusing to give ear or heed to His message concerning His firstborn whom He would have delivered, set free to serve Him.

Subjection to authority how out of joint to-day. Those living in the land of Goschen endeavoured to render their allotted daily task to the labour-masters appointed to overlook them; and on such tidings reaching the king of One other than he over them, for good and not for evil, for blessing and favour, not to tread them down and afflict, but to set free, and have homage and worship from them, this raises the ire of him against Jehovah, and tasks more grievous are imposed—calling them idle, having too much leisure to think of what is due to Him who gave them being, and brought them there to school them until He would issue word, in an orderly way too, to let His people go. How beautiful to see a people taught of God, subject to authority. For the perfection of it we must contemplate, pause and consider Him who said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God"—His only-begotten Son, obedient unto death.

To pursue the history of these favoured people a little further. We find the enemy's wiles unsuccessful so far. In their hard bondage they groan and cry ; but it is to Him who hears, and knows, and sees—the One over all. It was not a banding together, it was not labourers put upon fighting against those in authority ; but, alas, they are overcome in another way, so solemn to record it, yet such permitted to be chronicled for our admonition and learning, who carry the same deceitful heart and crooked understanding, which, if we lean upon, similar calamity will befall ; for as we sow we reap, be we Jew, Gentile, or of the household of faith. Sacrifice to God then was set before a favoured people, in a wonderful relationship. Now see the energy used in this chiefest of all matters, and see whether or not you are still detained in bondage of some kind. "Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein ; and let them not regard VAIN WORDS." Let them be repeated—VAIN WORDS. What words were regarded as vain ? To hold a feast unto the Lord God, to do sacrifice to Him, to worship, such were to be regarded as vain words ; and Malachi shows to what the people had sunk, when there was such heartlessness in it as to offer the worst instead of the best to Him who never withheld, whether it was manna in the wilderness or His only Son, the true Bread ; His best He gave, no reserve. So meaningless did His feast become, and that too which told of His interference on their behalf, sparing their firstborn, bringing them out of Egypt safely through the Red Sea, to think that old marks were so removed, so obliterated, that the feast which should have been in honour of Him was after all but the feast of the Jews, with nothing for Him to smell it at all—He ruled out, and they taking their pleasures without God, without fear, upon whom, after all, the judgment of God must fall. They had but a name to live, but were dead ; theirs was the form of godliness, but no power.

To-day so many have advantages, having escaped the grosser practices which existed in the Apostle Paul's time connected with heathen barbarities ; and in our day, though in remote parts, cannibalism exists, so revolting to us. But read, and do re-read, 2 Peter ii., especially verse 20: "For if they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning." How astounding to mark a people who had such deliverances falling a ready prey to temptations, turning to idolatry ; and this very warning held up to saints at Corinth who had similar dangers—those memorials as ordered to point out the One perfect sacrifice. Let My people go. Satan will do all to detain ; he will favour the gospel, applaud service, extol missions, flatter so-called servants ; but when it comes to worship God the Father in Spirit and in truth, all will be attempted to blunt the discernment, to becloud the glory of that Person who died, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God, and that we might worship Him in the beauty of holiness.\* See how the apostle discerns what is at stake ; what wisdom it took to minister the Word in the power of the Spirit, and so lay bare the snare, and establish saints in a condition of babyhood in the truth. To think that we should so presume upon the riches of His grace to forget Him who brought us into favour, and intrude ourselves, our persons, by our teachings, it may be, upon one another, and be more occupied with others than Him whose body was given, as the one loaf teaches, whose blood was shed, as the poured out wine teaches, and the veil rent to give access into the holiest. The social meal was so elevated that the same danger of reducing the feast, showing His death, to a feast of the Corinthians was there. But, if

\* For spiritual worship and ministry, see papers in *Words in Season*, present vol., signed W. T.

only love can be deified, conscience made too much of, to dim either Christ, the Holy Ghost, or worship the Father can accept, all will be done. What ready material too frequently is found to engage us, whether in the world or lustings of the eyes, in order to hold prisoner those as to whom He gives word, "Let My people go." But may there be such response and regard to His word, that there may be strength to cleave to it and heart to confess Him, and not deny His Name.

W. B.

## FROM EXODUS INTO LEVITICUS.

WHEN the GLORY fills the tabernacle in Exod. xl. the whole congregation is regarded; I judge, as in the reconciliation. This appears from several considerations.

First,—Because the glory had then taken the place of mercy, the throne of grace in their sight.

Secondly,—Because the tabernacle, which they had been building, was the witness of their repentance and faith, the very materials of it being contributed through the atonement money, and through the willing offerings of the people.

Thirdly,—Because the Lord in principle was now speaking to them from heaven, or in Christ, from amid the shadows of good things.

Fourthly,—Because He was having respect to their offerings, which He could not have had, had He not also respect to themselves, or regarded them as clean, or reconciled.

This being so, the sacrifices of Leviticus, which immediately follow, are the acts of a reconciled people, the services or worship of accepted sinners. Thus the burnt, the meat, the sin, the trespass, the peace-offerings are so many forms telling out the character, the ground, and the value of the various services of God's sanctuary (chaps. i.-vii.).

Then comes out the secret of all this acceptance of



the people and of their offerings. The priest is brought forth. He gets the due raiment, and goes through the needed process of his consecration. Then he offers both for himself and the congregation, the congregation all the while standing, seeing this great sight. And at last, down comes the fire from heaven to attest the acceptance of the sacrifices of the priest, and then the people fall down and shout for joy. For that was the full public testimony to the value of that on which all their acceptance rested, and they triumph with holy rapture in it.

The easy gliding thus from Exodus into Leviticus is very sweet, and there is as close a connection between them as there could be in any chapters of the same book. Israel had, by the golden calf, sinned away *all* their hope under the covenant from Mount Sinai (Exod. xxxii.); but they repented,—stripped themselves of their ornaments, and took the place of sinners, and of believers too, in looking after the Mediator (Exod. xxxiii.). Then they bring forth the fruit of repentance and faith in so willingly offering, not to the calf, but to the sanctuary; and this puts them at once on such new ground, that the Lord can come in the midst of them, accepting them and their services. They meet Him as pardoned sinners, and then have a shout of joy and see the glory; but under the fiery mount of law and judgment they did not stand for a moment.—*Extract.*

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AMALEK fell upon the feeblest of Israel—the laggards in the rear. Those who are pressing forward in all the energy of faith and love are not troubled with “fleshly lusts which war against the soul.” Are we lagging? becoming cold, careless; absenting ourselves from the company of the saints? The next thing will be some failure, some sin. The *heart* first faints before the steps falter. Let us press toward the front.

## THINGS WHICH SHOULD BE HELD FAST.

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1. "*Hold fast that which is good*" (1 Thes. v. 21; Phil. iv. 8).
2. "*Hold fast the form of sound words*" (2 Tit. i. 13).
3. "*Hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end*" (Heb. iii. 6).
4. "*Let us hold fast our profession*" (Heb. iv. 14; x. 23).
5. "*Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown*" (Rev. iii. 11).

If the above references are turned up, read, and studied, many fresh thoughts will be likely to get into the mind, and the soul will grow in the teaching of the Holy Ghost.

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"MANY WATERS CANNOT QUENCH LOVE,  
NEITHER CAN THE FLOODS DROWN IT."

*Cant. viii. 7; Eph. iii. 19-21.*

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OUR God, our Lord, our Saviour, Friend,  
Thy love begun shall know no end;  
Who can define its breadth, its length?  
What floods such burning love can quench?

Thou gav'st Thyself to suffering sore,  
And on the tree our judgment bore;  
On Thee it broke, on Thee 'twas spent,  
Beneath the stroke Thy head was bent!

This love, both human and divine,  
Doth now and shall eternal shine;  
The Father's house, the heav'nly bliss,  
Shall ne'er eclipse such love as this!

O mighty fount of waters free  
In which to bathe eternally!  
O love of Christ, Thy ebb-less flow  
We ardently desire to know!

“It passeth knowledge,” we know well ;  
Such precious love no tongue can tell ;  
At Thy desire, blest Saviour, we  
Would filled with all God’s fulness be !

Able art Thou to work, we’re sure,  
In us by Thine abundant pow’r ;  
To Thee, then, both in earth and heaven,  
Be glory now and ever given !

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## “THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD.”

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PROFESSOR DRUMMOND has undertaken to show us what this is. “We have been accustomed,” he says, “to be told that the greatest thing in the religious world is Faith. That great word has been the key-note for centuries of the popular religion ; and we have easily learned to look upon it as the greatest thing in the world. Well, we are wrong: If we have been told that, we may miss the mark. I have taken you, in the chapter which I have just read (1 Cor. xiii.), to Christianity at its source ; and there we have seen, ‘The greatest of these is love.’ It is not an oversight. Paul was speaking of faith just a moment before. He says, ‘If I have all faith, so that I can remove mountains, and have no love, I am nothing.’ So far from forgetting, he deliberately contrasts them. ‘Now

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*Note.*—In reproducing the above excellent article, which was first published by *The English Churchman*, London, we would express our own conviction that the pre-eminent place which God’s Word gives to love is because of its *character*. It is what God *is*. The reproduction of this is therefore the highest of all in the Christian, forming that which God appreciates most in the character of His children. The mistake is in contrasting it with the faith which lays hold of the Saviour and of salvation, and is therefore the root of all, while Scripture contrasts it with faith as a gift for service and doing mighty deeds.

Prof. Drummond’s awful mistake is, to make love a foundation. It annuls the Saviour. It makes naught of the stupendous work of the cross—“this hour” to which our sins had brought Him. It deifies Christian character and nullifies Christ. It is the high-road to infidelity.—“*Help and Food*,” August, 1891.

abideth, faith, hope, love,' and without a moment's hesitation the decision falls, 'The greatest of these is love.'"

This is a fair summary, in his own language, of Prof. Drummond's views on the question he discusses. That those views are erroneous—lamentably erroneous—it will not be difficult to show. We cannot wrest any Scripture from its context without altering its whole meaning; this is just what Prof. Drummond has done in this case. St. Paul, in this chapter, is speaking of the extent of the duration of love; many other things, he says, as prophecies, tongues, knowledge, shall cease and vanish away: love never ἐκπίπτει—falls off or ceases. Faith will fade into sight, hope into fruition; but love remains eternal. That this is the true sense of the whole chapter is further shown from the closing verse: "And now," says the apostle, "abideth (μένει—continueth) faith, hope, love: these three, but the greater of these is love." It is to be noted that the apostle does not say, the *greatest* (μὲγιστη), but μείζων—"the greater"—that is, not the greatest in all respects, but greater in the restricted aspect of continuity only. It is to be noted, also, that in the Revised Version this distinction between the comparative and superlative is marked by the translation "greater" being given in the margin as an alternative reading.

Prof. Drummond appears to have an uneasy suspicion that the continuity of love is really the ground of the precedence given to it by the apostle over faith and hope. In his closing chapter, entitled, "The Defence," he seems unconsciously to admit this. St. Paul's reason, he says, is "a very remarkable one. In a word, it is this: It lasts." But this apparent dawn of light is soon clouded over, for, a few pages further on, *more suo*, as those who are familiar with his self-contradictions in his "Natural Law in the Spiritual World" will recognize, he says, "Some think the time may come when two of these three things will pass

away,—faith into sight, hope into fruition. Paul does not say so. We know but little now about the conditions of the life to come. But what is certain is that love must last. . . . You will give yourselves to many things: give yourselves first to love.”

This brings us face to face with the unscriptural error running through the whole of Prof. Drummond’s address. Luther thought—inspired Paul was certain—that God’s greatest gift to man was faith: to be justified by faith was the keynote of the Reformation, and has been for three centuries the central point of all evangelical teaching. When the jailer at Philippi cried to Paul and Silas, “What must I do to be saved?” they replied, not give yourself first to love, but “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.” “Without faith,” the apostle says, “it is impossible to please God.” Neither love nor hope, nor any gift or grace, can be a substitute for faith. Faith is first of all,—the very foundation of all: love, and all other Christian graces are simply its necessary and inevitable outcome and fruit. It is very acceptable to God that we should please Him by loving Him; but without faith first, it is impossible to please Him.

Our Lord Himself set this great truth before us in the clearest light in His reply to the lawyer who, tempting Him, asked Him what he should do to inherit eternal life. “What is written in *the law*?—how readest thou?” said our Lord. And he, the lawyer, answering, said, “Thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as Thyself.” Now mark the Lord’s reply: “Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.” And mark, also, how diametrically opposed are the teachings of our Lord and those of Prof. Drummond’s address. Our Lord knew that neither the lawyer nor any other of our fallen race could keep the law; His own words tell us that “by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight.” He

simply used the law as a schoolmaster to bring the inquirer to Himself.

This is the true gospel—the blessed evangel of Christ and the Scriptures; but Prof. Drummond preaches another gospel which is not another. Listen to his version of it: "You remember the profound remark which Paul made elsewhere, 'Love is the fulfilling of the law.' Did you ever think what he meant by that? In those days men were working their passage to heaven by keeping the ten commandments, and the hundred and ten other commandments which they had manufactured out of them. Christ said, I will show you a more simple way. If you *do* one thing, you will do these hundred and ten things without ever thinking about them. If you love, you will unconsciously fulfil the whole law." Now, this is the mere substitution of one kind of "doing" for another. Listen further to another statement of Prof. Drummond; speaking of the patience, kindness, humility, sincerity, and other graces enumerated by the apostle, he says, "Now, the business of our lives is to have these things fitted into our characters. That is the supreme work to which we need to address ourselves in this world—to learn to love. Life is not a holiday, but an education; and the one eternal lesson for us all is, how better we can love. What makes a man a good cricketer? Practice. What makes a man a good artist, a good sculptor, a good musician? Practice. What makes a man a good linguist, a good stenographer? Practice. What makes a man a good man? Practice. Nothing else."

Not so teaches St. Paul. He tells the Romans that the righteousness of God—that is, God's gift of righteousness—is "by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe."

And to the Galatians he says, "So, then, they," not those who have been long practising the art of loving, but "they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."

Notwithstanding some isolated passages in Prof. Drummond's address which appear to be more in accord with evangelical sentiments, the general drift and tendency of the work is, to elevate love, the fruit, above faith, the cause—to put the fruits of faith in the place of faith itself, which is the one only cause revealed to us from which love and every other grace can flow. It is none other than a complete reversal of the gospel plan of salvation.

To what straits a man may be driven to bolster up a false position, Prof. Drummond furnishes us with a singular example. "Nor is this letter to the Corinthians," he says, "peculiar in singling out love as the *summum bonum*. The masterpieces of Christianity are agreed upon it: Peter says, 'Above all things, have fervent love among yourselves.' '*Above all things.*'" That is, doubtless, among the various warnings and exhortations he was giving, suited to the peculiar circumstances of that day, he gives special emphasis to that grace which the bitter opposition of heathens and unbelieving Jews would be likely to lead them to forget.

But if Prof. Drummond builds an argument on St. Peter's exhortation in this passage, what force does he attribute to that of St. James, "Above all things, my brethren, swear not at all"? Is abstinence from swearing the *summum bonum*? It must be that if Prof. Drummond's use of St. Peter's exhortation is warranted—that is, it must be as sound an inference in one case as in the other. But it is equally unsound in both cases. Both St. Peter and St. James used that expressive form of appeal only in connection with the circumstances referred to in the contexts in which they respectively appear. There could not possibly be two gifts or graces equally entitled to the position of the highest or greatest good.

It is not probable, however, that a difficulty of this kind, springing from the incompatibility of his views with scriptural statements, would occasion much

trouble to Prof. Drummond; he has a short way of solving such difficulties. Some time since, he delivered a course of lectures on Sunday afternoons at the Duke of Westminster's residence. The subject of one was "Christianity Looked at from the Standpoint of Evolution." Now, the account of the creation of the universe in six days out of nothing—chaos—is *utterly irreconcilable* with the theory of Evolution. Prof. Drummond disposed of this difficulty very briefly—by sweeping away the scriptural account as a mere instructive fable. I quote from the report of this lecture which appeared in *The Christian Commonwealth*, and which I have never heard that Prof. Drummond has repudiated.

"In the course of his lecture, the Professor said, 'Most of us have accepted the doctrine of evolution in some form or other. It cannot be proved yet, but that does not matter much (!) Great things and great thoughts fill the mind and make their impression. . . . The book of Genesis must be regarded as presenting truth to children's minds,' and the Professor illustrated this idea by George Macdonald's poem, 'The Baby,'—not literally true, but true for the child. 'So Moses gave truth in the form of a poem. If you say it is a scientific book, I give it up; but if you regard it as a poem, then I can deal with it. One great difficulty was the Fall. Theology gives us its version; and it appears, after all, not a fall, but a rise.

"Another class of difficulty was that of accepting miracles. No need of accepting any miracle but the Resurrection, and this science makes possible, and even probable.'" (!)

"Irreverence" is but a feeble term to describe such presumptuous handling of God's word.

Can its author be trusted to teach us what is "the greatest thing in the world," or, indeed, any thing which depends upon the plenary inspiration of Scripture for its foundation?—*P. Carteret Hill.*



## TIDINGS.

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CHRISTCHURCH, N.Z. — Marked blessing here through the ministry of His precious word. A lecture given by a servant well known to many, on "The Body of Christ," was so used of God as to set a company of saints professedly gathered to His Name, numbering nearly sixty, searching and conferring, and so deeply exercised as to what was due to Him, that in their search they ceased breaking bread. He granted to them in mercy recovery; with two or three exceptions all are happily at His table, rejoicing for mercy vouchsafed. Strange that, at the same time, movements are set going in other parts to amalgamate. The cry for liberality, which is but another word for compromise, finds in restless ones a listening ear; but how thankful to Him we are that the work in Christchurch is not after this sort. My correspondent assures me: "It is not *amalgamation*, but unity consistent with truth and righteousness."

MASTERTON, N.Z. — Several here, or near here, recovered after long entanglement. He blesses His Word to saint and sinner. The praise be His.

BAHAMAS, W.I.—Much cheering records from these parts. He has given increase. Several little companies of the Peter stamp—fishermen in a double sense—occupy for Him there. They realize their weakness, and how He appreciates our fellowship in prayer for all saints, especially those who labour in the Word, who suffer for His Name. How large a share of persecution many of these dear ones have had; yet how necessary all to awake up from the indolence and torpor that so usually prevails in temperate climes, and especially in tropical.

VIRGINIA, U.S. — Very cheering word comes of open doors and hearts in parts of Virginia, and it seems general; and so much are our brethren encouraged, who have been able to get away from their business for

a little season of toil for Him in unfrequented and neglected parts, that a Bible-carriage is contemplated for Virginia.

CATAWBA, N.C.—Stirring times there have been in this place. Three brief years back all seemed as still as death—so cheerless, so discouraging wherever you turned, whoever you spoke to no answer, no apparent interest. But now a little reaping time to cheer His own there, and encourage them and us to faint not, but sow on beside all waters.

IOWA, WESTERN STATES.—Cottage meetings and humble school-house meetings have been packed with eager listeners, and many a rejoicing one can be found. May He keep and preserve the dear labourers who suffer in body, I know, who travel oft, who spare not self, who seek in humility to serve Him. Soon rest, dear brethren ; occupy till He come.

ST. CROIX, NOVA SCOTIA.—Meeting purposed for a few days at this place, commencing on Aug. 21st. Through grace I know I can say all welcome. May He keep and use His own to minister for Him, to feed His lambs and sheep.

W. B.

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## LETTER OF INTEREST.

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12th MARCH, 1886.

MY DEAR SISTER IN CHRIST JESUS,—How good is our God ! What wonderful statements are in His fathomless Word. How I have been enjoying Psalm lxxxix. 14-17. It is a kind of Old Testament i-v. of Romans. In fact, we have the very order the Gospel is presented to us in that epistle. On reading, you will see the previous verses speak of the *majesty of God*, and verse 14 tells us of the establishment of *His throne*, "*justice and judgment*;" or, as Psalm xcvi. 2 expresses it, "Righteousness and judgment is the establishment of His throne." This is the first thing. "When He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right

hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. i. 3; x. 12). He is there as our *High Priest* (Heb. viii. 1, 2); and it is there we worship (x. 19); and it is there we are invited to come, "that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (iv. 16). What a mercy that we have God and the word of His grace to guide us.

But to return. What is the result of His *throne being established*? Mercy and truth shall go before Thy face; or, as another Scripture expresses it, "*Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other*" (Ps. lxxxv. 10). What wonderful statements! Not *mercy* apart from *truth*, nor *truth* apart from *mercy*. There is mercy for those who *need* it; and who does not? and stern *unbending truth* to condemn *our will and ways*—the Lord's word *balanced*. And now what follows? "*Blessed*"—ah! what a word—Blessed of God. Yes, and in perfect righteousness, according to His own character, "*Light and Love*." His *throne* is established. "*Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life*" (Rom. v. 21). And who is it that are blessed? The people that *know the joyful sound*. Blessed are the people that *know the joyful sound*. "*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good*" (1 Thess. iv. 21).

And now, where are we going to walk? In darkness? No. "*They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance*." Ah! what a blessed place! "*In Thy presence is fulness of joy*." And how did we get there? "*Because Thou hadst a favour unto them*" (Ps. xlv. 3). Let us abide where the Lord has set us, and if we do so we shall be saved much sorrow. "*If we walk in the light . . . . we have fellowship one with another*" (1 John i. 7), is the antidote to all mischief. Shall we be sad? Nay; "*in Thy Name shall they rejoice all the day*." *Rejoice*? Yes. How long? "*All the day*." Here is something like Luke xv. 24, "*They began to be merry*." When will the day *end*? I don't know. When will "*Thy Name*" lose its

preciousness? Never. "Bless the Lord, O my soul."  
 "And in *Thy* righteousness shall they be exalted;"  
 not their own (1 Cor. v. 21). "The righteousness of  
 God in Him." "For Thou art the glory of their  
 strength." Ah! He is everything, like the Bride in  
 the song, beaten in drawing the photograph of the  
 different parts of her Beloved, she ends with, "Yea, He  
 is altogether lovely" (see Sol. Song, v. 10-16); and if  
 the heart that is won loses sight of Him for a moment,  
 like Mary at the grave, the cry is raised, "Tell me where  
 thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away." "And  
 in Thy favour shall our horn be exalted." "*Thy*  
 favour:" "this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in  
 hope of the glory of God" (Rom. v. 2).

What is the measure of this grace? The *heart of God*; it passeth all understanding. And not only  
 "this grace wherein we stand," blessed as the thought  
 is, but far more. "Having predestinated us unto the  
 adoption of children by Jesus Christ to *Himself*,  
 according to the *good pleasure* of His *will*, to the  
 praise of the glory of His grace, which He hath freely  
 bestowed upon us in the Beloved" (Eph. i. 5, 6,  
 Revised Version). Search this subject out; it is  
 worthy of consideration.—Yours affectionately in  
 Christ,

J. B.

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"Blessed is the man whose *transgressions* are *forgiven*"  
 (Ps. xxxii. 2).

"Blessed is the man whom Thou choosest, and causest to  
*approach unto Thee*" (Ps. lxxv. 4).

"Blessed are they that *dwell* in Thy house" (Ps. lxxxiv. 4, 5).

"Blessed is the man that *walketh* not in the *way* of the  
*ungodly*" (Ps. i. 1).

"Blessed is the man that *feareth* the Lord, that delighteth  
 greatly in His commandments" (Ps. cxii. 1).

"Blessed are they that *wait* for Him" (Isaiah xxx. 18).

"Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He  
 cometh, shall find *watching*" (Luke xii. 37).

# A SKETCH FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

## THE LAST WEEK.—XI.-XIV. 2.

FROM Jericho to Jerusalem, distant about seventeen miles, the Lord next proceeded, stopping, as John tells us, one night certainly at Bethany, when Mary, the sister of Lazarus, anointed Him with the precious ointment. Of incidents, or of discourses by the way, as they passed through the desolate region, and kept mounting upwards along the track which led from the Jordan Valley to Jerusalem, we have not a word from any of the evangelists. For a desolate district for hours it was, as travellers have described it, that had to be traversed, and one frequented by robbers (Luke x. 30).

Reaching Bethany, the last week of the Lord's life had commenced (John xii. 1). Ere another Sabbath's sun had set He had died, and the stone rolled to the door of the tomb concealed from human eyes the body, which Joseph and Nicodemus had reverently, but hastily, laid in it, time not allowing of more than just enwrapping it in a linen cloth, with 100lbs. weight of myrrh and aloes mixed together, provided by the latter.

Events of the deepest importance were then at hand; and Mark has noted those of each day from the *fifth* to the *third* before the passover included. On the *fifth*, as we gather from John's gospel (xii. 12), the triumphal entry into Jerusalem took place—an event unpremeditated as far as man was concerned, and taking the inhabitants of the holy city by surprise. But who was thus to enter the city? The Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee? That was true. The raiser of Lazarus? That was also true. But more. It was Jerusalem's King, who would that day enter as such the city of the great King (Ps. xlvi. 2). In a becoming way great monarchs enter their capitals. In a suited manner would He enter

His. And centuries before had that been declared by Zechariah, one of the post-captivity prophets (ix. 9), who must have keenly felt, in common with his countrymen returned from captivity at Babylon, the low and servile state to which they were then reduced. Traditions of the past they might cherish, recalling to mind the palmy days of the Jewish monarchy, and of national independence, when orders issued at Jerusalem had been law up to the banks of the Euphrates. But all that was past, and the kings of Persia ruled over them. Yet the Jewish monarchy would be restored, and in the hour of the returned remnant's felt weakness Zechariah predicted it. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass." Thus wrote the prophet (ix. 9), and in measure the prophecy has been fulfilled. We say in measure, for Matthew, who quotes it (xxi. 5), carefully omits the words, "just, and having salvation;" for the time of Jerusalem's redemption had not then drawn nigh, though the King on that fifth day before the passover, entered as King in the manner predicted, riding on a colt, the foal of an ass. But who suggested that? The multitude did not bring an animal richly caparisoned. The disciples did not furnish the colt, and ask the Lord to mount it. The Lord took the initiative by sending two of His disciples to the entrance of Bethphage to get it. For the foal was there tied, Mark informs us, at a door without in the open street, or, perhaps, a crossway leading round the house. He told them where to find it, what to do, and what to say to the owners. Zechariah had foretold that the foal would be forthcoming for the King's use. The Lord made known where it was actually standing at that moment. Who tied it up, and why, are matters buried in oblivion. That it was there ready to carry its first rider—the King—is the point of interest for us.

The owners (Luke xix. 33) of the animal saw the disciples loosing the colt, and enquired the reason. They answered as directed by the Master: "The Lord hath need of him, and straightway He will send him back hither." So it seems Mark wrote (xi. 3), thus telling that which none of the others have recorded, that the Master required it for a temporary purpose, and would restore it when done with. That satisfied the owners. They let it go. May be they were disciples in truth, known as yet only to the Lord as such.

Covered with the garments of the disciples, the young ass was ready for the Lord. He mounted it, and they all proceeded on the way, crossing the Mount of Olives, which lay between Bethany and Jerusalem. A multitude was with them, attracted to Bethany by hearing of the resurrection of Lazarus, many of whom strewed their clothes in the way, whilst others littered the road with branches cut out of the fields. One spirit pervaded all. They would honour Him, and give Him a triumphant entrance into the city. Thus they passed over the crest of the mountain, and began the descent on the western side, the crowd now vastly increased by a multitude which had come out of Jerusalem to meet them, drawn together by the report of the miracle at Bethany (John xii. 18). This explains to us the language of both Matthew and Mark, who notice those who went before and those who followed; the second company, which had that day come forth from Jerusalem, most probably turning and heading the procession into the city.

"The Prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee," they were escorting. This, Matthew informs us (xxi. 11), was the answer of the crowd to the enquiry of people in the city. But the Prophet from Nazareth they declared was the King (Luke xix. 38), and that in the language of Psalm cxviii. 25, 26: "Save, now, I beseech Thee (*i.e.*, Hosanna), O Lord: O Lord, I beseech Thee send now prosperity. Blessed is He

that cometh in the name of the Lord." So wrote the Psalmist by the spirit of prophecy; for that composition has reference to the coming day of Israel's final deliverance. "Hosanna," cried the multitude, as they descended the slopes of Olivet and passed into the city; "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father, David. Hosanna in the highest." The One mentioned in the Psalm was in their midst. He was the King\* the heir to David's throne, under whom it will be re-established. Yet He was also the Prophet from Nazareth of Galilee. "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Nathanael had once asked (John i. 46). "Search and look, for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet," was the dictum of the Pharisees (John vii. 52). Nathanael had long ere this discovered that good could come from Nazareth. The vociferous multitude could assure the Pharisees that their dictum had no weight with them. The Prophet Jesus, from Nazareth, they were escorting into Jerusalem, and that Prophet was her King.

The Lord in this triumphant manner entered the city, and went to the temple, and looking round about upon all things, it being now eventide, He went out unto Bethany with the twelve. For this note of time, marking especially the close of that day, we are wholly indebted to Mark. And as he alone has recorded the Master's promise to return the ass, we can see how easily that could have been fulfilled, if the disciples led it back to Bethphage ere resting at Bethany for the night. They would, in that case, have restored it ere nightfall. The *fifth* day now closed, for ever to be remembered by that triumphal entry in fulfilment of the words of the prophet.

The *fourth* day began to run its course. How different was to be the experience of the disciples!

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\* The words of the crowd in verse 10 are peculiar to Mark, the last clause, "Hosanna in the highest," excepted.



They had seen their Master on the previous one receiving the homage of multitudes, and conducted over Olivet into the capital by a joyous crowd. Now He re-entered the city and temple, retracing His steps over Olivet, but it was as a hungry man, of whom none of the crowd now thought, and to whom none came to minister. A fig tree by the wayside, clothed, doubtless, with its dark, glossy leaves, betokening a tree professedly fruitful, the Lord saw, and went up to it. Covered with foliage, the promise of fruit should have been there, since the time to gather the crop had not come. "The *time of figs*," notes Mark, "was not yet." But it was fruitless, a fit emblem of the nation which, boasting of being God's people, was destitute of fruit for Him. The Lord cursed the tree, and the disciples heard it.

A popular ovation! What was it worth? He, the subject of it on the past day, was hungry now. Did He get His want supplied? No, historian has told us. But who was He? Just the popular idol of the moment, to be thrown aside when done with. All should learn about Him, for He entered the temple, and proceeded to exercise authority within its precincts, claiming it to be His house. So the traffickers in things used in its service He cast out. The moneychangers' tables He threw down, as well as the seats of them that sold doves. Further, and our evangelist alone records it, He would not permit the temple court to be desecrated for the convenience of those carrying vessels from one place to another. "He would not suffer," we read, "that any man should carry any vessel through the temple" (16). The sacredness of the house, the holiness of the enclosure, all should respect. The chief priests, the guardians of the sacred precincts, had failed in this matter. He, then, must maintain the holiness of the place. For the house was His. Jehovah Himself in the person of the Lord was present, and no one resisted Him. All evidently bowed to Him. "My house,"

He said, quoting the prophet Isaiah (lvi. 7), "shall be called an house of prayer for all the nations ; but," and here He referred seemingly to Jeremiah vii. 11, "ye have made it a den of thieves."

His work on the *fourth* day, as far as any evangelist has recorded it, was ended. And in the evening He went out of the city. The fig tree cursed and the temple cleansed, these were the great events of that day. The King had entered His capital. Jehovah had visited His house. The effect of the triumphal entry on the Pharisees John has told us (xii. 19). The effect on the scribes and on the chief priests of the cleansing of the temple both Mark and Luke have noticed. They sought to kill Him, for they feared Him, for all the people were astonished at His teaching (Mark xi. 18 ; Luke xix. 19).

The *third* day now dawned ; a busy day, as the three synoptic gospels show. It began, as far as Mark has noticed, with the lesson deduced from the withered fig tree (xi. 20-26), and ended with the prophetic forecast of Jerusalem's troubles till the Lord returns, given to the disciples in response to the question privately put to Him, when sitting on the Mount of Olives, by Peter, James, John, and Andrew (xiii. 37).

The fig tree was withered. They all saw that. It was dried up from its roots. Peter called the Lord's attention to it, who thereupon told them of the power of faith for those who ask in prayer, believing that they shall receive. "Have faith in God. Verily, I say unto you, Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up, and cast into the sea ; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass ; he shall have it. Therefore, I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them. And whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one : that your Father also which is in

heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (xi. 22-25). We have quoted the Revised Version, for there are several important differences in the passage, as well as the omission of verse 26. Believing prayer! What results from it there may be! What mighty deeds may be effected! A mountain like Olivet removed, and the heart realize the calming power of faith. "Believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them." This, it seems, Mark wrote, preserving the utterance of the Master in a way no one else has done. But such prayer can only proceed from one in charity with those who have offended him. Forgiveness must be accorded to the offending party ere the prayer of faith can be presented to God.

They reached the temple once more, and the Lord began afresh to teach the people. Engaged in that and walking about, as Mark especially notes, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders approach Him with a question relating to His, in their eyes, startling acts on the previous day. Probably taken by surprise, they were then struck dumb. Now recovered from their astonishment, they ask for His authority for what He did, and from whom He, confessedly not of Aaron's line, had received authority to order people and things within the precincts of God's house. But were they sincere? He would test them. A question about John's baptism proved them. Was his mission from heaven or from men? They knew whence it was. But to have answered aright would have condemned them. To have denied its heavenly authority would have brought them into conflict with the populace. They answered that they could not tell whence it was. They showed what they were. The Lord, therefore, refused to answer their questions about Himself. Such people might fittingly be left to themselves.

But a multitude was present. The Lord thought of them (Luke xx. 9), and spoke that parable of the husbandmen, which clearly showed who He was—the

heir, the designs also of the husbandmen, and their doom. The beloved Son of His Father they would kill, so destruction would overtake the chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees who opposed Him (Matt. xxi. 45; Luke xx. 19). The bearing of the parable His questioners perceived. They sought, therefore, to kill Him, but in the meantime they left Him, says Mark (xii 12), and went their way. Yet they did not leave Him alone, for they sent some of the Pharisees and of the Herodians to catch Him in His words (13-17). It was an artfully laid plot. Pharisees and Herodians! Who will not combine to oppose God and His Son? Pharisees and Sadducees had made common cause (Matt. xvi. 1) and tempted the Lord. Pharisees and Herodians now unite, so as, if possible, to deliver Him to the power and authority of the governor (Luke xx. 20). But in vain. Their question about the lawfulness of paying tribute was answered in a way they had not expected, and they marvelled at Him.

Sadducees next came forward with their question, involving, as they thought, the denial of a resurrection. To them He replied. They had referred to the Pentateuch (Deut. xxv. 5). He answered them from it (Exod. iii. 6). The provision for a levirate marriage demonstrated they thought the impossibility of a resurrection of the body. Two important things, however, they left out, viz., the power of God, and the teaching of the Word of God (Mark xii. 24). Men in the resurrection state will be equal to the angels, and will never die, so marriage, which now perpetuates the race, will not be required. Further, God's word to Moses (Exod. iii. 6) implied resurrection. Hence they greatly erred.

Sadducees put to silence, a scribe perceiving that He had answered them well brought up a question in debate, it seems, amongst the orthodox party, viz., which was the first commandment of all? The Lord's reply from Deut. vi. 4, 5 and Leviticus xix. 18 more

than answered the question asked. And the scribe, as Mark alone has recorded it, acknowledged the truth of the answer, and confessed that loving God and loving one's neighbour, in a word, the manifesting the divine nature, was more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. Love is the fulfilling of the law, wrote Paul (Rom. xiii. 10); and he taught the Corinthians that it is the greatest of Christian graces (1 Cor. xiii. 13). "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and do His commandments," wrote John (1 John v. 2). We can understand the Lord's prompt reply to that scribe, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God;" for to *acknowledge* the teaching as true is one thing, to carry it out is another! That question answered, the Pharisees, the Herodians, the Sadducees, and scribes all were silent. In wisdom had He met some; from the Word had He answered others. Now the Lord questioned them about David's Lord being David's Son. How much light could that psalm cast on the difficulties the Jews felt, in that He being a man made Himself God (John x. 33). The Lord here pointed to that which could solve what to them was an enigma. But who of all that heard Him profited by His question?

With a warning against the pretentious scribes, so fair in profession, but so defective in practice, followed by the commendation of the poor widow, whose practice, as proved by her self-denying offering, was in harmony with her profession, the Lord's stay in the temple court that day came to an end. He was walking in the temple when the chief priests challenged His authority for having cleansed it. He was sitting over against the treasury when that widow cast in her two mites. Thus Mark, with his usual careful attention to details, describes Him. Now leaving the temple, and predicting its overthrow, His attention having been called by a disciple to its stones and its buildings, He crossed the valley

which separated it from Olivet, and sat down on the slope of the mountain, facing, as Mark alone has told us, the sacred enclosure of that which has been described as "one of the most splendid architectural combinations of the ancient world." \*

There, at the request, Mark tells us, of Peter, James, John, and Andrew, who asked Him privately, the Lord foretold the fortunes of the city and temple, and the time of trial which His saints will experience just previous to His return in power. Of the three evangelists who record this prophecy, Luke dwells on the capture of the city by the Romans under Titus, whereas Matthew and Mark dwell especially on the troubles in the future consequent on the setting up in the temple of the abomination of desolation, as mentioned by Daniel the prophet. Reading what Mark has written, we find little that has not been recorded also by Matthew, the instruction to disciples in verse 11 and the warning in verses 33-35 being the two chief exceptions. Into the details of this prophecy we cannot here enter.

And now, as far as Mark is concerned, the instruction of that day is brought to an end, though much more is related by Matthew (xxi. 28-32; xxii. 1-14; xxiii.; xxiv. 45-xxv. 46) who alone has preserved what these several portions set forth.

The *third* day before the passover closed. Nothing more is told in this gospel of the Lord's movements, beyond the giving directions to Peter and John to prepare for the paschal feast, till He sat down with the twelve in the upper room on the night before His death. The events of the fifth, the fourth, and the third days Mark has carefully distinguished, as none of the others have done. The last week, therefore, is pretty well described. Activity in service characterised the Lord on that *day* of His life recorded in i. 21-38. Activity characterised Him

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\* Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. iii., p. 1464.

during the last *week* of His life. Now the time for His ministry whilst upon earth was drawing rapidly to a close, for the hour of His passion approached. About that Mark, in common with the other evangelists, has written. In another, and concluding sketch, we hope, if permitted, to look into it. C. E. S.

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"FAREWELL."

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FAREWELL, beloved servant of thy God,  
 Finished thy course, thy race at length is run,  
 And thou shalt hear (tho' neath the earthy sod  
 Thy body lies) the Lord's sweet word, "Well done!"

Yea, good and faithful servant, His own joy  
 Shall then be thine; careful o'er His "few things"  
 Hast thou e'er been, and then without alloy  
 He'll make thee ruler o'er His many things.

Thy sufferings for Him are for ever past,  
 Reproach was thine, and bitter malice too,  
 Scorn and derision to the very last  
 Of thy long, toilsome life of eighty-two.

Wondrously gifted teacher of His word,  
 Expositor unequalled to His Church,  
 Most valiant witness for the truth of God,  
 And servant of the saints thou loved'st so much!

But glory now awaits thee e'en with Him  
 Who gave thee grace and strength for suffering here;  
 Seldom, indeed, thy burning light grew dim,  
 Thy sojourn-time below pass'd in His fear.

The fear of grieving Him thy heart loved best,  
 The fear of wounding Him who led thee well,  
 The fear to break the wondrous peace and rest  
 That in His presence did all fear repel.

Meanwhile, belov'd, the better thing is thine,  
 With Christ thou art, tho' not yet glorified;  
 With Him thou waitest through that "little while"  
 In which He gathers those for whom He died.

Then when the gleanings have been gathered in,  
 And God's long-suff'ring patience waits no more,  
 Christ, mighty Firstfruits, shall, apart from sin,  
 Bring home for aye His death's abundant store !

A. R.

1882.

D.

## NOTES OF A LECTURE ON REV. III. 7-13.

By J. N. D., 1863.

I READ the address of the Lord to the church of Philadelphia. This truth stands very simply on the Scripture. No exhibition of ruin, no exhibition of weakness in those who love the Lord, is in any wise incompatible with the fulness of Christ being made perfect in them: His fulness in their emptiness, His strength in their weakness, His riches in their poverty. I call your attention to remark the position which you and I are in now. Turn back to Pentecost. Christ had ascended into heaven. He had shown the speciality of His love to His people in sending down the Holy Ghost to them. There was really a people of God upon earth who were thoroughly unselfish, thoroughly unworldly, whose hearts had been carried away from earth into heaven with the Lord Jesus, and they were waiting here on earth till He came back, a people whose hearts were absolutely up there like a lake which reflects upon its surface the image of the object above it. They mirrored the Christ who was before their hearts. *Now* I find nothing of the sort. I may find *souls*, but no such *company*. I could not say, if you know the face of the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven you will find all His lineaments reflected in a people down here. In Thessalonians we get a company waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of ripening evil.

That which was set up ecclesiastically has utterly failed, but the blessed Lord does not fail. We get the same thing in Rev. xxii. 11—a strange mixture of



light and darkness, profession and inconsistency, and a little further on the Spirit and the Bride inviting the Lord's return. This brings to our mind distinctly a state of things like the address to Philadelphia: awful confusion on earth, a mixture of good and evil, the Word of God came in suddenly to call His people; and I find that, in spite of the confusion and the ruin, there are those who are enabled to be responsive to the mind and thoughts of the Lord Jesus Christ. We hear around us a great deal about the Church, the Church, the Church, "the temple of the Lord are we," and that which assumes to be this is that which is characterised by the power of Satan (Rome) or the power of the world.

It is remarkable and comforting we don't get here the Lord walking in the midst of the candlesticks holding the seven stars, *i.e.*, we do not find any of these characteristics, but have quite another character, not an official one, that which was His own, and could not be put off: "He that is Holy, He that is True." These two titles are evidently divine. We could not say of John, he was the holy and the true one. He was called to be holy and to walk in the truth. But when we come to the blessed Lord, it is exactly Himself—His separatedness from evil, His faithfulness in all that belonged to God when on earth, now in heaven, and when He comes back again will still be the same. He is presented in a time of failure, of weakness and exhaustion among His people down here, still as the One expressing the character of the Father.

We are called, when put in a place of responsibility in the power of the new life, to meet it. If all has failed, God has not changed. I can look to Him, the giver, and receive something which changes not.

God is the giver—in every respect Holy and True. It was not saying now, "I have done with you," but "Behold, I have the key of David," and "I have set before thee an open door." He had got the key just at the time when all was failing. He could not

present one of the insignia of the Church, because they had all been lost, betrayed away; but He could say, "I am not changed." He was the opener and the shutter. Mark the extent of Christ's two services. If Christ opens, who can shut? He had opened, He has opened. It is not "Come and see"! There was no display of power, nothing outwardly wonderful, but the course was opened to them, and "Shutteth and no man openeth." He is not here speaking of His sovereign prerogative: "I have set before thee an open course, and if you do not enter in I can shut it up again." Quite true; but here it speaks of being shut to the adversaries. He can come in when all the power of Satan seems rampant, and can put a stop or overturn either in grace or providence, *i.e.*—take for example the late events in Spain—He controls the passions of men; "even the wrath of man shall praise Him, and the remainder of wrath will He restrain;" or in our own land, Henry VIII. Remark how beautifully He comes out just after and meets their hearts—not one word about *their* works, and all about Himself. He had begun by saying, "I know thy works." Well, about works. What were they? There was nothing that man could take notice of. Verse 8. Only two things: "thou hast kept My words and hast not denied My name," and what have you got to shew? Nothing for man's eye to notice. Who knows if I have kept His word and not denied His name? I ought to know, and the blessed Lord knows it. If His word is something treasured up in your soul, and if, in spite of feebleness, you have not denied a certain character which was displayed, you have on you the tokens of that character which first gladdened your heart. It is exceedingly precious in a day of weakness and feebleness, when the Lord says, I've done with the churches, but I've relation (or connection) with a people on the earth, to know Himself as the fountain of all blessing, the source of all strength, His strength like a river flowing into our

souls. Will our consciences bear the challenge about the "word of God dwelling in us richly"? They ought to. Does He see the word dwelling in you? God's eye marks, and not only this, but the practical dwelling on the character of the blessed Lord which that word reveals.

They took Him for *everything*; in their weakness they found Him at their side. In ver. 9 we get, in connection with the adversaries, the expressive hand of the Lord, and this is not an unusual thing. Even now He brings the opposers down to own that these very people whom they had despised are a people loved of the Lord. And knowing His mind, the result will be, I will write on you the tokens that I have loved you. There are tokens even the world cannot deny. It is often forced to confess, certainly these people have the favour of God upon them. Ver. 10: You have been identified with Me in the wilderness, you have kept My patience, you have recognised that I am in no *hurry* to rise up and take the kingdom, and you are waiting with Me. There is an hour of trouble coming to try the dwellers on earth, such as those spoken of Phil. iii. 9; but you who have not denied My name, &c., have not seized on anything as your rightful portion; but you are waiting for the portion I have to give you, and are counting on it. You were willing to wait till I rose up; you were not satisfied with all the good things here without Me, but you waited till you and I could be together. I will keep you from that hour. Verse 11. There was a crown. What had they got to hold fast? Not their crown. Christ has got my crown; I have not got it. They were to hold fast that which characterised them. There was the difficulty of overcoming when iniquity abounds and the love of many waxing cold. How at such a time does the faith act which overcomes? By two things:—by treasuring up the word of Christ and not denying His name. Then it will be like a river flowing in from the blessed Lord Himself, and keeping

—not will keep—your hearts bright and fresh while you are holding fast that word, that Name, and that patience.

Then He brings out royal, divine, blessed words to cheer their hearts, especially characterised by association with Himself. There is something peculiar in the promise, ver. 12. It is very different to that given to Laodicea. Supposing this had been addressed to Laodicea, it would have been out of keeping. They were a carnal people, boasting of their riches. He gives them something that even the natural mind can appreciate. They were seeking the highest place on earth, so he says, Follow Me, and I will give you something better than it all—you shall sit with Me on My throne. But here were these poor weak things who had got no excellence. He knew every one of them, and He says, I have got certain things very near to Myself, and I propose to place you in permanence; then when the time comes many will be placed in the temple of God who have been thought little of here. He puts them in the place of blessing to go no more out. I will write upon him the name of My God; not merely a stone here, but the most precious of all things to His heart, "My new Name." What were the thoughts of the Lord Jesus about the name (Eph. i. 21; Phil. ii. 9)? The name of the city of My God. God has got a character which He shewed out there. You shall bear that character. Many thoughts are crowded together here—a dwelling-place, "a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker are God," the special name, New Jerusalem, which none but He could give. Jehovah will provide perfection—the place where all His character can shine out. They might be oppressed with difficulties. What did it signify if these poor Philadelphians and Christ were of one mind together? The very difficulties were found by God to display the riches of His grace, to shew forth the fulness that is in Christ. I suppose all the churches had contemptible

thoughts about Philadelphia—a poor set of things, weakness within and difficulties without. Christ looks upon them—evil is ripening around—and He says to these poor weak things, I can let My heart flow out to them, the grace that is in Me flow out, and there will be no mistake. It is very important to see that man has spoiled all, and will spoil everything God has put into his hands, and even till the Lord comes it is just the same. God has not changed: He can make the most desolate place to blossom and bud. Christ is not changed: He is coming forth to change. His people now are suffering on the earth. When He comes this will be changed. There ought to be a people waiting for Him to come. Have you tasted the unwearied freshness of the love of the Lord Jesus Christ? Are your thoughts moved by His thoughts? What is thus connecting you in all your weakness with Himself in heaven? We want stirring up. It is a time of weakness; man's mind is full of pride and exalting itself. It ought to be a time when the blessedness of what Christ is to His poor weak ones is more and more tasted by us. This leads us to know His nearness. Christ can keep nothing back from you; He has not forgotten His poor people down here. He counts nothing too good to hold out for their benefit and encouragement.

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IN worship we seek not sermons, but the presence of God; the accomplishment of that promise "where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." I do not go there to hear a sermon, nor do I like to hear one; I go to worship, to find the Lord, and worship Him; and I judge that if brethren are incapable of enjoying this, it is a very bad sign. I do not go with my ears open to hear man, however gifted, but to worship God: and I beg to press this on brethren. I feel thankful if any one be led of God to give a word of exhortation or comfort. I know that the flesh has abused this, forgetting the

word, "Swift to hear, slow to speak." My brethren, be not many teachers. But I add most decidedly, that though I have seen liberty used for license (and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty), I have found where God was owned incomparably more of His presence and blessing than where man's arrangements had taken the place of God. There might be evils to deplore and to correct, but there was God to enjoy because God was owned. Elsewhere I have found decent things of man, a fair show in the flesh, but a sepulchre. The God I found delight in was not there; for even God's grace or gift in teaching is a wholly different thing from God's presence in the way of worship. But I add that where in worship this latter is slighted, I have never even found the former. It is written, "Cursed be the man who putteth his trust in man." Correct the evils, brethren; but let us not disown God nor His goodness. If you cannot know His presence in worship, nor what the blessing of this is, humble yourselves; you have suffered great loss, you have spiritually declined. I shall be glad often to wait not merely to compose my spirit, to gather up my strength from the Lord before I enter on His work or open my mouth to speak in His Name, but to wait in the hope to gather up strength through the blessing conferred upon some other beloved one of God, or by joining together, whoever may be used as our mouthpiece, in thanksgiving, and prayer, and praise; for "the joy of the Lord is your strength."—  
J. N. D.

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ISAIAH xxvi. 9.—"The inhabitants of the world" will only learn righteousness by divine judgment. The Christian ought to take his part in suffering; he who walks with the world does not understand the interests of Christ, and is weakened. He has not the desire for the glory of Christ, and does not suffer for Christ. Every hope of the world's conversion by the Gospel is without ground in the Word of God.—*Extract.*

## THE CAPTAIN OF OUR SALVATION.

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CHRIST bears thee on His shoulder,  
 He bears thee on His heart ;  
 Well may'st thou muse and ponder,  
 Nor from His side depart.

He keeps thee thro' the danger  
 Along the thorny way—  
 A pilgrim and a stranger  
 'Mid ruin and decay.

And He was once a stranger  
 In this sad scene of strife !  
 The Babe laid in a manger,  
 God's Son, the Prince of Life !

He led a life most holy,  
 This dark world's wondrous Light ;  
 His hand supplied the hungry,  
 And gave the blind their sight !

Down here the "Man of Sorrows"  
 Acquainted with their grief,  
 The crowd Him daily follows,  
 Nor seeks in vain relief.

But He, the Lord of glory,  
 They nailed to the tree !  
 There told He out the story  
 Of all His love to thee !

And in the grave they laid Him,  
 High Sabbath day drew on ;  
 God lookèd thro' the darkness,  
 And raised His Victor Son !

The Father's glory raised Him,  
 And now He's set on high ;  
 There faith with joy beholds Him,  
 And waits His drawing nigh !

## LETTER OF INTEREST.

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 TO A BLIND BROTHER.

DEAR BROTHER,—I write a line, not having been able to see you in my hasty visit, to sympathise with you in your present trial, quite feeling how real a one it is to you.

I enter not only into the way this would exercise and naturally prey upon the mind in all its thoughts, "the multitude of thoughts within me," as the Spirit of God deigns to speak. It is a serious trial to the father of a family, occupied as you are, to be deprived of sight. When the outward trial of being thus rendered comparatively helpless brings all the heart into exercise, the subjection to God's will, the humbling ourselves under His mighty hand, and contentment with whatever lot He may assign us; and besides the question of a humbled will, there often arises doubts practically of His love. An impugning of His wisdom is almost a preference to be out of His hands—what Elihu calls a choosing iniquity rather than affliction. I do not say that this has been produced in you at all. I speak of the trial and temptation where such a case arises, and I speak of it, dear brother, that you may be helped by the remembrance of our Father's love, and turn at once to Him and the assurance of His love. Remember that God, even our God, has better thoughts for us than rest or a portion *here*. He is educating us for a blessed and eternal rest, free from evil and all that would cause it, and He is bent on the blessing of His children; and, moreover, He is bound by His holiness to purge us suitably (though most precious) for the place He has called us to. How often He lets Satan do this painful task, and try and sift us as Job, but His hand and will are behind it all; He gives His saints up to his hand to a certain point, but only so far as to bring the heart fully to a bearing before Himself, and



to enter into deep questions with it, breaking down its pride.

But not only was the tempter absolutely limited in what he was to do to Job, but it was the Lord who first proposed his case to Satan. He had His own end in it, as we see. Job gets into blessing with a knowledge of himself and of God incomparably beyond what he had before. In all these cases, therefore, though Satan may sift and try us by a thousand trials without and thoughts within, our business is to think of His hand and love who originates it all as to the ultimate purpose. By its being the enemy the soul is sifted in it—tempted to murmur, "God could not do *that*;" and what flesh is is fully brought out to us, and there is a giving up of self which enables us infinitely better to appreciate God. Be assured then of His *love*. "Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us."

But for this we should murmur and complain—think God *in spirit*, if not in *judgment*, hard and wrong. With the sense of His love we are more than conquerors. None of these things separate us from it. May we know that it flows from love, a love we have known, His not sparing Jesus, and by every step of His life in a world of evil, a *Jehovah of Israel* stood engaged to bless and punish in government—most patient, no doubt, but still in government, which manifested outwardly the sense He had of such and such conduct. But *the Father* stands engaged to much deeper work. He keeps us in His own Name as a holy Father, and then deals with us according to that which, as such a Father, He would work in our souls. For such a blessing He is bringing His children in inward life to Himself. Alas! how much there is often to be done in us. Do not faint, therefore, dear brother, if a rebuke is come thus. He

speaks to you as a Father (and what a Father!) to a child, chastening whom He loves. Trust His love—trust it for yourself, for your family, for everything. Be assured nothing escapes Him, and you will find in the end it is not an ungracious act He has done. Let the thought of grace and His perfect love come in between all your thoughts, and you will find His hand sweet, though it smite you, and Christ, your eternal portion, sweet in a way you never knew before. The first feeling may be merely bowing to His hand and will; the next, the sweet recognition of His hand of love; and then, in a heart weaned from other things, a capacity to discover the excellency and enjoy the grace of Christ which will make you bless the day the Lord sent it you. Be assured His love makes no mistakes with us—it is certain and infinite. We know it, poor wretched sinners, that we are by the gift of Jesus; and oh! what is our eternal portion in grace—yea, glory with Him—compared with troubles here below?

Better suffer in a world of sin. The manner of it must be such as makes us feel a good deal, or it would be no use.

May your own soul be kept in peace.

The Lord be with you, and work His whole work of inward blessing with this trial for eternal joy.—Yours affectionately in the Lord,

J. N. D.

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WHAT name could be so dear to God as the name of Jesus?—the name of that One who devoted Himself at all cost to glorify His Father, and to glorify Him here where He had been so greatly dishonoured,—to glorify Him, too, as *Man*, where men had dishonoured Him, and to do this in humiliation and suffering, and in obedience! All this the NAME of Jesus signifies and imports and tells out to God and the Father, and in the sinner's opened ear.—J. R.

**"THE PIONEER OF WISDOM"**

—AUGUST 28th, 1891.

*F. Shaw & Co., Dockhead, London.*

THE idea of endless misery, which is of heathen origin, is held only by those who savour not the things that be of God, &c. Nowhere in the Scriptures do we read of the *soul* being eternally damned, much less suffering eternal torment.

At the first resurrection his (the unbeliever's) soul and spirit will appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.

The glory of the elect is the redemption of spirit, soul, and *body*, as contrasted with the salvation of the soul only.

We find the beloved disciple also bearing witness to the salvation of the rebellious at the second resurrection. The bodies of these have been eternally damned.

The Church of the firstborn, the 144,000 elect of God, the spirits of the just predestinated from before the foundation of the world to be conformed to the image of God through keeping both law and gospel, and under the guidance of the two immortal Spirits, Christ and Jerusalem above, thereby doing a greater work than Jesus did in overcoming all evil and becoming entitled to the tree of life. These comprise the third Church spoken of by Isaiah and the apostle Paul.

**ANSWERS.**

BUT God says in one of the earliest books of the Bible, "Hell is naked before Him" (Job xxvi. 6), and "the wicked shall be turned into hell" (Ps. ix. 17). He bids us "fear Him which is able to destroy *both soul and body in hell*" (Matt. x. 28), "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark ix. 44, 46, 48). These words are stated three times, and it is also said, "the fire that *never* shall be quenched" (ver. 43).

But Scripture says, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection" (Rev. xx. 6). Are unbelievers blessed and holy?

But Scripture draws no such contrast; none, according to Scripture, will have the salvation of the soul who will not also have the redemption of spirit, soul, and body.

Neither the beloved disciple nor any other writer of Scripture speaks either of the salvation of the rebellious (or of any salvation at all) at the second resurrection, nor of their or any other bodies being eternally damned.

The Church of the firstborn (Heb. xii. 23) and the 144,000 (Rev. vii. 4) are different companies; the former a present company gathered from Jews and Gentiles for *heavenly* blessing; the latter a future company sealed from the twelve tribes of Israel for *earthly* blessing. Nowhere in Scripture is "Jerusalem above" called a Spirit, nor are two immortal Spirits anywhere spoken of. "Right to the tree of life" (Rev. xxii. 14) is only by washed robes (see Revised Version), not by works of any kind. No "third Church," nor second even, is spoken of in

Adam transgressed in partaking of the tree (woman) in its impurity.

I see mostly clearly the necessity and glory of keeping the law, for it was ordained to life. Enoch, Elijah, and Jesus, one without the law, one with the law, and one with the law and the gospel.

The body, or dust, will never rise again, but the soul which sleeps in it will awake when the spirit is sent to rejoin it in the resurrection and form a spiritual body. The soul sleeps in the chambers of the grave. It (the soul) is sown in corruption (the body) and raised in incorruption. The soul united with the spirit will form a spiritual body.

The Holy Ghost is the female portion of the Godhead, Jerusalem above (see Gal. iv. 26; Jer. xxxiii. 16). Her mission is only to the house of Israel.

All men will be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

Scripture. There is "*one* body" (Eph. iv. 4), "*the* Church of God" (1 Cor. x. 32).

Not a word of Scripture indicates any such transgression, or that the tree was the woman.

"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. v. 4). "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse" (iii. 10). "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John i. 17).

This is contradicted by Matt. xxvii. 52, "Many *bodies* of the saints which slept arose," their bodies had been sleeping in the grave from whence they then arose. No Scripture speaks of a spiritual body formed of soul and spirit reunited, nor does it ever speak of the soul sleeping. The body sleeps in the grave. "*It* is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor. xv. 42, 44). The "natural body" is not the soul.

Scripture never speaks of any female portion of the Godhead, nor of Jerusalem above as being part of the Godhead. It speaks of the Holy Ghost as "He," "Him," and "Himself" (John xvi. 7, 8; 13). Nor does any Scripture limit His mission to the house of Israel. Cornelius and his house were Gentiles (Acts x. 44); so also were those spoken of in Acts xv. 8, of whom Peter declares that God had given "them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us."

Scripture nowhere says this, but says the very contrary. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 36).

The body, when laid in the grave, returns again to dust, and that cannot rise again. All souls belong unto the Lord, and none will be eternally lost. They are sleeping in the dust of the earth, and must rise again. The unbelievers will receive the gift which is in store for the rebellious at the second resurrection.

The Spirit of Truth is now . . . opening the seals.

Those whose bodies were changed to immortality were made like unto the Son of God; whereas those taking part in a resurrection glory were only made like unto and equal with the angels.

The great apostle of the Gentiles did not think that man's body is already the temple of the Spirit, for he adds, "The temple of God is holy."

His (Christ's) clothing was the Spirit, and as this withdrew He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

The three births mentioned in the Scriptures, viz., the first birth, when we are brought into this world by our natural mother; the second, when the souls are brought forth in the resurrection to form a habitation for the spirits of those who have lost their bodies; and the third birth obtained by the elect of God, when mortal puts on immortality. Those who have a clear hope of the common salvation seek to be born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible; and Paul tells us that

Job knew better; he says, "Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet *in my flesh* shall I see God" (Job xix. 26). Again and again Paul speaks of the resurrection of *the dead*. That cannot be the soul for it never dies and is never buried. Scripture never speaks of a gift for any at the second resurrection.

Scripture says the seals will be opened by the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, the Lamb of God (Rev. v.)—that is not the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Ghost.

This distinction is not found in Scripture; it is a purely human idea. All who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ up to the time of His coming will then have glorified bodies like unto His (Phil. iii. 21).

On the contrary, he says, "Your body *is* the temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. vi. 19), and it was for this very reason that the Corinthians were taught not to sin against their bodies, but glorify God in them.

No Scripture speaks of Christ being clothed with the Spirit, or of the Spirit's being withdrawn from Him, or of His ever addressing the Spirit. He cried to God.

There are no three births mentioned in Scripture. There are no spirits which lose their bodies, nor any bodies lost. Those bodies which are not raised at the first resurrection are raised at the second. The mortal putting on immortality (1 Cor. xv. 54) is at the first resurrection, and is never termed a "third birth," or described as birth. Those who are saved *have been already* born again, *have* eternal life; and John wrote that they might know *they had it* (1 John v. 13). The wheat and tares are not

the dead are raised incorruptible. They cannot prove this second birth until the resurrection. The third birth is only for the living, those who are redeemed from death. There are two seeds in man, the wheat and the tares; and these must be separated before he can be even begotten of the Spirit.

His blood will be cleansed, waiting for the new birth, when it will be washed away in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

The soul goes to the grave, called hell, and sleeps there till the first resurrection.

Jesus proved Himself to be begotten of the Father and born of Jerusalem above (Gal. iv. 26) as He appeared to His disciples within closed doors. So is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Woman being the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

God hath purchased the souls of all men by the death of His Son (Ezek. xviii. 4).

It is the evil in the blood which makes man **LIABLE TO DEATH**. The promise of God has yet to be fulfilled: "I will cleanse their blood which I have not cleansed." The apostle had not the evil removed from his blood. In order to understand how evil entered the blood we must go back to the fall. Woman is described as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In her was life and death, and she through partaking of her own evil during her uncleanness, caused it to be mixed with the good, contrary to the command of God, as is

sown in any man, but in the field, which is *the world*. Nicodemus was not taught that the wheat and the tares must be separated before he could be born of the Spirit. Wheat and tares were to grow together in the world until the harvest in the end of the world (Matt. xiii. 37-39).

Blood cleansing is from blood guiltiness (Psalm li. 14) and defilement (Isaiah iv. 4). Scripture nowhere speaks of our waiting for new birth when our blood will be washed away, but by the blood of Christ we are then cleansed from our sins.

Scripture never speaks of the soul sleeping. It passes into hades—state or place of departed spirits—not to the grave.

Scripture says He was born of the virgin Mary, nowhere that He was born of Jerusalem above. Nor does it connect being born of the Spirit with doing miraculous works.

This is pure invention, a human addition to Scripture.

Scripture attributes this purchase to the Son, "the Lord that bought *them*," not their souls only (2 Pet. ii. 1).

Death is the fruit of sin. Scripture never speaks of evil being removed from the blood, nor of its entering the blood of any person (see the answer given above), nor of the woman as the tree of knowledge of good and evil, nor of there being life and death in her, nor of her partaking of her own evil, nor of that being contrary to the command of God, nor is anything of that kind shown in the fifteenth of Leviticus. These statements are all of them gross fabrications in denial of the Word of God.

shown in the fifteenth of Leviticus. Through that transgression all mankind are inoculated with the poison of death. The heart of man became the seat of Satan, &c.

The wicked go down to the grave, from whence there is no return, *i.e.*, as far as the body is concerned.

All have perished through sin.

If any man's work be burned, he shall suffer *loss*; if his body be consumed in the grave, he cannot reach perfection; although by faith his soul will be raised in the first resurrection.

The truth is now being revealed to me by the aid of the two immortal Spirits.

There are three Churches spoken of in the Scriptures (Isaiah xlv. 5; 1 Cor. x. 32). "One shall say, I am the Lord's," the Gentile Church, Christendom, claiming the merits of our Lord's blood. "And another shall call himself by the name of Jacob," the Jewish Church, Judaism, claiming God's promises to Jacob. The third Church is now being formed, gathered out from the two former, and is the remnant of Israel, who will seek the fulness of the Spirit that they may sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, and by the union of law and gospel have a right to the tree of life. "And shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel."

The bodies of all who go to the grave are consumed, eternally

This is contradicted by John v. 28, 29; Rev. xx. 5, 12, 13.

Scripture teaches that all are lost, but only those who die in their sins perish (John iii. 15, 16).

We wait "for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. viii. 23). Then we shall be perfected, body, soul, and spirit. Souls are not raised at the first resurrection, but the bodies of the just.

Scripture speaks of "One Spirit" (Eph. iv. 4). "Ye have an unction from the Holy One" (1 John ii. 20; see also John xvi. 7-15). "The two immortal Spirits" are a mere human invention.

The three Churches are equally inventions. Isaiah xlv. 5 does not speak of any Church, and 1 Cor. x. 32 speaks only of *one* — "the Church of God." No union of law and gospel gives right to the tree of life, but robes washed in the blood of Christ. See Revised Version, Rev. xxii. 14.

Scripture does not speak of bodies being eternally damned,

damm'd, turned to dust (Job vii. 9; 2 Sam. xi. 8, 14). There is no hope for the resurrection of *the body*, but all *souls* which have been sleeping in the dust shall awake. All souls are the Lord's (Ez. xviii. 4), and will be saved in God's appointed time, the soul of the believer entering into the joy of his Lord at the first resurrection, whilst the unbeliever is cast back to the second death, banished from the presence of God for a season, but their punishment is not eternal.

The soul of Jesus was laid in hell, *i.e.*, the grave (Acts ii. 27, 31).

The hope of the Bride of Christ is not a resurrection glory.

God created the evil (Isaiah xlv. 7). It was placed by God in the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the body of the woman. Our first parents were warned not to touch it, but they fell into disobedience (Jas. i. 15).

nor is the body being turned to dust the equivalent of eternal damnation. Christ's body was raised and He was the firstfruits, therefore all who sleep in Him will have their "mortal bodies" quickened by His Spirit that dwelleth in them (Rom. viii. 11). The statement made is a positive denial of the plainest Scriptures. Scripture never speaks of casting back to the second death, or the unbeliever being banished for a season from the presence of God, but, on the contrary, the lake of fire is the second death (Rev. xx. 14).

Revised Version shows that the word is not *hell*, nor the *grave*, but *hades*—place or state of the unclothed *spirit*; "neither wilt Thou give Thy Holy One to see corruption" in like manner relates to the *body*. In Rev. i. 18 we see that Christ has the keys of death and *hades*—the state of the body (death) and that of the soul (*hades*). All is simple if we adhere closely to Scripture.

On the contrary, He will fashion our vile body at the first resurrection unto the likeness of His body of glory (Phil. iii. 21), and this *is* the hope of the Bride of Christ.

In the sense of judgment He did create evil, not in the sense of sin. Evil was not placed by God in the tree or in the woman. Neither our first parents nor the man had warning not to touch the woman. These statements constitute a flagrant denial of God's account of the fall. For God's creating evil (judgment) see Jer. i. 14, vi. 1, xi. 17, xvii. 18, xviii. 8-11, xxvi. 19; Amos iii. 6. Evil in the sense of sin is from beneath, and not from above (James i. 13).



# SPIRIT OF SACRED POETRY.

## GERMAN REFORMATION ERA.

THERE is a characteristic freshness and purity, as well as spiritual fervour, in the devotional lyrics which ushered in, and accompanied the Protestant Reformation of Germany. A greater variety in the subject of these hymns is no less noticeable, as also the peculiar circumstances which called them forth. No longer do these melodies come to us from the cloister of monkish asceticism, devoted mainly to the contemplation of the cross and passion of our Lord, not to refer to the idolatrous character of the majority of them, but they pertain to the daily needs and experiences of active Christian life. They are heart-bursts from the chamber of domestic sorrow, glad orisons of praise from the harvest-field, earnest appeals for Divine succour amidst the terrors of war,—the voices of the inner life of the individual Christian amid the various activities of those stirring times of transition and trial.

Well has it been said by D'Aubigné, that Poetry caught the living flame kindled up by the Reformation. The souls of Luther, and many of his coadjutors, elevated by faith to the loftiest flights of thought, excited to enthusiasm by conflicts and perils,—in a word, inspired by the poetic genius of the Old Testament, and by their faith in Old and New,—soon poured out their feelings in religious songs, in which poetry and music mingled. Thus the sixteenth century witnessed the revival of the psalmody which had consoled the martyrs of the first Christian age.

A pious bishop of Basle, Christopher of Utenheim, caused his name to be written on a picture painted on glass, which is still at Basle,\* and encircled it with this device, which he desired to have always before

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\* D'Aubigne.

his eyes : " My hope is the cross of Christ : I seek grace, and not works." A poor Carthusian brother, Martin, writes a touching confession, in which he says, " O God, most charitable ! I know that I cannot be saved, and satisfy Thy justice, otherwise than through the merit, the very innocent passion, and the death of Thy well-beloved Son. Holy Jesus ! all my salvation is in Thy hands. Thou canst not turn from me the hands of Thy love, for they have created, formed, and redeemed me !" The piety of the good monk would never have been known to us, had not an old dwelling, which had formed part of the convent in Basle, been taken down, in the year 1776, when this confession of faith was discovered in a wooden box, which his own hands must have placed in the wall of his cell. Let us cherish the hope, that many another cloistered relic of this priceless order, although as yet undiscovered, may have existed, as a memorial that the spirit of truth had not wholly forsaken the haunts of men during these dark ages.

Light from heaven burst upon the darkened mind of Luther, when the vicar-general Staupitz announced to him for the first time the great foundation truth, that not in works and penance, but in " love toward God, and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ," true repentance consists. " Seek not conversion in emaciation and suffering, but love Him who first loved thee." Luther listened in rapt attention : his heart was surprised with an unknown joy, his mind with a strange and unknown light. Thus illumined himself, he soon began to scatter abroad those rays of light upon others ; while the Bible, which he found chained up in a monastery, in a dead language, he ultimately gave to the common people in their own vernacular.

Often did there seem to meet in Luther the very opposite poles in man's character. He, for example, for whom Richter had said his words were half battles,—he, when he first began to preach, suffered

unheard-of agony. "Oh, Dr. Staupitz, Dr. Staupitz," said he to the vicar-general of his order, "I cannot do it; I shall die in three months. Indeed, I cannot do it."

Dr. Staupitz, a wise and considerate man, said upon this, "Well, Sir Martin, if you must die, you must; but remember that they need good heads up yonder too. So preach, man, preach, and then live or die as it happens." So Luther preached and lived, and he became, indeed, one great whirlwind of energy, to work without resting in this world.

A little bird, having alighted at sunset on the bough of a pear-tree that grew in Luther's garden, Luther looked upon it, and said, "That little bird, how it covers its head with its wings, and will sleep there, so still and fearless, though over it are the infinite starry spaces, and the great blue depths of immensity. Yet it fears not: it is at home. The God that made it, too, is there."

When Zwingli, "the hope of Switzerland and of the Protestant Church," was suffering from an attack of the plague, and thought to be dying, he gave utterance in German to the following plaintive strain:—

Death's at my door, walks by my side!  
 Hand of all power, in Thee do I hide!  
 Christ, in alarm I beg for Thy aid;  
 Lift Thy pierced arm, break the foe's blade.  
 But if, at noon, Thou call'st me home,  
 'Tis not too soon: Jesus, I come!

Meanwhile, the disease seemed to be gaining upon him; and, with the little power remaining to him, he faintly said,—

I'm near my goal, and want Thy cheer!  
 Body and soul dissolve with fear;  
 Death aims his blow,—my tongue is dumb,  
 My senses go, my hour is come!  
 The fiend is feeling for his prey;  
 He is stealing life away.

I'll fear no more his voice or eye :  
 Jesus, before Thy cross I lie !

But the gentle reformer had not yet finished his work. Life's smouldering spark glowed again. The plague left its prey, and he poured out his heart anew.

Father, I live ! healed of my pain,  
 Myself I give to Thee again.  
 From all things wrong, oh, keep me free,  
 And let my tongue sing only Thee !  
 The unknown hour will come at length,  
 With darker power to crush my strength,  
 But I've no dread ; for then I'll rise,  
 With lifted head, above the skies.

In the year 1530, during the Diet of Augsburg, Luther's mental anxiety so overcame his bodily strength, that he fainted ; on recovering, he said, "Come, let us defy the devil, and praise God by singing the hymn, 'Out of the depths I cry to Thee.' This hymn has often comforted the sick and dying. It is said to have been the last Protestant hymn sung in Strasburgh Cathedral."\*

His hymns were sung by people of every class, not only in schools and churches, but in dwellings and shops, in markets, streets, and fields. They found entrance even among adversaries. Selnecker relates, that, several of the hymns having been introduced into the chapel-service of the Duke Henry of Wolfenbüttel, a priest made complaint. The duke asked what hymns they were against which he protested. "May it please your highness, they are such as, 'Oh that the Lord would gracious be !'"—"Hold !" replied the duke : "must the devil, then, be gracious ? Whose grace are we to seek, if not that of God only ?"

Luther's "'Song of praise for the benefits which God has manifested to us in Christ,' in the original," says Mrs. Charles, "seems to have pressed into it the

\* Miller's Our Hymns, &c.

history of a lifetime,—to be the essence of that ‘Commentary on the Galatians’ which contained, as it were, the essence of Luther’s life.”

Dear Christian people, all rejoice,  
 Each soul with joy upspringing ;  
 Pour forth one song, with heart and voice,  
 With love and gladness singing.  
 Give thanks to God, our Lord above,  
 Thanks for His miracle of love !  
 Dearly He hath redeemed us.

The devil’s captive, bound I lay,—  
 Lay in death’s chains forlorn ;  
 My sins distressed me night and day,  
 The sin within me born ;  
 I could not do the thing I would,  
 In all my life was nothing good,  
 Sin had possessed me wholly.

Then God saw, with deep pity moved,  
 My grief that knew no measure ;  
 Pitying, He saw, and freely loved,—  
 To save me was His pleasure.  
 The Father’s heart to me was stirred,  
 He saved me with no sovereign word,—  
 His very best it cost Him !

He spoke to His beloved Son,  
 With infinite compassion,—  
 “ Go, my Heart’s most precious crown,  
 Be to the lost Salvation !  
 Death, his relentless tyrant, stay ;  
 And bear him from his sins away  
 With Thee to live for ever ! ”

Willing the Son took that behest ;  
 Born of a maiden mother,  
 To His own earth He came a guest,  
 And made Himself our Brother.  
 All secretly He went His way,  
 Veiled in our human flesh He lay,  
 And thus the foe He vanquished.

We have not given the whole of the verses. A curious use was made of this hymn in the year 1557, when, a number of princes belonging to the reformed religion being convened at Frankfort, they wished to have a Protestant service in the Church of St. Bartholomew. A large congregation assembled, but the pulpit was occupied by a Roman-Catholic priest, who proceeded to preach according to his own views. After listening for some time in indignant silence, the whole congregation rose, and began to sing this hymn, till they fairly sang the priest out of church!

Of the score or more of English versions of Luther's great hymn, one of the most recent and best is by Dr. Reynolds, of Chicago. He fitly designates this noble hymn the imperishable pæan of the Reformation. In spite of their rugged, inharmonious measure, Luther's lyrics are full of his characteristic fire and energy. It was this hymn that was chanted over his grave, amid sobs and tears:—

A safe stronghold our God is still, a sure defence and weapon ;  
He will deliver all from ill that unto us may happen.

Our old and bitter foe  
Is fain to work us woe ;  
In strength and cunning, he  
Is armed full fearfully ;  
On earth is not his equal.

By strength of ours we naught can do, the strife full soon  
were ended ;

But for us fights the Champion true, by God Himself  
commended.

And dost thou ask His name ?  
'Tis Jesus Christ ! The same  
Whom Lord of Hosts we call,  
God blessed over all,—  
He'll hold the field triumphant.

Though Satan's hosts the earth should fill, all watching to  
devour us,

We tremble not, we fear no ill, they cannot overpower us.

This world's false prince may still  
 Scowl fiercely, as he will,  
 His threatenings are but vain,  
 We shall unharmed remain :  
 A word shall overthrow him.

God's Word unshaken shall remain, whatever foes  
 invade us !

Christ standeth on the battle-plain, with His own strength  
 to aid us !

What though they take our life,  
 Our goods, fame, children, wife ?  
 E'en when their worst is done,  
 They have but little won :  
 The kingdom ours abideth !

Luther's first hymn was, it is believed, called forth  
 by the martyrdom of two young Christian monks,  
 who were burnt alive, at Brussels, by the Sophists :—

Flung to the heedless winds, or on the waters cast,  
 Their ashes shall be watched, and gathered at the last.  
 And, from that scattered dust, around us and abroad,  
 Shall spring a plenteous seed of witnesses for God.  
 Jesus hath now received their latest living breath,  
 Yet vain is Satan's boast of victory in their death.  
 Still, still, though dead, they speak, and trumpet-tongued,  
 proclaim,  
 To many a wakening land, the one availing Name !

Hear, now, his beautiful hymn of Faith :—

When the sky is black and lowering, when thy path in life  
 is drear,  
 Upward lift thy steadfast glances, 'mid the maze of  
 sorrow here.  
 From the beaming Fount of gladness shall descend a  
 radiance bright,  
 And the grave shall be a garden, and the hours of  
 darkness, light.  
 For the Lord will hear and answer when in faith His  
 people pray.  
 Whatsoe'er He hath appointed shall but work the good alway.

E'en thy very hairs are numbered, God commands when  
 one shall fall ;  
 And the Lord is with His people, helping each and  
 blessing all.

Hans Sachs managed to make shoes and verses  
 at the same time ; was born, in 1494, at Nuremberg,  
 —one of the first cities of Germany to welcome the  
 new doctrine ; and soon our poet became vocal in  
 behalf of its claims.

Here are some stanzas of the celebrated German  
 funeral hymn, of Sach :—

Come forth ! come on, with solemn song !  
 The road is short, the rest is long ;  
 The Lord brought here, He calls away !  
     Make no delay,  
 This home was for a passing day.

Here in an inn a stranger dwelt ;  
 Here joy and grief by turns He felt ;  
 Poor dwelling, now we close thy door !  
     The task is o'er,  
 The sojourner returns no more.

Now of a lasting home possessed,  
 He goes to seek a deeper rest ;  
 Good-night ! the day was sultry here,  
     In toil and fear ;  
 God-night ! the night is cool and clear.

Then, there is the grand, massive chant, evidently  
 inspired by the 'Dies Iræ ;' often erroneously  
 ascribed to Luther, which, although worthy of him,  
 was written by Ringwaldt, in 1585 :—

Great God ! what do I see and hear !  
     The end of things created !  
 The Judge of mankind doth appear,  
     On clouds of glory seated !  
 The trumpet sounds, the graves restore  
 The dead which they contained before :  
     Prepare my soul to meet Him.



The dead in Christ shall first arise  
 At the last trumpet's sounding,—  
 Caught up to meet Him in the skies,  
 With joy their Lord surrounding :  
 No gloomy fears their souls dismay,  
 His presence sheds eternal day  
 On those prepared to meet Him.

Here are some admirable lines, from the German, on the "Name that is above every name :"—

To the Name that brings salvation, honour, worship, laud  
 we pay ;  
 That for many a generation hid in God's foreknowledge lay,  
 Name of gladness, Name of pleasure, by the tongue ineffable !  
 Name of sweetness, passing measure, to the ear delectable !  
 'Tis our safeguard and our treasure, 'tis our shield 'gainst  
 sin and hell !

Nicolaus Herman, who died in the year of our Redemption, 1561, wrote this simple and sweet melody for evening-time :—

Sunk is the sun's last beam of light,  
 And darkness wraps the world in night :  
 Christ ! light us with Thy heavenly ray,  
 Nor let our feet in darkness stray.  
 Thanks, Lord, that Thou, throughout the day,  
 Hast kept all grief and harm away ;  
 That angels tarried round about  
 Our coming in and going out.  
 Whate'er of wrong we've done or said,  
 Let not on us the charge be laid ;  
 That, through Thy free forgiveness blest,  
 In peaceful slumber we may rest.  
 Thy guardian angels round us place,  
 All evil from our couch to chase ;  
 Both soul and body, while we sleep,  
 In safety, gracious Father, keep.

Among these German minstrels we find the Princess Louisa Henrietta of Brandenburg, who wrote a beautiful poem on the Resurrection, "Jesus, meine

Zuversicht." We quote from the English version of Mrs. Charles :—

Jesus, my eternal trust and my Saviour, ever liveth !  
 This I know ; and deep and just is the peace this know-  
 ledge giveth,  
     Though death's lingering night may start  
     Many a question in my heart.

Jesus lives eternally : I shall also live with Him !  
 Where my Saviour is, shall be ! What can make this  
 bright hope dim ?  
     Will the Head one member lose,  
     Nor through each its life diffuse ?

Hope's strong chain around me bound, still shall twine, my  
 Saviour grasping ;  
 And my hand of faith be found, as death left it, Jesus  
 clasping !  
     No assault the foe can make,  
     Nor that deathless clasp shall break !

I am flesh, and therefore duly, dust and ashes may become ;  
 This I know, but know as truly, He will wake me from the  
 tomb !  
     That with Him, whate'er betide,  
     I may evermore abide !

God Himself, in that blest place, shall a glorious body  
 give me ;  
 I shall see His blissful face ; to His heavens He will  
 receive me ;  
     Then, from this rejoicing heart,  
     Every weakness shall depart !

In Professor Schaff's " Christ in Song," is a transla-  
 tion by Dr. Harbaugh of a remarkable poem, which  
 Knapp pronounces " the sweetest and most excellent  
 of all German hymns." It is by Dr. P. Nicolai, a  
 Lutheran pastor of Westphalia, and is still a favourite  
 German hymn, celebrating the union of Christ and  
 His saints. It was written during a prevailing pesti-  
 lence in 1597. We give four stanzas of this fine hymn.

How lovely shines the Morning Star !  
 The nations see and hail afar  
     The light in Judah shining.  
 Thou David's Son, of Jacob's race,  
 My Bridegroom, and my King of grace,  
     For Thee my heart is pining !  
     Lowly, holy, great, and glorious,  
     Thou victorious  
 Prince of graces,  
 Filling all the heavenly places !

Now richly to my waiting heart,  
 O Christ of God, deign to impart  
     The grace of love undying.  
 In Thy blest Body let me be,—  
 E'en as the branch is in the tree,—  
     Thy life, my life supplying ;  
     Sighing, crying for the savour  
     Of Thy favour ;  
 Resting never  
 Till I rest in Thee for ever !

Wake, wake your harps to sweetest songs !  
 In praise of Him to whom belongs  
     All praise ; join hearts and voices.  
 For evermore, O Christ ! in Thee,—  
 Thee, all in all of love to me,—  
     My grateful heart rejoices.  
     With joy, employ hymns victorious,  
     Glad and glorious ;  
 E'er be given  
 Honour to the King of Heaven !  
 Oh, joy ! to know that Thou, my Friend,  
 Art Lord, Beginning without end :  
     The First and Last—Eternal !  
 And Thou, at length, O glorious grace !  
 Wilt take me to that holy place,  
     The home of joys supernal !  
     Amen, amen !

These impressive lines are from the German of  
 Rosegarten :—

Through *night to light* ; and though to mortal eyes  
 Creation's face a pall of terror wear,  
 Good cheer, good cheer ! The gloom of midnight flies,  
 Then shall a sunrise follow, mild and fair.

Through *storm to calm* ; and though his thunder car  
 The rumbling tempest drive through earth and sky,  
 Good cheer, good cheer ! The elemental war  
 Tells that a blessed healing hour is nigh.

Through *death to life* ; and through this vale of tears,  
 And through this thistle-field of life ascend  
 To the great supper in that world, whose years  
 Of bliss unfading, cloudless, know no end.

Through *cross to crown* ; and though thy spirit's life  
 Trials untold assail with giant strength,  
 Good cheer, good cheer ! Soon ends the bitter strife,  
 And thou shalt reign in peace with Christ at length.

From the German of Johann Hofel : \*—

Oh ! sweetest words that Jesus could have brought,  
 To sooth the mourning widow's heart,—“ Weep not !”  
 They fall with comfort on my ear,  
 When life is dark and trouble near.

Words that were spoken amid sorrow's strife,  
 And in the very midst of death and life ;  
 They shall refresh my soul at last,  
 And strengthen me till life is past.

Oh ! sweetest words that Jesus could have brought,  
 To cheer His weary, troubled ones,—“ Weep not !”  
 Thrice blessed words ! I, listening, stay,  
 Till grief and sorrow flee away !

The following, of the plaintive and penitential order,  
 is from the pen of Joachim Neander, 1679 :—

Behold we here, in grief, draw near,  
 Pleading at Thy throne, O King !

To Thee each tear, each trembling fear  
 Jesus, Son of Man, I bring.  
 Let me find Thee, let me find Thee,—  
 Me, a vile and worthless thing !

Look down in love, and from above  
 With Thy Spirit satisfy ;  
 Thou hast sought me, Thou hast bought me,  
 And Thy purchase, Lord, am I !  
 Let me find Thee, let me find Thee,  
 Here on earth, and then on high !

Hear the broken, scarcely spoken  
 Utterance of my heart to Thee ;  
 All the crying, all the sighing  
 Of Thy child accepted be ;  
 Let me find Thee, let me find Thee,  
 Thus I pray vehemently !

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## A SKETCH FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

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### THE LAST DAY, AND THE FIRST DAY.—XIV.-XVI.

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THE last day of the Lord's life on earth drew nigh. The chief priests and scribes were now intent on compassing His death, little knowing that the time of year and the very day for it had been foreshadowed about fifteen centuries previous, when their forefathers kept their first Passover in the land of Egypt. Hatred and expediency, however, governed them, so they sought how they might take Him by craft and put Him to death.

Fearing the populace, they counselled not to carry out their purpose during the feast. Their fears, however, were groundless, as it turned out, and they did put the Lord to death on the very day of the Passover. For unexpectedly they were aided in their designs by the unsolicited offer of Judas Iscariot to betray his Master. Nettled, it would seem, by the Lord's rebuke in the house of Simon the leper, at Bethany, the design was formed in his heart to betray Him. Hence it

was that both Mark and Matthew introduced the account of the supper at Bethany out of its chronological order, but just previous to telling their readers of Judas' treachery. And Mark, with his usual characteristic attention to details, informs us that Mary *brake* the box of alabaster, and poured the ointment on His head. The ointment was costly, but not too costly to be all bestowed on her Lord. And the box could never be used again for any purpose, for she brake it. As an earthen vessel in which the remains of the sin-offering had been sodden was broken, that it should not be devoted to common use (Lev. vi. 28), that box or flask was broken, never to be refilled with ointment for any ordinary use. All in that vessel was for Him, and that vessel was never to be profaned.

Some sitting there were indignant at the apparent waste, and Judas (John xii. 4) led them in the expression of their feelings ; so that, as Mark writes (xiv. 9), they murmured against her. The Lord, thereupon, undertook her defence, and seemingly the matter ended. With all but one it went no further. That one was the most interested of the company. He had the bag, and purloined what was put therein. Had he sold the ointment, he could have pocketed the money, equal in value to about £10. He lost that, and betrayed the Lord for something between £3 and £4 of our money.

And now the son of Mary (Acts xii. 12) tells us of that man's interview with the chief priests, who had already assembled in council in the hall of Caiaphas, the high-priest (Matt. xxvi. 3), volunteering to do their work. The terms were quickly arranged, and the silver was weighed unto him (Matt. xxvi. 15) ; for they were glad, notes Mark (xiv. 11), when they heard of his offer. Murmurings in Simon's house, rejoicing amongst the chief priests, these points our evangelist brings out.

The chief priests thus engaged planning the Lord's

death, He, who knew all that was going on, desired to keep the Passover with His disciples. For that preparations must be made, and two disciples, Peter and John, were commissioned to make them. But where? For the Lord had no abode in the city. Fully directed by Him how to find the house, what to say to the owner of it, and how they would know the room, they went on their errand; and accosting the owner of the house in the words put into their mouths by the Lord, they found, as He had foretold, a large upper room furnished and, as Mark adds, ready. There they made ready the Passover.

Touching the supper, and the events connected with it, we have almost nothing peculiar to our gospel, only in writing of the agony in the garden we understand that the Lord most probably addressed His Father in Aramaic (xiv. 36). Then Mark tells us, what is nowhere else recorded, of a young man who followed the Lord when He was apprehended, with just a linen cloth about his naked body, possibly a night-dress. But finding himself in danger of being apprehended, as they laid hold of him he left the linen cloth and fled away naked (xiv. 51, 52). Conjecture, of course, has been busy about this one. Unnamed by Mark, and without any clue to identify him, it is wise to confess our ignorance, and to leave it as a matter which we cannot clear up. But one thing must not be omitted, peculiar as it is to this gospel. The Lord, in warning Peter of his coming fall, had said, "Before the cock crow *twice* thou shalt deny Me *thrice*" (xiv. 30). And so it was, as Mark relates. A cock crew after Peter's first denial, and a second time after his third denial (vers. 68, 72). How often have we to note the evangelist's attention to details, evidencing his complete independence of his fellow biographers.

The night passed, the morning came, and the council was assembled formally to condemn the Lord. Little time was occupied in that, we may well believe. All professed to be clear about His guilt. He was de-

serving of death. So to Pontius Pilate He was taken ; and we are introduced, as it were, to the scene. On the one hand were the chief priests, accusing Him of many things ; on the other was the Lord, perfectly silent to all their charges against Him. Then Pilate's surprise is expressed, and his words to the Lord, in consequence, seem reported in full: "Answerest Thou nothing? Behold how many things they accuse Thee of" (xv. 3, 4). Still the Lord was silent, His conduct being so different from that to which Pilate, as a judge, was accustomed.

Then began the abortive attempts of the governor to release Him, in accordance with the custom at that feast to release one prisoner, whom they would. Barabbas or Christ, that became the question. So in answer to the clamour of the multitude that he would do as he had ever done unto them, the governor's voice was heard saying, "Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?" Vain, however, was this attempt to escape from unrighteously condemning the Lord. The chief priests stirred up the populace to clamour for Barabbas. Again, the governor's voice was heard, "What then shall I do unto Him whom ye call the King of the Jews?" Poor Pilate, seeking to keep in favour with the people, and yet desirous to set the Lord free, puts the issue in their hands. "What shall I do," &c., he asked. The answer came, as the cry from the multitude again arose, "Crucify Him!" One more attempt on Pilate's part, "Why, what evil hath He done?" only met with a most persistent demand for His death. The judge had not only publicly cleared the Lord from any charge worthy of death, but now he asserted His innocence of any evil whereof they had accused Him. Yet, to content the people, that unhappy man yielded to their clamorous demand! Judgment and righteousness were that day separated, to be found together again when the King shall have returned, as Ps. xciv. 15 long ago predicted.



The Lord and Herod had met. Pilate and the Lord had now met, and were about to part, but to meet again at another tribunal, when He who was that day unrighteously condemned will sit on the judgment seat, and before Him both Herod and Pilate shall stand.

From the judgment-seat to the Prætorium, Mark next carries his readers. There, in the court made the sport of the soldiers, indignities and mockings the Lord patiently endured. For what Isaiah (1.) had predicted was carried out. After that they led Him away to be crucified, compelling on the way one Simon, a Cyrenian, to bear the cross behind Him: an Hellenistic Jew. Was he a disciple? Evidently he had taken no part with the populace, for he was coming *from* the country, and so must have met the procession on its way to Golgotha. He was also, as Mark takes pains to inform us, the father of Alexander and Rufus—that Rufus, very likely, who is mentioned by Paul in his epistle to the Romans (xvi. 13).

Mark's account of the crucifixion supplies little that is not found in one or more of the others. Indeed, his history here agrees very closely with that furnished us by Matthew, though the latter presents the darkest picture of all of that solemn time. Still, we have to thank our evangelist for a few facts peculiar to his history. He tells us that it was the *third* hour when they crucified Him (xv. 25); and he gives us, very probably, a translation of the Latin inscription which was put over the Lord's head on the cross (26). To him, too, are we indebted for the name of the Virgin's sister, and the wife of Zebedee, who with other women mentioned was present at the cross, and subsequently, on the resurrection morning, visited the tomb. John writes of her, who was his own mother, as the sister of the Virgin. Mark informs us that her name was Salome (xv. 40; xvi. 1). She with others when in Galilee had followed

the Lord, and had ministered to Him of her substance. To the last she was seen at the cross, and was early, too, at the sepulchre. And though those women stood beholding the cross from afar, they were quite separate in heart, and, perhaps, in position, from the taunting crowd; for their hearts were full of sorrow, whilst their devotion to the Lord remained unshaken, as their visit to the tomb on the resurrection morning clearly attested.

They saw Him die, and witnessed, doubtless, the melting away of the vast multitude when all was over. The burial now followed, a matter of interest to but few of all who had stood before the cross. But who was to undertake the office of placing the body in a grave? One of the Sanhedrin, who was a rich man of Judea (Luke xxiii. 51), Joseph by name, a disciple of the Lord Jesus, went to Pilate and asked for the body. Was He really dead? Had He expired so soon? The thieves were still alive. Death by crucifixion was generally anything but rapid. So Pilate marvelled if He were already dead, not knowing that in the counsel of God the Lord would give up His life, no man taking it from Him (John x. 18). Calling for the centurion, as Mark alone has noticed, he enquired if He had been any while dead. Ascertaining that He was dead, he granted the *corpse*, as our evangelist probably wrote, to Joseph. It was buried. Joseph was looking for the kingdom of God (xv. 43). Was his faith upset by what had just happened? It would seem not. Like the penitent thief he awaited the kingdom, and we may well believe, discerned in the crucified One, the King who is to come. So, as Matthew records, he reverently laid in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out of the rock, the body of Him who is the King.

Joseph's work was done. He disappears from the page of history as suddenly as he came upon it. We had not heard of his existence before, we know nothing of his end; yet of this we are sure, that,

though hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God, he stands out as one who, possessed of wealth, and held, too, in reputation amongst men, through the sovereign grace of God became an inheritor of the kingdom of the heavens. Helped by Nicodemus, who furnished the spices of about a hundred pounds in weight, he did what the women could not have done, and then closed the door of the sepulchre by rolling into its place the stone, which was very great. Work for the women, however, remained. And when the Sabbath was past (for they rested on it), Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the mother of James, and Salome bought sweet spices, that on the following morning they might come and anoint Him.

Morning came, and they, very early astir, visited the tomb when the sun was risen, but learned then of the Lord's resurrection from the angel who addressed them. For service to the body within the tomb they were prepared, and all that was needful for that they had brought. Service, however, of a different character was appointed them—that of messengers, bearing to the disciples the joyful news of the Lord's resurrection. Jesus, the Nazarene, who had been crucified, they sought. He was not there. He was risen. And now to tell the disciples, and Peter, adds Mark, that He would go before them into Galilee, was to be their occupation that morning. And here some little touches peculiar to this gospel must be noticed. "They fled," wrote Mark, trembling and astonishment having seized them, and "said nothing to any man, for they were afraid" (xvi. 8).

Thus far all are agreed that Mark wrote (xvi. 8). The genuineness of what follows (vers. 9-20) has been much questioned. The two oldest MSS. omit it; whilst versions older than they, and many MSS., exhibit the portion as part of Mark's gospel. Into this question we shall not here further enter; but, believing the verses in question are part of inspired Scripture, and as they have always been found at the

end of the gospel of Mark, we shall notice the chief features of this section, taking it to have proceeded from the pen of our evangelist.

In Matthew's gospel we have the meeting mentioned (and nowhere else) of the Lord and the eleven in Galilee on the mountain where He had appointed, and the commission entrusted to them, to make disciples of all the nations. In Luke we meet with incidents of the day of the Lord's resurrection illustrative of grace, which is such a characteristic feature of that gospel. Here in Mark we have the unwillingness of the disciples to accredit the testimony of Mary that she had seen the Lord, as well as that of the two who had journeyed that day to Emmaus. That the Lord had appeared to Peter, an apostle, was credited (Luke xxiv. 34). His appearance to the others was not. Of this these verses are the only clear witness. The state, too, of the disciples when Mary went to them we also here only learn. "They mourned and wept" (xvi. 10). This is in perfect character with the behaviour of Cleopas and his companion, who, when accosted by One, as they thought a stranger, "stood still, looking sad" (Luke xxiv. 17).

Two manifestations noticed, and the testimony of those favoured with them discredited, the third is described somewhat at length. On the evening of that same day, the Lord appeared to the eleven as they sat at meat. That they were thus occupied Luke indirectly confirms, as in response to the Lord's question, "Have ye any meat?" they handed Him a piece of a broiled fish. Of this interview both John and Luke have written, and each writes of it somewhat in character with his own gospel. The former tells us that, when the doors were shut for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst; for shut doors could not keep Him out (John xx. 19). The latter tells us how terrified and affrighted they were at His sudden appearance, supposing that they saw a spirit (Luke xxiv. 37). Evidently they were wholly unprepared

for His appearing among them, which is consistent with their disbelief of the testimony of others relative to His manifestation. Mark tells us, however, nothing of the effect of His presence on the company, but only of the Lord upbraiding them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, in not accrediting the testimony of Mary and of the other two that they had seen Him. Then, as also in Luke, the Lord, we learn, acquainted them with their future field of labour—the world—and of their service in preaching likewise. The form of the announcement we probably read in these closing verses of Mark's gospel: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned." The character of their message is learnt from Luke xxiv. 47. For their authority to receive into fellowship those who should believe we have to turn to John xx. 21-23. Very different then is the account of that interview in each of those gospels which mentions it, for Matthew wholly omits it. Yet each contributes to our knowledge and for our instruction what otherwise we should not have learnt. Further, as these verses of Mark show how the Lord, who in Matthew is represented as giving the formula for baptism, insisted on that rite for all disciples, we see how it was carried out in the Acts (ii. 38; xix. 5; x. 48). And we learn also in Mark (xvi. 17, 18) of the signs which should follow those who believed. Of the fulfilment of this the Acts bears full testimony (ii. 43; iii. 7; v. 12-16; vi. 8; viii. 6, 7, 13; xiv. 10; xix. 11, 12; xxviii. 3, 9).

And now of the ascension, mentioned elsewhere only by Luke, Mark writes, but briefly, stating "that the Lord Jesus was received up into heaven, and sat down on the right hand of God." To this he adds, what comes in as a complement to Matthew's gospel, that the disciples "went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following" (xvi. 20). Thus the promise of

the Lord's presence with His servants, recorded only in Matthew xxviii. 20, is declared to have been verified by his co-evangelist, Mark.

How much there is in these closing verses of interest to us all! And whilst the account of things differs much from what we have elsewhere, yet, as one may see, it dovetails into the history of the resurrection recorded by others. And not the least interesting is that last verse of this gospel, which testifies to the faithfulness of the ascended Lord.

These sketches from the gospel of Mark of course now end. If the reader have derived any profit from them, they will not have been outlined by the writer in vain.

C. E. S.

ON taking my Bible to glean something, a very sweet thought came to me, which I give you. It is this: God entitles me to be before Him as a saint of His, freed from sin and sins through death—the death of Jesus—whiter than the snow, through His most precious blood. . . . Do we not wrong the Sacrifice and Him who offered it by covering ourselves with the filthiness of our own thoughts, instead of, in the simplicity of faith, abhorring *them* and joying in Him, the Father's Beloved, and in the wondrous work which has set us before Him spotless, in spite of sin, Satan, flesh, and conscience? He cannot consent to discredit or degrade the perfectness of His own work. Oh, it is sweet to think of it. *One offering*—once offered—once for all, eternally perfecting the worshippers who are sanctified by it, for ever putting us *within the veil*, as priests of the Holiest. . . . Shall we be repulsed on entering? By whom? By Him who shed the blood that we might enter? By God who bore witness of its value? Ah! it is not having seen self as *judged* of God that hinders.—J. R.

## THE PASSOVER.

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THE Passover of God is the simple single ground of rest and security ; upon the blessed value of this the children of God can feed within, the security of the blood being upon their door-posts. That meets the destroying angel, and he goes, and can go, no farther. Within, all is peace. Judgment may be around, and conflict and trial before, but the Church rests in the security which faith has afforded or enjoys in the Paschal Lamb, eaten within the blood-stricken doors.

This is not the work of the Spirit of God, save as revealing it in and to us ; the work of the Spirit detects sin, leads into conflict, animates into those exercises which ever bring to light the evil, shortcomings, and failure of our own hearts, but is never the ground and warrant of peace. It may be the means, on being charged by the enemy, of proving that the peace we have is not a false one, but is *never* the proper ground and warrant of peace, for it is ever connected with imperfection, and perfectness somewhere must be the ground of peace with a perfect God. "By one *Offering* he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." "He has made peace by the blood of His cross." Nothing can be mixed with this, nothing *in* us comes up to the measure and expression of holiness which that blood affords, or therefore can make peace as it does. It is the very vindication of perfect holiness against all sin, and therefore the *perfect* peace of the believer against all sin ; for the thing which alone adequately measures it puts it away, cleanses from all sin those that are walking in the light. But "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." And we have thus definitely the Antetype of the lamb that was slain. It is, moreover, in this character that Christ at present holds the throne, as regards His work and its worthiness, as it is written Heb. i. 3 ; Phil. ii. 9, 10 ; Rev. v. 9.

J. N. D.

## JESUS, OUR SAVIOUR AND LORD.

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WHAT has become of Him? The Son of God came into this world, being made in the likeness of men (Phil. ii. 6-7). He came to seek and to save that which was lost. John I tells us in unmistakeable terms who He was. He was in the world, we read, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came, too, to His own (the Jews), and His own received Him not. The law had been given to them by Moses, but now grace and truth came by Jesus Christ; and we read further, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

All agree that He went about doing good. We have only to read the gospel of Mark to be convinced of this. If that were so, then Psalm ciii. 3 tells us distinctly that He was Jehovah. And how foolish and contradictory in their assertions are those who admit He was a good man, and yet deny His eternal Sonship and equality with God the Father! The very fact of what He did told who He was. His works and Himself cannot be separated. Did any needy come to Him and went as they came? "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" repels such a thought. What has become of Him, then, dear reader? We read on further, and what do we find? Man does not like the pure goodness of God. It is this grace which makes nothing of man, and which stirs up the heart against the One who displays it. He is taken, and the multitude lead Him to Pilate (Luke xxiii. 1); and mark the testimony of all concerned. Pilate finds no fault in Him (xxiii. 4); Herod bears the same testimony (xxiii. 13-15); Pilate's wife also gives her verdict (Matt. xxvii. 19). We have seen beyond question who He was, and on this very ground the Jews said He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God (John xix. 7). Let



those who refuse to acknowledge Him ponder this and account for it if they can.

And now, as Pilate puts the solemn question, "What shall I do with Jesus which is called Christ?" no dissentient voice is raised, for they *all* say unto him, "Let Him be crucified." Jews, Gentiles, all join in the cry, "Away with Him!" Ah! there the heart of man is fully displayed. Man has done his worst, and has put to death the blessed Son of God. But God has raised Him from the dead, and 1 Cor. xv. 3-8 tells us the number of those who saw Him after His resurrection. The world would not have Him, but God has set Him at His own right hand (Phil. ii. 8-11). You and I, dear reader, were represented amongst that crowd, who by wicked hands crucified and slew Him. God will have a controversy with the world about it, though men may seek to forget it. As the very fact that the Lord is not here is sufficient to tell us who got rid of Him. And where are you, dear reader, in all this? Are you part of the world who is still rejecting Him, or have you fled to Him for pardon? If you still belong to the world, let me entreat you to listen to the voice of mercy—the voice of Him who is still the sinner's friend. He died "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God;" and God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." And mark, dear reader, "He was *delivered* for our offences and *raised again* for our justification. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God." And "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that *God hath raised Him from the dead*, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 9-10). We are told in Phil. ii. that every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue confess Him Lord. You will certainly be compelled to bow the knee presently; but what a joy you are missing if you still neglect, still despise this great salvation. To think you might have been amongst the number who will be found in His

presence, where all is fulness of joy throughout eternity; joys which know no end. What a prospect the believer has! And you letting all this slip through your fingers! Just one word more. "God hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that *He hath raised Him from the dead*" (Acts xvii. 31). Those who believe on Him know Him as their Saviour, are not of the world even as Christ was not of the world (John xvii. 16), and presently will be taken out of it to be for ever with the Lord (1 Thess. iv. 16-17; 1 Cor. xv. 51-57). If you waste the valuable moments which are now closing this day of grace, then surely all hope for you is gone, and in that day you will stand before Him to be judged, even before the One you so despised. Come now to Him; He will in no wise cast out.

"Lifted up" was He to die,  
 "It is finished" was His cry;  
 Now in heaven exalted high,  
 Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

J. H. I.

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## THE CONTENTS OF THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

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I CAN only give here some very general thoughts upon them. It will be remarked at once that the character of the first three gospels is different from that of John. The principle of this difference is this: the first three present Christ, though in different characters, to man to be received, and shew His rejection by man. John begins with this as the starting-point of his gospel, being the display of the divine nature, and what man and the Jew was in presence of. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came to His own, and His own received Him not. Hence we have sovereign grace, election; man must be born again, wholly anew; and the Jews

are all through treated as reprobate ; the divine and incarnate Person of the Lord as the foundation of all blessing, and a work of atonement which is the basis even of the sinless condition of the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, together with, at the close, the gift of the Comforter, form the subject of the gospel, in contrast with Judaism. Instead of tracing the Lord to the Abrahams and Davids, the roots of promise, or to Adam, to bring in as Son of Man blessing to man, or giving the account of His service in ministry as the great Prophet that was to come, it (the gospel of John) brings a divine Person, the Word made flesh, into the world. What I have just said stamps their characters on the four gospels.

Matthew is the fulfilment of promise and prophecy, Emmanuel among the Jews, rejected by them, stumbling thus on the Stone of stumbling, and He shewn to be really a Sower ; fruit-seeking was in vain ; and then the Church and the Kingdom substituted for Israel blest by promises, which they refused in His Person ; but after judgment, when they owned Him, to be owned under mercy. The ascension is not found in Matthew, I believe for this very reason : Galilee in Matthew, not Jerusalem, is the scene of His interview with the disciples after His resurrection. He is with the poor of the flock who owned the word of the Lord, where the light had sprung up to the people sitting in darkness. The commission to baptize goes forth hence and applies to the Gentiles.

Mark gives the Servant-prophet, Son of God ; Luke, the Son of man, the first two chapters affording a lovely picture of the remnant in Israel ; John, a divine Person come into the world, the foundation (redemption being accomplished) of the new creation, the object and pattern of faith, revealing the Father, with the promise of the Comforter while Christ is away. Paul and John reveal our being in a wholly new place in Christ. But John is mainly occupied with revealing the Father in the Son to us, and thus life by the Son in us ; Paul

with presenting us to God, and His counsels in grace.

If we confine ourselves to the epistles, only the latter (Paul) speaks of the Church, save 1 Peter ii., the building of living stones, but only Paul speaks of the Body. The Acts shew the founding of the Church by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, and then the Jerusalem or Palestinian labours of the apostles, and other free labourers, especially the work of Peter, and then that of Paul. With the history of the rejection of his gospel by the Jews of the dispersion, the history of Scripture closes.

J. N. D.

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IT is the same with regard to the expectation of Christ. If I consider myself as a man responsible on the earth, I expect Him for the deliverance of all things, and to put an end to all suffering and to all the power of evil; and so individually myself, as a servant, I look to receive His approval, as a Master, before the whole world. But if I think of my privileges as a member of His body, I think of my union with Him above, and that I shall come back with Him to appear in His glory. It is well we should know how to make this distinction. Without it there will be confusion in our thoughts, and in our use of many passages. The same thing is true in the personal religion of every day. I can consider myself as united to Christ, and seated in Him in heavenly places, enjoying all the privileges which He enjoys, as Head of the body, before God, His Father. I may also look at myself as a poor weak being, walking individually upon the earth, having wants, faults, and temptations to overcome, and I see Christ above whilst I am here below, Christ appearing alone for me before the throne—for me, happy in having in the presence of God Him who is perfect, but who has gone through the experience of my sorrows; who is no longer in the circumstances in which I find myself, but with the Father for me who am in them. This is the doctrine of the epistle to the Hebrews.

J. N. D.

## FEEDING UPON CHRIST.

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IN the offerings under the law there are those which were for a sweet savour and those which were not wholly so. The former were the burnt offering, the meat offering, and the peace offering, distinguished from the sin and trespass offerings; yet even as to these whatever was burnt on the altar was a sweet savour. But there is also another point: the former were frequently voluntary; the latter were not, were in fact compulsory, God required them, and the omission of them became disobedience to Him. There was absolute necessity that sins should be atoned for before God; the sacrifices which testified of this could not be dispensed with, or be put upon the ground of voluntary offerings. But the distinctively sweet savour offerings were more than this: God began with them, and first of all with the burnt offering, with what Christ was to Him when in the place of sin—not as bearing sins, but as made sin, and through the Eternal Spirit offering Himself without spot unto God—expressing the intrinsic excellence of Christ unto Him. Consequently the whole carcase was all for Him, all burnt upon the altar, a sweet savour unto the Lord. The offerer and the priest were equally excluded from partaking of it. Only He to whom the essential and eternal excellence of Christ was known could appreciate what He was in all His precious acceptability to God as a sweet smelling savour, while made sin for us at the cross. How precious was it to God for an Israelite to come and voluntarily bring his burnt offering, if in any degree he entered into its character as being “for his acceptance,” thus bringing Christ before God in His absolute devotedness to Him, which is the meaning of offering Himself,—made sin and in the place of sin, so to speak, but thus and there precious, and only precious to God, the fumes from the altar a sweet savour, and only a sweet savour unto God. Never more sweet, more precious to God than

(may we not even say, never *so* sweet, *so* precious to Him as?) at the cross; as He said, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it again" (John x. 17, 18). He, and He alone, of all men had title to lay down His life and to take it again, and this He did as the burnt offering, offering up Himself, a spotless Sacrifice to God, voluntarily of His own will. It is added, "This commandment have I received of My Father," shewing that it was of His obedience also, for He and His Father were of one mind about it; and the double element was therefore there, absolute devotedness in self-surrender and perfect obedience to the will of His Father, in His atoning death.

Then we have the meat offering and the peace offering; or, as they might be termed, the food offering and the thank offering. The former speaks of Christ in His life of service on earth, His extrinsic and His intrinsic perfection, from the day of His anointing with the Holy Ghost as a Man here below, in all human and divine excellency before God. The two kinds of the meat-offering are full of interest; the fine flour setting forth His human nature in its purity and evenness, and the same cooked by fire indicating the trials and sufferings to which He was subjected during the three years of His ministry. For as distinctly as the burnt offering speaks of His death does the food offering speak of His life; devotedness and consecration to God equally in both, surely; but with this difference, that whilst all that could be eaten of the former was for God, in the latter there was Jehovah's portion—a certain proportion of the flour and the oil, and all the frankincense; but the residue was for the priestly family, Aaron and his sons. Begotten of the Holy Ghost, anointed with the Holy Ghost, working by the Holy Ghost—all this and more is doubtless the signification of the oil inter-

mingled and incorporated with the fine flour of His spotless humanity. God's portion was burnt in sweet savour to Him ; the rest was for the priests, who thus shared with Jehovah, typically feeding together upon Christ, the spotless Son of God. No leaven, which was typical of evil, and no honey, typical of mere natural qualities, entered into this, but in life and in death was He a sacrifice salted with salt, both the sin offering and the meat offering being expressly said to be "most holy."

In the peace (or thank) offering there is also Jehovah's portion, the fat burnt upon the altar. "It is the food of the offering made by fire unto Jehovah." "For a sweet savour ; all the fat is Jehovah's" (Lev. iii. 11, 16). But the residue was for the priests and the people. Thus it was distinctively for communion. Jehovah had His portion ; the priests had theirs ; and the people the rest. It was truly a feast ; and thanksgiving and communion were its characteristics. It is Christ as the ground of our joy and worship and communion in life and in death.

In thus rapidly glancing at certain distinctions between these sweet savour offerings, we learn something of that word, "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live because of the Father : so he that eateth Me, even he shall live because of Me" (John vi. 57). In the earlier verses we are taught the sovereign grace that gives eternal life as the result of eating of His flesh and drinking His blood. In that we see the cross and its results. It need scarcely be said that this is not the Lord's supper ; for were it so, none but those who partake would be saved. It is the saving efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ, of which the penitent thief partook when his soul rested by faith upon Him who had done nothing amiss, but who gave His flesh and His blood to cleanse our sins and bring us to God. *That* answers to the compulsory offerings under the law ; but we have further in the 57th verse, as above cited, that which answers to the voluntary sacrifices

which are peculiarly precious to God, specifically the meat offering, in which the priest typically fed upon Christ, and lived by or because of Him.

The burnt offering was for God ; the meat offering for God and for the priests ; the peace offering for God and for the priests and for the people. Thus, as ourselves priests of God and of Christ, we see clearly pointed out that the meat or food offering is our especial privilege—wherein we feast with God and express our unspeakable joy and delight in Christ, feeding upon Him who is the food of God. What a privilege!

Looking back to David in Psalm xxiii. we might ask, were not the green pastures Christ? And to Solomon in the Canticles, was not the apple tree, among the trees of the wood, Christ? And then, looking forward to the hidden Manna (Rev. ii. 17), and to the Tree of life in the paradise of God (ii. 7), we might ask, as to each, is it not Christ?

Truly, indeed, that which speaks of this is no compulsory thing, but it is indescribably precious to God, a sweet savour unto Him ; and if so, how utterly impossible to do more than to suggest how peculiar is the joy and the sweetness of it to the priestly family, which God has made us to be before Him. What then, it may be asked, is feeding upon Christ? We can only answer in His words, "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live because of the Father : so he that eateth Me, even he shall live because of Me" (John vi 57). He was here because of the Father, as we, if we know our calling, acknowledge that we are here because of Christ. He was here to meet what the Father's character required and what the Father's heart desired ; here not only as His perfect Servant and devoted Witness, thus the One who was obedient to Him in all things, but much more, as being able to say as none but He could : "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than My necessary food" (Job xxiii. 12) ; and again, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them : and Thy word was unto Me the joy



and the rejoicing of Mine heart ;” and yet again, when He sat at the well of Sychar, “ My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.” He was here, how truly ! because of the Father, because His interests required it, because He delighted in Him, and therefore to be for Him, because He was impelled by the unfathomable love of the Father towards Him to minister to the joy of the Father’s heart, thus making this arid wilderness to blossom as the rose, and causing that Father’s voice to be heard from an opened heaven, in response to what His eyes beheld in the Son of His love, saying “ My beloved Son, in whom is all My good pleasure !” Was not He who thus spake at that very moment feeding upon the meat offering ? and is it not full of the most suggestive teaching to our souls as to what it is for us to feed upon that living Bread—the hidden Manna—whom the living Father had sent into the world ? And this because, as priests, with opened eyes we are, in the power of the Holy Ghost, privileged to gaze upon and delight ourselves in that One precious Christ of God, that the Father gazed upon through the heavens He had opened over Him !

How blessedly does the apostle John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, write of the meat offering : “ The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth. . . . No man hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him” (John i. 14, 18). “ That which was in the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life ; (for the Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal Life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us ;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us” (I

John i. 1, 2, 3). The apostle Peter, also, when he says, speaking of the Lord Jesus, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously" (1 Pet. ii. 22, 23). And a third apostle, Paul, also writing of Him as the meat offering, says, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself" (Phil. ii. 6-8) May we through grace herein discern the Holy Ghost's ministry of Christ as the meat offering to the souls of His saints; and because we are to see Him so quickly, because we are to be like Him so perfectly, because we shall enjoy Him so intimately, and be at home with Him everlastingly, may every reader of these lines, while with anointed eyes watching for His return more than they that watch for the morning, know more every day through grace of what it is to be feeding upon Christ in the power of His Spirit. Thus shall we be in preparedness of heart for His return as the everlasting Lover of our souls, and thus also shall we be diligent to be found of Him in peace without spot and blameless.

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NO mist that man may raise shall hide the eye of heaven.

NOTE—that overt acts of sin only were taken cognisance of in Israel of old—but *now* the thoughts and intents of the heart. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he."

OUR life has its drowsiness, discords, and sadness,  
 And time has its shadows, disturbing and drear;  
 But living to Thee is all brightness and gladness,  
 And sorrow is sanctified if Thou art near.

## LUKE XVI.

THERE is one distinct relation in which Israel as a nation had stood in responsibility to God, and that was as a steward. Therefore, Jesus said to His disciples, "There was a certain rich man which had a steward, and the same was accused to him that he had wasted his goods." This similitude of the nation and its stewardship may, perhaps, be the continuation of the elder brother, to whom the father said, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine;" for this was the position of Israel as the firstborn, and its place and portion as of the earth, endowed with all natural blessings under the sun. Nor had the nation been faithful in its stewardship, and this is especially the burden of some who were sent by Jehovah with this charge against them. As a matter of fact, too, they have been as a people put out of their stewardship, and even cast off out of their land, as having wasted and corrupted what was not their own; and this displacement, which was at hand, must needs form part of the ministry of the Messiah, and gets its place, in this chapter xvi., upon their refusal to pass with Christ into other and heavenly blessings by grace, and their determination to stand with the just who need no repentance, and upon the ground of legal righteousness.

Viewed in this light, they were unfaithful in the stewardship of the goods which had been committed to their trust; for the goodness of God had distinguished them in Immanuel's land, as one that brought forth of itself, and flowed with milk and honey. What, in truth, was the earth, and the kingdom, and the nation, and the city of Jerusalem, and the throne, and the dominion, in the times of Solomon, and his wisdom, and his might, and his glory, as dispensed and put into his keeping by God? Could anyone better interpret the extent and character of the blessing than by the words, "Son, thou art ever with

me, and all that I have is thine"? This reference to that day proves as clearly that the goods have been wasted and forfeited long ago, and that, governmentally, the stewardship has been corrupted. "How is it that I hear this of thee?" was the question of Isaiah and Jeremiah; "Give an account of thy stewardship" was reiterated by one and another; till, last of all, the ministry of John the Baptist declared the time was at hand "that thou mayest be no longer steward;" and *now* Jesus confirms it, to His disciples, as really come.

Will they come out of the place of the steward, and quit their relations with Moses and the law, and the land itself, where all witnesses against them; and come into the standing of sons, in the Son's house by grace, through faith in Christ, who is come to take the unfaithfulness, and bear the sin, and carry them out of the world as it is, to have a welcome into the Father's home in heaven as repentant sinners? for this has been the character of His ministry with them ever since He accepted His decease from the mount and His rejection at its foot! "Then the steward said, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship; I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed." And, in passing, we may say, it is not a little remarkable that the Jews, who are one with the unjust steward as turned out, and made a hissing, and a by-word, and a reproach besides, have carried out these two things with their leader, and refuse alike the digging and the begging—they are neither husbandmen nor paupers! "I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses." And it is *here* the instruction is conveyed that Jesus desires they should follow—for earthly things had all failed, and relationships broken up after the flesh, as between Jehovah and Israel—they were to forget what was behind, as to the nation's hopes, and accept a present place with a rejected Messiah, to pass into other habitations elsewhere.

His was a heavenly position, and they would be received there. All things below must necessarily change, and their house be left unto them desolate: yea, all that the Father had, and had given to them, was no longer to distinguish them below; for their Messiah, with whose presence in their midst they could alone enjoy it and hold it, had taken another place in heaven. What could they do? They were to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord. By thus putting themselves and all around them into this new connection with a heavenly Christ, they had another and a very different standard by which to estimate "All that I have is thine." Like Barnabas (which is by interpretation the Son of consolation), a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet; so the disciples are taught beforehand this same lesson by Jesus. If this Levite had not known that Israel had failed, and they were to be put out of the stewardship on earth till the second coming of Christ, how dare he have changed sides with the debtor and creditor, and so lightly and unlawfully treated his lord's land by selling it, and accepting the minimum, that he might make friends with the mammon, as Barnabas did through the apostles, and lay it up in this way, with a rejected Christ, in the place and habitation to which He had ascended? The test which Jesus applies is this, "he that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much."

"God and mammon" were in question, for all that He had given to them on earth had become "unrighteousness;" and now God was cutting them away from the first Adam and his world, which had become corrupt, to the second Man at His right hand above, to be manifested in due time—though Jesus had already told them of His going away, and coming again at such an hour as they thought not. Where

were "true riches" now? Surely with Christ, and where Christ is! And what was "another man's," but that which Christ has for a time refused, and where He is not? This gave to "faithful and unfaithful" another signification, consequent upon Christ's rejection on earth, and His acceptance and session in heaven: to the nation of Israel and the world it would be dispensational, and continue till He takes to Himself His great power and reigns; to the disciples and believers in Christ, they would follow Him into "everlasting habitations." The Son of consolation was an example of these two things, and their respective changes of value, when the standard and test became the place below which the Messiah had left, and the place above into which He was about to be lifted up!

Six hundred years before Christ came, the value of the world could only be determined by what Jerusalem was as to its prosperity, or what it was not; for it was God's centre, and the city of the great King. Therefore, the prophet Jeremiah, understanding by visions *the mind of Jehovah with Israel and Jerusalem*, "bought land" from Hanameel, his uncle's son, for "the right of redemption was his;" and, by so doing, contradicted Barnabas, who "sold the land" after the Lord "had accomplished His decease at Jerusalem;" yet they were both right in their season.

The relation between the servant and his master follows this of the steward and his lord. And Jesus said, "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other: ye cannot serve God and mammon;" for if they laid up treasure upon earth, they could not be rich toward God. Jesus had instructed them in this before, when He refused "the place of judge and divider" upon the earth. Again, "the Pharisees, who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided Him; but He said unto them, "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is

highly esteemed amongst men is abomination in the sight of God." Alas, this is the only alternative left them—to justify their covetousness by the earth that they pillage; and to live in the sight of men, and in the midst of men as they are, and who do the same things, where they cannot be condemned.

The candle lighted, and set upon the candlestick, had detected them from the first time it was brought into the house; and now at the last, Jesus turns it round upon their hearts before God, if so be they may discover by this means what is abomination in His sight—adding, "The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." Will they understand His speech, and enter in? If not, "it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than one tittle of the law to fail;" and they must abide its judgment, and receive its punishments, if they would not use the law and the prophets, and John too, as pointing onward to Christ and the kingdom of God, and press in. Jesus had convicted them as an evil generation, when they asked Him to prove His authority by signs from heaven, and now He leaves them under the reproach of an adulterous generation, by cleaving to that which was put away; and they, like Capernaum, which was exalted to heaven (by the mighty works which He had wrought there), should be cast down to hell; and this hell He uncovers to them.

"There was a certain rich man which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day; and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores," &c. The earth has been busily closing itself up against "God's good pleasure with men," and shutting its doors against the Saviour, the Prophet, the great Teacher; and, as we shall see presently, it refuses yet again to open its gates, that the King may ride into the city of Jerusalem, and announce the kingdom of God to her. The earth's refusal of its Creator and Lord, and the

voice from the Father contradicting the enmity below necessarily opens the heavens over His head, whilst He continues His gracious ministry below, till the morning of His ascension into them, when they open themselves wide to receive Him ; and this action on the part of a righteous God as necessarily opens and uncovers hell and its torments for the betrayers and murderers of Jesus, the Son of His love.

All things are now to be looked at and estimated according to heaven and hell. The earth is filled up again with violence and corruption ; as such, it has neither balances, nor weights, nor measures, nor a righteous man that can speak the truth in it, except as God, in unfailling grace, raises One up as a witness to Himself, and against the world and its rich men, or to say "the Judge standeth at the door." It is a solemn thing, on the one hand, and yet how blessed on the other, to know that the new occupants of the heavens above, and of hell beneath, are supplied from the earth ; and Jesus has now reached this great reality for Himself, and opens the way out of the earth into the Father's house by the way of the cross and the empty sepulchre, by which man as he is, and the world as he made it, are refused by God, and set aside too. Good things and evil things can only be learned with Jesus, where He is in heaven, and as we have been considering, in their relation to God or mammon, or else be taught in hell with Dives ; for the earth cannot teach the one or the other, but keeps up the delusion and the counterfeit under Satan, "the prince of the world," who bestows upon men the riches and the glory of its kingdoms, which Jesus refused, and clothes them "in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day." Neither can "rich and poor" be taught by any master, in any school upon the earth ; nor can it put the difference between Dives and Lazarus, except to blunder by making room for the man in gay apparel and with the gold ring, and "say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit at my footstool."



The world, and men in it, can say or do nothing for truth, but enquire with Pilate what it is and where it dwells; for righteousness is taken from the earth in the departed One. In the meanwhile the world believes a lie, and refuses to justify Christ, by saying, "Let God be true, but every man a liar;" and in the end, at the time of its crisis, worships the Antichrist, and, glorying in its shame, says, "Who is like unto the Beast?" Alas, alas for the earth! it must now be dependent upon the opened heavens, or the opening hell, to learn the truth of all that is in it, and that walks abroad in a vain show uncontradicted, yea, and "highly esteemed amongst men," forgetful and deaf to the voice which cries out, "These things are an abomination in the sight of God." Where can the issues and results be found and learnt of realities such as these are! but in the everlasting habitations on high, or in the future torments of hell beneath! The world and men in it, become infidel or sceptic though the devil, who may "transform himself into an angel of light," is neither the one nor the other; for Jesus commanded the unclean devils, whom He cast out and confessed Him to be the Son of God, not to publish it abroad. What a rebuke to men! and what a reproof to mankind!

Nor is God to be understood in it by what men call "His ways in providence" any longer, but are shut up by the judgment of God on the world at the cross to the salvation of God at the cross, by Him who died upon it as the Substitute for sinners. What a blunder any would make, who applied "ways of God in providence" to either Dives or Lazarus while they were upon this earth. No, God is not making Himself known now, as He once did in Canaan, by what He bestows in liberality and plenty, or by what He withholds (though His outward government may be manifested in this way); but God reveals Himself in Christ alone. In former days too, as respects God's exceptional men, how can any understand Daniel in Babylon, and his

walk through the glory and grandeur of the kingdom into the lion's den, by the light of providence as a key? And in later times, since the day of Christ's resurrection, when all power was given to Him in heaven and earth, did He use it in the way of outward providence to keep the faithful out from the prisons and the stocks? Nay, His brightest witnesses were the men who were hurried thither, and who sang praises, even at midnight, to the Lord!

No, the world of itself knows nothing, and can teach nothing either of truth, or grace, or wisdom, for they are in Christ; yea, God refuses to walk through it, in the way of providence, to distinguish the good from the evil as He once did, but true to Christ, and to Himself in withdrawing Jesus to His right hand where He now sits; and actions are weighed in heaven and confirmed, if needs be, in hell.

"And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." Thus it was not while they were in this life that "good things and evil things" could be learnt, but after death, by the torments or the bosom. No doubt the voice of Abraham to Dives, in reply to his cry for a drop of cold water, and by the tip of the finger of Lazarus, that he might cool his tongue, carried home the condemnation morally, as well as judicially, when he said, "Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy 'good things,' and likewise Lazarus 'evil things,' but *now* he is comforted and thou art tormented." It is not only that the reality "of good and evil," and the realities of "the life-time" upon the earth, are thus transferred to heaven and hell, that they may be rightly estimated and weighed *there*, so as to refuse every other standard and test for practical walk while on the earth; but the finality is likewise reached. Nor can "make to yourselves friends of the mammon of

unrighteousness" be carried out by any who are not in spirit gone after their Lord where He is! Every action culminates in heaven or hell, and is brought into crisis and finality there. And so Abraham said, "Beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; so that they who would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from thence." It is not only final, but fatal to him.

Nevertheless, if it be too late to think of recovery or even relief, by the tip of the finger and the one drop of water, as regards himself, a cry comes up for others, out of the torment of hell, and the reality and fixedness of the sufferings: "I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house, for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." But the brethren at home, and left behind, cannot be reached from thence. "And Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them."

The word which Abraham spake to him before, "Son, *remember*," must have been as a dagger to his soul, when he did recall his life-time: and now up come "Moses and the prophets," whom he had neglected, before his mind and faithful memory, when it was too late; and what must this recollection have been to him, but "a sharp two-edged sword?" for there are not only torments by the flame of fire, but remembrances that are sharper than swords and keener than the pointed dagger, for those who are in that place which lies beyond the great gulf. "And he said, Nay, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead they would repent." But this did not avail in the instance which it recalls. "And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up? And Saul said, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams; therefore I have called thee,

that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do." But all Samuel could do was to confirm the word which the Lord had spoken before by him! And Abraham said, in like manner, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." And this is the *present* character of the testimony of God to sinners and the "five brethren," now that Jesus Christ has been raised\* from the dead.

No sooner, however, was this ministry commenced, after the resurrection of Christ, than it was challenged by those who clung avowedly to Moses and the prophets. "And as the apostles spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being grieved that they preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." Could there have been a more glorious testimony than from Him who had been "the first that had risen from among the dead," and come back again to this earth, to connect the glad tidings with Himself, as He went up into the heavens to prepare the Father's house for those who should believe on Him? Could it have been better preached than by the Holy Ghost sent down from the glorified Son of Man?

"And they laid hands on the apostles, and put them in hold unto the next day;" for *this* was then the convicting and condemning testimony to "the brethren after the flesh," that He whom the nation had refused and killed had come back again to them from the dead, and whom God preached afresh to them at Pentecost, but whom they rejected again, and confirmed their enmity, and their refusal to hear, by shedding the blood of His martyr Stephen! What could be done more for them than He had done? Jesus had come down into the world, and walked through it in their company, if they would but join Him, and take their places "at the great supper" which a certain man made for them, as the invited guests; but they

made present things their object, and begged to be excused. He sought to call them out, into association with Himself and His disciples, as the rejected One of the earth, and the accepted One of the heavens—yea, to enter by grace alone into the Father's house, even as the prodigal, kissed and clothed and made at home in love; but they would not come in, even when "the father came out and entreated." They would not be made happy on the earth, with the Messiah in their midst "eating and drinking" with them; they would not be won away from the earth by the heavens, even though Jesus be lifted up into them. And now He uncovers hell and its torments to their fears; and by the beggar "in the bosom," and the rich man "in the flame," seeks to win them back to Abraham and his warning voice, which bade them be guided by the earlier testimony "of Moses and the prophets," lest they likewise fall into Tophet, and come "into this place of torment." This ministry of grace, which has gone through the earth, and the heavens, and even hell itself for them, is unheeded; yea, though renewed in the person of Him who came back from the dead, now the risen One in heaven, inviting them by faith in His death and resurrection to join Him in the glory, and get into the kingdom of God from above, by "the door opened in heaven." Yet they refuse Jesus over again, and imprison His witnesses. Grace and goodness are grieved away from below, and, like the angels' word, wait to be recast and reproduced by another company, in other associations; when the heavens will gladly open themselves afresh, to give out with Christ Himself all that this earth refused, and which they received in trust until the mystic Bride shall be seen to come down from God out of heaven, having the glory of God.

J. E. B.

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PEOPLE string their reasons together to hide their motives from themselves.

## THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR.

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“I AM the bright and morning Star.” Does *God* desire to see the Lord Jesus as the bright and morning Star? When the hour is come, God will give the word, and Christ will leave His throne, to bring up His Bride. But the morning Star is not for *God*—it is a hope for a people in the dark night. This title does not come in once in the Old Testament; there we find the Sun of righteousness. But this bright and morning Star comes to usher in the morning without clouds.

The Lord knows what the hearts of His people want here—it is Himself, His own blessed person. Ah! is the Lord Jesus looked for by us as the bright and morning Star? It is not the glory, but *Himself* that is set forth. “I am the bright and morning Star;” and, oh, it is Himself that I want! What would glory be to me without my Lord?

Just observe the sort of glory here. What is this bright and morning Star as to glory compared with the Sun of righteousness? Oh, but they who love Christ know the sweetness of this title; all their hearts’ affections are bound up in His person, that it is which their hearts are set upon. How sweet it is in the midst of all the evil of this wilderness scene to connect the hope of His coming with “I am the bright and morning Star,” and the Spirit and the Bride say “Come!”

In 2 Cor. xi. 2 we get just the true idea of the Bride. Do you know anything of such a thing as a body, a people affianced to Christ?

If the marriage of the Bride, the Lamb’s wife, is to be, and you and I are part of that affianced body, where can creature title come in?

How that name of Bride supposes all affections on the part of Christ! If He looks down and sees one here and there, poor feeble things in themselves indeed, but all they are part of that body, and He has

washed them in His blood, what can He see in them but failure? but He has given them the Spirit and made them one with Himself; He will have a Bride fit for God's own dwelling-place. If you do not know the personal love of Christ to His Bride, you cannot invite Him to come.

God did not stop when He had taken the bone out of Adam, but builded a woman; and so He not only calls and washes poor prodigals, but builds out of poor prodigals a Bride for His Son: making them the members of His Son. It will be a part of His glory to have a Bride formed out of poor prodigals.

The Bride may have all sorts of precious things—but she herself is for the Lord.

What! I, a poor thing, a leaf in the wilderness carried here and there, can I say "Come, Lord!" Ah, but if God has given me the Spirit and made me one with my Lord, I can. If He had merely *shown* me all the glory, it would have had no effect, but the Spirit of God brought the truth to bear on my *heart*: the Spirit of the living God always bringing a fresh taste of the love of Christ to my heart.

Oh, how the Spirit is straightened by us as He goes through the wilderness with us and finds so little answer in our hearts, and cannot get the waters to flow! Do not speak of self, failure, or circumstances, though we have deeply to humble ourselves: Satan would always try to put these between us and Christ; but we may set everything round the cross, in the light of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and if there were but one believer alone in the world, the Spirit in the Bride is sufficient to enable that one to say "Come!" It is not the Bride only, but the Spirit, knowing all the affections in the heart of Christ, says "Come!" How sweet to have Christ wanting you to say "Come." Have you known the sweetness when in solitude, when none have been near, of that thought in your heart, hardly breathed

in words, "Come, Lord, come"? Shall the thought, "I may be caught up to-night," alarm my heart? No! I am as sure of being His, as Rebecca was of being Isaac's, and surer: and so are all believers who can say "Come."

We are in the wilderness now, and we count by weeks and days, and the time seems long; but One up there looks upon you, and says to you, "Surely I come quickly." To you it may seem long, but to Him it is but a little while.

G. V. W.

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OUR judgments sometimes—nay, always—prove our own state as much and more than that of which we judge.

NEVER lose courage when God is showing you what is in your heart. For if thus He discourages confidence in yourself, it is in order that you should take refuge in the Lord Jesus, and find in Him the sure resting-place of the soul.

THE Lord shows us the completeness of redemption in taking the thief on the cross beside Him straight to paradise. The work was all complete for that, *in* Him as well as *for* Him. And He owned Christ when the disciples ran away.

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THESE six things doth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto Him:—

A proud look,

A lying tongue,

And hands that shed innocent blood,

An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations,

Feet that be swift in running to mischief,

A false witness that speaketh lies,

And he that soweth discord among brethren (Prov. vi. 16).

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer (Psalm xix. 14).



## LETTER OF INTEREST.

"I WAS interested in all you wrote. As to 'exercised thereby,' that word struck me much of late 'With whom we have to do.' Back of all circumstances—back of the enemy, it is with God we have to do.

"Through His great mercy He has taught us this as *sinner*s, brought us into His own presence with our mouth stopped and our soul guilty before God, subject to His *judgment*. And O how sweet has it been then to listen whilst He passed by, and told us what He had done for such, in the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord! How faith has welcomed the word of His grace! And how we have worshipped for mercy freely given through the blood of His Son! 'Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid,' &c., has been our song. And oh, how often has He had to bring us back to the place of truth before Him, this place of grace and blessing! Blessed be His name! May He keep us learning more and more of the sufferings of Christ, and of the glory in which He is, and is for us, as well as of that glory to come.

"But I must stop. I was only going to add, has not that word a deep meaning and reality for our souls as saints—'With whom we have to do'? If guilt is met by what Jesus *has* done for us when here, is He not now *daily* concerned with the practical state of our souls before Him, not only nourishing and cherishing His Church, but sanctifying and cleansing us by the washing of water by the word? He loved the Church and gave Himself for it that He might do this, and He is doing this that He may present it to Himself a glorious Church. O what a sweet part of our blessing is this, though our careless and vain hearts would often forego it. But He *restoreth* our souls and makes us partakers of His holiness. How often the death of Christ is connected with holiness now (see Titus and 1 Peter).

“Two scriptures came to me to-day from the Lord. One is that Satan is ‘a *liar* and a *murderer*,’ and that our business is to ‘resist’ him on the one hand, and *never to mind* his ‘roaring’ on the other, but peacefully to do *God’s will* and leave all issues with Him. The other is that whoever does this ‘abideth for ever.’ What a rock is God’s Word for a feeble creature to rest on! Thus we rest on God.

“It is getting late, but I must give you one thought I felt precious at the prayer-meeting, as it is the answer to your fear in your last.

“It is this, that GOD is our salvation. He has not merely saved us, but has brought us to *Himself*,—if indeed in conscience we have been brought to Him as purged for evermore—and now. it is *with God* we are walking, if indeed we do walk with Him. Well, but who is *God*? O the glory and majesty of God! He made the worlds, and sustains them and even the wicked. All things hang on Him. He brought His Son again from the dead, freed from our sins, which He had in love taken on Him, and set Him in true humanity at His right hand in glory, and He is now displaying His glory in taking sinners out of the fearful grasp of Satan, and giving them to the Son. Can HE not uphold me, who upholds all heaven and earth? Is this glorious One *our Father*? Has He washed me in the precious blood of Jesus, and clothed me with change of raiment? Am I thoroughly happy with God about the guilt of sin? Do I know what it is to ‘abhor myself’ as did Job? He was the most righteous man on earth. But O how we take the very grace God puts in us to make ourselves comely in our own eyes! Job was righteous in *his own eyes*. Ah! God had to strip and strip and strip him. And *God* only could do it. No creature could make Job feel that he was vile; he was righteous in his own eyes; and no words of the creature can fasten the arrow of guilt on the conscience so that nothing can ease it but the real application of the blood of Christ by Christ Himself.

O the dreadfulfulness of being under the sense of God's displeasure! I don't mean fearing hell, but conscious that you have not perfect *ease* and liberty in His presence.

"Dear —, we have heard of God with the hearing of the ear, but we need *with our own eyes to see Him*. Then shall we abhor ourselves and repent. God has been giving me humbling views of my self-righteousness, and the grievous dishonour it does to Christ. It is slighting the blood which God says has satisfied *Him*, the blood which that blessed One shed,—oh, how sorrowfully!—that we might know its virtue.

"But I was going to say, Is this God *my* God? Then what need I fear? I have but to be obedient. He has a *will* about my future—I have but to do it. He will keep me. But first we must be brought in conscience down to where Job was, then know conscious acceptance through *faith*, then there is peace.

"Well, the longest journey will come to an end. Everything will end but *God*. When everything ends, *God* will be all in all. Trial, temptation, endurance, conflict, failure, faith, and hope, all will end, and *God and love* last for ever. We have been brought to God in love now—we have begun with what is *eternal*. Now it is our wisdom not to be taken up with what passes away. Slander, lies, reproach, suffering, all will come to an end—but 'love never faileth,' and the 'truth shall be with us for ever.'" J. R.

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THE Bishop of Southwell has been illustrating what the "Oxford Magazine" calls the "Ritualistic tendencies of modern Nonconformity" by a reference to the splendour of Mansfield College Chapel. He told his Diocesan Conference that Dr. Fairbairn sat enthroned under a canopy which outshone his own chair at Southwell as much as "Papal magnificence does a pawnbroker's shop!"

## NOTICE.

With this issue of "Words in Season" we bring to a close another year's ministry of Christ to the hearts of our readers. Finding Him to be the Alpha and Omega thereof, we trust it has been in some small degree suggestive of the Tree of Life, yielding twelve manner of fruits, and yielding her fruit every month. This, at least, has been our desire, and this our aim, that every number issued should be redolent of Christ, carrying the sweet fragrance of His name, the excellency of His person, the efficacy of His work, and the bright and blissful anticipation of His glory to the heart of every reader. After six years of this service, it is well for contributors and subscribers alike to recall that this is the definite character that they desire "Words in Season" to maintain. And, the Lord helping, with increased efficiency and with sweeter savour in the future, we trust, than in the past, if opportunity for such service should continue to be granted to those whose labours we are well assured have not been in vain in the Lord. Frankly, therefore, would we ask our readers for renewed interest and exertion in the furtherance of this work of faith and labour of love. From the first, its promoters have sought that the balance sheet should be the last consideration; at the same time, it may be well that readers should not be without even this stimulus to increasing the circulation of "Words in Season," and our gospel paper, "Whosoever Will"—the knowledge that every copy of both serials for the whole six years has been issued at a pecuniary loss. For this reason then, among others, but especially because the time is short, because the shadows are lengthening and deepening also, and because so many saints throughout the world are ill-furnished and ill-fed, neither eating the fat nor drinking the sweet, we count upon all who are acquainted with our pages to aid in the precious ministry of Christ to the hearts of those who are dearer to Him than the apple of His eye. Who would not desire for himself and covet for others the aspiration of the apostle in Phil. iii. 10-12? "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."