

# WORDS IN SEASON.

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

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## PATIENT WAITING FOR GOD.

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To wait for God should characterise His saints. His purposes will not fail of accomplishment. All will surely be brought about. In ordinary life patience is called for. "The husbandman," writes James, "waits for the precious fruits of the earth, and hath long patience for it, till he receive the early and the latter rain." It is no wonder, then, if Christians in their course have to practise it.

Saints of old well knew what it was to wait. The prophets had to exercise patience, and patriarchs likewise. Abraham waited twenty-five years ere Isaac, his heir, was born. Joseph was thirteen years a slave in Egypt, and part of that time a prisoner in the dungeon, before deliverance appeared; and nine years more ran by before his dream was fulfilled by his brethren bowing down before him. David, too, had to wait long years before he ascended the throne, years of much affliction and harassment. But the end came, and he could pen the eighteenth psalm, the witness of deliverance accorded him by God out of all his troubles, and out of the hand of Saul. To an instance of patient waiting, and one of the earliest on record, we would now direct attention.

Noah had entered the ark with his wife, and his sons and their wives, and proved the suitability of that vessel, built by him according to God's directions, to be a refuge from the storm, a hiding-place in the deluge. Pitched within and without with pitch, it was quite waterproof; resisting the force of that pitiless torrent of rain, which for well-nigh six weeks fell without intermission, but fell harmlessly on its exterior. Safety they proved there was for all within. For forty days and forty nights it rained. None of us can conceive what that must have been; for none since that time have witnessed such a downpour. But more. All the fountains of the great deep were broken up, when the windows of heaven were opened,

and for one hundred-and-fifty days the waters prevailed upon the earth (Gen. vii. 17-24). Inside the ark they must have heard the rain beating on its covering, but in vain. No chink admitted it. All was secure, waterproof indeed.

But soon they had a new experience of the suitability of their vessel to live in the flood. For as the waters increased they bore up the ark, and it was lifted above the waters. Its buoyancy was found to be perfect, heavily laden though it must have been. It was now afloat; launched on the great waters, but not by human effort. Still the waters rose, for they prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth. And now (vii. 18) the vessel not only floated, but moved. It went upon the face of the waters. All within must surely have been aware of this last. Of three important facts, then, were they now cognisant. It was able to resist the incoming of the rain. It could float, being perfectly buoyant. It could also take a voyage, for it had commenced to go upon the face of the waters. But whither was it going? Where would it stop? These were questions for the company within as yet unsolved. How long, too, were they to be confined within it? When would it discharge its living freight on dry land? These questions they might ask one another, but no one could answer them. For during all those five months the waters prevailed on the earth; and when the mountains were covered, there could have been nothing but a wide expanse of water to be seen—a shoreless ocean indeed.

Shut in by God, they were to remain there, till allowed by Him to come out. Had He forgotten them during these dreary months? The last communication, of which we have any record, was addressed to Noah to tell him to go in (Gen. vii. 1-5). The door shut, communications from above were, it would seem, suspended, till more than a year had rolled by. Then the command went forth for all to

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come out of the ark. That they would emerge from it in time God intimated before they went in, as He told Noah, that by all in the ark seed should be preserved alive upon the face of all the earth (vii. 3): Hope therefore of their coming out was to be kept alive in their hearts. This is God's way with His own. Abraham, Joseph, David, each and all proved that. We too, are to prove it, who "are saved by hope," a "hope which maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us" (Rom. viii. 24 ; v. 5). And needed surely was that which was thus graciously ministered, for the little word *all* before "the earth" intimated pretty plainly the unchangeableness of God's purpose, that animal life upon earth outside the ark should perish in the waters. In hope, then, Noah entered the ark. In patience must he have waited within it.

Five long months the waters prevailed upon the earth. At the end of that time "God," we read, "remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that were with him in the ark" (viii. 1). God does take thought for His creatures ; for cattle (Jonah iv. 11), and for other living creatures as well as man (Gen. ix. 10-17). So He remembered them all, and showed it. Yet not by speaking, but by acting. For the water assuaged by a wind passing over the earth. The wind blew. The waters abated. Those who had heard, doubtless, the patter of the rain, were conscious now that a wind had risen. But more. "The fountains of the deep, and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained." The flood had reached its limit. The greatest depth of the waters could now be recorded. And we learn that fifteen cubits upward (about 25 feet, or so) they had prevailed, and the mountains were covered. It was not then merely a large plain bounded by high hills that was inundated. "All the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were

covered.” Nothing could have been seen from the ark, but a wide expanse of water bounded only by the horizon. “And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man; all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed, which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark” (vii. 21-24). Death all around. Life only for all in the ark. Death had no entrance there. Outside death reigned. Inside life continued.

This is the record in the book of Genesis. Is it an exaggeration, or a myth? Was it only the supposition of Noah, and of those within, whose range of vision of course was limited? The Holy Ghost by Peter confirms the record of Genesis. “Eight souls were saved by water,” wrote the apostle (1 Pet. iii. 20). “God spared not the old world,” he wrote again, “but saved Noah, the eighth person (or, more probably, one of eight) bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.” Again he writes: “The world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished” (2 Pet. ii. 5; iii. 6). Was there then but a partial destruction of the Adamic race? Peter’s testimony runs counter to that, and his words in the last quotation just given would seem to take in more than the destruction of men, even all that Gen. vii. 23 declares was affected by that terrible judgment. And the record of Genesis is confirmed again by one who witnessed it—the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, by whom the worlds were made. He tells us in plain language how before the flood men were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, looking for nothing but the perpetuation of the race on earth, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and knew not

until the flood came, and took them all away (Matt. xxiv. 38, 39). A partial destruction of the race shall we say? All were taken away but those in the ark is the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ, who alone has told us what men were about, ere the flood came unawares upon them. Death, then, as we have said, was reigning around. Life only survived in those in the ark. What a solemn time for Noah and those with him. They only of the human race were safe from the overwhelming power of the waters of the deluge. For five months, as we have said, they had proved the suitability of the ark to shelter them, and could attest its buoyancy likewise.

At length the seventh month began its course. Still there was no appearance of any change approaching until the seventeenth day dawned, and then the ark grounded (Gen. viii. 4). Its voyage was ended; it went no further. But where was it? Who inside then knew? As yet no landmarks were visible. But the grounding of the vessel betokened that the water had declined. Hope of an exit from the ark must, therefore, have been strengthened within them, as they were conscious that for the first time the vessel had touched the ground. Days, however, and weeks had to pass ere anything but the water could be seen, and therefore before, as it seems most probable, they really knew where they were. From the seventeenth day, then, of the seventh month they might know that the waters were subsiding. On the first day of the tenth month they had ocular testimony that it was really true. On that day the tops of the mountains were visible. What an interest to that little company the first sight of the mountain tops must have been! As the first land after a long voyage is hailed with delight by a ship's company, so surely the sight of the mountain tops must have been so hailed by Noah and his family. They had *known* for nigh ten weeks that the waters were decreasing. They could *see* now that it

was the case, and henceforth could daily mark the subsidence of the flood. The mountain tops seen! Little islands in a vast ocean must the several mountain peaks have appeared. But patience was still called for, and for months yet would they be kept within the ark.

Six weeks almost went by. Each day surely they might see the land coming more and more into view. Was the ground yet fit for them to live upon it? Noah would learn how far the waters were dried up; so he opened the window which he had made, and, selecting a raven, sent it off on a voyage of discovery. Evidently the ground was not ready for man, for the raven went forth to and fro till the waters were dried up from off the earth (viii. 7). A week later he sent forth a dove, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground. But the dove returned to the ark, for it found no rest for the sole of its foot. Matters were not far enough advanced for their exit to be yet entertained. Patience had still to be in exercise, though the time of disembarkment was evidently approaching. Waiting another seven days, he sent forth the dove again. In the evening it returned. Was there another disappointment in store for those in the ark? This time all within must have been cheered by the sight of an olive leaf in its mouth. That little dove was that evening a messenger of good tidings. Unable, of course, to relate its experience, the olive leaf in its mouth, one freshly grown, told the tale. Vegetation had resumed its course. The waters were abated from off the earth. With what interest surely must they all have examined that leaf, God's message to them of coming enlargement. God had indeed remembered Noah, and all in the ark. That leaf was a witness of it. Another seven days, however, rolled by, when the dove, now sent forth on its third flight, returned no more. Nine weeks had come and gone since the mountain tops had first reappeared. The raven and the dove needed no longer the pro-

tection of the ark ; but men, and cattle, and beasts, and creeping things must still abide within it.

The next note of time that we have is the new year's day of the following year. A red-letter day for them all it proved to be, and one doubtless ever remembered by Noah and his family. They now for the first time breathed again the pure air of heaven, for Noah uncovered the ark and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry. Should they now disembark? Patience had, however, still to be exercised, for no word had God yet spoken to tell them to come forth from the shelter that He had provided. A ship on dry land it probably was when they had entered it. A ship on dry land it again was, and they could see that when its covering was removed. How long would they still be confined within it? Nearly two months more rolled by. Each day they could look at the earth, the face of which was dry. No flood around them, no waste of waters reaching to the distant horizon. Where water had once been seen the earth was visible, and verdure clothed the ground.

Had God forgotten them? The twenty-seventh day of the second month witnessed that such was not the case. On that day He told Noah that all were to come out, for the earth was dried (viii. 14). The *face* of the ground being dry was one thing, the *earth* being dry was another. Till this last was brought about the ground was not fit for men to dwell on it. When it was dry, God waited no longer. And now the welcome permission was accorded. All came forth. Patience was needed no longer, however great had been the trial of it. And surely all of them must have justified God, who had provided such a shelter, and who had kept them within it, till the earth was in a fit condition for them again to make the ground their habitation.

As God acted then, so He has always acted, and will act. He does not bring His people into a place unprepared for them. Adam knew that. Noah learnt

that. Israel proved the same (Deut. vi. 10, 11). And we shall attest it when we enter the Father's house, and find all has been prepared for us (John xiv. 2, 3). He who moulded things in Eden for His creature man is the same One who has gone to prepare a place for His people on high. "Let patience have her perfect work," writes James (i. 4), "that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Surely in Noah we see that exemplified, and One greater than Noah has said: "I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto Me, and heard My cry. He brought Me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set My feet upon a rock, and established My goings. And He hath put a new song into My mouth, even praise unto our God." And the effect was to be, "Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord" (Ps. xl. 1-3).

Are any chafing, because the wheels of the divine chariot seem to revolve so slowly? Let this record of Noah, which may be read as a leaf, as it were, from the log of the ark, allay such feelings. Are any tempted to say, no trouble was ever like mine? Let these words of Ps. xl. speak, and gild the edge of their dark cloud with the bright light of hope. For "blessed is the man who maketh the Lord his trust" (Ps. xl. 4).

C. E. S.

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## PRESENT AND FUTURE.

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How deep our joy ! how calm our peace !  
 Before the throne of God,  
 Where cherubim with outstretched wings  
 Look down upon the blood !

The precious blood of God's dear Son—  
 Our Sacrifice and Priest—  
 Who bore our sins now bears our names  
 Before His Father's face !

The shoulders of our Great High Priest  
 Uphold each feeble saint ;

PRESENT AND FUTURE.

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Though mighty foes their way oppose,  
Yet, they shall never faint.

Redemption work is now complete,  
The Paraclete is given,  
By whom we know as on we go,  
Our portion bright in heaven !

Where He our absent Lord has gone,  
Our great High Priest to be ;  
From thence He'll come and take us home,  
His glory there to see !

Soon, soon, He'll leave His Father's throne,  
Descending to the air ;  
One moment, then, the church is gone,  
Thenceforth His joy to share !

She's sighed for Him through many years,  
But lo ! He comes at last,  
To put an end to all her tears,  
Her sorrows then are past.

All hail ! that bright and happy day,  
When we shall never part  
From Him who is our strength and stay,  
The Bridegroom of our heart !

Yes, David's Lord and David's Son,  
The Bright and Morning Star,  
Shall sit and rule upon His throne  
O'er all, both near and far !

God's fair creation then shall rest,  
And righteous peace shall flow  
One thousand joyful, happy years,  
And only blessing know.

No wonder that creation groans,  
O blessed Lord, for Thee ;  
The Spirit and the Bride say Come :  
Amen, so let it be !

A A.

## GIDEON AND HIS COMPANY.

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THE life of Gideon, like that of every servant of God recorded in the Bible, has many lessons for us who live in these last days, for whose admonition, indeed, it was written (1 Cor. x. 11). To the most prominent features of his life we would turn.

Israel had done evil in the sight of the Lord. A democratic spirit pervaded the people, just as it does the people of to-day. Every man did that which was right in his own eyes (Judges xvii. 6; xxi. 25. Compare Deut. xii. 8). But "there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. xiv. 12). Forgetful of Jehovah and His mighty acts, they quickly turn aside from following Him, and in spite of warnings again and again repeated, sink into the ways of the nations around. The wilderness with its many marvellous experiences was forgotten as a dream, Gilgal with all its deep lessons had faded from the memory, Bochim with its tears had passed into oblivion. The heart no longer finds delight in meditating upon the majesty, might, and mercy of Jehovah, but occupies itself with the ways and practices of the neighbouring nations, only to become, in how brief a time, a worshipper at the shrines of Baal and Ashtaroth.

The Christian, likewise, forgetful of the cross of Christ, soon lets slip the truth that he is "not of the world" (John xvii. 16), and falls a victim to worldly ways and acts; and, just as the Israelite bowed down to Baal, so he bows imperceptibly to the influences of Satan. "Be more like other people—do as others do," is the subtle advice of him who has had no less than six thousand years' experience of the human heart. Hence, "Thus saith the Lord" falls unheeded upon the soul.

But "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth," and, therefore, He delivered His people into the hand of

Midian seven years. "Greatly impoverished," they cry to the Lord: "We have sinned, because we have forsaken the Lord, and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve Thee" (1 Sam. xii. 10, 11). The Lord's ears were open to their cry. They confessed their sin, and "He is faithful and just to forgive" (1 John i. 9). By the mouth of a prophet an answer was vouchsafed, that they had not obeyed the voice of the Lord (Judges vi. 8-10), and this was followed by the appearing of an angel to Gideon, who saluted him with the words: "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour" (vi. 12). What a remarkable greeting for Gideon, whose thoughts, revealed by his answer, were so far otherwise! "If the Lord be with us," he says, "why then is all this befallen us? . . . but now the Lord hath forsaken us." Sad as was this answer, there is great beauty in it; for it declares a heart which is not pent up with its own sorrow and the depressed circumstances immediately surrounding itself, but is touched and humbled on account of the people generally. Their sorrow was his sorrow; their sin was his sin. "*We* obeyed not His voice," said Daniel, "*we* have sinned, *we* have done wickedly" (Dan. ix. 14, 15). So, too, it was not merely Achan who had sinned, but "Israel hath sinned" (Josh. vii. 11). Faith views things as God views them. The individual walk may be excellent, but faith, which enables one thus to walk, takes in its vision the state of the whole people of God.

Oh, that we were all Gideons and Daniels, to mourn over the ruin and confusion of the Church, and to humble ourselves, confessing to the Lord that "we have sinned." To how many then would come the message: "Go in this thy might, . . . have not I sent thee?" (Judges vi. 14). The word of God and His presence is might indeed, which no foe can withstand. "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

“Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am least in my father’s house” (verse 15), is no valid plea for disobeying the Lord’s injunctions. Wealth and family connexions, such potent factors in the world’s estimation, are of no moment whatsoever before God ; for “hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith,” “that no flesh should glory in His presence” ? But Gideon felt his own weakness and insignificance, and in wondrous grace the Lord again assures him of His presence. “*Surely* I will be with thee” (verse 16). Doubts even yet lurk in his mind. What slowness to believe the plain declarations of so beneficent a God ! Moses displayed a similar hesitation (Exodus, iii., iv.), and is it not characteristic of the whole human race ?

Gideon now asks for a sign, and his prayer is granted. He is overawed by it, and cries out in fear ; a circumstance which brings forth the gracious sentence, “Peace be unto you” (verse 23); a sentence repeated, many years after, to console, cheer, and strengthen the fearful hearts of others who were His (John xx). Peace, undoubtedly, came to Gideon ; the spirit of worship fills his soul, and he builds an altar to the Lord.

All, however, is not yet right. The altar of Baal belonging to his father must be overthrown ; and in obedience to the word of the Lord it is immediately destroyed, together with the grove that was by it, and an altar to the Lord is erected in its place. With Gideon, as with the Lord’s people at all times, there must be no truce with the enemy. Every alliance with the world and its surroundings must be broken ; for he that “will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (Jas. iv. 4). In short, the Christian as well as Israelite must be a Gideon, that is, one who cuts down, as the name imports. Isolation, such as was Gideon’s, may ensue, but how cheering the words, “*Surely* I will be with thee.” “In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John xvi. 33). Narrow is the way, and narrow

will it ever remain; and any attempt to make it broader can end only in disaster, and dishonour to the name of the Lord. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. xv. 22). So learnt Gideon, and richly was he rewarded for his obedience.

The ground is now cleared of all obstruction. The enemy within has been trampled upon and overcome; and Gideon is in a position to meet the foe from without. This is ever the only right way. The cause of Israel's troubles was the wickedness within. It had not only brought the Midianites and Amalekites to attack and distress them, but had incapacitated them from resisting these outward foes. And history repeats itself again and again. It is the wickedness, the carelessness, the indifference to evil within the assembly which renders it weak (hence schisms and divisions), and nullifies its testimony to the world. The Spirit of the Lord comes upon Gideon. "The Lord is on my side" he can now say, "I will not fear: what can man do unto me?" And with that he blew the trumpet of war. The opposition of the worshippers of Baal had vanished in an instant, and a greater, though less subtle, enemy will soon flee before him. As those blasts fell upon the ear, how many memories must have been awakened to the words of Him who is "ever faithful, ever sure." "If ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then shall ye blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies" (Num. x. 9).

Faith in God had aroused the slumbering energies of Gideon into activity; zeal had taken the place of despondency; the trumpet had been sounded with no uncertain sound, and thousands were preparing themselves to the battle. A tremendous crisis is at hand. Gideon's heart sinks within him. He must once more resort to God for a sign whereby he may be again assured that he is to be, indeed, the instrument to save

Israel. Poor, fickle heart! plead and plead again, for *never* wilt thou plead in vain. God's love is infinite, His patience illimitable, His grace inexhaustible! To every request is an answer given, though Gideon's conscience is evidently touched by his own want of confidence (vi. 39).

To the trumpet's call no less than 32,000 men respond. A goodly array, of which, perhaps, man might be proud; for he delights in numbers and revels in his own might. "Union is strength," saith he. But what saith the Lord? "Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird, yourselves and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand" (Isa. viii. 9, 10). With such a host Israel might vaunt and say, "Mine own hand hath saved me" (Judges vii. 2); but it is "not by an army" (see margin), "nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Zech. iv. 6). "I, even I, am the Lord; and beside Me there is no Saviour" (Isa. xliii. 11). Israel, and Midian also, must learn this lesson. These numbers are too great for God to get to Himself glory, to Whom glory alone belongs. No one, therefore, must be pressed into His service. He draws, not drags: leads, not drives. "The Lord loveth a *cheerful* giver," whether it be the heart or aught else given. It must be a loyal service, freely and gladly rendered for nothing. How many among this huge multitude will fight the Lord's battle from choice? Twenty-two thousand are fearful and faint-hearted, and return home, preferring its ease and comfort to the hardness which a good soldier of the Lord must endure (2 Tim. iii. 3, 4). Of those who are left, the majority are more bent on satisfying the cravings of nature than animated with thoughts of the coming battle. Only 300 out of 32,000 are found to be true soldiers, ready to "fight a good fight." What a re-

## GIDEON AND HIS COMPANY.

15

fection! How striking a demonstration of the truth that "many be called, but few chosen"! "I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ," must be the spirit to impel the Christian onward. Without it, he and his comrades would be but a "forlorn hope" against the myriads opposed to them. With it, "they go from strength to strength," and, as the combat deepens, their zeal and courage mount. There is no parley with the enemy; stricter their discipline, closer their ranks. They who are not thus inspired, quail before the storm; lax becomes their discipline, open their ranks, and then, like chaff before the wind, are they scattered hither and thither by the enemy. To you, my Christian reader, who have enlisted under the banner of the Captain of our salvation, I would put the question, To which of these three companies do you belong?

The eve of battle approaches. Jehovah is with Gideon as He promised (for "He is faithful that promised"). Six times already has He, by word or sign, revealed Himself to His servant to give him assurance of His presence and of His help; yet once more, for the seventh\* time, must He come to him, unsolicited, in all the perfection of grace, to give him strength and encouragement. "Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand. But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host: and thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host" (vii. 9, 10). What tender consideration for Gideon do these words disclose! Well might Gideon worship (verse 15) on realising the goodness and superabounding grace which had been manifested towards him. "Grace upon grace" had he indeed received. What of us, then, who can say, "Of His fulness have all we received, and grace upon

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\* The seven times are as follows:—(1) Judges vi. 12-16, (2) 17-23, (3) 25-26, (4) 36-38, (5) 39-40, (6) vii. 2-7, (7) 9.

grace"? (John. i. 16). Surely with the heart's deep devotion we can only worship and adore!

And now Gideon with his little band goes forth to the battle. Each man is furnished with a trumpet, an empty pitcher, and a lamp within the pitcher. One simple, yet striking order is given, "Look on me and do likewise" (vii. 17), an order loyally and faithfully obeyed. Imitating their leader, they all, at one and the same moment, blew their trumpets and brake their pitchers, and cried, "The sword of the Lord and Gideon" (vii. 20). Marvellous, indeed, was the effect. "And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled" (verse 21). What a sight to behold! The mighty host of Midian appalled and confounded, while the three hundred, scantily equipped, stood in the calm elevation of faith in the living God! Truly the weakness of God, as expressed in Gideon's company, is stronger than men (1 Cor. i. 25). With this picture before him, who need fear to meet the direst foe? To fight God's battles man's arms and armour must be flung aside, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. The panoply of God, the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, are the Christian's arms, and his attitude that of "looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith." In this way he may not fear to go forth and bear his testimony, letting the light of the Holy Spirit within shine out as from a broken vessel, knowing "that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. vii. 18), and so demonstrating that in earthen vessels, like ourselves, the excellency of the power is of God, and not of us (2 Cor. iv. 7).

The time for standing still is at an end, and now they must go forward; for there is a time to stand still and a time to go forward, as Israel in an earlier day had learnt (Exod. xiv. 13, 14, 15). The first flush of victory is over; what is before them will try and

test them sorely, for the enemy must be chased beyond the confines of the land. The sinner, too, who has just found rest in the finished work of Christ, and is rejoicing in his salvation, soon discovers that his labours—wearying, anxious, trying labours as a saint—have only begun. First to thwart them is the jealousy of Ephraim, their own kith and kin really (and how often is this the first stumbling-block which Satan puts in the way of a young Christian?); but Gideon has grace given him to meet it. “What have I done in comparison of you?” is his reply to these outbursts of jealousy; and their anger abated towards him (viii. 3). How like, too, the spirit of Him who, “when He was reviled, reviled not again, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously!” Gideon had committed himself into the hands of Jehovah, and so passes on. Crossing the Jordan, he with his followers is now in a strange country; similar to the Christian, a stranger and pilgrim in the world, whose citizenship is in heaven (Phil. iii. 19). The enemy’s power is not yet wholly broken. “Faint, yet pursuing,” they follow after, seeking help from one and another, only to find none. The world around has no sympathy with, and is always slow to help the Lord’s people; and while they may grieve over such cold-heartedness, it is, after all, a blessed thing to learn by experience that there is One only to whom they can go for comfort and relief during this time of conflict here. “I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none,” was really His own experience (Ps. 69, 20). “Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not” (Gal. vi. 9). The difficulties are many, the dangers great. The world, the flesh, and the devil are terrible foes to be ever combating; yet the Lord can deliver, nay, has delivered His own from their dominion, did they by faith fully realise it. Still, it must be sorrowfully confessed that this triumvirate of evil, as it may be called, has sadly diminished

the ranks of Christians, and so disheartened many. To the few who do hold closely to Him, how encouraging the words: "The Lord did not set His love upon you nor choose you because you were more in number than any people, for ye were THE FEWEST OF ALL PEOPLE" (Deut. vii. 7). Oh, for the tongue of the learned, to know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary!

The men of Succoth and Penuel may laugh at the weakness of Gideon and his men, and refuse them aid (viii. 5-9), but a time of reckoning will come. For the present "grace" is Gideon's watchword, but anon it will be "judgment." Thus is every insult by the way borne in silence. Midian is at length crushed, and Gideon returns from the fight, taking terrible vengeance upon those who had mocked him. And to-day grace is reigning. The dark deeds, revolting language, and shocking insults to God which men indulge in, are being passed over in wondrous silence, till that day "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe" (2 Thess. i. 7-10). A day of joy to the believer, and of untold grief to the unbeliever, will that day prove.

And now that the land is once more rid of its enemies, the men of Israel desire that Gideon should rule over them; for, say they, "*thou* hast delivered us out of the hand of Midian" (viii. 22). Little thought here of Him who had delivered them; but to Gideon was that honour given. Therefore he rebukes them by saying, "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you" (verse 23). A beautiful reply, and a fit conclusion to perhaps the most important chapter in Gideon's history.

## NOT ENOUGH!

19

Another short, sad chapter remains to be told. Elated, doubtless, by success, Gideon seeks to enrich himself with the gold of his enemies, which presently was to become a snare to himself, his house, and even to all Israel (ix. 27). In weakness and reproach he had clung to the Lord, and was esteemed by Him a "mighty man of valour" (vi. 11-13). What of him now, when at the zenith of his power? A poor victim of mammon!!

Such is man; changeful and vain at his very best. How sweet to know there is One who changes not, whose love remains undiminished and undimmed, spite of our many, many failures—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." May the hearts of all who shall read these lines bow in joyful adoration before Him.

A. C. H.

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 NOT ENOUGH!

"And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in Thee."—*Psalm xxxix. 7.*

'Tis not enough Thy voice to hear,  
We want Thy face to see!

'Tis not enough to know Thee near,  
We want with Thee to be!

'Tis not enough to know Thy Name,  
We long to dwell with Thee!

'Tis not enough to spread Thy fame,  
We would Thy glory see!

'Tis not enough to taste Thy grace,  
Thy glory we would share!  
We want to view Thy beauteous face,  
And Thy blest image bear!

If not enough for us, blest Lord,  
Far from enough *for Thee!*  
Come, then, fulfil Thy precious Word,  
ALL and *in all* to be!

## BETHEL—PENIEL—BEER-SHEBA.

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THERE are four stages in the journey of the life of Jacob (see Gen. xxv.-xlix.): his residence at home in Canaan ; his sojourn in Padan-aram ; his second residence in Canaan ; his sojourn and death in Egypt.

Between these four stages there are three links or times of transition, which we may call Bethel, Peniel, and Beer-sheba.

Bethel, or the scene there, happens as he journeys from Canaan to Padan-aram.

Peniel, or the scene there, happens as he journeys back from Padan-aram to Canaan.

Beer-sheba, or the scene there, happens as he journeys from Canaan down to Egypt.

These are the eras in the life of Jacob, and the transitions from one to the other. I would now meditate on these transition scenes, or on Bethel, Peniel, and Beer-sheba.

Jacob had offended the Lord, having taken the way of nature, in listening to the counsels of unbelief touching the blessing. He is therefore put under discipline, that he may learn the bitterness of his own way. His place of stones, the very night on which he left his father's house, witnessed this. It was the fruit of his transgression, but it told that God was his God still. It is the place of discipline, however, and not of sin. God can therefore own it and visit it. Had it been the tent where he and his mother had dressed the kids for Isaac's feasts, God could not have owned it, for iniquity was practised there ; but Luz, or the place of discipline, the Lord can visit with His presence.\*

He does accordingly come, and He comes to make glory a great reality to His servant. He does not come to soften his pillow, or to change his condition, sending him back to enjoy the home of his father and

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\* His presence there turns Luz into Bethel.

the care of his mother. He leaves Jacob still to taste the bitterness of departure from God, but comes to make glory and heaven great realities to him. Onwards, therefore, this chastened child of God goes, and for twenty years knows the bonds of an injurious taskmaster in Padan-aram.

In due season he is on his way back. But it is a different Jacob we now see, as well as a different journey. He was an empty Jacob at Bethel, he is now a full Jacob at Peniel. He has become two bands. Flocks and herds, and servants and wives and children, tell of his prosperity. He has become a rich man. He has a stake in the world. He has something to lose, something which may make him an object and a prey.

He hears of Esau coming with four hundred men. He trembles. He manages as well as he can, religiously committing all to God. But still, unbelief has mastered his heart, and he is in fear of his revengeful brother.

The Lord comes to him ; but He comes in a new character altogether. He had been a child under discipline at Bethel, he is an unbelieving child now ; and the Lord comes not to comfort him as then, but to rebuke and restore him. "There wrestled a man with him till the breaking of the day." This was the Lord in controversy with Jacob's unbelief touching Esau. But what is the issue of this controversy ? Grace is made a great reality to Jacob now, as glory had been before. The wrestling Stranger in abounding grace allows Himself to be prevailed over by the weak and timid Jacob, and the spirit of faith revives in the soul of Jacob. Very blessed this is. He comes "boldly to the throne of grace." He says, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." And Jacob becomes Israel. The unbelieving Jacob is restored now, as the chastened Jacob had been comforted before. Grace is made a great reality to him now, as glory had been to him then. At Bethel he

walked at the gate of heaven, here he walks in the presence of God. Christ was giving him promises at Bethel; He is giving him embraces at Peniel. He was opening His house to him there; He is opening His heart to him here.

Such was Bethel, and such was Peniel to Jacob; such is God to him in his various needs. Heaven was shewn to him in the day of his sorrow; restoring grace in its exhaustless treasures in the day of his failure.

But Beer-sheba is still to be visited, and it has its peculiar character also. Nature had spoken very quickly in Jacob, when on hearing that Joseph was alive and governor of Egypt, and seeing the waggons which he had sent to take him to that country, he said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive, I will go down and see him before I die." This was just nature; and though nature may speak rightly in a saint, yet its voice ought always to be challenged, for it may be wrong as well as right. In a calmer moment of his soul, this decision, this unchallenged decision of nature, becomes the occasion of uneasiness to Jacob; and it is this uneasiness, as I surely judge, that gives us Beer-sheba. For, I may ask, Why the sacrifices there? "And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac."

This is remarkable. And why all this? I ask. There had been no altar at Mamre before he had set out. Why this delay at Beer-sheba on the road? The spiritual sense has now been awakened, and the saint feels reserve where the father had felt none. Very common this is with the people of God. Nature had acted at Mamre, but now that the mind of Christ awakens to take the lead, the judgment of nature is reviewed.

Many years before this the Lord had said to Isaac, "Go not down into Egypt," and had said this to him in a day of famine in Canaan, as was the present.

(See chap. xxvi. 1, 2.) Faith reviving in the soul of Jacob at Beer-sheba (lying on the southernmost border as you go to Egypt), this is remembered, and Jacob pauses. Uneasiness is felt when faith thus challenges the verdict of nature. And God is sought, the God of Isaac. Most fitly so; for it was the word of the God of Isaac which had awakened this conflict and uneasiness. The word of the Lord, as we have now seen, had raised a wall or dug a gulf between Isaac and Egypt. So that this delay at Beer-sheba, and these sacrifices, tell the secret of Jacob's soul, that faith, and not nature, was now taking the lead of the motives that were stirring there.

Very lovely this is, and very precious with God, as the sequel of this perfect little story of other days at Beer-sheba tells us. God comes to Jacob, and comes at once upon the raising up of the altar at Beer-sheba. He had been with him before, as we saw, on his way from Canaan to Padan-aram, and again on his way back from Padan-aram to Canaan; and now is He with him on his way from Canaan to Egypt. At Bethel, as we also saw, He had made glory, or heaven, a great reality to the chastened, sorrowing Jacob. At Peniel He had made grace, in its restoring virtue, a great reality to the timid and fainting Jacob, and now at Beer-sheba He makes divine sympathy a great reality to the tender self-judging Jacob.

The communion between the Lord and His elect one here is full of the witness of this. The Lord lets him know that He was acquainted with all the workings, both of nature and of the spiritual mind in him, that He had marked the path of his soul from Mamre to Beer-sheba. "I am God," said the Lord in a vision of the night to him, "I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt. . . . I will go down with thee, . . . and Joseph shall put his hands upon thine eyes."

What a communication this was! How thoroughly did it disclose this most comforting truth, that the

Lord had read all his heart, his present fears, his earlier affections, the mind of the father and the mind of the saint in him, the desire of nature and the sensibility and suggestion of grace. "Fear not to go down to Egypt" calmed his present saintly apprehensions; "Joseph shall put his hands upon thine eyes" gratified the earlier motions of a father's heart. How full and perfect all this was! What a reality it proved communion or the sympathy of Christ to be!

"When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, thou knewest my path." The groan that cannot be uttered has entered, with exactest meaning, the ear of Him who searches the heart. All this is now made a great reality to Jacob, and in the joy of this he goes onward. How could he any longer fear Egypt? How could he question any longer the desire of indulging his fatherly affections? All was answered and satisfied, and Jacob resumed his journey, and accomplished it. "And Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba. . . . and they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him."

Rich and wondrous instructions! Glory is made a reality to Jacob at Bethel, grace is made a reality to him at Peniel, and divine sympathy is made a reality to him at Beer-sheba.

I might add "Shechem" to these cases. Correction is made a great reality to Jacob's conscience there. The Lord told him to go from it to Bethel, for his way there was evil; and he sets himself on the journey, not only at once, but under a purifying of his whole house, shewing how his spirit had received correction. (See chap. xxxv. 1, 2.) J. G. B.

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O WONDER of wonders! astonished I gaze  
 To see in the manger the Ancient of days,  
 And angels proclaiming the Stranger forlorn,  
 And telling the shepherds that Jesus is born!

## THE WORK AND PERSON OF CHRIST.

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IF I understand what Christ was for me on the cross, there is no sin on me before God. If God had treated me as He did His Son, it would have been the withering up of me and the casting of body and soul into hell—but I am standing in the presence of God, as one who has had the measure of my sin laid on Christ, and He has brought His own divine thoughts into my being, lifting my heart up to Himself.

When our future in the wilderness is closed, there is Christ's future; and in the thought of that, hearts ought to be extremely bright. To be able to say, "I am the Saviour's prize, I have fallen to His lot," makes everything bright, for He is Lord of all.

Do you find a great deal in yourself which you cannot find in Christ? The answer is, "He is Lord of all." If, when in the world, Christ never had such a care as this or that, why then have you got it? Lay aside everything that Christ could not be troubled with. Have we any plans of our own? we shall be sure to have trouble. His people should have the mind and thoughts of Him who is going before them in the wilderness; He is, and will be, Lord of all, but there must be a more simple faith in Him as a *living Person* for *to-day*. It won't do to know only of the love of Christ yesterday, to-morrow, and for ever; but we need to know it as the love of the living Christ *to-day*, who is sitting at *this very time* at the right hand of God in heaven, bearing all His people on His heart, making all our cares through the wilderness His. Unless you realise this, all will be too much for you. He may take from you a great many things which you cannot carry into glory. How is it that people can leave their souls and their eternity with Christ, but not the things of time? It is from their not realising Christ as the *living Person*, occupied with all that concerns them.

Is there not light enough in heaven to cast down

brightness on the little bit of wilderness I am passing over, and to light up all that remains of the three-score years and ten down here? Yes, the light *does* shine down : the eternal life I have is a present thing : glory is future, but the life of Christ in me connects me with the light above. Eternal life flows through our souls, and as we go through the wilderness, the Holy Ghost ministers to us all that God and Christ are.

G. V. W.

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### NAZARITESHIP.

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THE end is near. The line which separates the Lord's people from the world is easily and immediately discerned by those who through grace would seek to do His will. We can trace the roots of self-will which are steadily growing, only hindered from coming into full bloom by the presence of a power which is foreign to it. How horrible is it to Him, who said, "Not My will, but Thine be done"—whose one continual and unceasing aim was to do the will of His Father, in which He found such delight! What grace and mercy in Him to us, dear Christian reader, who put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, thereby delivering us from this present evil world! We need to have our eyes open, beloved, to the realities of things around us, lest we should forget this, and thus fall a prey to the wiles of Satan. Alas! we see dear ones taken unawares, surely; the affections taken from Him who should have the first place. For, if this is given up, He is only known afar off; His mind is not known; the vision is dimmed, and thus, what is due to Him is lost sight of.

And how deceptive such a state—indignation feigned if reproached for such crookedness. And Satan is content if he can secure this. Ah! how subtle and like the natural heart, too. When the will is manifested where will the heart stop? To divert the mind how much activity! Service resorted to which the flesh would pride

itself in, though really covering an artificial state of soul. To occupy for Him is a blessed thing. His gracious words He has permitted us to bear in mind, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." What one would seek to draw attention to in view of all this is the contrast between this One, who came in the Father's Name, this will-less One, and him whom the world will receive, *answering in every way to its desires*. Oh! beloved, as we read that precious Word to-day, may we prize it, and adore the gracious and loving God who gave it. In Matt. xi. we have an example to sustain the heart concerned to do His will, to deliver His message, to bear testimony to His worth. The world may refuse it, but how refreshing to His Father and our Father. In such a way do we not find His yoke easy and His burden light? And then again to remember He was the holy, harmless One, undefiled, separate from sinners, now made higher than the heavens. The truth so much resisted to-day marking us off and placing us, too, in a manner along with Him. With such contrasts the epistles of Timothy abound. As we observe from day to day each mark recorded in 2 Tim. iii. 1-5, self-judgment must be exercised, surely. And then again, such contrasts as 2 Tim. i. 13, iii. 7, iv. 3, and iii. 15, telling us the effect of self-will on the one hand, and on the other that blessed wisdom which boasts in One who is so worthy of our confidence. And further, as we trace on the result by which the truth of God has formed us, we find what sweet and wholesome counsel we obtain from ii. 21, iii. 16, 17, ii. 15, a secret in which lies our strength.

Walking in obedience to His Word, approved of God. What a privilege! We find in some little way fellowship with our blessed Lord, and know what Nazariteship is. We are called to walk by faith; and as we turn back to Judges xiv.-xvi., we find a salutary illustration in the life of one who was a

Nazarite from his birth, and to take warning by the failure recorded there for our admonition. If the secret of our strength be given up, the link is broken, and helplessness is shown. The natural desires of the heart as taken up there, illustrate what is so prevalent in our own day. In such a connection, Rev. iii. 7-13 comes with especial force. May our hearts respond to these divine instructions, so encouraging, so salutary! Peter tells us how good it is to be reminded of these separating words (2 Peter iii.). Think, beloved, of what awaits us. Away from *home* now—and what does not that word convey to us. He is waiting; and the marks of the last times declare to us He is coming soon. Can we express the joy these hearts feel at the thought? In a moment that shout may be heard. Toil on, beloved; occupy a little longer; His face thou shalt see, and then we shall be like Him, then He will present us to Himself, and we shall have the joy of seeing every knee bow before Him, and every tongue confess Him Lord, whose right it is to reign.

May we hasten that blessed moment, and if He tarry may He Himself work in us that devotedness to His Person which shall expose the carnal reasonings and self-will and pride of the natural heart. "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." J. H. I.

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"THIS gives great deliverance, that when Christ died and rose *all was done* for God's glory and the salvation of the elect, and all had come out for the judgment of the world and Satan. Since then it is God's daily patience. The Judge is at the door, and our salvation draweth nigh." A. R.

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JANUARY, 1892.

## THE FATHER'S HOUSE.

*John* xiv. 1-6.

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THERE is no portion we are more familiar with than this *John* xiv. Surely there is no part more frequently read, and turned to for comfort—and rightly so. “Let not your heart be troubled.” The Lord anticipates the disciples being found in circumstances of sorrow and trouble. Of course He refers mainly to His own going away; but when He comes down to verse 27, and has spoken of His going away, and of giving the Holy Ghost, He again says, “Let not your heart be troubled.”

It is one thing to be saved *by* Christ, and another thing to throw in your lot *with* Christ. Every true-hearted servant of Christ, or Christian, would say: “If my Saviour died for me, if He came from God’s eternal presence down to the cross, if *that* was the measure of His love to me, the only answer I can make is, to cast in my lot with Him.” Then he is prepared not to *expect anything* down here. We have no expectations here, where Christ was rejected; and a place is opened out to us up there, where there is no rejection. But there *is* rejection here, and no person can fully enjoy *John* xiv. who does not accept rejection with Christ. For why is not Christ here? The fact is (and nothing requires more pressing), that Christ has been rejected, cast out, refused here; and God came in, in the riches of His grace, and turned all that into the fullest blessing for us. Christ has been refused; they would not let Him remain here. He had a title to everything here, but He accepted this place of rejection. He was the Son of God, the blessed Saviour; and as long as the disciples had the shelter of His wing, they knew what it was to dwell under His shadow and have a place of refuge. Whatever opposition and trouble they met with, they had One to whom they could go and tell their sorrows: they “went and told Jesus.” No one can tell what it was

to those disciples to walk in the Saviour's presence here. Who can tell what it was to them to hear His voice, to have His ear ever open to them, and to know His care and His presence? Remember that *God* was there manifest in flesh. Think what it was for these poor simple men, who had walked in the company of the Son of God in this world, to hear Him say that He was going away, and that He was going to leave them in a world where He Himself met with nothing but rejection. He said He would not leave them comfortless; but they, for their part, looked at the terrible blank the absence of Christ would make to their souls. We must place ourselves in the very circumstances the disciples were in at that moment in order to understand it.

Nothing is plainer than "the foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." He had not a place here, but He was going to speak to them about heaven, with which He was *perfectly* acquainted. He knew all that was there, though it was an entirely new revelation to the disciples. Where can you find in Scripture anything before about the Father's house? There had never been anything unfolded about it before, and now *we* speak about the Father's house as a place we have heard of all our lives! But think of the Lord going away, and leaving these dear ones He had drawn to Himself; ignorant perhaps, but *they loved their Master*. If you ask me what is the striking characteristic of these men, I would say, their affection for Christ; they really *loved* their Master. Because in an earlier day (John vi.), when the Lord had been speaking of His rejection, and some went back (men who had been outwardly near to Christ, and had seen what they had never seen before, but had no real link in their souls, with Him; merely a passing interest, and when the moment of testing came, they parted company with Christ), yet still *these* disciples were true to Him, and when He said, "Will ye also

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go away?" there came that beautiful answer, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." They could answer in all the certainty of what they had learnt from Christ, and they could answer rightly. They were not intelligent perhaps, but where a person's heart is true to Christ, everything else will follow rightly.

Christ has gone to prepare a place for those that are His, remember. It is one thing to have a place prepared *outside* this world, and another thing *inside*. In the gospel God does not propose to prepare a place for us *in* this world; there is the unfolding of that which is heavenly, and not the giving us a place or anything down here in this world. That which marked the Master must mark the servant. Some people say: "I would like to understand the truth of the Church of God." You never will, unless you take part with Christ in rejection. You may read a book about it, and have it all in your head, but if you have not broken with the world you don't *know* what the Church is. You must be *in the company* of Christ, as well as be saved by Him, in order to know what the Church is. Christianity gives you the most wonderful circumstances outside, but it does not propose to give you anything in this world—it will not set things in order around you.

"Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." You have God before you as an Object of faith. The invisible God they had believed in; now the Lord was going away, and he was to become an invisible Object likewise, but He *claims* their faith. I do not know anything more beautiful than that in Scripture. He has a right to claim your faith, and you know very well whether He has it or not. Christ came from heaven and walked down here for thirty-three years, died for you, and because He died for you He has a claim over you. Do you know Him? Has He gained the confidence of your souls? The Saviour who stood upon this earth is now up in heaven, but

He is just the same Lord Jesus, and in the midst of your sorrow you can know how real a thing it is to be brought into personal acquaintance with Christ in heaven. I ask you, What is the greatest favour that God can give to man? "Well," you say, "He watches over us, and He gives blessings, such as health and strength." Yes, He does ; it is God's own special mercy. But what is His *greatest* favour? *The revelation of Christ in heaven*—that is His greatest favour. For what do you bless God most? That ever He brought you to bow at His blessed feet. He claims your faith.

"I am the way, the truth, and the life." There is no other way to God. The fact of Christ saying He is the way, declares that man has lost the way. What man wanted was a way back to God, to the Father ; and Christ says, "I am that way." And He is "the truth" as to everything, the truth in relation to God, in relation to man, in relation to time, in relation to eternity ; and if you do not know Christ, you do not know the truth about anything. Your judgment of things in this world is a false judgment if Christ is unknown to you. And is He not "the life" too? He claims these three things for Himself. It was claiming to be a great deal, was it not? Is it too much? Do you admit that Christ is the way, the truth, and the life? and have you proved it for yourself? The great thing is for your souls to be brought into association with it. There is no approach to a difficulty on God's side, but on your side there may be difficulties. There is no difficulty about your forming an acquaintance with Christ now. It is a great thing to be able to say you know a Saviour at God's right hand in heaven, and if you do not know Him, you can go to Him now, as you are, and where you are, and say, "Lord Jesus, I should like to know Thee as my Saviour." The man that sets out for God and Christ in that way may say, "Well, I do not know much about doctrines, but I

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know I have a soul that must live for ever; and, Lord Jesus, I want to know Thee as my Saviour." The heart of Christ is delighted with every soul that turns aside to Him; and not only at the first moment, but a *deepening* acquaintance must delight Him and you too. All blessing depends on it. The first thing is to know Christ, to come to Him, to say, "I desire to bow before Thee, to receive Thee as my Saviour." Christ is either inside or outside your hearts; you have opened the door of your heart to Him, or it is shut against Him. Your blessing in this world depends on a *deepening acquaintance with Christ*. To think that the Son of God in heaven loves to increase the acquaintance of your soul with Him! There is no company Christ so delights in as the company of those for whom He died. And is your answer, "I delight to be with the Lord Jesus Christ?"

Having claimed their faith He speaks of His Father, a new thing to them. Who can tell what the Father's house is? It was *home* to Christ. Home is home everywhere. Christ had not a home here; He came from heaven, and He measured things here by it. He saw the poverty, the sorrow, the ruin, and death here, and He came down from heavenly glory to tell us what the Father was in Himself, to open up the way to Him, and to speak of the Father's house. Is not that a divine reality? Supposing it were possible to annihilate the opening verses of John xiv., would you feel a blank as to the future? Supposing you had never read them before, what a revelation it would be to you! What could be more wonderful than that the Saviour should tell us all about it? It is as if He said, "I do not propose to find you comfortable nests down here, and to guard you from every anxiety, but I open up a place for you in heaven." A *place!* That is the whole thing in this chapter. No place here, but a place in heaven, a place for man, a place in the Father's house. And when the soul has learnt that, it has got hold of divine possessions, of

surroundings which God has given for our comfort in this world. The place which Christ prepared for *them* is prepared for every believer in Christ to-day. Our place was prepared the moment Christ went in as a Man. If Christ is your Saviour, where He goes you go. Christ never goes anywhere that the believer has not a place with Him. As a Man on the ground of accomplished redemption He goes up into glory, and there prepares a place. We have a place in heaven, not amongst *men*, but a place, a *present* place, in heaven. The moment Christ is our Saviour, God is our Father, and in virtue of what Christ has done, we are brought into the family of God, and that which is proper to the family is the *home*. You never get into the thought of verse 2 unless by meditation and prayer before God. The Father's house, it is greater than the glory of the kingdom. If I had been there in that day, what would have comforted my heart? He tells what there *is* for us; He knows what there is; a place, many abodes, a rest, and the Spirit of God is given us as the only power to sustain us here. We should go to the wall completely but for the Spirit of God. Our only power is in the fulfilment of, "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever."

A Christian is a person who can stand in this world and say, "I am ready at this moment to step into the Father's house." As surely and as really as Christ stood on this earth, and told them what He was going to do, so surely did He tell them He was coming back. Do you believe Christ is coming for you? I do not mean, Do you believe in the second coming? but, Is it *Christ coming for you*? If you believed it, it would settle ten thousand things for you. It is so blessed! It is the heart of Christ which will find out in this world every loved one, wherever they are; the heart and eye and hand and almighty power of Christ will gather them out of this world. *That*, next to the cross, will be the greatest expression of divine affec-

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tion. Do you know that may take place now? There is not a word of Scripture to be fulfilled ere He come, and before another hour has passed Christ may be here. We do not know what the circumstances of the rest of our pathway may be, but we *do* know Christ is coming.

Have you weighed and measured everything connected with you in the light of God's eternity? Can you say, "Thank God I have a Father, and a place in the Father's house, and thank God I have a future so brilliant and so blessed that nothing can touch or disturb?" Is it not wonderful? That Christ is really *for us*; that, notwithstanding the poverty of our testimony for Him, His heart has not grown cold, and He never loved His people more than at this moment. He was never in greater activity for them. You can look up to heaven and say, "Christ never loved me more than at this moment, and He is only waiting to have me with Him for ever." One moment we shall be here, and the next moment up there, received unto Himself. Then there will be no separation from Christ for ever. Is it not beautiful? And that is our future! I trust that we may honour Christ by the expectation of Him. When Christ has displayed this most magnificent future, could anything be more sorrowful than that we should treat it as a fable? The moment Satan has got anything in between our souls and the coming of Christ, it has no power over us. If the coming of Christ is a *near* thing to you, it has power. Make it to-morrow, and its power is gone; you cease to wait and to watch. Christ has been refused here, but He is accepted there, and the weakest saint that ever looked to Him is dear to Him, and He will come and fetch that one.

May the Lord make His coming the *next* thing to us!

E. P. C.

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GOD is never a moment too late with His mercies; but He sometimes comes just at the last moment.

## THE CHURCH OF GOD.

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IT is a solemn thing when we come to think what the Church really is. \* It is all blessed when we think of her privileges ; but looking at her as Christ's representative on earth is most solemn—"the epistle of Christ." As the tables of stone represented what God demanded of man, so should the Church, and in an equal sense, be in the world the revelation of what God is to man, an exhibition of God's grace and power to man and in man.

As to her "power." In Scripture it is not the power *of* the Church, but the power that works in us—the power of God working in the Church : "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory *in* the Church," etc. The operation of the power of the Lord is necessarily limited by the moral condition of the Church (He may bear with it, have patience towards it), but God will never publicly act so as to sanction what He disapproves.

While the Church carried externally the character of Christ before the world, she was chartered with power—the power of Christ. That which Christ is to supply can never fail. Christ, and His power, and His acting in power, can never fail. He must nourish the Church withal according to its need. But if God is acting in, and towards, persons, there must be truth in His actings ; He cannot act in the power of grace contrary to the moral condition of the Church, any more than He can act towards an individual contrary to his state before Himself. We must get our souls

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\* Not "ought to be," but "is ;" she ought to be a faithful representative ; but we cannot take the Church of God out of this place, let her have got into what condition she may.

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down into the consciousness of where we are, before we get the blessing suited to our condition. Where are we? is the question. He never alters His mind. But the Church's responsibility never alters His grace. Christ is exactly what it wants now—otherwise my faith cannot get on—as exactly what we want for the Church now, as when in the days of the apostles it was adorned with every kind of miracle. But He will not act in the same way.

Christ will never give up His thoughts about the Church; and if we are acting on our thoughts, and He acts on His, He will make sad work with what we have set up. "He that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad." If Christ begins to gather, He will scatter that which is not gathered in the power of unity with Himself. As with a card-house, the first wind of God's Spirit blows it all about. This may be very astonishing, very humbling, still it does not discourage (far from it!) those that look for God's actings. You are sure to get bad roads, when the spring comes, and the frost breaks up. Let the Church be what it may, that is, the members of it; Christ is not altered. Her power is her weakness, her spirit of dependence, in never getting out of the place of constant, simple, unmingled dependence.

. . . . .

As to "present position and occupation," there is one thing makes a great difference. When the Spirit of God was working in the beginning of the gospel, the testimony had the aspect of power, and produced a sensible and visible result; there was an ostensible gathering. The central energy had the fulness of the truth, though there might be febleness at the extremity of the rays. But there is nothing of this sort now. The sheep of God are scattered. The camp has got wrong. The consequence of this is all manner of degrees of knowledge. The very principle of unity has a separative tendency. A man must now

settle himself upon the centre of truth. If my soul is not prepared to look to Christ, and to gather with Christ, and to take His judgment, I shall be cast into the uncertain condition of the differing judgment of every saint I meet with in the day's walk. Where Christ is the common object, there will be a coalescing power. I find the Church of God in a unity which attaches itself to Christ alone, as the one sole centre.

The "occupation" of the Church ought to be constant, incessant reference to its Head. If its Head is not its first thought (and that is shown in thinking of its Head, and filling itself into all the thoughts and mind and affections of its Head), it cannot act for Him. This is its grand occupation. "We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word." I must get through the crowd of Satan's power, and I must get beyond the crowd to the Head, who is the only source of power. We should seek that kind of communion with the saints which living in spirit with the Head gives. We should get all who hear to join in the cry (Rev. xxii.). So should the Church have its own light, that all that is outside would be shut out. The apostle was living in a world of his own—he was filled with ideas of his own; but they were God's ideas, and he had power.

Knowing the scene I have to act in is not that which gives me power (we get no strength from the contemplation of that), but intercourse and living communion with the Head. We should get near enough to Christ to enjoy Him, and to know Him truly, and to gather up all that is like Him. If not separated by affection from the world, we shall be separated by discipline in the world. He will vex our souls to get us separate, if in spirit and in heart we are not separate. "Because thou servedst not Jehovah thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart . . . therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which Jehovah shall send against thee" (Deut. xxviii. 47, 48).

J. N. D.

## THE SHEPHERD AND THE SHEEP.

*Mark vi.*

THERE is something exceedingly touching in the short account given us by the evangelist Mark of the Saviour's feelings when He beheld the people who preceded Him on foot got before Him to the desert place ; and of the beautiful way He took to minister to them. He had gone there *with* His disciples for *rest*. He did not say, "Go ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile"—but "*Come* ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile" (verse 31). And this touch is all the more beautiful as coming from Mark. None of the other evangelists record it. Mark alone, who gives us the servant character of the Lord, mentions it. A beautiful example for servants to-day on the part of Him who was the perfect Servant. Rest is needful even now. No need to say, "We shall get our rest by and by." True, we shall—an eternal rest too. But if time is taken occasionally now for rest *with* Him who says, "Come ye yourselves apart . . . and rest," fresh strength and ability for service will be given, and fresh lessons will be learnt in retirement which could not be learnt in the rush and excitement of public life. Sometimes servants who are so very busy and zealous would do well to remember that the Lord can do without them, though He deigns to use them, and

"God's purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour,"

whether they live or die. To remember this will save us from much self-importance, and perhaps from a good deal of humbling. May it be pressed upon us.

The Saviour, then, had gone with "His own" for rest ; but the need reached Him even in what was intended for retirement, and, instead of rest, it became the scene for a fresh forth-putting of His power and a fresh forth-shining of His glory ; and another occasion to which the disciples could look back and say,

“We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of *grace* and *truth*” (John i. 14). In His *grace* He *fed* them, and with His *truth* He *taught* them, while His *glory* shone in every act.

Let me here, at this point, add a word as to ministry which we should all do well to remember in these days, viz., that while ministry is most needful, *the presence of Christ is absolutely essential*. Had He not been present to *give*, the disciples would have had nothing to *carry* to the hungry multitude. Theirs was surely the happy privilege of *dispensing*, but His was the grace and goodness of *providing*. Might I suggest that forgetfulness of this is one reason why so much of the ministry of the present day is so cold, and barren, and fruitless—why the benches are empty, and the sheep found wandering from place to place in search of food? Of course this does not excuse the sheep for their wanderings, and they are responsible for that: but I speak of the bare fact. Is it not often that the servants have not got anything fresh from the Master’s hand for the sheep? Nay, often one feels the Master is not there, and it has dropped down to a weary, humdrum, monotonous, bench-emptying service. How necessary, when such is the case, for all to wake up and cry mightily to the Lord to vouchsafe to them once more the sense of His own blessed presence, and give to the servants something to carry to the poor hungry sheep, and enable them to minister it in such a way as to bring sunshine and satisfaction amongst them, and cause all hearts to overflow with praise and thanksgiving as the sheep are fed, and poor, lost, and wandering ones are found, brought, and blessed. This is not written to cast a slight upon the Lord’s dear servants, or as stone-throwing in any way, but to wake us all up to our responsibilities to cry to Him to bring freshness, and vigour, and sunshine into the ministry, for His own glory and our joy.

We read, “And Jesus, when He came out, saw much

people, and was *moved with compassion* toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things" (verse 34). What a touching word! "He was *moved with compassion*, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd." Yet there *He* was, "The Shepherd of Israel"—the true Shepherd of the sheep; but, alas, what a state the sheep were in! Can we doubt that, as He looked upon them, His mind would recall the Scriptures which speak of them? No wonder, as He recalled them and witnessed the sad state they were in, that His heart was moved with compassion. He who could expound to His disciples in all the Scriptures the things concerning *Himself* (Luke xxiv. 27), could not be ignorant of all that was written concerning the *sheep*. How He would recall the words of Moses, when about to die on Mount Nebo, "Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the Lord be not *as sheep* which have no shepherd" (Numbers xxvii. 16, 17). Also the words of the prophet Micaiah to the King of Israel, "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills *as sheep* that have not a shepherd" (I Kings xxii. 17). And the words of Jeremiah, "My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray; they have turned them away on the mountains; they have gone from mountain to hill; they have forgotten their resting place" (Jeremiah l. 6). And Ezekiel: "They were scattered, because there is no shepherd" (Ezek. xxxiv. 5). These and all such passages must have crowded into the mind of the Saviour when He beheld the multitude, and His compassion was moved.

Was this then to be their state for ever?—sheep without a shepherd, and "meat for all the beasts of the field where they were scattered?" No! Blessed be God! Their sorrowful condition would have

ceased at that very time if only they would have received Him. But "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John i. 11). The *true Shepherd* of Israel was there amongst them in the person of Jesus; and that little forth-putting of His *power* on their behalf, along with the outflowing of His *love* to them in their distress, was but a sample or picture of what He will do for them in the coming day, when He shall "seek out His sheep, and deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day;" when He will also "feed them in a good pasture," and they shall "lie in a good fold"—"never more shall they be a prey, . . . but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid" (Ezek. xxxiv.).

But ere this bright and glorious day can dawn for Israel, or the Shepherd can surround Himself with the "other sheep . . . which are not of this fold" (John x. 16), He must needs go down into death. Sin, with its withering blight and death penalty, must be met and borne, its darkness and distance must be entered by the Shepherd, ere the deliverance of the sheep can be effected. Did such a fearful prospect daunt Him? No! He was the good Shepherd—the only good Shepherd, and as such He "gave His life for the sheep" (John x. 11, 15). Well may we, who are numbered among the sheep of the flock, with overflowing hearts

" Sing of the Shepherd that died,  
That died for the sake of the flock,  
Whose love to the utmost was tried,  
Yet firmly endured as a rock."

His love to His Father, as well as His love for the sheep, carried Him down under all the penalties to which the sheep were exposed, and there, on the cross, in the very agonies of death, and bearing divine judgment, the moral glory of the Man Christ Jesus shone out in its brightest rays. The Son of Man was glorified—and God was glorified in Him (John xiii. 30, 31).

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And as His love to His Father took Him down to accomplish all for His glory, so, when all was accomplished, the glory of the Father which had waited at the grave's mouth took Him out and set Him on high; and the deepest sorrow of the cross has its present and permanent answer in the highest glory of the throne, while the hearts and lips of His redeemed ones respond,

Thou, Thou art worthy, Jesus, Lord,  
Thou Good, Great, and Chief Shepherd of the sheep!

Doubtless Satan would think he had secured a wonderful triumph when the Shepherd lay in the grave, and that the sheep were now at his mercy! It seemed like it. But his triumph was short-lived; and total defeat and complete discomfiture were his when "the God of Peace brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant" (Heb. xiii. 20). What a victory for Jesus! What an act on the part of the God of Peace! What a defeat for the enemy!

The heart delights to linger over the scene, and listen to those blessed words, "The God of Peace" and "Our Lord Jesus"! Our very own! Death never can touch Him, or rob us of Him again. It is on the other side of death—in resurrection, life, and power, and blessedness that we know Him. We are in Him. We hear Him saying, "Because I live, ye shall live also. . . . Ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you" (John xiv. 19, 20). "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hades and of death" (Rev. i. 18). "I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish" (John x. 28). And this Lord Jesus is *our* Lord Jesus for ever and for ever. Who can doubt or fear when this is grasped? The God of Peace, our Lord Jesus brought again from the dead, and poor creatures like ourselves, all brought together—all satisfied together

—all joying together, and consistently with the nature and character of God as *light* and *love*. Not only so, but to be the displays throughout the ages to come of the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us by Christ Jesus (Eph. ii. 8).

We have, then, not only Jesus as the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep; but we have Him as the Great Shepherd of the sheep in resurrection, life, and power; hence we may well use the language of the Psalmist of old and say, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures," &c. (Psalm xxiii.).

There is a beautiful connection between Psalm xxiii. and Psalm xxiv., which gives increased confidence in saying, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." Why? Because "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof" (Ps. xxiv. 1). If the earth is the Lord's, and He is my Shepherd, how can I want? Is there fear of Him failing to care for the sheep? None whatever; for all He does is "for *His own Name's sake*." Were we as sheep going astray? Blessed be God, we have now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls (1 Pet. ii. 25), whose *glory* is not only bound up in caring for us, but whose *joy* it is to do it. Presently "The Chief Shepherd shall appear," Peter tell us, to give crowns of glory which fade not away to those who, instead of lording it over God's heritage, have been ensamples to the flock (1 Pet. v. 3, 4). May these blessed ways of the Shepherd so affect the hearts of the flock that we may be controlled, not by the restraints of a fold, but by the confidence begotten by Himself who keeps us in His hand, carries us on His shoulders—feeding us according to the integrity of His heart, guiding us by the skilfulness of His hand—and never leaves us nor forsakes us, but saves us to the uttermost—and loves us to the end—"Our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep"! WILLIAM EASTON.

*New Zealand.*

## THE COMPASSION OF CHRIST.

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GOD in the person of His Son has come very nigh to man. The life of Christ on earth evidences what the heart of God is towards men, and assures us likewise of that compassion of which we all so much stand in need. "Thou art a God full of compassion," David could say, affirming the unchangeableness of His character, as made known in His proclamation to Moses when hidden in the rock on Sinai (Exod. xxxiii. 22). For the Psalmist adds, "And gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth" (Ps. lxxxvi. 15). How he delighted to reiterate that, his *Psalm of praise* (cxlv. 8) sufficiently demonstrates. In trials and vicissitudes he had proved what the Lord was to him.

And another, who like him had his path strewn with afflictions, even the prophet Jeremiah, has written of God that "His compassions fail not" (Lam. iii. 22). How well in his time had he proved that. And his experience, recounted in the chapter just referred to, was to furnish hope for his people in the trials upon which they were entering, consequent on the overturn of the throne and the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

God is unchangeable. His saints of old found it so; and they attest it. His character, declared in the revelation of His name to Moses, remained the same throughout subsequent ages and generations. And of the Lord Jesus we can say, judging from His appearances after His resurrection, that His feelings toward His people, and His interest in them, ceased not with His death; so as we need we may look to experience this, and find in the gospel history encouragement to expect it. To a few examples of the Lord's compassion we would direct attention.

And first, in cases of *sickness*.

A leper (Mark i. 41) presented himself before the Lord—where we know not—and supplicated for His

active intervention, as kneeling before Him he besought Him, saying, "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." That creature, with God's hand laid heavily upon him, was low in the dust before the Lord ("Full of leprosy," writes Luke, when describing the same miracle); his bodily appearance bore testimony to his need; whilst his mouth gave expression to the faith of his heart, that the One, whom they at Nazareth had lately been ready to kill, was able, if He would, to heal him. Grace, which would, and had reached a Gentile in the days of Elisha, could flow out to him in the extremity of his need.

But to whom before of men had such a power been ascribed with any manner of intelligence? The King of Syria had indeed sent Naaman to King Joram to heal him of his leprosy. Joram, however, rightly disclaimed that such a power was inherent in a man. God was the healer. It was for Him, not for the king to do that (2 Kings v. 7). But in the gospel history, God was upon earth in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. And to Him it was that the leper addressed himself with a petition then unique in the annals of Israel.

Thus approached, and thus directly appealed to, Mark has put on record what surely goes home to every heart, that "Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth His hand and touched him: and said unto him, I will; be thou clean." He was immediately healed. Jehovah was there in the person of the Lord. He had compassion on the poor creature. He shewed it. But not by mere words of sympathy, as we might have done, being powerless to help. He spake, and it was done. "I will; be thou clean" was enough. Words of power they were; but proceeding from One full of tender pity. He could, and did feel for him. "I will" spoke of One who could act in His own name, and who did not merely wield delegated power. Jehovah was there. Had, however, the words "I will," &c. only been recorded, the leper would have

## THE COMPASSION OF CHRIST.

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been healed by Him who was Jehovah, but His tender pity for him might have been for ever concealed. It has pleased God, we may say with thankfulness, to put on record thus publicly in the Scriptures of truth how the Lord felt for that man, an intimation that He can and does feel for His creatures in their sufferings. Nor is Mark the only evangelist who mentions the compassion of Christ ; for Matthew and Luke write of it as well, though on different occasions, and in connection with different circumstances. We turn to them.

Subsequent to the death of John the Baptist, the Lord retired with the twelve into privacy, to afford them a little rest after their preaching mission (Mark vi. 31, 32). So they crossed the lake in a vessel to reach a desert place apart, near the city of Bethsaida Julias (Luke ix. 10). The rest was not obtained ; for multitudes went after Him but on foot, and reached that desert, about to become famous for ever by the miracle of feeding five thousand men, besides women and children, with but five barley loaves and two small fishes ; so that, when the Lord reached the place, He found it populated with a crowd, which "outwent them," swelled as it was by contingents furnished by various cities. Thus far we learn from Mark.

Now Matthew tells us of the effect produced on the Lord when He went forth and saw the multitudes. "He was moved with compassion toward them, and He healed their sick" (Matt. xiv. 14). No deputation waited on Him, that we hear of, to call His attention to the sick. None of them who needed healing entreated His interposition. He surveyed the multitude. He saw the sick. He was moved with compassion. He healed them all. None sat down that day on the green grass to be fed, with sickness still upon them. No one sat down to partake of the loaves and fishes as hopelessly incurable. "He healed their sick," wrote Matthew, who witnessed it. "He

healed them that had need of healing," wrote Luke, years afterwards. Everyone who had need proved His power, and shared in His compassions.

Compassionate indeed He was. The sufferings of His creatures moved Him. What a resource for us in our need! "His compassions fail not."

Of this, Matthew gives another illustration, as he writes of the two blind men at Jericho—Bartimæus and his unnamed companion (xx. 34). On that occasion, as was the case with the leper, these two made known their want. Their cry of distress had gone forth; and though rebuked by the multitude that they should be silent, they cried the more earnestly, saying, "Lord, have mercy upon us, Thou Son of David." The Lord stopped, and called them, and asked what they wanted. "Lord, that our eyes may be opened," was their answer. Jesus then, being moved with compassion, touched their eyes, and they received their sight. He pitied these two blind men. His inward feelings were moved. He shewed it by touching and healing them.

The leper, the sick in that crowd near Bethsaida, and those two blind men at Jericho, each and all could attest that His compassions failed not. They found in Him one who felt for them, and that deeply. Cleansing, healing, sightgiving, these acts bore witness to it.

Yet these were not the only sights and wants which called forth the feelings of His heart. *Sorrow* and bereavement could do it likewise. Of this Luke furnishes us with an example in the case of the widow of Nain (vii.). The Lord was entering that city with His disciples and much people, as the widow's only son was being carried out to burial. No one accosted the Lord on her behalf. But when He saw her, writes the historian, He had compassion on her, and addressed her with those soothing words, "Weep not." He was moved by her sorrow. He knew her circumstances. He touched the bier, and, raising up her son

to life, He turned her mourning into dancing! What light and joy must have been in her house that night. She had experienced the compassion of Christ.

Again, *spiritual need* awakened that same emotion. Of this we have two examples, one in Matthew (ix. 36), the other in Mark (vi. 34). "When the Lord saw the multitudes," writes the son of Alphæus, "He was moved with compassion, because they fainted (or, were distressed), and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd." In the case recorded in Mark, the reason assigned is the same, though the occasion was a different one. Touched with pity, in the one case, He sent forth the twelve to preach (Matt. x.); in the other, He Himself taught the crowds, for "He began," writes Mark, "to teach them many things." And Luke indicates something of the line of teaching on this last occasion, as he told Theophilus, that the Lord spake to the multitude of the kingdom of God. The people, without a shepherd apparently, were to hear from the true Shepherd glad tidings of the kingdom of God. He was not indifferent to their spiritual welfare.

Lastly, if spiritual need moved Him, to *bodily* wants He was not insensible. And both Matthew and Mark tell us of this, displayed as it was on the occasion of the multitudes which had come to Him with their sick (Matt. xv. 30), and continued with Him three days in a desert place, till, supplies evidently exhausted, they had nothing to eat. Then the Lord spoke, addressing His disciples, "I have compassion on the multitude" (so writes Mark, viii. 2, 3), "because they have now been with Me three days, and have nothing to eat, and if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way; and divers of them come from far." What consideration for them this was! None who followed Him should lack on that account. Their need He knew; of the distance which some had come He was fully aware. The weakness of the creature He thought of.

Food was to be supplied, lest they should faint in their way home. What proof of His compassion was this. He then satisfied the need of all with seven loaves and a few small fishes !

Interesting this is, some may say. But far more than that. These instances tell us of His heart, how He feels for His people, whether in their *sicknesses*, in *sorrows*, or when in *spiritual need*, or in *bodily want*.

C. E. S.

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“THE HEART OF A STRANGER.”—*Ex.* xxiii. 9.

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“ALSO, ye shall not oppress a stranger : for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.” When no longer in the *place* of strangership, but in their own land, they would still know the *heart* of a stranger, having been such themselves in Egypt. And how sweet it is to know about our Lord Jesus, that although He is no longer a stranger here, but gone to the Father (John xvi. 28), yet, having been such when He was down here, He never forgets it, but knows by experience the heart of a stranger still ! But how poorly it would express His tender love for “His own,” to say that He does “not *oppress*” those who are “strangers” as following Him who was once a stranger here Himself, and having won their hearts, has carried them up to heaven where He is ! Nay, “He is able to *succour* them,” and He loves to do it ; and He does it as One who has Himself “*suffered*, being tempted.”

The strangers in Israel were objects of Jehovah’s especial care, and were not to be “oppressed,” even by His own people. How touching the recollection, that when “the Son of His love” was a stranger in this world, “*He* was oppressed and afflicted ;” and though it is said (Ps. ciii. 6), “Jehovah executeth righteousness and judgment *for* all that are oppressed,” yet in *His* case righteousness and judgment were executed against, and not for Him ! “Awake, O sword,

*against* My shepherd, and *against* the Man that is My fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the Shepherd" (Zech. xiii. 7). For "He was made sin for us," and righteousness must be *against* Him on the cross before it could be exercised *for* Him in resurrection and glory, and for us in Him, and through Him. But now He is crowned with that glory to which He has won new titles, and which He will shortly share with those whom the Father hath "purchased" with the blood of His own, and has "given" to His dear Son (John xvii. 2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24). And so the blessed Lord Jesus now is no more a stranger, but "in the Father," and with Him, yet He is "the same"—though "ascended up far above all heavens," as He was in weariness at Sychar's lonely well, or in weeping with the Bethany mourners. Nor does He forget in the glory of His present place, the pressure on His spirit of what He met with and witnessed in this world, that knew and owned Him not. And His heart of love has cherished interests down here among the "little flock" of His chosen and redeemed ones. Surely He *loves* them all. "His own which are in the world," He loves "unto the end." But are there not some among them who may especially enjoy the sweetness of reflecting that the Lord knows their path and their heart, *as having trod the same path Himself*? It was the heart of a "stranger" that Israel knew, for *such* they had been in Pharaoh's land, "Seeing *ye were* strangers in the land of Egypt." Was it not just this that Jesus was in the world?—His own world, yet unknown in it (John i. 10). Brought to an "inn," the place of strangers and sojourners, to be born, but no room for Him even there! Not even a wayfarer's accommodation in a world full without Him. Rich and increased with goods, and having "need of nothing," as they thought, yet really the land of the "mighty famine," and He alone able to meet the need and fill the hungry with good things, yet for Him "no room"!

“O ever homeless Stranger,  
 Thou dearest Friend to me,  
 An outcast from the manger,  
 That Thou might'st with us be !”

And if a certain scribe thought it would be a fine thing to follow One possessed of such extraordinary power and resources as He, the Lord would let him know that it was a Stranger whom he essayed to follow, not to a hole or a nest, but to where He had no place “to lay His head.” Such was the path of Jesus here; and hence He knows, by experience and recollection, “the heart of a stranger.” Dear reader, does He know *your* heart and path in this way? If I am finding a nest and rest in this world, where He never even sought one, making myself a *home* where He had not a place to lay His head, I cannot have the consciousness that He knows my heart in this sense. To be sure He knows all *about* me, for all things are naked and open to His eyes. He knows all *about* the persons He speaks of in Matt. vii. 22, who have prophesied in His name, but to the persons themselves He will say, “I never knew *you*.” So also He knows what sin is—who knows or can know, as He who on the cross bore its judgment, what the enormity of sin is as against God? Yet it remains true that “He knew no sin” (2 Cor. v. 21). And could we say He *knows* the heart of one of His professed followers, who would settle down and make himself at home, where *He* has called him to be “a stranger and a pilgrim?”

But if, on the other hand—like Moses in the bosom of his family, in a land where he was for a while “content to dwell,” yet confessing himself, in his son's name, to be a *stranger* there—you can look up to the Lord from the midst of whatever comforts His gracious hand has surrounded you with, and honestly say, “This is not my rest, Lord; a stranger confessed, Lord; I *wait* to be blessed at Thy coming again.” If thus you can appeal to Him who knoweth all things, and tell Him you

## NOTES FROM AN OLD NOTE BOOK. 53

have not ceased to be a stranger in a strange land, but would, like Rebekah, gladly slide down from the camel's back at the first glimpse of Himself ; then you can delight yourself in this, that He has been before you across this desert, Himself "a stranger here," and, hence, knows, not your circumstances only, but your heart in all its loneliness, "for He has felt the same." And He provides for us that, if subject to the leading and teaching of "the other Comforter," we may even here know that which is the very joy of the Father's house itself, even communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. He, once a stranger, enters into all the exercises of *our* hearts as strangers where *we* are, and He would have us to enter in faith, by His Spirit, into all the tender love and sympathy of *His* heart where *He* is (John xvi. 13, 14).—*W. Tunley.*

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NOTES FROM AN OLD NOTE BOOK.

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You will find persons of culture and learning taken up with the texture of the robe or the fashion of the ring, who never come within sight of the love of the Father. The Father's love is for those who *need* it, and a rich feast it is for a prodigal ; and, wondrous truth, a rich feast for the Father is a prodigal who is driven by his need to take refuge in His bosom. God only can prepare such a feast, and only prodigals can enjoy it.

If I am praised, I am put into the fining pot, and I overcome by being silent. Disclaiming merit often becomes an occasion of exacting it on the score of humility. Best to be silent ; so too when blamed.

Satan points us to our "sin in the flesh" to discourage us from coming to Christ—God does it to shut us up to Christ ; and when we are encouraged to take refuge in Him from ourselves, the end is gained.

## GO FEED MY SHEEP.

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THE Saviour said, Go feed My sheep ;  
Proclaim that I will surely keep  
My chosen sheep from harm 'secure,  
And lead them unto waters pure.

Go feed My sheep, He cried again,  
Lead them to pastures ever green ;  
Proclaim My love, My grace, My pow'r,  
And lead them unto mercy's store.

Go feed My sheep, and let them know  
My love to them shall ever flow ;  
It mitigates their grief and woe,  
And triumphs over every foe.

Sing, O ye sheep, redeemed by blood,  
Your glorious Shepherd is your God ;  
Hold fast His word, and you shall prove  
The glories of eternal love.

*Derby, 1830.*

G. R.

## GOD IN HIS HOLINESS.

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"I WILL be sanctified in them that come nigh Me, and before all the people I will be glorified" (Lev. x. 3). From such words we gather how the holiness and majesty of God is jealously guarded. Righteousness must be vindicated, and this at once gives the death-blow to man in the flesh. Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, offer strange fire before the Lord, and judgment overtakes them. Had they no right in the sanctuary? Undoubtedly, for they were sons of Aaron, though they were there not as sons, but as priests. Indifferent to the character of God, they set aside His direct instructions (Exodus xxx. 7-9), and pleased themselves. And, dear Christian reader, there is much here for us to take warning and profit by. God's character has not changed; nay, rather, how blessedly has it been upheld. Sin in all its hideousness has been dealt with. There has been no

compromise. All the claims of the throne have been met. The blood of the Victim has been shed and sprinkled. God is satisfied; and now, because that blood has spoken there, we have boldness to enter the holiest, even into His presence without fear. As priests, we are there to offer up spiritual sacrifices unto God by Jesus Christ (1 Pet. ii.). Acceptable to God *by Him*. In all the fragrance of His Name. No "strange fire." Nothing of the flesh, but in spirit and in truth praising and adoring the One who glorified such a God.

How then our hearts should be garrisoned, that no thought but what is consistent with Himself should be allowed. Ah! we praise Him for His holiness as well as His love. We thank Him for His righteousness as well as His grace. This blessed redemption sets us down in His presence. Just to refer to Lev. xvi. The first thing we meet with is two men "dead before the Lord;" and, as we read on to the 30th verse, we find the words "before the Lord" occur no less than *seven* times, finishing with "clean from all your sins before the Lord." What a picture! How little we comprehend what has been done. We are so apt to be thinking of ourselves and what we have received (which is blessed in itself), that our thoughts seldom rise to the reality that God's glory has been cared for. God in all His majesty and holiness is perfectly righteous in receiving and justifying a guilty sinner who puts his trust in His Son and the work He has wrought. What a contrast to this do we get in the book of Samuel. Absalom kills his brother Amnon, and flies from the face of David. After several years he is found in the presence of the king; and what do we read? THE KING *kisses* Absalom! It does not say David, or the father, kisses the son, but *the king* (the representative of righteousness and truth) kisses Absalom. The most unholy kiss that had ever been given! The king should have killed him. After this we read of David flying for his life from before

Absalom. If David fails, God does not, for Absalom is caught by his hair in the branches of an oak, and meets with his death ; and God has said, "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree."

But what a blessed tale have we to tell : "To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness : that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii.). God can now give a welcome embrace to the returning prodigal, and implant upon him a kiss of love. What joy to God ! What refreshment for His heart as that repentant one exalts the Name of Jesus, and declares in the liberty of the Spirit without hindrance the preciousness of His person. The one who not only knows Him as Saviour, but gives Him His rightful place as Lord. And who, dear reader, has the right to preside but Himself. How jealous, then, whether in our walk or when gathered together unto His Name for worship, should we be that His place be not usurped. It is with a holy God we have to do, in whose presence no flesh can boast ; as it is written, "Let him that glorieth glory in the Lord." What a perfect One to be occupied with, and how worthy of our praise and worship ! May we ever keep in mind such marvellous grace (Ephes. ii., and Deut. xxvi. 1-12).

With what rejoicing hearts do we look for the time when both heaven and earth will acknowledge Him Lord of all, and praise Him in the "beauty of holiness." For, as surely as the cherubims of glory above the ark meet *over the blood-stained mercy-seat*, so certain will both earthly and heavenly glories centre in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. "But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever ! a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom : Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity ; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows" (Heb. i. 8, 9). J. H. I.

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FEBRUARY, 1892.

## “THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.”

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IN Ephes. iv. 3 we are besought of God in the following words: “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace” (New Tr.). These words were addressed to the assembly at Ephesus, and we say, therefore, to the Church of God, wherever it or any portion of it was then, has been since, or is now. It has lost none of its importance, and has been divested of none of its authority. The obligation to respond to it is as incumbent upon us to-day as it was incumbent upon the saints at Ephesus when Paul’s epistle reached them in the first century.

That we may observe the exhortation, it is necessary for us first to know what the unity of the Spirit is, and in the second place to know how the endeavour to keep it is to be made.

First, then, the unity of the Spirit is not *our* unity, nor is it any humanly formed unity whatever. It is essentially a divine thing, formed and established once for all by God the Holy Ghost, whose name alone characterises it. It is neither the unity of God nor the unity of Christ, but of *the Spirit*. The church is the Church of God, the assembly of God, and has its two distinct aspects: (1) House of God (characterised by calling upon the Name of the Lord; in a word, *profession*); and (2) Body and Bride of Christ, vital union with Him now and eternally. But the “unity of the Spirit” introduces us to a peculiar obligation attached to a peculiar operation of the Spirit of God. When saints at Pentecost were baptised with the Holy Ghost, they formed the House of God on earth, for the Holy Ghost dwelt amongst them thenceforward, and by so doing they were constituted God’s house. And they formed also the Body and Bride of Christ, for they were thenceforward united (by receiving the Holy Ghost) to Him, the Head in heaven. But more than this. Be it

observed, the *truths* of the House of God and of the Body and Bride of Christ had not then been unfolded, although the realities themselves existed. He whom God had ordained in His sovereignty to make known by revelation these truths had not yet been effectually called and qualified by His grace. The Spirit of God had, however, then and there formed, fashioned, and established the divine unity of which we speak. The saints of God, every one on earth, had been by sovereign grace separated off from everything around in the most *exclusive* way. God's ancient principle of separation from evil, which may be traced back throughout the divine record of His ways with His people, had now its final display. Those whom He had separated by the cross from their sins, themselves, and the world, He now separated *to Himself* from all earthly hopes and from all human religiousness, for the glory of God and His Christ, by the powerful operation of the Spirit of God. The Holy Ghost was an ungrieved Spirit, an unquenched Spirit; He wrought in mighty, unhindered power. His sovereign presence was manifest to faith; every opened eye beheld the personality of His distinct and positive operations for the glory on earth of Him from whom He had come, and of whose glory in heaven He was the witness. By the same Spirit as He had once wrought in the physical creation He now wrought in an infinitely more blessed way, and in result the eye of God beheld here a thing of pristine beauty, fairer than the paradise of Eden, and which to the heart of Christ was to be a joy for ever! It was for this, indeed, that He had died—that the children of God who were scattered abroad should be gathered together in one, or in *unity*. Most blessed, then, was this, for the divine persons of the Godhead were now glorified in an altogether new and surpassing way. Holy separation from evil found an entirely new practical display, for whatever was contrary to “that Holy Spirit of God,” in the power of whom they had been

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sealed unto the day of redemption, was given no place. In a word, "they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts ii. 42).

Enough has perhaps been said to indicate the character of the Spirit's unity. Let us now consider for a little how the endeavour to keep it is to be made. We have seen that it has not to be formed; its formation was once for all at Pentecost. As God planted a garden in Eden for man—what a scene of fair order, and bloom, and beauty it must have been!—and then set the man to dress it and to keep it, so has the Holy Ghost formed that beauteous thing to which He has attached the dignity of His own Name, and then besought the saints to endeavour to keep it. It is at once observable that this is entirely and distinctly *practical*, and only practical. A certain thing has to be done; it is a matter of diligent endeavour, and it has to be done in a prescribed way. Saints in the House of God may be making no endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit; saints in the Body of Christ may equally be making no endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit. Lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, bearing with one another in love may beautifully mark their walk and ways, and yet they may stop short of a diligent endeavour to keep the Spirit's unity. There may be no exercise of conscience as to this, and therefore no practical expression of it. When established, how marked was its character. The saints were of one heart and of one mind; of one accord and in one place. They came together to break bread—all this before the House of God was fully brought out, and before one word had been given as to the Body of Christ. Each of these has its specifically practical connection. As to the House of God, I am taught how I must behave myself in it; as to the Body of Christ—His Bride—I learn that the subjection of a woman to her husband answers to our relation to Him, the Head in heaven.

And as to the unity of the Spirit, I learn that my obligation is equally clear: with all diligence must I endeavour to keep this in the uniting bond of peace. In the House of God, evil is found as well as good, connected with the name of Christ. The elements may be one or the other; both are there. But in the Body of Christ, only the divinely constituted elements are found. We have not to cleanse the House of God, but to be clean vessels in it. We have not to challenge the members of the Body of Christ as to their articulation therein, nor assume superiority of membership, for those members "we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour."

And it may here be added that in receiving to the fellowship of saints we do not receive into the House of God, nor to the membership of the One Body, and equally in cases of excision we do not put away from either one or the other. Those who are gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace, thankfully receive to their fellowship in the breaking of bread—on the ground of the One Body—those who have peace with God, and are walking in holiness of life and sound doctrine, and are clear of corporate association with evil. They own it is the Lord's supper, the Lord's table, and *not theirs*; and thus they can receive only what His presence and glory can sanction and approve. Their discipline, if Scriptural, is not local action, but the sovereign act of the Lord Himself, and if of the Lord it is valid, and if valid it extends wheresoever saints gathered on the same divinely formed and divinely given ground are found together in fellowship. It cannot be refused and yet the assembly whose discipline it is continue to be accepted, for that would be a house divided against itself, and we know Him who hath said that such a house *cannot* stand. If any assembly judges that either the receiving or the putting away exercised by another assembly is unscriptural, they

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will show godly grounds for their apprehension that error has been committed, and thus reconsideration of the case will follow, and a godly issue be reached. Were any assembly to resist such a gracious appeal, and to maintain an unrighteous judgment, herself, as well as her action, would, after long patience and the exhaustion of every effort, have to be disowned as not being subject to the Lord, and not endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit.

Thus receiving and refusing are equally of the Lord Himself, acting by the Holy Ghost in assembly, and have their instant and effective application wheresoever His saints are owning and occupying the same divinely-given ground.

Such saints claim not to be the House of God, or to be the Body of Christ, or to have wholly and solely the Lord's table. But being gathered unto His Name, they have Christ Himself in their midst, and they come together to eat the Lord's supper, and they endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit, and they cultivate sedulously corporate fellowship with all saints equally endeavouring to maintain divine principles and to give Scriptural expression to what the Body of Christ really is. They promote, as far as is in their power, intercommunion with all gatherings thus Scripturally constituted, by letters of commendation to and from them, and desire to take into their affections all saints, even though not thus endeavouring to keep the Spirit's unity, being well assured that when the Lord comes He will take every one of them to be with Himself. The ruin of the professing Church—the House of God—they deplore greatly, and cannot but deplore still more deeply that the Body of Christ finds no general corporate expression ; but they hold that no such sorrowful facts discharge them in ever so remote a degree from the obligation, with holy jealousy of all evil, to endeavour to keep with all diligence that unity which God the Holy Ghost formed and established at Pentecost.

## BOLDNESS IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

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JOHN says, teaching us under the Holy Ghost, "Herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world" (1 John iv. 17). A most wondrous and very blessed Scripture.

John himself afterwards experienced the boldness of which this Scripture speaks, in a very remarkable way; he had his own doctrine made good to his spirit by the same hand that brought him the doctrine.

In the Isle of Patmos he was introduced to a day of judgment. The revelation he got there of the Lord Jesus Christ was a revelation of Him in judicial glory. He saw the Son of Man standing among the golden candlesticks, with white garments, eyes of flame, a voice as of many waters, a countenance as of the sun in his strength, and with feet as though they burnt in a furnace. A solemn, terrible exhibition of Christ in the day of judgment all this was. John falls to the earth as one dead. But the Lord tells him not to fear, speaking to him as the One who had been dead and was alive again, having the keys of hades and death. That is, He imparts to the spirit of His saint, then in the presence of judicial glory, all the virtue of His own condition. Jesus was there, through death and resurrection, holding in His grasp all the power of the enemy, for He had the keys of hades and of death. Such an One speaks comfortably to John. He imparts, as I said, the virtue of His own condition to His saint, though in a day of judgment. "As" He Himself was, "so" would He have John to be, even in the place of victory, the other side of judgment (Rev. i.).

This was surely wonderful and full of blessing, and John at once feels the power of it and acquires "boldness" in that "day of judgment." For, though the Son of Man is still before him in the same attire and character as he had already seen Him, in judicial

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glory, with eyes of flame, and feet as though they burnt in a furnace, and a countenance like as the sun shineth in his strength, John has boldness. And then he listened to the voice challenging the Church again and again, but he remains unmoved from beginning to end.

This is very beautiful, and has a great character in it. But still more: another scene of judgment succeeds this, of the Son of Man walking among the candlesticks, and John is yet in the presence of it.

He is carried or summoned by the sound of a trumpet to heaven, preparing itself for the execution of judgment. The thrones were there, thrones of judgment—for the elders are seen clothed in white raiment, befitting those seated in judgment. Voices, lightnings, thunders, instruments of wrath, or witnesses that the Lord was rising up out of His holy place for judgment, proceeded out of the throne; and from thence, as we proceed through the book, all that succeeds is in character—trumpets, vials, fire, smoke, earthquakes, and other terrible sights and symbols, enough to make another Moses quake, as in the day of Sinai. But John maintains the “boldness” he has already acquired, and all through is as unmoved as the divine creatures or crowned elders themselves. They were on high, but he was still in “this world;” they were glorified, but he still in the body; yet he is as calm as they. As they were, so was he. And when the terrible sealed book is seen in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne, and a loud voice, as of a mighty angel, challenges all to loose it; instead of dreading the moment when such an awful volume should be opened, he weeps because no one was found equal to do so. He longs to have the secret of the throne disclosed. The day of judgment has no terror for him. He is “as” Christ, and has “boldness.”

But this security, God’s own calmness and assurance in the day of judgment, has had its witness, or expression, in different forms, again and again, in the

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course of God's dealing with His elect; as in the time of the flood; in the day of the overthrow of Sodom; at the time of the Exodus; and also at the time of the passage of the Jordan.

These were days of judgment, but the security thrown round the elect on each of them was divine; it was God's own safety which He then imparted to His people. They were in the world when its judgment was executing; but we may say, "as He was so were they." His safety was theirs.

The "Lord God" shut Noah into the ark with His own hand ere the waters began to rise. The waters were there the instruments of divine wrath, but the divine hand had shut the door upon Noah; and surely these waters of judgment could no more prevail against the *hand* of God, than they could against His *throne*. And, therefore, as the Lord was, so was Noah. Their safety was a common one, wondrous to tell it: so even such an one as Lot in another day of judgment. He was saved so as by fire—out of the fire; a salvation in no wise glorious to himself. He suffered loss, for his works were all burnt up. But the angel said he could do nothing till Lot was fully and clean delivered from all possible danger from the judgment. The angel *could do nothing till then*; and, I ask, was not this divine security?

In the night of Egypt, He who carried the sword had already appointed the blood. He, to whom the vengeance belonged, the Judge who was conducting the judgment, had ordained and pledged the deliverance: "When I see the blood, I will pass over." Was not this imparting His own security to His people again? The Lord must deny Himself—and this He cannot do—or Israel must be safe. Israel may have the same "boldness" in that "day of judgment" as the Lord Himself in the world through which the sword was going.

So, in the passage of the Jordan. The waters were there, as in the days of Noah, ready to overflow their

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banks, as in the time of barley harvest. But the priests were in the midst of them, and the Ark or Presence of God. And there they stood, the ministers of God in the presence of God, till all the people had crossed the river. Jesus was in the vessel, and He must sink if the disciples did. The safety of the Ark was the safety of the camp. As it was, so were they. Nothing less than divine security was that of Israel amid the swellings of Jordan. The judgment of Canaan was about to begin, but Israel was in God's sanctuary.

All this sweetly witnesses how the Lord imparts Himself, or shares His condition with His elect—and that, too, in the day of their most solemn necessity, so to speak. He is beyond judgment, above it, the Executor of it; but the value of His own place He communicated to those elect ones in days of judgment.

But this boldness of ours has a new character in it. It flows from "perfect love." God has put the value of the Son of His bosom upon us; and it is not possible for love to take any higher counsels, or do any more wondrous works than that. The love that has set the value of the Son upon us is a *perfect* love; and our boldness, therefore, is conferred not merely by the *hand* or by the ordinance, of God; but by His *heart*. Noah, or Israel, or even Lot, in their several days of judgment, might have said, "As He is, so are we." God's safety was theirs. But we rest our security now in the love of God, as they did in the hand or ordinance of God. The security is equal, but ours is the witness of a nearer, more affecting, title. Ours is personal—Noah was in the Ark; we are in God. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God;" and in a new sense we say, "As He is, so are we." We are *loved* as He is, not merely *secured* as He is. We bear an element of full personal affection, investing our spirits, as well as an element of boldness.

J. G. B.

## THE GENERAL EPISTLES.

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THE Catholic, or General Epistles, as they are called, are seven in number. All of them were written by men who had known the Lord after the flesh—James, Peter, John and Jude being their respective writers. In this fact just mentioned they differed, of course, from Paul, whose first sight of the Lord was when He appeared to him on his way to Damascus. He only knew the Lord as in glory. The others had been well acquainted with Him as He walked about amongst men.

Their writings are called *Catholic*, or *General*, because addressed to no particular church or churches. James wrote to the twelve tribes of the dispersion. Peter addressed the elect of that dispersion in the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Jude showed his care for those beloved of God the Father, and preserved in (or for) Jesus Christ. John indited his *first* letter to Christians under the three classes of fathers, young men, and babes (1 John ii. 13). His *second* was penned for the benefit of a lady, and his *third* was inscribed to "Gaius the beloved, whom I love in truth."

Paul likewise indited personal letters. He wrote to Timothy and to Titus, two well-known labourers, and also, to Philemon, who lived at Colosse, all three being his converts (1 Tim. i. 2; Titus i. 4; Philemon 19). Timothy was at Ephesus when Paul first wrote to him (1 Tim. i. 3), and probably was there still when he penned his second, and last letter to him (2 Tim. i. 15, 16; iv. 14, 15). Titus was in Crete (Tit. i. 4, 12, 13), and Philemon served helpfully at Colosse, opening, evidently, his house for a meeting of Christians (Phil. 2); but where the elect lady lived to whom John wrote, or in what place Gaius showed Christian love in helping labouring brethren in their work, John, the apostle, has not enlightened us. Hence, those two short epistles, whilst, strictly speaking, not deserving

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the name of Catholic, have, nevertheless, been always classed as such in the arrangement of the New Testament volume.

In that volume the epistles of Paul are always found together, and those called Catholic are similarly kept together; but in all the uncial MSS., the Codex Sinaticus excepted, these last are found directly after the Acts, and preceding the fourteen generally ascribed to Paul. We say *generally*, because it is a question on which people are divided, whether he was the writer of that to the Hebrews. Into this matter we need not here enter, though for our part we see nothing in that epistle to decide against the Pauline authorship. But whether written by Paul or not, the fact of its inspiration is in no way to be called in question.

Similarly the apostolic authorship of Jude has been questioned, as well as the correctness of the very common belief that the writer of the epistle of James was one of the twelve. Probably as long as the Church of God is on earth these questions will be debated, and not finally settled to the satisfaction of all disputants; so we leave these points as unsuited for debate in the pages of this periodical, claiming for those who are not convinced by the reasons urged against the apostleship of Jude (in which company the writer of these lines takes his place), to regard still both James and Jude, in common with many in every age of the Church's history, as that James the less, and that Jude, elsewhere called Thaddæus, who were of the number of the twelve. And since the teaching of the apostles is so much insisted upon (Acts ii. 42; Eph. ii. 20; iii. 5; 2 Pet. iii. 2), it would seem not unnatural to conclude that all the New Testament epistolary writers were of that company. But, whichever view be maintained, as we remarked above about the Hebrews, the solution of the question of authorship in no way affects the canonical authority of the epistles of James and Jude.

All the Catholic epistles are eminently practical in tone, insisting on reality on the part of those to whom they are addressed. The doctrinal teaching of Christianity Paul especially unfolds. In his writings it is that we learn of justification by faith, and of the gift of the Holy Ghost, and about the Body and the Bride of Christ. The writers of the Catholic epistles, whilst firmly holding all this, and surely endorsing all Paul's teaching (2 Pet. iii. 15, 16), were led to insist chiefly on the outflow of real life, and on practical godliness of walk. Of this, John's first epistle is a marked instance. How needful to be reminded of this! Doctrine, without the power of it in the soul, and manifested in the life, will never do. It may make zealots, but it will never conduce to real discipleship, nor to the manifestation in us of the divine nature. On the other hand, practical teaching, unless really based on true Christian doctrine, may land its adherents in all kinds of wild vagaries. We need to be well grounded in the doctrines of Christianity in order to be kept on the rails. We need, too, that the divine nature of which we are partakers (2 Pet. i. 4) should be active within us, if we are to be fruitful to God. Now, if we examine the writings of Paul and the first epistle of John, we see, to use a metaphor which all will understand, in the writings of the former how the tree is rooted, *i.e.*, how we come to be in Christ; and in the latter, how it will be fruitful, *i.e.*, if we are abiding in Christ. "In Christ" is characteristic of Paul's teaching; "abiding in Christ" characterises, very especially, John's.

But here we must guard against a possible misapprehension. It is not for one moment intended that Paul does not inculcate practical teaching. He dwells a great deal on that, having generally first laid the foundation for it by unfolding some part of Christian doctrine. Thus his writings present such a marked contrast to the law of Moses. In this last, doing to get the blessing is dwelt on and enforced. In Paul's

epistles, it is doing because we have been so fully blessed that is laid before the reader.

Turning back to the Catholic epistles, we see that they in their turn address those who have had teaching from God, whether the twelve tribes, the Christians among them of the dispersion in certain provinces of Asia Minor, or Christians in general. James, who addressed God's ancient people, dwells much on practical religion. Peter, who ministered to certain saints of the dispersion, encouraged such in their new pilgrim career.

We have already remarked that they are found as a body in nearly all the uncial MSS. in close association with the Acts of the Apostles. We would now state that they are generally arranged in the order in which they are found in our Bibles at this day, James heading the list, and Jude, his brother, closing it. And there seems a fitness in this. The appeal to the ancient people of God, amongst whom the Prophet like unto Moses had appeared, comes suitably first. Then those of them who had really hearkened to the teaching about that Prophet, being ranked as His true disciples, are encouraged in their pilgrimage, having started on the way to the inheritance reserved for them in heaven. After that we have John's *first* epistle, which teaches how each one may know that he has eternal life, who believes on the name of the Son of God (1 John v. 12). This is followed by his *second*, which indicates to the elect lady how she should exhibit the possession of the divine nature, which is light, by keeping aloof from those who brought not the doctrine of the Christ. Then in the *third* he addressed Gaius to exhort him to continue the manifesting the divine nature, by the outflow of Christian love through the channel of hospitality to those labouring in the Word; and the series closes with Jude's important letter, which warns true saints against apostasy, still future in its full development; but the germ of which the Spirit of God then detected, whilst as yet the first century had not

finished its course. James reminds all of the failure of Israel; Jude foretells that of Christendom, in the midst of which, however, true saints would be found as long as the Church of God is on earth.

One thing more we would notice ere bringing these remarks to a close. In each of the Catholic epistles the Lord Jesus Christ, if spoken of by the two last names, is always called "Jesus Christ," and never, as Paul so often designates Him, "Christ Jesus." To this 1 Peter v. 10, 14 presents no exception. In both verses "Jesus" should probably be struck out. Paul, who only knew the Lord as in glory, often mentions His names in that order, which reminds us of His ascension (Acts ii. 36). The others, who were personally acquainted with Him upon earth, make mention first of that name given to Him as a man by the angel. Suited, we may say, was this. C. E. S.

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"HE RESTORETH MY SOUL."

*Psalm xxiii. 3.*

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O LORD! to Thee my thanks I raise  
 For all the goodness of *Thy ways*,  
 So marked in grace, so full of power,  
 Towards me until this present hour!  
 Ah! many a cloud has passed between  
 My soul and Thee, and which has been  
 A source of much disquietude,  
 As must be so when sins intrude;  
 But Thou hast had Thy watchful gaze  
 Upon Thy child in all *his ways*,  
 Hast seen the *will*, the *motive* known,  
 Descried the secret stumbling-stone,  
 That Satan, or the world, hath cast  
 Before his footsteps as he past;  
 And in Thy wisdom, by Thy skill,  
 Hast used *their* purpose, and *his* will,  
 As instruments to break the crust  
 Of many a hidden, "hurtful lust,"

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And in Thy rich, restoring grace,  
 Hast saved his soul from dire disgrace,  
 And led him back by paths untrod,  
 To find his joy in Thee, his God,  
 Unfolding too Thine own design—  
 Ere Thou canst *bleſs*, Thou muſt *refine*.

Be it my one unceasing prayer—  
 Be it my ſtill-increasing care—  
 From all defiling things to flee  
 Which hinder fellowſhip with Thee.  
 So ſhall the tempter, with his wiles—  
 So ſhall the world's alluring ſmiles,  
 Loſe all their fascinating charm—  
 Be powerless to divert, or harm.

What wondrous treaſures, once conceal'd,  
 Thou haſt in Thine own word reveal'd ;  
 Treasures of ſuch magnificence,  
 That captivate my every ſenſe ;  
 And telleſt me a glory waits  
 For thoſe who paſs the pearly gates  
 Of Zion's city (once within,  
 Farewell to ſorrow and to ſin),  
 And ſcenes of joy and bliſs untold—  
 More bleſſed theſe than heaps of gold,  
 Or broad eſtates, or halls of mirth,  
 Or aught that appertains to earth.

O Lord ! to Thee my thanks I raiſe,  
 That through the knowledge of Thy ways,  
 And patient goodneſs unto me,  
 My heart is happy—ſweetly free  
 From fears that this poor world entwine,  
 For Thou haſt linked my life with Thine.

G. C.

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"WE had a moſt happy meeting. J. N. D. ſaid that if Chriſt was the huſband's delight, a wife would ſeek to pleaſe him with Chriſt, and not with the things of the world. With Chriſt ſhe would comfort him when he came home. Otherwiſe it would be but dragging him down."

## GOD'S WAYS AND TESTIMONY.

## JEREMIAH ii.

THERE are two distinct points in the ways and testimony of God as regards us ; first, faith is the condition of soul in us which, as it is in exercise or otherwise, may either hinder or favour the enjoyment, which habitually the testimony of the word is to give to us. Then in presenting the objects of faith to our souls—the Father's love, the Son's work—the word of God applies itself to the *conscience* and heart ; for where the conscience is not in exercise the heart will not be, and all will be hollow. When the affections are dull then self comes in, and I attach these holy affections to myself ; for when I am thinking about *my* affections I am thinking about *myself* ; but when the conscience is in exercise we are thinking of the object presented, otherwise the heart is turned in upon self, the Lord is forgotten, and weakness ensues. Consequently we sink into a feeble state ; but then the word of God presenting the object of faith applies itself to the conscience, bringing that into exercise, and thus the heart is brought back to God.

There can be no true love to Christ while there is the existence of wrong ; for I cannot love a person I have wronged. What is needed then is the consciousness of the wrong done. "I have sinned, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son." When the conscience is aroused, and the heart is brought into play, we rest in the presence of God. The Spirit of God may humble us on account of what *we have done*, but when conscience is in play it brings out our *whole condition* before God. It is not the law coming in again, but God presenting *Himself* ; thus there will be right affections, and the conscience will be in exercise. Self-confidence and self-exaltation in every form are always the effects of an unexercised conscience. Only put a man in the Lord's presence, and that will keep him lowly, and in a spiritual state of

discernment ; but there is nothing out of which we so easily get as the consciousness of the presence of God. So also in our prayers. You may often be sensible that you go on praying after you have lost the consciousness that you are speaking to God, still the soul goes on expressing itself ; even when we have been led by the Spirit the manner will be all wrong, though the words may be right. Well, though all this be true, whenever the Lord recalls a soul He recalls it to His own presence. He will act on the conscience ; He will speak plainly to us. Why ? Because He is conscious of the relationship which ought to have produced the conduct befitting the relationship which we have forgotten. "Is Ephraim my dear son ? is he a pleasant child ? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still : therefore my bowels are troubled for him." When the Lord recalls a soul to Himself He may reproach it with having *forgotten* the relationship in which it stood to God, and God to it ; but He cannot reproach it as *never having known* that relationship. The power of every rebuke is founded on the relationship, and God remembering the relationship acts on the ground of it with all the affections belonging thereto. Thus every rebuke comes to us as the expression of the most wonderful tenderness ; and the more deeply we learn that there is no failure in God's affection, the more deeply we lament our short-coming and failure in that relationship which never fails.

God said to Jeremiah, "Go, say in the ears of Jerusalem ;" but, alas ! Israel would not hear. Now this was most disastrous ; but God remembers His relationship to them, and says, in Hosea ii. 16, "In that day thou shalt call Me Ishi ;" that is, my Husband, "and shalt call Me no more Baali ;" that is, my Lord. Evil as their state was, He recalls with all its force and energy the remembrance of their relationship—"Go, cry in the ears of Jerusalem." It is not, "He that hath an ear let him hear," but God goes and

speaks in their ears. Oh that He may speak in our ears! When God spake comfortably to Jerusalem then He spake *to the heart*, and that was after chastening; but here He is at another work, speaking in the ears of Jerusalem that they might hear what God had to say to them. He could say—the true Servant—“The Lord God hath opened mine ear” to hear what God had to say to Him, and He was not rebellious, neither turned away back; but Israel “had forsaken Him days without number;” they had done a terrible thing, such as no other nation had done. “Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but My people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.” And again, “Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” And now that God is sending a message after them, does He say, “Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, I remember *thy sins*”? No, but “I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.” He is recalling what Israel was to God Himself—I remember the outgoings of thy heart toward Me; “I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals.”

Now what a thing it was for God to say to Israel, ‘I have not forgotten what you were to Me in the days of thy youth, when the heart first turned to Me.’ In all this we have the same principle as “Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations,” when they were quarrelling which should be the greatest. And so Israel were always murmuring, thinking their leeks and cucumbers better than God; But God remembers the *principles* on which Israel acted—“When thou wentest after *Me* in the wilderness.” They got much of this world’s goods in

Canaan by following God ; they got cities that they had not built, wells that they had not digged, palm-trees that they had not planted, and the like. All these things were the consequences of following God ; but He does not mention these. But "thou wentest after Me in the wilderness," which was a land of deserts and pits, a land of drought, and the shadow of death, a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt ; thou wentest after *Me* in the wilderness, where there was nothing to set your affections on but Myself ; I *Myself* was the whole and sole object of your affections ; and this it was that God remembered. He overlooks all failure, and the condition which God notices is that He Himself was everything to them ; and this is what characterises a heart when first converted to God—the Lord is everything to it. What is the world to that heart? Dross and dung ! Everything, cares and pleasures are alike forgotten, everything counted as nothing, except what is found in God Himself. The praises of Israel were freely given—"I will prepare Him an habitation ;" "my father's God, I will exalt Him," because they had found Him who was everything to them, and the world and all it had to give a mere nothing.

Now let us look at the other side of the picture, and see the desperately bad state which the heart of Israel had got into, remembering they are but types of us. They were dissatisfied, and cried, "Would to God we had died in Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and ate bread to the full." And again, "Wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us into this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates ; neither is there any water to drink." In the wilderness there is nothing to see, nothing to look at ; and that is what Israel wanted. God says, "I brought you into a plentiful country to eat the fruit thereof, and the goodness thereof ; but when ye entered ye defiled My land, and made My heritage an abomination." They felt their own impor-

tance, and forgot the Lord ; they had the blessing, and did not want the Lord of the blessing.

And is not this true of the Church of God? We bring in self, which is but a broken cistern, and depart from Him, who is the living fountain and power of blessing, forgetting that "a Syrian ready to perish was my father." Consequently there is moral weakness, and Satan gets power. A believer cannot get back into the world. A mere professor may, and enjoy it ; but a Christian cannot. An Israelite could not get back through the Red Sea again. You cannot think of yourselves and the Lord together with satisfaction to your own souls. The Lord's presence in the soul will bring *self* into utter ruin and nothingness. We have only to let the Lord have His place in our souls, and that will put us into our place. If I am walking through the world, shall I find it a wilderness? To be sure I shall ; but then I shall not be thinking about the wilderness if the Lord is my joy and strength. Are your hearts saying, This is a land we cannot see? If so, what does that prove? Why, that you are looking for something to see ; and this is the thought you will find in your hearts, "*It is a land not sown,*" although you may be ashamed to own it. But God remembered Israel when they thought it worth while to follow God for His own sake. We feel bound to say it is a happy thing to be a Christian ; but when we are alone do not our hearts say, "It is a land not sown"? If it be so with you, do not rest until the Lord Himself alone satisfies your soul ; for you should delight yourself in Him. Lot *saw* a well-watered plain and a city, and then dwelt in it on the earth, and consequently was in the midst of judgment ; while Abraham sought a city *out of sight*, and he enjoyed the blessing and comfort of God being with him, go where he might. When the soul is down like a ship when the tide is low, it is in danger of shoals and sandbanks ; but when the tide is up there are no sandbanks, because the ship is lifted up above

them all. Thus when the soul is happy in Christ it will go on peacefully, independently of all the trials we may be called to meet with in our fellow-saints. We are called to walk together through the world, and a mere natural fitness will not do for that. No. We can only go on so far as Christ fills the soul ; and thus going on in the tide of divine goodness, forgetting everything else, we can walk together happily, being occupied with Christ, and not with each other.

But notwithstanding what Israel was, still God does not forget Israel. And why? Because He remembers her affection in the day of her espousals, "when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness." The soul, when occupied with *God alone*, is holiness *to the Lord*. God says to Israel, "If thou wilt return, return *unto Me*." It is of no use to attempt to set the soul right except it be set right with God. Israel was "holiness to the Lord." Now holiness is not innocence. God is not what we call innocent, but holy. He perfectly separates between evil and good. So Christ Himself when on earth was separated unto God ; and when about to depart out of it He says, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth ;" for the meaning of the word "sanctify" in this place is separation to God. So it is with the Church of God. She is separated from the world unto God, taken out of creation for Himself, the first-fruits of His increase. There will be a harvest of blessing when Israel and the nations are brought into blessing, but the Church is the first-fruits of God's increase. God remembers this, though the Church may have forgotten it ; but if we know what it is to get back into the *affections* of God, we must enjoy the love that fails not ; for God says, "I remember." The soul then apprehends what the Church of God is in the affections of God, and not what it is down here. Christ was the corn broken and bruised, and afterwards the wave-sheaf before God. So the Church is to be in a low and oppressed state, and afterward to

be exalted to where Christ is. God will have the whole harvest, but the first-fruits of His increase is that which occupies His affections.

“What iniquity have your fathers found in Me?” Have I failed towards you in goodness? What is the matter now? Is the Lord changed? Is He worth less now than when thou wentest after Him in the wilderness? No; but we have got far from Him, and have walked after vanity, and have become vain. We have enjoyed His blessing, and have got fat and kicked, and consequently have fallen down into the weakness and wretchedness of our own hearts. When did the Lord bring up His people? When the very circumstances through which, and into which, He brought them were the proof that *the Lord* was bringing them there; for He brought them into a land of deserts and pits, where they had no need to lean on “a broken reed, whereon if a man lean it will go into his hand and pierce it,” because they leaned on God Himself. “Neither did thy raiment wax old upon thee, nor thy foot swell, these forty years.” And why? Because “the Lord alone did lead them, and there was no strange God with him.” So was it with Gideon (Judges vi.). He remembered what God had been to Israel in the day of her espousals, saying, “Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?” And the Lord looked upon him, and said, “Go in this thy might.” Thus we see that Gideon’s remembrance of what God was to Israel in the day of her espousals was the secret of his strength. In Gideon was a soul near enough to God to say, “Where is the Lord?” and then what a burden is taken off the heart. Only let us place ourselves before the Lord, and see if He does not come in remembering the day of espousals.

If I am thinking of the cucumbers of Egypt, the wilderness will not suit me; but if I am thinking of the Lord, I shall have no thought at all whether I am in the wilderness or not. The affections of my soul will be going on with God’s affection for me; for He

## REALITY.

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ever remembers "the love of thine espousals" when He first revealed Himself to our souls: It is true we may see chastening, but God never forgets the work of grace in our souls. He never forgets "the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land not sown." And now thou art "holiness to the Lord;" and though God will have His joy in the harvest of the earth, yet thou art the first-fruits of His increase.

J. N. D.

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 REALITY.
 

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A real testimony meets with real rejection.

A real rejection produces real sorrow.

A real sorrow causes one to send up a real cry to God.

A real cry receives a real answer.

A real answer received makes one send back a real song of praise.

A real song of praise meets with a real acceptance in the highest courts of heaven!

J. D. R.

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 "IN THE SPIRIT ON THE LORD'S DAY."
 

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*Rev. i. 10.*

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IN Rev. i. 12-18 we have a wonderful revelation of the dignity and glory of the person of Christ. Nowhere else in the word have we anything like it, anything which approaches it for minute detail. The Lord Jesus Christ as Son of Man is minutely described to us, and we may well desire that our eyes should be anointed with eyesalve that we may behold the matchless sight. John tells us what he saw and what he heard; and what he had thus given unto him he was inspired to write, and he was directed to do so. For it was not for his sake alone, but for ours, his fellow servants' sake especially. But first let us notice

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that there was a spiritual condition pre-eminently fitting him for the revelation he received. He could say, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (ver. 10). Nor was that for him alone. We have not the same vision of glory, the same revelation made to us as he had ; we receive it on his testimony, and it is to us the word of God ; we apprehend it and we enter into it by faith, and in no other way. But should we say that is why we have so feeble a hold upon it and why it has so feeble a hold upon us, we should err. May we not much more safely say it is because we are not "in the Spirit on the Lord's day?" The Holy Ghost dwells in each believer who has peace with God, and He dwells in the House of God on earth, but neither of these is signified by, nor to be identified with, what is set forth in the expression before us. Is it not rather to be in the true current of the Holy Ghost on the first day of the week? If at any one time more than another the Spirit of God carries the hearts and minds of the saints onward and upward ; if there is more than any other time one in which He opens our anointed eyes, and touches our circumcised hearts, bringing the full glory of Christ Himself before us, it is surely on the Lord's day. May we then, through mercy, cultivate that attitude of soul, that deep spiritual subjection and receptiveness, that is implied in being "in the Spirit on the Lord's day." Surely many can say, we have only too seldom known what that is, but we *have* known it.

To return to verses 12-18, let us first note that though the vision brings to the eye of faith a glorified Christ, it is not Christ in glory. No ; He is seen on earth. The golden candlesticks were not needed in heaven ; even the light of the sun and of the moon is not needed there. The candlesticks were for the earth and were on earth, and Christ was in the midst of them. Seven is a number which God uses for completeness, expressing the whole of that to which it relates ; thus we have in chap. iv. 10 "seven lamps of fire burning before the

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throne, which are the seven Spirits of God,” the Holy Ghost, the “One Spirit,” in His sevenfold operations (compare also chap. i. 4 and Isaiah xi. 2). It is the Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of the Churches, the House of God upon the earth. Everything points to responsibility upon our part, and to a judicial character and attitude on His part. Whom does John see? “One like unto the Son of Man.” This stamps the occasion. As Son of God He gives life, quickening whom He will. Equally with the Father this prerogative is His. But for the Father’s glory He became a man, humbled Himself as such, and the world mocked Him to scorn; they refused Him as a Saviour, and cruelly slew Him. God has therefore committed *all* judgment to Him (John v. 22, 27). Fittingly then in this judicial scene do we behold the *Son of Man*.

As Peter says, “Judgment must begin at the House of God” (1 Pet. iv. 17). He wears the priestly robe. Of His three offices, Prophet, Priest, and King, the second is what He is distinctively filling now. The first is what was to be seen in the days of His flesh (compare Deut. xviii. 15 and Acts iii. 22, 23), and the last is still future. But He is now “High-priest over the House of God” (Heb. x. 21), and as such we see Him in garments down to the foot. That is to say, not in actual service, in which case the robe would be drawn up and over the girdle, but in all the dignity of judicial authority. The girdle, nevertheless, surrounds Him beneath the breast, expressive of faithfulness and righteousness; a golden girdle, and therefore an intrinsically *divine* adorning.

Further, we read, “His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow;” reproducing Daniel’s description (chap. vii.) of the Ancient of days! Thus it is His essential existence as seen in verse 8: He who is “Alpha and Omega, the beginning and ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty;” in a word, the divine glory of Christ as “having neither beginning of days, nor end of life;”

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the eternal God, in the fulness of His omniscience and divine wisdom.

Again, "His eyes were as a flame of fire." Not only He knows everything, but His scorching gaze is upon it. Nothing escapes His eyes. "His eyes behold, His eyelids try, the children of men" (Psalm xi. 4). Three times over in the Revelation given unto John for the *servants* of Jesus Christ are we reminded that His eyes are like unto a flame of fire (ii. 18 ; xix. 12), and in each case it is in judicial connection, penetrating and discerning everything.

"And His feet were like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace:" this clearly suggests His rigorous, inflexible righteousness in subduing all opposition ; and His contracting no defilement, while trampling beneath His feet all that defileth.

Then further, "And His voice as the sound of many waters:" a figure three times used in the book of Revelation, evidently expressing resistless, overwhelming majesty (compare Psalm xciii. 3, 4).

"And He had in His right hand seven stars." As to this, it is added in the 20th verse they "are the angels of the seven Churches." It is thus the completeness of represented authority or rule in the assembly of God, in subordination to Christ.

"And out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword," which we cannot fail to identify with "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. vi. 17). It signifies that the word of His mouth is the voice that brooks no opposition, for *He* is "the Word of God."

Finally, we read, "And His countenance was as the sun shineth in His strength." Here the crowning point in the description is reached ; it is the magnificent splendour of His supreme authority, before which everything pales its lustre, the unclouded glory of the Son of Man !

This was too overwhelming for His poor, feeble servant, who fell at His feet as dead. But He, who

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had not given this glorious revelation before He had touched the spring of His servant’s affections, and caused him to record the result in those precious words of worship and adoration, “Unto Him that loveth us, and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father ; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen,” now laid His right hand on John, saying, “Fear not ; I am the first and the last and the living One ; and I became dead, and, behold, I am living to the ages of ages, and have the keys of death and of hades” (N. Tr.). Surely the beloved disciple would on hearing these words recall that earlier, that resurrection scene, in which he had heard His tender voice saying, “Why are ye troubled ?—Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself : handle Me, and see ; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have” (Luke xxiv. 38, 39).

That same Jesus he had seen go up into heaven (Acts i. 11), and that same Jesus was then in the midst of the assembly, in the House of God, High-priest over God’s House on earth, sending (chapters ii. and iii.) a special message, accompanied by a special character of Himself, to each of the seven Churches then existing in Asia Minor (which messages, &c., stand in all their value for assemblies to-day in like conditions) ; but in this chapter (i.) He presents Himself as in the midst of the whole testimony for God on earth, and as such, therefore, He is in the midst of whatever bears His Name on earth to-day. How solemn is this consideration ! All who are gathered unto His Name thankfully own His presence in the midst, and our hearts well up and well out in the hymn :—

“To Him that loved us, gave Himself  
And died to do us good ;  
Hath washed us from our scarlet sins  
In His most precious blood :

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Who made us kings and priests to God,  
 His Father Infinite ;  
 To Him eternal glory be,  
 And everlasting might !"

But while we thus thankfully and joyfully sing to Him, oh ! let us remember that His feet are like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace, and out of His mouth proceedeth a sharp two-edged sword ! As one has said who is now with the Lord :—  
 "'Touch not the unclean thing.' If He around whom we are clustered would have us so separate from evil as not to *touch*, not to be linked with what is unclean in His sight, how can we be gathered together in His Name, according to His mind, unless we are separate from unsound doctrine, immoral ways, and unholy associations ? As to doctrine and practice, we are warned of their insidious and spreading effects by the Holy Spirit, who says, 'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump ;' and as to unclean *associations* (the last thing many consciences are moved by), we are to treat them as we would a leprous garment. We are solemnly charged to 'depart from iniquity,' and to *purge ourselves from vessels to dishonour*. It may be said, 'If we act in this way we shall find few will go with us.' Be it so, if it be the will of the Lord ; but let us at all costs keep clear of associating with that peerless Name anything which does not suit the 'holy' and the 'true.'" And as another, also with the Lord now, has affirmed :—"While God has set forth the ruin of the Church as connected with man's responsibility, He has shewn us that there is, for the path of faith, just as much wisdom and power as at first." And, may it not be added ? the Lord is to-day as truly among the candlesticks as when John beheld the vision he has so solemnly recorded.

May those gathered to His Name be so walking before Him that He may find nothing that has to be consumed by the breath of His mouth !

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MARCH, 1892.

## A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST.

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“ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable,” we read (2 Tim. iii. 16). No part of it is non-essential; yet there are Christians who, when some portions of it are mentioned, and its keen edge is felt in their conscience, seek to turn it aside by saying, “It is not an essential truth.” Now there are many truths which are certainly not essential to the salvation of the soul; but if we are to refuse all that does not relate to the salvation of the soul, or is not “essential to salvation,” as it is termed, then the greater part of Scripture must be treated as profitless. If the blessed God has been pleased to reveal His mind to us, His creatures, then it is important that we should know it. And if it is not essential to our salvation, it is essential to His glory that we should not only *know* it, but be in fellowship with His thoughts, whatever may be the subject of them. “I esteem *all* Thy precepts concerning *all things* to be right,” said the Psalmist of old (Ps. cxix. 128); while the Apostle exhorted the Ephesian saints not to be “unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. v. 17). Happy is the man who is sufficiently free from the miserable selfishness which occupies itself only with that which ministers to its own needs, and willing to learn “all truth” for His glory who gave His Son, in whom it all centres. The heart, where “Christ is all,” is not to be limited in its grasp of truth to what is merely “essential to salvation,” nor yet to the narrow lines of any sectarian creed; but remembers that the Holy Ghost has come to lead us into “*all truth*” (John xvi. 13); and every interest of Christ’s is dear to such hearts, for it is all bound up with His glory who has won our hearts by the unutterable agonies of Calvary, and now satisfies

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them as the living One on the throne in the "brightness of eternal glory."

Now the subject of the Church as the Body of Christ is not only of the deepest moment to the Christian, because of its relationship to Christ; but it is absolutely necessary to know it in order to understand God's dispensational dealings with men on the earth. In fact, it is this ignorance of dispensational teaching, and of the place the Church has in the ways of God, that has caused all the confusion we see around us in Christendom today. But this I do not enter upon here. Then, if we are to act consistently in that wonderful relationship in which we as Christians are set, *i.e.*, as members of the Body, we *must* understand what it really means, and that knowledge can only be obtained from the Scriptures, and by the Holy Spirit. I shall seek, then, to set forth a few thoughts on this important subject as simply and concisely as possible.

## THE CLOSENESS OF THE RELATIONSHIP.

The human body is the only figure that would in any adequate way set forth the closeness of the new relationship to Christ, in which the believer is set by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Having completed the work of atonement, the blessed Lord has sat down on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, the witness of God's satisfaction in that work, and from thence He has sent down the Holy Ghost to form this new thing, the Church, which is His Body. Never was there such a thing known before. It was not even hid in the Scriptures, to be dug out by the diligent student. It was "hid in God," and "not made known in other ages to the children of men," but revealed for the first time to the Apostle of the Gentiles, and now made known to us through him in the Scriptures of the New Testament (Eph. iii. 3-10).

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There were saved individuals, of course, before ever the Church was formed, as Hebrews xi. makes known to us by that list of worthies who all died in faith. But they were just so many *units*, each independent of the other, though having many blessings in common. Such a thing as membership of a *body* was unknown. The Spirit having come, as He did on the day of Pentecost, consequent on the work of atonement being completed, a new relationship was formed, than which nothing could be closer or dearer, and saints are no longer *units* (though individuality is never lost), but *members of a body*, united to a Head. "By one Spirit are we all baptised into one Body" (1 Cor. xii. 13). *Independence* of one another is therefore an impossibility now, if saints are acting in accordance with this new relationship in which we are set through grace.

## HOW IT IS EFFECTED.

The way this is brought about is very blessed. Many dear Christians have very hazy thoughts as to how we are united to Christ, though enjoying the thing itself for themselves. Some say we are united to Christ by *faith*. But this is a mistake, though we must have faith to have any blessing from God. If it is faith which unites us to Christ, then there will be a time when we shall cease to be united to Him; for faith will no longer be required when we see His face. Both *faith* and *hope* shall cease then. But we shall never cease to be united to Christ, because it is neither by faith, nor by life, nor by love, but by the Holy Ghost, and having Him we have Him "for ever" (John xiv. 16). "By one Spirit are we all baptised into one Body" (1 Cor. xii. 13). It is therefore by the Spirit, and by the Spirit alone, that we are united to Christ, though we have both faith and love, and life too; so that union with Christ can never cease, it is "for ever," and it makes us members of His Body.

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## A DIVINE UNITY—NOT MERE UNION.

This new thing formed by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost is not a mere union, but a divine unity, in which each member is a living part, and apart from which they cannot exist, so to speak. I will make this clear presently. Union, I apprehend, is a number of persons or units banded together for a common object and benefit to the whole—such as Freemasons, Oddfellows, or trades unions of whatever kind; and their motto is, "Union is strength." Well, so it is; sometimes it is strength for good. But, alas! sometimes it is strength for evil. This unionism will be seen in its perfection; it will reach its climax for political and Satanic purposes when the man of sin appears on the scene (Rev. xiii. 11-18), and who shall be destroyed by Him who will put down "all rule and authority and power," who "*must* reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet" (1 Cor. xv. 24-25; 2 Thess. ii. 3-12).

We might take another illustration. The corn of wheat is sown; there appears "first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear; then cometh the harvest." But each of those little corns in that ear of wheat exists, and can exist, separately and independently of every other, though they all draw their nourishment from the same root and through the same stem. It is a figure of union, but it is not unity. To have the latter we must take the figure of a human body, as that alone sets it forth. If we take the smallest finger on a man's hand, it is part of his body, and cannot exist apart from it. Cut off the finger, and it cannot exist like a corn of wheat apart from the others. Besides, the body would be mutilated and incomplete. Again, in a body no member can act independently of the other. All are regulated and guided by the head, and dependent one on the other for the healthy and harmonious working of the whole. In this, then, we have the

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only figure of divine *unity*, and such is the Church, which is His body.

## HOW IT IS SUSTAINED.

As in a healthy body every member has its place and work, so in the body of Christ every member has its place and responsibility. "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him" (1 Cor. xii. 18). God has set each one in his place. It is not, therefore, a question of what each would like to be or do, but what God has made them, and what He expects them to do. The privilege is *given* them ; the responsibility is expected to be fulfilled by them for the benefit of the whole. Christ is the Head, from whom *the whole body*, fitly joined together and compacted by that which *every joint* supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of *every part*, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. iv. 16). Besides this, there are gifts given by the ascended Christ, who is its Head. There are the apostles and prophets, who laid the foundation in their ministry ; then the evangelists, who seek the unconverted with the Gospel ; then the pastors and teachers, who instruct those who are brought in by the evangelists ; so that the members are cared for in the fullest and most blessed way by the Head, and by the effectual working of every part, each member being a contributor to the common good, under the guidance of the Head by the Holy Ghost. All this is easily seen, and each thoughtful Christian reader can at once discern the numerous and varied ways in which this help for the common good can be given.

## THE HINDRANCES.

Alas ! there are many hindrances, and all kinds of difficulties are raised by those who care not to be governed by this truth, but prefer an easy path rather than one which calls for much exercise of soul and

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dependence on God. We are told by some that everything is smashed now ; and who is to know what is right when so many make the same claim, and are all consistent in their lives? But we reply, Is the *truth* smashed? Is *it* right? Are we to act on *it*, or float on the tide with those who have given it up? Then, if we see a few who are, through grace, endeavouring to act in accordance with Scripture, even at the expense of being thought narrow-minded and bigoted, are we to take our place with such, or ignore them and stand apart? The second epistle of Timothy was written in view of such times and to meet such objections, and while the saint is called to be separate from "vessels to dishonour," and to "flee also youthful lusts," &c., he is to "follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, *with them* that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. ii. 19-22).

Others there are who think that things have so gone to the bad that all corporate fellowship and testimony is gone, and the path wholly an individual one now. Strange idea this, surely! Was the truth as to the Body of Christ only meant to last for a very brief period, and then be practically useless during the rest of the Church's history on earth? Perhaps some made these same remarks and used the same arguments when things began to break up shortly after the apostles passed away to their rest; yet see what a blessed revival of Church truth and position there has been in this century, not to speak of other things, though it is fading now. Such an objection is an unworthy one. Why not be honest, and say straight out, "The path is too narrow and trying, and these incessant divisions make it so difficult to say who is right, that it seems like a farce to talk about a right Church position now?" Well, we can only sorrowfully admit how difficult and trying the path is; but the question arises, Do I make the path clearer to those who are seeking their way by taking up an independent and isolated position from all those who

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are seeking to walk with God according to His word, and thus by my act deny that there is such a thing as Christ's Body on the earth for which He, the Head in heaven, has not ceased to care?

If I can afford to stand alone, independent of others who are acting on 2 Tim. ii. 22, then I practically say I am the body myself; or I say to all the rest of the members, "I have no need of you," and this a serious position to take up (1 Cor. xii. 21). Has not the Head made provision for the members, and for the display of that truth till He takes His own away to be with Himself for ever? Surely He has! The Lord's supper itself teaches us that He expects to have a corporate testimony till the close. "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death *till He come*" (1 Cor. xi. 26). Can a person take the supper alone? No, surely not! Then, if there is another to do it with you, you have two, and therefore that which is *corporate*. Are we then to prohibit others from this privilege who have equal rights with ourselves, and not scripturally disqualified from partaking of the Lord's supper, under the plea that the testimony is individual, when Jesus says, "Till I come?" Surely not! Then the excuse of the testimony being individual is bottomless, and not to be entertained for a moment. God remains. The Spirit remains. The truth remains. Blessed be God it is so. The centre of gathering and the power of gathering are still the same, while the comfort of the Lord's blessed presence according to His word, and the ministry by an ungrieved Spirit through His saints, are still the portion of those who are satisfied to act on the truth of Scripture—that "there is one Body and one Spirit." May we each and all value the Scriptures, and act on them in the midst of, and spite of, all the ruin around, till we hear the Lord's voice and see His face!

W. EASTON.

*New Zealand.*

## THE TOWER OF BABEL, OR THE LIVING GOD?

A WORD TO HOLY BRETHREN, PARTAKERS OF THE  
HEAVENLY CALLING.

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“IN God is my salvation and my glory ; the rock of my strength, and my refuge is in God” (Psalm lxii. 7).

“For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe” (1 Tim. iv. 10).

Our faith is tested by our temptations, that is, by our difficulties ; and what I desire to consider in the following pages is not the trying of our faith as touching the perfect efficacy of the blood of Christ as having cleared us from all our guilt, but our trust in the living God as the Saviour, that is, Deliverer and Preserver ; whether it is true to every one of our souls that the rock of our strength and our refuge is in God. If there were no pretenders to be rocks of strength and refuge, if there were no competitors as objects of trust, our faith in the living God as the Saviour, the only Saviour in every difficulty, would not be tested ; but it is because there are rivals, and rivals that compete only too successfully for the trust which none but the living God is entitled to, that I am attempting to state, as God shall enable me, the nature of the opposition which supplants the living God as the rock of strength and refuge, in the practice of many of His people.

That every human being needs a rock of strength and a refuge will not be denied. There are a number of difficulties and emergencies which may come upon us at any moment, being of such a kind as no human foresight can avert ; and there are objects of attainment which seem desirable to the human heart, but which the individual is in many cases powerless to reach ; consequently, men combine to protect one

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another against the consequences of the dreaded evil, or to help one another to attain the supposed good. It is this principle of combination for these ends which offers itself as a rival to God in the character of rocks of strength and refuge.

But before proceeding to develop the nature and operation of this principle, it is necessary to consider the three great antediluvian testimonies to the relation of the elect to God and to the world, as we read them in Abel, Enoch, and Noah.

I assume that my reader is settled in his own heart and conscience as to the way in which a man "obtains witness that he is righteous, God testifying of his gifts" (Heb. xi. 4); that is, he believes that the type of Abel's offering is fulfilled by the obedience unto death of the blessed Son of God; accepted in His sweet savour, justified by His blood, sanctified by His one offering, by Him he "offers the sacrifice of praise to God, the fruit of his lips, confessing His name." He eschews the way of Cain.

This is the worship-side of Abel's experience; and believers stand here gladly; but are we equally ready to recognise the martyr-side of his experience as belonging to us also? Do we "marvel if the world hate us?" (1 John iv. 13). Do we shrink from perceiving that if we are identified with Christ in acceptance, we are also in His treatment from the world? There is a magazine of strength in arming ourselves with the mind to suffer in the flesh because Christ suffered in the flesh (1 Peter iv. 1). But if we do not arm ourselves thus, we shall be liable to shirk difficulties which lie in the path as disciples, instead of making God our refuge. But if the world hate us, it is because we are not of it, even as our Lord is not of it (John xvii. 14), and because He has chosen us out of it, to be His friends (xv. 19). If, then, we have recourse to the principles and contrivances of the world for our resource against possible evils, or the attainment of some advantage, we are making that

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our rock and refuge which hates our Lord, and are false to our calling as His friends.

But if we know that we are not of the world, and delight in being friends of Him on whom the world has poured out all its hatred, then we also know that our path and principles are as different from those of the children of this world as are our friendships and our hopes. Our path is that of Enoch. "Enoch walked with God"—or, as Heb. xi. 5 expresses it, "pleased God"—and "he was not, for God took him;" "he was translated that he should not see death." There can be no need to insist that this is the only true path for a saint; we are called to wait for God's Son from heaven, to be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and which way can we walk, but in the direction of our hope? God becomes a Rewarder to them that seek Him out. Enoch's experience is the witness of it; and the faith of Christ puts us where we have all the motives and all the power to follow out this path. The world has nothing to give us, and God has everything to give us, and we know where it is.

Thirdly, Noah's history teaches us what it is to be warned of what is coming on the world, and not only to provide for the safety of ourselves and our houses, but in doing so, to "condemn the world." But this can only be done by steadily and consistently carrying out the purpose of keeping the world, its principles, fashions, and shifts, out of our pursuits, plans, and houses.

There are then three things which characterise a saint while passing through this present scene.

1st. He is in a world, of which he is not, even as his Lord was not, and which hates him because it hates his Lord.

2nd. His hope is outside the world, because his life is outside of it, and he seeks "the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God," being "dead, and his life hid with Christ in God."

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3rd. He diligently keeps himself and his surroundings free from that which would involve him and his in the judgment which is coming on the world. He cannot indeed be judged with the world, but it is possible for a saint so to follow human thoughts of what is desirable, as to involve himself in sorrow and disgrace, and his family in moral ruin, as was the case with Lot.

I am now, however, considering one particular way in which a saint may be thus ensnared ; and that is, by resorting to the world's expedients to avoid the consequences of what may befall him in the government of God. These things are almost innumerable : losses, dangers, disappointments ; what men may do designedly to injure ; what may happen in God's providence without any intent of any man. Against these things, and the consequences of them, the world has its resources ; but if Scripture is to be believed, the saint needs no resource but God Himself. "Therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe."

The form, as we have seen, which these expedients of the world take, is combination, and the objects of these combinations are of two kinds : either to enforce their own will, where, as individuals, men would be powerless to do so (and indeed, in most cases, have no right to do so), or to protect themselves against the consequences of God's governmental dealings by means of money.

The Tower of Babel was the original outcome of this principle, which is at bottom simply the insubjection of the heart of man to God's will, appointments, and providential dealings. Men's object was to make themselves a name, "lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth ;" in other words, to hold one another up, so that they might not individually be dependent on God's appointment for each of them. What God thought of it is plain : "This

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they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do" (Gen. xi. 6). That is, it is God's will that men should be individually dependent upon Him, and to compel them to be so He confounded their language, so that their purposed combination was impossible. In the form of families and nations men are respectively united and mutually dependent; but this is in the way of government and relationship; and the two great principles of subjection to divinely-constituted authority and affection in natural relationships are the bonds formed by God Himself. But these are just the things which the principle of the Tower of Babel interferes with and supplants, leading men to find their mutual support and help in humanly-contrived circles of common interest, instead of God Himself being trusted in in the circles of His own forming. In both the forms of combination referred to the rock of strength is money. This alone might open the eyes of the saint to their true character.

When the object of the combination is to enforce the will of a class in opposition to the will of another class, the institution is upheld and kept together by money; it considers itself strong in proportion to the balance in the hands of its treasurer. In the other case, money is the solace guaranteed to each of the individuals combining to uphold one another. In one case and the other they "trust in riches" (Mark x. 24); but "how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!" It is not that men are so foolish as to trust in riches to save their souls, but they do trust in them to support them in the unexpected troubles that find them in the turnings of the road down here.

We have the character of such combinations plainly described in Prov. i. The object in verse 13: "We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil;" the manner of pursuing it in verse 14: "Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one

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purse ;” the warning against them, verse 15 : “ My son, walk not thou in the way with them ; refrain thy foot from their path ;” their character and end in verse 19 : “ So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain, which taketh away the life of the owners thereof.” There can be only two causes for a saint turning to such resources—an uneasy conscience, or discontent. Either he is not clear in his conscience that the path which he is in is God’s will for him ; or he is bent on improving his circumstances. If neither of these is his case, what can be happier than to be dependent on God only and always ? If God has, in His government, ordered his employment and situation, “ Ye serve the Lord Christ ” (Col. iii. 24) ; “ He that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord’s *freedman* ” (1 Cor. vii. 22).

If God has given him his wife and children, if his house, warehouse, and stock belong to the Lord (for surely if we are His, all we have is His), if God has placed him in his calling and circumstances, what can happen to him without God ? are not the hairs of his head all numbered ? Is he not of more value than many sparrows (Luke xii. 7) ? Are not all things yours ? “ The world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours ; and ye are Christ’s ; and Christ is God’s ” (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23).

Has a saint any need to protect himself against what his God and Father, in His wise government, may order for him ? Do not all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose ?

But one may say, “ This is all very well, but in order to follow out such principles, and be happy in doing so, a person needs to live in God’s presence, and be sure of his steps.” I admit it ; but to what else are we called ? To what end are we the objects of God’s compassions—justified, having His spirit, crying, “ Abba, Father,” and so assured of His love that we are persuaded nothing can separate us from

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it;—but that we may present our bodies to Him a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God? This is our reasonable service, or service for which we have a reason; our priestly, attendant, or God-ward service, and we are to prove, or have experience of the good and perfect and acceptable will of God. But we cannot do this, if we are conformed (confashioned, rather) to this age, for this age is one of man's will and wisdom, not of proving God's will. It is only as transformed, not transfashioned, as if only in appearance, but transformed by the renewing of the mind, that we can do so; that is, having a new nature, by which we know and discern every moral question; every subject which raises the question, What is God's will for me here? What is good? What is perfect in God's sight in this matter? What is acceptable to Him?

If, then, God has taught us this, and we are enjoying something of the power of it,—not without failure it may be, and need of self judgment, and an increasing sense of how imperfectly we have learned our lesson, knowing the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity and in whose spirit there is no guile—whom can we turn to at every winding of the road, but to the living God? “Thou art my hiding-place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.” “I will instruct and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will counsel thee, mine eye upon thee” (margin, Psalm xxxii. 7, 8). If this be so, what need has the saint to turn to the Tower of Babel? Nay, if he does so, is he not practically denying what the living God is? He is the “Saviour of all men,” that is, all deliverances and preservations are due to the goodness and oversight, if necessary, even interference, of the living God. There is no other preserver or deliverer for any of the human race:—known or unknown, believed in or denied, His is the hand that preserves and delivers in every case.

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Believers especially—or chiefly, rather—enjoy the benefit of His care, and are they to join with the world to secure themselves against contingencies which, whatever men may think of them, are assuredly no chance in God's ways with His own? What hiding-place is like Him? What songs of deliverance can equal those which His deliverances—known and acknowledged to be His—call forth from the heart and lips of a believer? No doubt we need to be unlike the horse or mule which have no understanding. We need to walk in the consciousness that His eye is upon us, and to bow down our ear to the instruction He gives as to the way we are to go. But that is our privilege, not a bondage; and if we are in the way of His guiding, all the contingencies of it are in His hand, and will be provided for as they arise.

“Godliness with contentment is great gain.” “Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” How of that which now is? Because we have the living God for our Saviour and unfailing resource.

Thus we see that the first overt act of departure from God on the part of man, after the flood, was not idolatry, but independence of God. Idolatry followed when they were scattered, for those who will be independent of God are ready to be ruled by Satan. The intention at Babel was frustrated by God's interference, but the seeds of Babel still survive in the human heart, are showing their life in the ways we have been considering, and will come out again in greater and bolder manifestation in the Babylon of the Apocalypse, and the blasphemies of the beast, when men will not only pretend to independence of God, but will openly defy Him under the guidance of the beast.

So will end the history of man's responsibility in government. The question then for us is, which stream are we moving on; putting it practically, is our reliance in those matters in which we must rely

on something,—because neither in foresight nor power are we sufficient for ourselves,—placed on the plans of men, springing out of the seeds which produced Babel, or on the living God? Have God's elect need to protect themselves against the unknown contingencies of His providence, or is God Himself their Rock of strength and refuge, their Preserver and Deliverer, against all those evils which Satan may plan or work against them, and in all the burdens and sorrows which we must experience, as being part by nature of a groaning creation. C. E. MOORE.

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## SOME IMPORTANT TRUTHS.

(EXTRACT.)

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REDEMPTION is both an Old Testament and New Testament truth, and implies a change of condition. Just three kinds of it are therein treated of concerning man in relation to God. 1st, Redemption by *power*; 2nd, redemption by *money*; 3rd, redemption by *blood*.

The first of these—redemption by *power*—Israel experienced at the Red Sea (Exod. vi. 6; xv. 13) when redeemed from the Egyptians; they became God's people, and He became their God. A condition this was which never did, and never can alter. And so in their darkest hour they could, and will, yet plead with God, that He has redeemed them (Deut. ix. 26; Neh. i. 10; Ps. lxxiv. 2; lxxvii. 15). This redemption the *nation* as such shared in, and to it, and to it alone, in the Old Testament reference is made when pleading with God. It made them His people, and He then became their God (Exod. vi. 7).

2nd, Redemption by *money* is treated of in the law of Moses, and concerned the *first-born males of the twelve tribes*. For it was a redemption from God's claim on them for special employment in His service. He announced the claim, which He had on all their

first-born males, in Exod. xiii. 11-16; but set free those of the twelve tribes by first taking the Levites as far as they would go person for person in exchange; and for the overplus of the first-born of the twelve tribes then, and ever after, enforcing a money payment of five shekels (Numb. iii. 40-51; xviii. 16). It was then redemption *from the service of God*, and in no sense redemption *from judgment*. For neither the clean animal, nor the Levite, shared in this redemption, nor would the latter have desired it. It is important to keep this clear in the mind, if we would rightly unfold the word of truth. Such a passage as Exod. xiii. 13 about the ass would never have been applied as it has been; nor would 1 Peter i. 18 have been viewed as relating to it. The ass by the lamb was redeemed *from God's claim*; and Peter writes of redemption *from your vain conversation*, which plainly has no application to the redemption of the first-born.

*Redemption by blood* is a New Testament truth, and is never mentioned in the Old. It is true only of *saints*, but *of all saints*, and includes for us forgiveness of sins (Ephes. i. 7; Col. i. 14) and justification (Rom. iii. 24). Sharing now in redemption by *blood*, we shall share in redemption by *power* (Rom. viii. 23). Israel has known nationally redemption by *power*; they will come to know redemption by *blood*, and all Old Testament saints *will* be found in the enjoyment of it. But, learning the blessings connected with it, we can see how teaching about it would have been for them, when on earth, dispensationally out of place. To sum up. Redemption is a change of condition. That of old by power concerned the *nation* of Israel as such. That by money concerned the *first-born males* of the twelve tribes. That by blood concerns *saints*. Only such share in it.

*Reconciliation* relates to sinners, and things in heaven and things on earth (Col. i. 20, 21). Sinners are now being reconciled to God. This last is a New

Testament doctrine, not really taught in the Old, as Rev. Ver. (Levit. vi. 30, viii. 15, xvi. 20; Ezek. xlv. 15, 17, 20; 2 Chron. xxix. 24\*) will shew, and a reason for this is manifest, when we learn how it is effected, viz., by the death of God's *Son*. Redeemed by *blood*, we are reconciled to God by the *death* of His Son. For it is the wonderful tidings that *God's Son* has died for sinners, by which estrangement is removed from the heart of a guilty one (Rom. v. 10). There is the *ministry* of reconciliation raised up by God; the *word* of reconciliation provided by God; and it is effected in the sinner by the tidings of the death of His Son, which, when believed unto salvation, reconciles the individual to God.

Reconciliation of things in heaven and things on earth is future, and will be effected when the Lord returns in power, when things in heaven and on earth, but nothing beyond, will be brought into harmony with God's mind.

*Cleansing* is by blood, and by water as a figure of the Divine Word. Cleansing by *blood* is connected with, and is a fruit of, atonement (Levit. xvi. 30; Heb. i. 3, x. 2; 1 John i. 7). Cleansing by *water* is effected by the action of the Word on us through the power of the Holy Ghost, as water acts on the body (Ps. cxix. 9; John xv. 3; Ephes. v. 26). Rev. i. 5 should very likely be read *loosed*, not *washed*.

*Loosing* is administrative action, committed in the first instance to Peter (Matt. xvi. 19) for his special service of opening the kingdom of heaven to Jews (Acts ii.), and then to Gentiles (x.); and committed also to the assembly (Matt. xviii. 18) to restore a repentant offender outwardly to his place, and to the enjoyment of Christian privileges with God's people.

C. E. S.

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\* To this Daniel ix. 24 is no real exception, as the margin of the Revised Version attests.

## A WILDERNESS SONG.

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WE love to contemplate the grace  
Which shines so brightly in the face  
Of Jesus Christ our Lord !  
Fain would we dwell upon the love  
Which brought Him down from heights above,  
The everlasting Word !

A path of sorrows here below,  
A path which only He did know,  
He trod in this dark scene !  
Upon the cross He bowed His head,  
And e'en was numbered with the dead,  
Our judgment to sustain !

Himself, His work, His words, His ways  
Demand the gratitude and praise  
Of those redeemed to God !  
Man's ruin and his wretchedness,  
God's mercy and His righteousness,  
Were witnessed by His blood !

That sinners might draw nigh to God  
He bore sin's heavy, heavy load—  
He lives to die no more !  
Let us extol His glorious Name,  
Yea, let us celebrate His fame,  
Him evermore adore !

Blest Lord ! Thy face we soon shall see,  
And then shall like and with Thee be ;  
We long and wait for this.  
Meanwhile we worship at Thy feet,  
Have part with Thee, and are made meet  
To share Thine endless bliss !

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AS to that word in 1 John i 15, "Love not the world." Note that though we think little of its power to seduce and demoralise—yet *many strong ones* have been brought low by it—are they not all around like beacons ? Therefore be not highminded, but fear.

“A WEDDING GARMENT.”—*Matt.* xxii. 11, 12.

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IN the parable of the king's feast at the marriage of his son we have two clearly distinguished parts: the first setting forth God's invitation given to the Jews to enter the kingdom of heaven, portrayed under the figure of a wedding festival; their two-fold refusal; and their judgment, which took place when Titus totally defeated them 40 years later, and burned Jerusalem with fire; this ends with verse 7. The second part sets forth God's mercy to the Gentiles, which followed its rejection by the Jews (verses 8-14). It is in the latter portion that we find that significant incident of one of the guests being found without a wedding robe.

Consider for a moment the occasion; it was not one of homely, everyday life, a humble entertainment amongst friends and neighbours; it was a royal festival, given to celebrate the marriage of the king's son. The host was of exalted, yea, of supreme rank; and the occasion one of the very highest character! Thus God sets forth “the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph. ii. 7). He commends the greatness of His condescension to us poor sinners of the Gentiles in showing that He, “the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy,” and who dwells “in the high and holy place” (Isa. lvii. 15) invites us to share His joy and gladness, feasting together with Him, or, in other words, sharing the delight and satisfaction of His heart in what concerns the joy and the glory of His beloved Son! It is to this we are called. God wants to have us witnesses and co-sharers of all that He hath prepared for them that love Him. Eye of man hath not seen, ear of man hath not heard, heart of man hath not conceived the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, but He “hath revealed them unto us by His

## "A WEDDING GARMENT."

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Spirit : for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God " (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10). What is here may be said, then, to signify the Lord's invitation to all this ; and through the effectual work of His grace, " the wedding was furnished with guests."

Not until then, as befitting the dignity of a king, did the host appear amongst the company ; but then he came in to see them ; and what do we read was that which his eye first fell upon? " He saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment." What a blot was this upon the picture, that bright scene of joy and gladness ! An obnoxious object was there ! Where all ought to have been in harmonious order and beauty, there was a conspicuous stain. And not merely was this a public blot upon the scene, but a public dishonour to the king and the king's son. It was nothing less than an assertion that the host had failed to provide a robe for every one of his invited guests ! Or if not that, it was an assertion that the dress of the guest was good enough for such a host on such an occasion ! Either of these things would be an insult added to an injury ! Consider, then, what God thinks of any whom He has bidden thus treating the condescension and the grace which He has so much more wonderfully manifested ? Can you think that God does not feel it ? Can you suppose that God is insensible to all the insults and the injuries that men cast upon Him and upon His Son ? To believe that is to attribute to Him a heart as callous as their own !

But will you say, " I should like to be on good terms with God ; I should like to be a guest at the banquet of grace, and to have a place in the kingdom of heaven, but *I have no fitting attire* " ? Ah ! there is then much ground for the hope that you are *not* like this man in the parable. For had he but known and felt that he had no fitting attire, how gladly would he have welcomed the costly robe which the royal bounty and magnificence had provided for every bidden guest.

But you will perhaps say, "Well; what is it?" Let us first say what *it is not*. It is not a robe of good works, for says Paul, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us" (Tit. iii. 5). Again, "Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii. 9); and as Isaiah also had said, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Is. lxiv. 6). Thus, if it were a robe of good works of ours, it would be but *filthy rags* in the sight of God. Neither the blouse of the workman, then, nor even the long robe of the Pharisee, answers to the wedding garment. Nor is it, either, the purple robe of earthly rank; for hath not God said, not many mighty, not many noble, but God hath chosen the foolish, the weak, the base, the despised? (1 Cor. i. 26-28). Nor is it, again, the garment that distinguishes the wise and the learned, the educated and the cultured; for hath not God said, not many wise men after the flesh, for the wisdom of this world cometh to nought! It is not, then, the academic gown of the scholar nor the sacerdotal vestments of the priest. But is it, therefore, what might be regarded as a *contrast* to these, say the coarse and filthy raiment of the monk, the hair shirt, the sackcloth and the ashes? No, nor is it any of these. This abject humility and harsh treatment of the body, so far from finding favour with God, is what His word distinctly condemns, see Col. ii. 23.

What, then, is the wedding garment? Let us consider the analogy. The host provided and presented this stately, beautiful robe; it was his gift to the guest, suited to the rank and station, the royal magnificence of the giver, and calculated to exalt him in the eyes of the receiver. What gift could God bestow that should fully display His glory as a giver save the gift of His Son? Again, the wedding robe was to adorn the guests for the king's presence—in other words, to qualify them in his sight to be before him—and so to appear in his presence as to be at perfect

## "A WEDDING GARMENT."

ease, because, though under his piercing gaze, they were just exactly as he would have them to be. Now this is truly what Christ is to us before God! He is "of God, made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (I Cor. i. 30, 31). In a word, then, "the wedding garment" is CHRIST, through faith in whom we are justified, or in other words accounted righteous before God; and not until we have the certainty that we are "*in Christ*" before Him can we possibly have perfect ease in His presence.

Let us further remark that there is not only in the parable an indispensable garment, but there is also an unanswerable question. When the king saw the man, he said, "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?" The king had provided it for him; had sent it to him; what more could he have done for his invited guest? And here let us ask ourselves, writer and reader alike, what *more ample*, what *more blessed* provision could the Lord have made for us than He has done? And how could He have brought it *nearer* to us than He has? As the Apostle Paul writes, "The word is *nigh thee*, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be **SAVED**" But there was dead silence. The king's question was not only unanswered, it was unanswerable. We do not read that the man was able to frame for himself even the very feeblest excuse or the very lamest apology; and why was this, but that his conscience told him he was hopelessly self-condemned? Not one word could he utter. His tongue clave to the roof of his mouth. "*He was speechless.*" And so, assuredly, will it be with everyone who, doing despite to divine grace, spurns the proffered mercy of God in the gift of His

Son. Not having one word to say for himself, plunged into the silence and the darkness of eternal despair, he will hear from the lips of Him (who is at this moment a loving Saviour for every one that believeth) the irrevocable sentence, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (ver. 13).

And here let us pause to ask concerning the divine judgment thus pronounced, *of what was it the eternal penalty?* It was clearly the everlasting issue of one of two things: on the one hand the distinct refusal of the invitation, or at least the *making light of it*; or, on the other hand, the professed acceptance of the invitation, while refusing that garment of grace and salvation which was essential to it. Solemn consideration for those who listen to the gospel!

The Apostle Paul says, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Cor. v. 11). May so many of us as, through the sovereign grace of God, know these things be therefore diligent—whether brothers or sisters, each in suited sphere of service—in seeking to awaken and arouse the unsaved to a consciousness of the jeopardy they are in every moment. And through that same grace may many who are "without Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. ii. 12) understand that as God's mercy is now going out to the Gentiles, they are *all* invited guests to the banquet of mercy—the marriage of the King's Son! And may they know this also, that for all whom divine grace has freely *invited*, divine bounty has richly *provided*; yea, provided that wondrous and magnificent bridal garment of beauty and of glory, CHRIST HIMSELF!

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CHRIST did not speak of His sufferings to man. We don't find them in the gospels. He spoke of them to God. The Psalms reveal the intercourse of Jesus with His Father, when He was whole nights in prayer.

## “ALL ARE YOURS.”

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To bear party names was and is still esteemed wise by the worldly intelligent; but by Him who estimates its wisdom aright, He takes the wise in their craftiness, and reckons their reasoning vain. There are those still who rally and adhere to men, with all varying motives and purposes: philosophers, politicians, law-keepers and law-breakers gain their following. Easy enough then, one would suppose, to introduce men for prominence in another circle—a circle outside this world—those, too, who brought to the hearing of men weighty matters with eternal issues, who show the way of salvation. Not by leaving the Saviour out, with His marvellous Name; by making Him known who endured the cross, proclaiming Him who died there, the risen and ascended One, by whom God will judge the world in righteousness at His appointed day.

What's the harm? Where's the wrong? Let us go in for equality, is the popular cry. What's the difference between master and man, scholar and teacher? So the cry goes on until a Babel is raised—all in revolt—yet confusion labelled progress; order set aside; trouble and troublers abounding. Have we who are of the household of faith forgotten how to blush, to drop the head in shame, when the workings in the world are known to be the workings in the church, among those who call upon His Name, yet who would also call upon others and give the voice: I am of Paul, I of Apollos, I of Cephas! What can it mean? Does it not exercise our hearts to find not only party names now, but a plain recognition of them by saints and the poor world, who attempt now to reduce God's message to a man-given opinion, instead of its coming from Him with all authority as the oracles of God. Introduce the servant into a place of eminence, get him to forget himself, get him

to forget his Master—then you have fallen a prey, one through pride lifted up, which our blessed, faithful God will grant a fall to sufficient to undeceive, to humble before Him.

May your heart beat for joy and your eyes swell with tears of gratitude as you see the way He takes ; and He in richest grace says, "All are yours." We might think Him ready to dismiss us, to chide and scold for our short-sightedness, in being content to have one poor failing servant out of place, in prominence. Poor promotion, indeed, to be placed by man on a pedestal, and not to be the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. How long will we refuse to be humbled as to the party-serving, man-fearing principles and practices known, yea, well-known and established with tradition and usage to perpetuate? Slowly, feebly our hearts soar above and beyond the servant to the One who sent him or her at His charges—poor response to the messages they bring, small returns in real profit and progress for the previous portions which have been ours through His care and unceasing interest ! Poor babes, would Peter alone suit you for aye? The enemy suggested such previous to A.D. 59, to those so weak and simple who passed some time of their sojourn in Corinth—he suggests the same to you and me to-day. Well, how far have we got on with our own selected ideals? When Christ is not our all, what poor fickle things are we, left to the workings of our own minds, our vain imaginings ! Paul in 1 Cor. i. is apostle of Jesus Christ—all the weight was necessary ; his writings are not there to be treated as words of men, not to be lightly esteemed or set at naught—he was apostle by God's will, and would be accounted along with God's fellow-workmen as servants of Christ and stewards of mysteries of God.

How differently should we approach, how ardently should we pray for, servants of the Lord Jesus did we but regard them as such, recognise them in all transparency as speaking the same thing, as without varia-

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III

tion commending Him, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Look upon them as party-men, says the enemy; criticise their sayings; don't by any means "prove all things," it is a tedious labour. Question their motives, find out their faults and blemishes, tell them to others, is the fashion of the day; but so exactly contrary to the word, that one would long and desire that the due time has at length arrived for unfeigned humiliation before Him. Discernment He will give; for surely how widely different those who serve Him and those who serve Him not. Sect-makers, causers of division, sowers of discord are more numerous than those who labour for Him. Labourers *few*. But what need have we to search our hearts: am I, are you, His servant who esteem those words so highly: "Let a man so account of us servants of Christ"? "Not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." "There was also a *strife* among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest" (see also Matt. xxiii. 1-12).

Has there been such grace drawn upon to make known to dear ones in bondage that "all are yours"? —in the breadth of His thoughts giving such as make known things hard to be understood, church matters, teachings in connection with the kingdom, the eloquent Apollos making Christ known from the Scriptures. What love! What grace!! What wisdom!!! He knows our need of pastors, teachers, leaders, such as give us food in season. Written ministry to-day is of value as giving not only instruction, expositions of the word, but doctrine as well as admonition and exhortation is found there, which we should not in our isolation despise. Let us watch lest we undervalue what He vouchsafes in His care for our profit. Knowing our surroundings and besetments, we need to take all with grateful hearts, and test too what is presented; for alas! in these days the children's bread is often tampered with. But have we been dili-

## "ALL ARE YOURS."

gently engaged in gathering to Him, not to creeds, or self in any way? The Holy Ghost takes of His things, makes known a Person who ever has pre-eminence, yet in grace fits His redeemed ones for service, to run and toil at His bidding; rebukes interference of fellow servants, those who run without being sent of Him, such as presume to prophesy things which never come to pass. "All are yours." What depths are here, what deliverance from the world's way and the wisdom of men. And *ye Christ's*—not your own. How completely is the snare broken; what is brought out through the enemy plying his wiles!

Thanks, indeed, and praise to Him for permitting these failures to come out, to present us with richest instruction for our present admonition and learning.

W. B.

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"NOT as I will!" the sound grows sweet  
 Each time my lips the words repeat;  
 "Not as I will!" the darkness feels  
 More safe than light when this thought steals  
 Like whispered voice to calm and bless  
 All unrest and all loneliness.  
 "Not as I will!" because the One  
 Who loved us first and best has gone  
 Before us on the road, and still  
 For us must all His love fulfil—  
 Not as we will!

HELEN HUNT JACKSON.

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Satan could touch Job's circumstances and Job's person, but he could not touch Job's God. While I am joying in the God of my blessings, and not in the blessings of my God, I am joying in that which is beyond the reach of all the malice of the powers of darkness.

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APRIL, 1892.

## AHITHOPHEL AND JUDAS—A WARNING.

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“**THY** Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm cxix. 105). Light is needed not only to shew the way, but also to reveal the perils that lie around it; and, while in the Word there are numberless encouragements held out to us to beckon us onward and upward, so, too, are there many warnings scattered over its pages telling us where dangers lurk. For love warns as well as cheers; and in God’s book of love, as it may be termed, warnings and cheerings are beautifully blended. That which we are about to consider furnishes us with two solemn warnings; and, knowing that “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jer. xvii. 9; Mark vii. 21-23), how much and how often need we to be put on our guard! So, we read, “*whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning*” (Rom. xv. 4).

Ahithophel, we know, was David’s counsellor (2 Sam. xv. 12), and so highly was his counsel esteemed that it is written of him, that that “which he counselled in those days was as if a man had inquired at the oracle” (margin reads Word) “of God; so was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and Absalom” (2 Sam. xvi. 23). How dearly David loved this man may be gathered from what he wrote of him: “A man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company” (Psalm lv. 13-14). What a heart, we might exclaim, must that man have, that could betray a confidence so real, a love so sweet as this.

Held in high estimation and loved as was Ahithophel, what shall be said, then, of Judas? The King of kings, in the lowly guise of a man, had chosen him as one of that honoured band which accompanied Him during His wondrous ministry here. Ahithophel, much as he, at one time, may have revered the

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king whose confidence he had so remarkably gained, was most probably aware of his master's deed of shame, had noticed many an inconsistency, and had most likely sounded the shallows and depths of his character. Not so Judas *his* Master. In Him, gracious and blessed Master as He was, yea, and is, was no blemish of character, no inconsistency. Unruffled was His temper and undimmed His love, be the walk of His followers as devious as it might. "Meek and lowly in heart" most truly; yet in every way perfect. Oh, what a display of mercy, love, goodness, and grace had Judas been a witness to, and his heart untouched!

Great and beloved man as was David, he is as nothing in comparison with Him who sprung from his loins, and of whom he was, in many respects, a type—the true Son of David. And just as Ahithophel's master was a type of Judas' Master; so, too, was the traitor of David a type of the traitor of David's Son and Lord.

Suffering intensely under the blow of his former counsellor's defection, the psalmist, led by the Spirit of God, penned those memorable words: "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, hath lifted up his heel against me" (Psalm xli. 9); words of far deeper significance than the sweet singer of Israel ever thought of—for, while they expressed his own thoughts under a circumstance so sad, they were the utterances of the Lord Himself in circumstances somewhat similar, though infinitely more sad (John xiii. 18).

Like Judas, Ahithophel was of the tribe of Judah (2 Sam. xv. 12; Joshua xv. 51). Both preferred the night to carry out their evil designs (2 Sam. xvii. 1; John xiii. 30)—a fitting season, surely, for such deeds as they contemplated. Ahithophel's desire is to "smite the king only" (2 Sam. xvii. 2), but he must be accompanied by no less than 12,000 men in order to work upon the fears of the king and his followers. He wants to come upon him while he is weary and

weak-handed, and make him afraid (2 Sam. xvii. 2); and that arm, which formerly he had so often entwined around the king's arm as a loving and trusty friend, is now uplifted to smite him. But David, like ourselves, must learn to "cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?" A hard lesson, but a blessed one! The people, David's followers, would flee when they saw danger approaching (2 Sam. xvii. 2), and allow the king alone to be taken and smitten. In all this, how like unto what happened with our blessed Lord. Judas had no desire to betray the disciples, nor did the chief priests and rulers pay any regard to them. Jesus is the only One on whom their hatred is set. Thus Judas covenants to betray Him only (Luke xxiii. 47). He knows His place of resort, and thither he hies, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves. The blessed heart of Jesus knew no fear, and forth from His place of retirement He goes to meet the multitude, challenging them, as it were, with the question, "Whom seek ye?" "Jesus of Nazareth," is their unhesitating reply (John xviii. 4, 5). That He was weary after that awful scene in Gethsemane's garden, who can doubt? That He was weak-handed (humanly speaking), He surely was, for we read presently that His disciples "all forsook Him and fled" (Mark xiv. 50). But this weary and weak-handed One, with the almighty power of "I am" in His hand (John xviii. 6), can stoop to even lower depths of shame to win our hearts; for He suffers Judas, His former disciple, to imprint a kiss upon His blessed face, yea, to cover Him with kisses (Mark xiv. 45, Grk.), only (woeful thought!) as a sign of betrayal (Mark xiv. 14). Could this cherished token and symbol of the fondest affection be ever used for a baser purpose? What heart but that bereft of the commonest instincts of humanity could be guilty of a deed so cutting and cruel against One so pure in His love, so unsullied, gentle, and gracious in all His acts!

What wickedness is man not capable of when in Satan's grasp? Can we not adore Him as we ponder over these shameful, nay, shameless, outrages upon His holy person?

Over the brook Kidron, or Cedron (2 Sam. xv. 3; John xiii. 1), both David and David's greater Son in sorrow passed (comp. Luke xxii. 39); the former to escape the wicked intentions which Absalom had towards him, the latter to enter into mighty conflict with Satan. Hallowed ground might this be called. Here had fallen the tears of David (2 Sam. xv. 30), tears which really his own unrighteousness had provoked (2 Sam. xiii.); and here, too, long years after, was the soil moistened by that sweat of agony which fell from off our great Redeemer's aching brow (Luke xxii. 44). To what had that Mount of Olives been a witness? To David's tears; to the agony in that garden hard by; to Judas' treachery, as also it would have been to Ahithophel's had he had his way; to that glorious sermon of blessings (Matt. v.); to the Lord's ascent into heaven (Acts i. 12), as it will be to His descent to the earth in the coming day of His power and glory (Zech. xiv. 4). It has echoed, and will echo again, the shout of His people: "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Luke xix. 37, 38; and Psalm cxviii. 26). The thunderings of Sinai, as well as the curses of Ebal (Deut. xxvii.), are lost amid the echoes of the blessings of Olivet; and the unuttered blessings of Gerizim (Deut. xxvii. 12), of which both Jew and Samaritan (John iv. 20) might boast, find here their total eclipse.

The treachery of Ahithophel failed (2 Sam. xvii. 23), as did that of Judas succeed; the former, in answer to David's prayer (2 Sam. xv. 31); the latter, because God's counsels could, in no one iota, remain unfulfilled. But the failure of the one and the success of the other operated alike upon their minds. "They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirl-

wind" (Hos. viii. 7). Ahithophel, moved by ambition, or something akin to it, and Judas by greed of lucre, find their machinations frustrated; for the former had built his hopes on success, as had the latter, doubtless, on the inability of the people to take our blessed Lord. With hopes all shattered, their treachery recoils upon themselves with terrible force, and remorse pierces their hearts with its relentless fangs. Life was no longer tolerable; and with their own hands they put an end to their mortal existence by hanging themselves (2 Sam. xvii. 23; Matt. xxvii. 5).

Who can be otherwise than solemnised at the fate of these traitors, and learn a deep lesson for oneself? Traitors there always have been, and are, and will be. The word signifies one who gives up something. So Ahithophel desired to give up David to his enemies; so Judas, Christ; so, also, to give up Christ and that which is well-pleasing to Him for the world and its so-called innocent pleasures is but to play the part of a traitor. Three times in the New Testament does this word occur. The first time it is applied to Judas (Luke vi. 16), the second to the Jews (Acts vii. 52), and the third time to men in these, the last days (2 Tim. iii. 4).

Let us, my reader, take heed that it may not be applied to ourselves by reason of either our walk or doctrine; for we do well to remember that *to act the traitor, a previous knowledge of the ways and character of the person betrayed is necessary*. Ahithophel had been introduced into all the intimacies of David's heart, and knew apparently the haunts of his master (2 Sam. xvii. 2). Judas also had, in an outward way, walked in intimacy with our beloved Lord, and was well acquainted with the place to which He was wont to resort (John xviii. 2). To-day the Lord delights to come into the midst of His people gathered to His name (Matt. xviii. 20). Need we therefore be surprised, with these examples before us—terrible as the thought is—to find a traitor there? May God forbid

it, though surely He gives us a needful warning. A pronounced and open enemy, such as is a worldling, could not be guilty of treachery to the Lord. It must be one let into some of the secrets of His love, having a knowledge of His ways, but with a heart callous and cold as was that of Ahithophel or Judas. How solemn, yet true!

A. C. H.

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"WHITER THAN SNOW."—*Psalm li. 7.*

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IT is an immense mercy to know, on the abundant authority of the word of God, how absolutely and divinely perfect for us are the results of the work of Christ. What is essentially characteristic of His person is essentially characteristic of His work—it is infinite, it is eternal, it is divine! It cannot be exceeded or surpassed, and its present results to every believer are therefore perfect, positive, and permanent. God has glorified Himself in this display of His abounding grace to us. May our hearts, as we think of it, respond thereto, and well over in ever-flowing and ever-increasing gratitude and adoration to God and His Son.

It is instructive to see that the Psalmist *anticipated* this effectual work, though it was not for saints of that day to know its accomplishment, and consequently they were unable to speak—as it is our privilege to do—of standing in the full value of it, both now and for ever, under the eye of God. David wrote (Ps. li. 2): "Wash me *thoroughly* from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." And again: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be *whiter than snow*" (ver. 7).

Now when we consider this language, we cannot but conclude that the Spirit of God was using the pen of the son of Jesse to anticipate the efficacy of the blood of Christ. Who has ever seen in natural things what is whiter than snow? The purest of Carrara

marble after receiving its highest polish is not so white as snow! The finest cambric linen that was ever bleached is not so white as snow! The choicest quality of writing paper ever produced by man is not so white as snow! As the snow falls from the heavens it is purer than the purest, and whiter than the whitest of any merely natural or artificial thing ever seen upon earth.

At the transfiguration, Luke records that the raiment of the Lord was "white and glistering" (or effulgent); "white as the light," says Matthew (new trans.); "shining," says Luke, "exceeding white, as snow, such as fuller on earth could not whiten them" (new trans.). So Daniel (vii. 12) says of the "Ancient of days—whose raiment was white as snow," and the apostle John, describing the Lord Jesus in this same character (Ancient of days), says in Rev. i. 14: "His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow." The Spirit of God in the whole range of natural things found nothing so suitable to illustrate the unsullied holiness of the Lord Jesus Christ as the snow that fell on the mountains of Lebanon and glistened in its heavenly purity and effulgency under the eyes of God and man. And those of us who have seen it covering the summit of the Alps, and illuminated by the sun in the heavens, will acknowledge how marvellous a figure it is of the essential holiness of Him before whom is heard through day and night the adoring exclamation, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come" (Rev. iv. 8).

In John xiii. 10 we read, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every *whit*." This old English word is very beautiful here; it signifies a point, a jot, the smallest part or particle imaginable. The believer once entirely washed or bathed, referring to the work of the cross of Christ, is absolutely cleansed, not the smallest particle imaginable being left out of the efficacy of the blood, clean

*every whit!* How blessed is this!\* Isaiah in his day, by the Spirit of God, foresaw this efficacious work, as my readers will doubtless remember, when he wrote: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (chap. i. 18); and by the same Spirit the sweet singer of Israel, in the passage we have already referred to, said, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Will any ask how it is that when the illustration is used of Christ it is "white as snow," while, when used of us by the Psalmist, it is "whiter than snow"? I can only suggest that in the former God is speaking *to us*, who never yet have seen anything else even so white as snow; and in the latter the Holy Ghost was leading David to speak *to God*, who has seen and does see what is whiter than snow in His eyes, whenever He sees one who is washed in the blood of Christ!

There may be also a latent thought of *beauty* here. When *we* look out upon the landscape after a fall of snow, seeing the earth covered with its monochrome mantle of white, we may be struck with the monotony of the scene. But not so with God. He who seeth not as man seeth, is the One who alone hath fully "entered into the treasures of the snow" (Job. xxxviii. 22). Every flake as it falls is a fleecy crystallisation, which if the rays of the sun fall upon it is lit up with the varied colours of the rainbow. And under the microscope each single particle of every flake appears to have its own elaborate and peculiar beauty of form and structure, a recent investigator having found no two particles alike. In all this multitudinous variety of beauty does God behold those who are in Christ, graced in the beloved (Eph. i. 6), clad in the mantle of His adorning!

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\* "Hast no part *with Me*" refers to *communion*, which the external defilement we contract in passing through the world sadly hinders, but our ever-living, ever-loving Advocate on high meets this "with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. v. 26).

## THE MINISTRY OF JAMES.

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My soul marvel, now and for ever marvel, at the efficacy of that blood and the value of that sacrifice before God which has "*perfected for ever* them that are sanctified, whereof the Holy Ghost is also a witness to us" (Heb. x. 14, 15).

Surely we cannot fail to see that God is signifying how earnestly He desires that our peace should be as solid and as enduring as the Rock of Ages upon which He has established it! Could anything in the English language surpass these three expressions by which He describes what the believer is ever now in His sight—"WHITER THAN SNOW," "CLEAN EVERY WHIT," and "PERFECTED FOR EVER!"

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 THE MINISTRY OF JAMES.
 

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"JAMES, the servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad (or, which are of the Dispersion), greeting." In this way does the writer introduce himself to his countrymen.

Writing to the twelve tribes, we can see the propriety of this double designation. As the servant of God, he might claim the attention of all his countrymen. Moses, and the prophets of the Old Testament were so called. To them the tribes professed to hearken. Here was one of their own day, who presented like credentials to the prophets, and who evidently wrote with authority as having a divine commission. To him they ought to hearken. Would James, then, thus seek to catch them with guile? By no means. For not only did he present himself as a servant of God, but he avowed himself to be a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ as well. Bold was he, declaring in his greeting that he served both God and the Lord Jesus Christ. To the saints among them this last avowal would of course ensure him an attentive hearing. Writing then, as he alone

does, to the twelve tribes of the Dispersion, many of whom were bitterly opposed to Christianity, yet amongst whom no small number could be found who were believers in the Lord Jesus, James introduces himself in characters fitted to command the respect of each and all of them.

Very gracious was this on the part of God. A letter He would send, penned by His servant, of whose piety none who knew him doubted; a letter for every one of His ancient people outside the bounds of the land; His last appeal ere Jerusalem was destroyed, that centre to which they always turned, till that catastrophe which relegated the hopes of returning national prosperity to a distant future. The *twelve* tribes were addressed. In God's eyes they existed (Acts xxvi. 7) like the twelve loaves which were always in light through the hours of darkness by means of the seven golden lamps of that seven-branched candlestick, which burnt from evening unto morning. Dispersed abroad as the tribes had been for centuries, and that because of national unfaithfulness, God nevertheless remembered them, this letter being a witness of it. Their countrymen in Palestine had for years enjoyed exceptional advantages, and many had made good use of them (Acts xxi. 20). Now to those of the Dispersion, whose dwelling-place was not in Palestine, James wrote, affording them thereby an opportunity to become acquainted with a fresh message from the God of their fathers.

Reading this epistle, we are reminded of the Lord's teaching when upon earth, and can see also the vantage ground which the writer occupied. As God's earthly people the twelve tribes professed to know Him, and to be zealous toward Him (Acts xxii. 3). But true knowledge of God and acceptable zeal were only compatible with a divine work in the soul. So it was seasonable, and fitting in such an epistle, to press on its readers the need of reality, and of the outflow of the divine nature. And addressing, as

James very commonly did, the true saints of God among the people, and called by him "My brethren," and "My beloved brethren," he could write in such a way as to show the rest what they lacked ; and thus, if possible, arouse them to seek for that grace by which, when received, they would become in truth members of a holy nation, and part of a peculiar people (1 Pet. ii. 9). Thus all would find a word to meet them, whether really saints or not. We have said *saints*, because full Christian teaching, such as we meet with in the writings of Paul, we should look for in vain in the writings of James. In the nature of things, that was outside the purpose of his letter. It is the state of things amongst the tribes that called forth this epistle. So whilst seeking to stir up all to reality in life and walk, he notices things which were wholly opposed to it.

With encouragements, however, he begins, and with encouragements he closes. Patience in trials he presses at the opening. Patience under persecution he inculcates near the end. Now the temptations to which he refers were of two kinds (i. 1-15). There were temptations, or trials, sent by God to test the reality of their faith. Such Abraham had experienced. And temptations there were arising from the activity of man's evil nature (13-15). The effect on the individual desired by God from the first was patience. "Let patience," writes James, "have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (4). And for any who lacked wisdom, when so tried, there was a resource. God's ear was open to prayer. Let such ask of Him ; and James encourages them to do that, as he continues, "who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not ; and it shall be given him." But a condition, and a necessary one, is, to "ask in faith, nothing doubting."

Now there was a class which might especially feel tried in such a manner, through casting in their lot

with the movement of that day, and becoming in truth disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. That class was the rich. For them, then, there is a special word of encouragement. God would remind them, on the one hand, of that which is transient, viz., all earthly wealth and position; and on the other, of the crown of life to be given by and by to those who endure temptations.

Then adverting for a moment to the other kind of temptation, James points out whence it proceeds, and reminds his brethren (13-15) that "every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variable-ness, neither shadow that can be cast by turning." Nothing, therefore, contrary to light is from Him; so no one can excuse himself for yielding to the second kind of temptation. And now addressing true saints of God, he adds, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures."

The first-fruits belonged to God. Believers, then, should in their ways be for Him. "Ye know it," the apostle writes, and then exhorts all to be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, and to receive with meekness the implanted word that can save the soul. Thereupon follow three subjects, at first just mentioned, but to be afterward dealt with at some length. First, Be doers of the word, and not hearers only (22-25). Second, Bridle the tongue (26). And third, Keep yourselves unspotted from the world; this last being named as a feature of pure religion before our God and Father (27). To this order James keeps in that which follows (ii.-iv.). And, taking up these subjects consecutively, he necessarily exposes evils rife in his day amongst his nation.

And first, of being *doers of the word*. The failure in respect to this he illustrates in two ways: viz., in the lack of faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, and in vaunting of faith unaccompanied by works. The Lord did not despise the poor. Should they?

*Respect of persons* characterised the believing among them. To an unbeliever clothed in fine linen, with marks of wealth, a good place in their synagogue was accorded. To a poor man the contrary treatment was meted. How would he correct that? "Hath not God chosen the poor in this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?" As for the rich, if unconverted, they blasphemed the honourable name by which the saints were called, and persecuted them likewise. Should they be honoured in the assemblies of God's saints? Where was the royal law in this, which inculcated loving one's neighbour as oneself?\* Christians were not to fall below the level of the teaching of the law, nor could they afford to be indifferent to one command. He who keeps the whole law, and yet offends in one point, is guilty of all. Hence the conclusion, "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; mercy glorieth against judgment" (12, 13). The man who hath showed mercy will find it; the man who has not, in the day of judgment will miss it.

*Barren faith* was gloried in. Evidently a question had been raised about faith and works; and the doctrine of grace was being abused to the neglect of works. James boldly grapples with this. "If a man say he hath faith, and have not works, can faith save him?" Let us mark the language: "If a man *say* he hath faith," &c. The doctrine of Paul (Rom. iv.; Gal. iii.) must be tenaciously held; but the teaching of James must be implicitly accepted. Salvation is indeed by faith, and not of works. And no man is justified before God by works. Yet, as James writes, "Faith without works is dead (or barren)." For works are the evi-

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\* The law is here called "a royal law," and a law of liberty; the former, because it is the command of the King; the latter, because to the new man it presents no restraint.

dence and fruit of faith. Of this, two illustrations are adduced from the Old Testament. Abraham and Rahab, both signal examples of faith, afford also undeniable evidence of that for which James contends, that by works is faith made perfect.

Abraham, the father of the faithful, was justified by faith, Scripture declares it, and that settles the matter beyond the possibility of doubt for all time. But Abraham was also justified by works, these last evidencing the reality of his faith. Of this Gen. xxii. is the witness. Abraham was justified by faith years before he offered up Isaac. But that act of obedience attested his faith. "By works was faith made perfect, and the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness, and he was called the Friend of God." Again let us mark the language. Scripture was *fulfilled*. What Scripture? Gen. xv. But *how*? Gen. xxii. tells us. It was by the surrender of his son. He showed by that act on the mountains of Moriah that he had really believed God at the oaks (or, perhaps, terebinths) of Mamre. Faith and works (but works as the fruit of faith, and this order must never be reversed) the patriarch displayed. And the one on whose history, and the lessons from it, Paul has dwelt, is the one to whom James turns to illustrate his teaching that faith without works is barren (ii. 20).

To another example he now turns, and shows how Rahab, whose faith is commended in Heb. xi., gave evidence of it by her works, and stands forth in company with the father of the faithful as one justified by works, shown in her receiving the spies, and in sending them out another way. Is James at variance with Paul? Not at all. Paul teaches us in Romans of justification by *faith*, with reference to acceptance before *God*. James insists on justification by *works*, the evidence before *men* of the reality of a divine work in the soul. "Shew me," he says, "thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by

my works." "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (ii. 18, 26).

To another evil he next turns, in accordance with the order noticed in chap. i.—that proceeding from the *tongue*. "My brethren, be not many teachers." The Jew, we learn from Rom. ii. 19-20, priding himself on the possession of a divine revelation, took the ground of "a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes." That same spirit seems to have been fostered by Christians among them. And may we not say it is congenial to men where circumstances favour it? A word of caution, then, was timely. "Be not many teachers, knowing that we shall receive the greater (or heavier) judgment. For in many things we offend all." To make a show of knowledge is a snare to man. Now the profession of it without real practice of the truth, will involve that man in heavier judgment. How eminently practical is James in his teaching! How conducive to sobriety! He proceeds: "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." A small thing like a bit or a rudder directs the one, a horse, and the other, a vast vessel. So the tongue, a little member, has great power. If used for good, what blessing! How often, on the contrary, is it like a little fire, which kindles much wood! And now his language, as he thinks of its evil effects, gathers strength. "The tongue is a fire, the world of iniquity among our members is the tongue, which defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course (or wheel) of nature, and is set on fire of hell." It is an anomaly, too, in nature. It is the one thing which cannot be tamed of man. And contrary to our experience of natural things, out of the same opening proceed two different streams; at one time blessing God, at another cursing men, made in the likeness of God. "My brethren," James adds, "these things ought not so to be." And now he challenges his readers, "Who is a wise

man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation (or life) his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not; and lie not against the truth" (iii. 13-15). Such wisdom is not from above. Thereupon, he sets forth the characteristics of heavenly wisdom, "pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy" (17).

But were the twelve tribes, God's professing people, always displaying that? We have now a picture of the sad state of things rife amongst them. And here we are led on to the third great evil mentioned in i. 27—*the world*. Wars, fightings, murders, covetousnesses, these he has to denounce, and those addicted to them, from giving the rein to their pleasures, he calls "adulteresses."\* Were those who thus indulged manifesting that they were God's true people? To His people—His saints, God has given the indwelling Spirit,† which, assuredly, produces in men no such actions. Is grace needed? God giveth more grace, but only to the humble. What then should those thus condemned do? In verses 7-10 is found the answer. God does not leave people in doubt as to this for a moment.

Then taking notice of that *ensoriousness*, unhappily so natural to man whether converted or not, he reminds all that such a spirit is really fault-finding with the law. If the one judged was breaking the law, show it; if not, leave him alone. Moreover, there is a Lawgiver, a Judge, there is but One, and

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\* This is the right reading. All were as adulteresses who, professing to be God's people, were acting thus.

† A difficult passage. The best punctuation of it makes two questions. "Think ye that the Scripture speaketh in vain? Doth the Spirit which He hath made to dwell in us, long unto envying?" The Spirit is the Holy Spirit. For it would seem without point to write of man's spirit as dwelling in him. We could not be men at all without it.

He is able to save and to destroy. "Who art thou that judgeth thy neighbour?" After that he turns to another evil somewhat akin to the one just named, self-will, which also showed itself in a spirit of *independence* of God, as if the creature had absolute control over his plans in this life.

Yet what is this life, but "a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away?" The proud vauntings of what the individual will do receive no commendation at the hands of James. The Lord is wholly left out of such calculations. And of this he reminds such: "Ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that. But now ye glory in your vauntings. All such glorying is evil. Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (iv. 17).

The *covetousness* of the wealthy is next denounced. Miseries were coming upon them. Judgment, in the overthrow of the Jewish polity, was near at hand. And they, what were they doing? Heaping up gold and silver, the very rust of which from being unused would witness against them. Those who had earned wages got it not, for covetousness dominated the rich. The cry of those they defrauded ascended up to God. And in luxury and pleasure they were passing their time, nourishing their hearts in a day of slaughter (compare Isaiah xxii. 13). Moreover they had condemned and killed the Just One. They carried out their will. "He doth not resist you," adds the apostle; and for this class of people James has no word of comfort. Their covetousness is denounced. They are left by God to their evil courses.

And now he turns to the *suffering classes*, the defrauded, the oppressed. Was God unconcerned about their trials that He had not already interposed? He would inculcate that lesson of long-suffering so foreign to man as a child of Adam. "Be patient (or long-suffering) unto the coming of the Lord."

And James, who delights apparently in simple, yet forcible illustrations (i. 11, 23, iii. 4, 11, 12, iv. 14), finds one to the point in the patience manifested by the husbandmen. "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (v. 7, 8).

But trials to all, unless grace is working within, are hard to bear. Hence, there might be a feeling of *jealousy* against those apparently less tried than themselves. For such a word is given, and a reminder that the Judge is near at hand. He standeth before the door. Besides this, the lives, the sufferings of the prophets in the past, are to nerve those suffering to endure it. And the patience of Job, and the end of the Lord with him, are grounds for encouragement for all sorely tried. "The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

Meanwhile, ere the deliverance comes, that straightforwardness of conduct which needs no asseveration from the individual to impart confidence to his words, is expressly enjoined, and the suited outlet for the individual's feelings is pointed out (12, 13). And if sickness had come upon a person, the elders of the church at his request would pray for him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord (Mark vi. 13); and the prayer of faith would save him; and sins, if they were the cause of the sickness, should be forgiven him. God's governmental dealing with him would be removed, and he should be raised up. The prayer of faith, James has said. Would any ask for an example of that? He adduces Elijah, with whose history all were acquainted; but whose prayer, which made God withhold the rain in the days of Ahab, is here only recorded. Confession one to another enjoined, and prayer one for another that sickness may be removed; dealing with offenders in grace with a view to their recovery, is pressed upon the saints, and the happy results of effective dealing with such is pointed out.

## THE VIRGINS OF JERUSALEM.

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Here the epistle ends. Reading it we are reminded very much of the prophetic ministry under the law, viz., the showing up the failure of the professing people of God, with a view to encourage the faithful, and to recover, if possible, those who had failed. But writing in Christian times, James reminds them of the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, of the Father, of the indwelling of the Spirit, of the coming of the Lord, and of the existence on earth of the assembly of God, in which through the elders a resource for those in sickness might be found. He writes as a servant of God, and a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

C. E. S.

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 "THE VIRGINS OF JERUSALEM."
—*Lam.* ii. 10.

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SEE them gathering on the mountains,  
 Mourning early, mourning late,  
 Judah's daughters, deep lamenting,  
 Weeping o'er their hapless fate.  
 Once they sat as queens in glory,  
 All that God could give them theirs ;  
 Now brought low, they sit in ashes,  
 Watering Judah's land with tears.

All their beauty is departed,  
 All their pleasant things are gone ;  
 Zion's virgins girt with sackcloth !  
 Zion's sons in Babylon !  
 There they sit beside the rivers,  
 Songs of mirth required to sing,  
 But they hang their harps on willows,  
 And refuse one note to ring.

How sing songs when hearts are breaking  
 To the authors of their woes ?  
 Sing Jehovah's songs of gladness  
 To their hard, relentless foes !

## THE VIRGINS OF JERUSALEM.

Deeply sighing, they remember  
 All their pleasant things of yore ;  
 Corn, and wine, and milk, and honey,  
 God Himself supplied their store.

Now Jehovah's hand's against them,  
 For their sins to heaven reach,  
 Spite of all His tender warnings,  
 Spite of all His prophets teach.  
 So His wrath is poured upon them :  
 Famine, sickness, drought, and sword ;  
 For they will not hearken to Him,  
 Will not heed His prophets' word.

Now abroad the sword bereaveth,  
 And at home there is as death ;  
 Mighty men are fallen, fallen !  
 And the bravest yield their breath !  
 Feasts and Sabbaths are forgotten—  
 God His dwelling-place abhors,  
 King and priests alike forsaken :  
 Is there not a righteous cause ?

Will the Lord cast off for ever ?  
 Nay, God's mercies never fail !  
 Shiloh will His people gather,  
 Yea, His grace shall yet prevail.  
 They will own Him their Messiah,  
 God their God, and they His sons ;  
 He will bless them without measure  
 When for aye He's purged their sins.

For when Christ restores the nation,  
 He will wipe away her tears,  
 He will comfort all her mourners,  
 He will chase away their fears.  
 Then as King and Priest He'll bless them  
 In the land that God loves best ;  
 For their sins Himself was stricken,  
 Thus 'tis His to give them rest.

A. R.  
 D.

“LORD, IF THOU HADST BEEN HERE,  
MY BROTHER HAD NOT DIED.”

JOHN xi. 21-32.

NOT here—no, not here. There was a time when God was manifest in flesh. It will never be forgotten through all ages; at the name of Jesus *every* knee shall bow. In the days of His flesh, He could be sent for. It was remembered He loved sick Lazarus, as also his sisters, Martha and Mary; the words above were uttered by both. This blessed Person, in the presence of whom no death, it is truly recorded, would have taken place—yet it was for God’s glory Lazarus fell asleep. Sorrow and weeping for those dear ones—in which He joined—so soon to give joy in which all were privileged to share when He called forth His sleeping one and presented him alive; and to fully assure them that it was no apparition, he comes forth with his grave clothes about him. He gave such employment as should dispel all misgiving, for Jesus says to them, “Loose him and let him go.”

In His own case, gentle hands bore the heavy weight of costly myrrh and aloes, and bound fine linen about His body with the spices, although often He had said, “I am the Resurrection and the Life.” “Where have ye laid him?” He had asked. “Lord, come and see.” The question arose, too, as to what He had done to other eyes, and what He was preparing eyes to behold (those that believed). Did I not say unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? How patiently He had wrought, how marvellously toiled—the solemn word that must have its answer. Prophets had spoken of other eyes and hearts than those of Martha, Mary, and the company of mournful ones with that question of questions so full of meaning: “Could not this Man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have

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died?" Oh! yes, if eyes are opened, He did it. All praises to Him. "But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear." When dead men are raised it is at His word, and He knoweth His own by name. Lamentable words: *Ye will not come unto Me.* The words of Scripture, which cannot be broken, must have their accomplishment. Esaias had said, "Hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand, and beholding ye shall behold and not see; for the heart of this people has grown fat, and they have heard heavily with their ears, and they have closed their eyes as asleep, lest they should see with the eyes, and hear with the ears, and understand with the heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (New Translation, Matt. xiii. 14, 15).

Can we enter in any measure into His sufferings, with questionings ringing in His ears, with prophecy before Him, Himself the Resurrection and the Life, all that was necessary to meet the urgency of the position, with morally blind and deaf about Him, with dead in trespasses and sins, with physical death and corruption, and the outlook of eternal woe for those who resisted Him and the Holy Ghost often, and were left to take that portion that belongs, by their own choice in rejecting Him, to those who despise? "See, therefore, that that which is spoken in the prophets do not come upon you, Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye will in no wise believe if one declare it to you" (New Tr., Acts xiii. 40, 41).

A secret disciple makes request of a public man for the body of JESUS. Think of whose body it is, who has it in custody, from whence it came! He was crucified, and near by was a garden having a new tomb; they laid Jesus there. Adam had known Paradise, a gardener indeed, had known its trees; had by disobedience been cast out, ruin and loss was his. This One, who lay in this garden in a tomb, was

“LORD, IF THOU HADST BEEN HERE,” ETC. 135

obedient unto death, the death of the cross. But He does not abide there; yet we hear of no word, “Loose Him and let Him go.” His grave clothes are there, but He is not. No earthquake shock or violent upheaval had taken place, no summary demand from a guilty world for the surrender of the blessed Lord. The handkerchief that was about His brow—can we utter it and read it without shame suffusing our faces, and being humbled about it?—that brow had had placed upon it a crown of thorns, that side became accessible to the doubting Thomas, whose fingers might rest upon the very spot, and his eyes see the wounds He had received. In the garden was Mary, her attitude one of distress, weeping! The thought in her mind was an exchange of tomb for Him, removed from one, laid in another, her errand unsuccessful, not having discovered the whereabouts of Him who was her all; she learns HE LIVES. Do you know this—Him not entombed, but accessible! Oh! let us banish by receiving His own precious word the gloom of unbelief, as we think of Him having been set forth crucified among us, who is now on high, interested most deeply in His own who are in the world, in their much or little tribulation, tempted as well as tested, sufferers needing succour, and such an One to sympathise and minister supplies to us from His throne of grace, which come with no grudging heart and from no niggardly hand. If we think of Him where He has been, let us also think of Him where He is, or what shall we know of the words of encouragement He gives to overcomers? “I will give Him to eat of the tree of life which is in the paradise of God.” “The just shall live on the principle of faith.” Christ has redeemed us, . . . that the blessing of Abraham might come to the nations in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Gal. iii., New Translation), “Blessed they who have not seen and have believed.”

W. B.

GROWING. WELLPLEASING. PERSECUTION. REIGNING.

*Growing*.—2 Peter iii. 18: "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Grace means the unmerited favour of God, and there is nothing scarcely that we are more ignorant of. If a thief break into some shop, or should a man murder another, he is punished by the law; so, therefore, because we have sinned against God, *we* at once conclude that there is wrath and no mercy awaiting us, and rightly so. But it is different with God: "By grace ye are saved" (Eph. ii. 5). When the soul hears this, it at once puts in its "may be's" and "perhaps after all there is mercy for me," but by and by it trusts fully in God and His grace, and then it is in this soil that God wants it to grow. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John i. 17); not truth and grace. So God first wins the heart by His "grace," and then He feeds the soul with "truth;" only nothing is more precious to remember all the day and week long that God loves us as He loves His own Son! "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Here he has four names. Grow in the knowledge of "our Lord" as the One who is Lord of all, as the One who controls us, and to whom we belong. This ought to keep us steady, when we remember that He always sees us, in the dark as well as the light. When an earthly master is present how diligent all his servants are, but when his back is turned, generally the laughing commences and work is thrown aside; but our Master's back is never turned, He neither slumbers nor sleeps (Psalm cxxi. 4). "Saviour" does not carry our minds back to Calvary here, I think, but teaches that He saves us from day to day in this difficult path. "Jesus" takes us back to the cross where He died for our sins, and this gives God a righteous ground on which to bless us, and say that He has removed

our transgressions from us as far as the east is from the west, and that He will never remember them any more (Psalm ciii. 12 ; Isaiah xliii. 25). "Christ" is the same as Messiah, which tells us that He is coming back again to reign and we with Him, and to gather again the children of Israel, and in Him shall all nations of the earth be blessed !

*Wellpleasing.*—2 Cor. v. 9: "That we may be wellpleasing to Him." This is the outcome of growing in grace, &c., for we learn the Lord's mind, and at once try to please the One who so loved us. Wellpleasing, not because commanded. Wellpleasing, not on Lord's day or on a special occasion only, but on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. The servant girl may be sweeping and dusting and pleasing the Lord, or cleaning the grate, or spreading the table, and be wellpleasing. The same with young men ; meditating on Christ and holding sweet communion with Him all the day long ; and shame on us if we be like those of old who said, "Our soul loatheth this light bread" (Num. xxi. 5). If God has found all His delight in Him (for which see Matt. xvii. 5), surely He is more than enough for you and me.

*Persecution.*—2 Timothy iii. 12: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." This is the certain outcome if the preceding be followed. In this chapter the child of God is viewed as a soldier. Perhaps one may say we have no persecution to-day. Certainly we have neither torture nor stake in this land, but we have mocking and jeering to endure. It also brings one into trouble ; for when a mistress says to her servant girl, "Go with so and so to the ball to-night," she answers "No," because it would not be wellpleasing ; and the young man cannot do such and such a thing, because it would not be honouring to the Name or work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and then those around say sneeringly, "She's a Christian," "He's got converted,

and thinks himself better than us," &c., and so are we looked down on, although we may not think anything of ourselves, having learned that there is nothing good in us (Romans vii. 18). A Christian often speaks loudest when he speaks least.

*Reigning.*—2 Timothy ii. 12: "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." This is our future. After all our suffering is past, what a glorious prospect, reigning *with Christ!* May we push on, suffering for Christ and with Christ, redeeming the time, for the time is short and the days are evil (Eph. v. 16; 1 Cor. vii. 29).—*Notes of a Lecture by A. A.*

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## LOVE AND HOLINESS.

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THE love of God is the source of all our blessings and joys, and "God is love." But in a certain sense His holiness elevates us more. His love is perfect; we dwell in love, dwell in God, and God in us. This love "is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us;" it is proved by the death of Christ; and so we are to walk in it. But it cannot be said *we* are love. God is sovereign in love, "rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us." All this is, objectively, blessedness; and in us, and enjoyed by us in communion.

It is said, we are "light in the Lord"; He makes us partakers of His holiness—partakers, morally, of the divine nature. No doubt we love, but we *are* light. How blessed this partaking of the divine nature! And to this we must have respect, too, in our relationships with God. We know, thank God, that He is love towards us, and indeed in us; but He is light, and as this tested man, so in grace man is made it, *i.e.*, the new man has this character, "After God, is created in righteousness and true holiness."

Now I cannot but feel that, in fact, there are souls perfectly sincere, and in Christ agreeable to God, who

as to the Word and prayer are in an outside place practically. The Word is the revelation of God, and in and by a Man, suited to man, reaching him there where he is ; and prayer takes up our wants where we are, and presents them to God—goes in where He is, according to what He is.

Now there are practically two states—true states—as Christians in connection with this ; the Word reaches a renewed soul as for man down here ; and so it is, but he takes it, and as down here. It is a light to his feet and a lamp to his path, but he takes it as suited to him down here. It came, he recognises, from God, but it occupies itself with his condition here ; it came out from God to him who is outside—came in grace, and he so received it, and all right. But, save in owning the grace that gave it, he does not go in where it came from, but is thankful for that which is light where he is, and so far it is all right, but his spirit remains there, in that which the Word is adapted to ; this was properly the character of the law. In the case I refer to, there is this difference between it and law, that grace is owned by God, and in that given, which is very important ; but the man remains outside, and has a word adapted to him as walking as a man outside. He is not living, thinking, feeling inside by it. The ray has come down and lit upon his path, but he is in and occupied with his path, though acknowledging the Sun as the source of light.

So in prayers. Men are in wants and difficulties down here, and they carry them, as down here, to God—and this is all quite right—and they will be surely heard and graciously heard.

But there are Christians whom the Word carries in to what it reveals, not what it throws light upon. Divine wisdom does give here a path, according to divine wisdom, which the vulture's eye has not seen ; but it comes from above, takes the heart up to the source from which it comes, and reveals what is there,

and causes the soul to live there, and this is another thing. It does not cease to enlighten the path, and we need it—God's wisdom in this world, a divine path in it; but oh! how much more blessed to have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ—to say, "the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him"—to know where He is gone and the way!

Christ is God's way and truth in this world, but He is the way to and revealer of the Father and the things which God has prepared for them that love Him, the way of knowing the things freely given to us of God; and we may live in them, and understand, for example, the promises to the seven churches, and a thousand other passages which tell us about what is within. We have it revealed in John, we are brought into it by Paul, and even by John too.

And so with prayer. I may pray from my wants and for my wants, and for others too, as we have seen, and it is all right. But if I am living in the heavenly things, and see the saints in the beauty that belongs to them in Christ, and my prayers for myself and for them are formed in what I am dwelling in, how much higher and more earnest they will be. I am thinking of them, or of myself with the thoughts of God, and want them to reach them. My desires are formed by these, and I labour with God in prayer for them. The Word, through the power of the Spirit, reveals heavenly things—I see the saints according to God's mind in them, and as with God, and for carrying out His desires and His thoughts for and in them. I plead with God according to these thoughts. Oh! what a different thing it is! But how near we must be to God so to labour in prayer—to labour for the carrying out His thoughts in them, as they are inside with Him.

J. N. D.

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MAY, 1892.

## THE GLORIES OF CHRIST.

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IT is ever a joy to the heart that beats true to the Lord Jesus to discern in the Word that which brings Him before us by the Spirit of God. If we turn to Rev. i., we find four verses singularly rich in its varied aspects of the glory of His person: I refer to verses 5, 6, 7, and 8. In the first three of these we have glories which pertain to Him as Son of Man, and in the last His glory from all eternity as Son of God.

As to the former, the first thing to be noted is that He is "the faithful Witness" of God. In this our gaze is directed to Him in His humiliation as a Man. As such, He was here witnessing for Him who sent Him; God's beloved Son from everlasting, but God's Servant in the world; the Sent One of God; the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person; but in absolute self-abnegation devotedly fulfilling His service for God amongst men. We gaze with adoring eyes upon Him who when found in fashion as a Man humbled Himself—took the form of a Servant in His life, and surrendered that life in obedience unto death. The only absolutely perfect Servant that God ever had upon earth, we can well understand why the Holy Ghost terms Him "THE faithful Witness."

He is next termed "The First-begotten of the dead." He had said concerning His life (John x. 18), "I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again" (New Trans.). In this He was *alone*, for none but Himself had title so to speak! None ever entered into death and through it into resurrection life as He has done. In all this He was pre-eminent, "the First-begotten of the dead."

Then the Holy Ghost conducts our hearts to the future—"Prince of the kings of the earth"! This He is already in title, but He has not yet taken to Himself the exercise of this authority. Soon will He be manifested as King of all kings and Lord of all lords;

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and, note it well, each of these titles (The faithful Witness, The First-begotten from the dead, The Prince of the kings of the earth) He has received as a Man.

As the apostle John receives this revelation, his heart overflows with adoration, and he breaks forth in worship. These glories attaching to the person of the Son of Man lead his affections to embrace that blessed One, and he attributes still further glories to Him, those which belong to Him as a Saviour! "Unto Him that loveth us;" not "*loved*," for it is an ever present, ever flowing love, of which John and ourselves are with all saints the objects. "And washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father." Washed we have been, once for all—that is past; loved we are with infinite love—that is present; kings and priests already in title, but not yet reigning as such—that is future. But each and all of these things are the result of His work, and consequently go to magnify Him as our Saviour. They constitute the glory of what He hath wrought.

Then the Spirit of God carries us onward to the manifestation of the glory of His person as the Judge of Israel. "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all the tribes of the land shall wail because of Him." If we compare with this Zechariah xii. 8-14, we see that the effect of His coming will be deep anguish and distress of heart. In brokenness of spirit will the two tribes which pierced Him, the Jews (Judah and Benjamin), and also the other tribes of Israel (the ten tribes), mourn and lament because of their sins. And in this deep distress will the Lord comfort His mourners, saying, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." When we see this to be the character of Rev. i. 7, we can well and heartily say, "Even so; Amen." The Lord is then glorified in the sight of His earthly people. It is the day of Psalms xcvi. to c. "O worship the Lord in the

## THE GLORIES OF CHRIST.

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beauty of holiness ; fear before Him, all the earth. Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth ; the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved : He shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad : let the sea roar and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful and all that is therein : then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord ; for He cometh to judge the earth ; He shall judge the world with righteousness and the people with His truth."

Lastly, we have His glory from all eternity. In the three previous verses we have His varied glories as *Son of Man*, but in the eighth, it is the essential glory of His person, not as Man, but as God. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." All that the Father was, is, or ever will be as a divine Person ; all that the Holy Ghost was, is, or ever will be as a divine Person—such also is the Lord Jesus Christ. Take the most exalted titles or terms that Scripture uses to express what belongs to the divine glory, and each one and every one of these is to the fullest degree due to the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the Father ; Himself the Ancient of days, the self-sustained and eternal God, who never was and never can be less than God over all, blessed for evermore. Such, my soul, is thy Saviour !

" Hosanna to the King of kings !  
 The great incarnate Word !  
 Ten thousand songs and glories wait  
 The coming of our Lord !  
 Thy victories and Thine endless fame  
 Through the wide world shall run,  
 And everlasting ages sing  
 The triumphs Thou hast won !"

WHAT need of watchfulness, lest the ungirding of the loins after service should take out of the place of communion.

## MEDIATORSHIP.

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Two mediators the sacred word mentions. Moses (Gal. iii. 19) and the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. xii. 24). Moses was the mediator of the first covenant. The Lord Jesus is mediator of the new covenant. Of the service of the mediator at the ratification of the first Exod. xxiv. treats, for it was not dedicated without blood (Heb. ix. 18-20). The making of the new covenant is an event of the future (Jer. xxxi. 31; Heb. viii. 8-13). So with neither of these covenants have we any real concern. As the former, so the latter, and better, will be made with the same people—the nation of Israel. Yet in passing we may remark, that we share in the blessings which Israel by virtue of the new covenant will come to enjoy, viz., the knowledge of God and the forgiveness of sins. For the blood of Christ, on which it will rest, having been shed and accepted, forgiveness of sins by virtue of that blood we rejoice in who believe on Him.

Now were the office and the teaching of a mediator confined to the making of a covenant, the subject, though one of interest, would not, as we have said, in any way concern us. But more is brought out in connection with mediatorship as set forth in Exod. xxxii.-xxxiv., and we shall find this full of instruction for every child of God.

After the ratification of the first covenant by the blood of the victims sprinkled on the altar and on the people (Exod. xxiv.), Moses, by God's command, re-ascended Mount Sinai, and continued forty days and forty nights there with God. Before going up he had charged Aaron, his sons, and the elders to remain where he left them, on the lower part of the mountain, and apart evidently from the camp in the plain below (Exod. xxiv. 9-14). Till he and Joshua returned, that was to be their place. For reasons, however, unknown to us, they did not obey those instructions. They went down into the camp; and, though they had seen

the God of Israel on the mount, and must have known that He was different in appearance from a calf, they proclaimed without, that we read of, one dissentient voice, that the golden calf, which Aaron made out of the earrings of the women, their sons, and their daughters, as the gods which brought the people out of Egypt. Was it beyond human endurance to have waited for Moses where he left them? Joshua surely showed that it was not. For, he must have waited all those forty days and forty nights somewhere quite alone on the mountain where Moses left him. This appears from the account in *Exod. xxiv. 13, 15-18; xxxii. 17.* In the former chapter Moses, accompanied by Joshua, went up into the mount of God. Then on the seventh day God called to Moses to go up into the midst of the cloud, where he was for forty days. But coming down, Joshua is again in his company.

The long absence of Moses tried the faith and patience of the people; and Aaron, yielding to their solicitation to make them gods to go before them, produced the molten calf (*xxxii.*). The covenant thus broken, the people of course had forfeited all claim to blessing on the ground of observing it. As far as they were concerned, all was lost. At this juncture God brought in fresh teaching about mediatorship, revealing thereby that provision through which they might, though they had failed, learn what it was to be an accepted people before the Lord. So, addressing Moses on the mount, God communicated to him what was going on in the camp. He spoke in language new to all, and acquainted Moses with the fact that He identified him and the people together. "Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves" (*Exod. xxxii. 7.*)

Redeemed by the arm of divine power at the Red Sea, Israel became henceforth the Lord's people (*Exod. vi. 7, xv. 16*); and this could never alter, whatever the people might do. God had made them His, and He

could never disown that, or drop them. But now, to Moses, on the mount God revealed in what light He regarded them henceforth in relation to Moses. They were the people of Moses. So again in chap. xxxiii. 1-3, God addressing Moses said: "Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I swear unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it: and I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way." The people and Moses were thus identified. "*Thy* people." "*Thou* art a stiffnecked people." "Lest I consume *thee* by the way." Yet Moses had not sinned in the matter of the calf. The people had.

Would Moses repudiate this association? No. He accepted it, and pleaded with God: "If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? is it not in that Thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are on the face of the earth" (xxxiii. 15, 16). The people were God's people, and of that Moses reminded God (xxxii. 11, 12), and again in the verse just quoted. And Moses, though personally clear of the sin of the calf, did not dissociate himself from Israel, but interceded with God on their behalf. He accepted the position, the being identified with a people which had grievously failed. Now, therefore, all would depend for the people on God's acceptance of the mediator.

No wonder then was it that, after the tent of meeting was pitched outside the camp, the movements of the mediator became of deep interest to all. They must have felt that all for them, humanly speaking, depended on him. So we read that, "when Moses went out

unto the tabernacle (rather tent), that all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the tabernacle (or tent)" (Exod. xxxiii. 8).

But now another truth comes out. "The Lord talked with Moses." "And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" (xxxiii. 9, 11). Personal free intercourse there was between the Lord and Moses, and that characterised the mediator throughout. This Numbers xii. 6-8 confirms, where God, addressing Aaron and Miriam, said: "Hear now My words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make Myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all Mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently (or manifestly), and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold." Unique was the position that Moses occupied, and peculiar was the privilege that he enjoyed. He alone could enter the divine presence without a sacrifice first taking place. As often as was needed he entered to speak with God (Numb. vii. 89); and of him alone was it true that the Lord knew him face to face, that mark common to him, and to the Prophet who should come, who in that would be like unto Moses (Deut. xviii. 18; xxxiv. 10). The mediator is one identified with the people. He is also one who can enter the divine presence, and be at home there without the need of sacrifice first being offered up.

But further. If Moses could as mediator, and thus identified with the people, and that after the sin of the golden calf, hold intercourse with God, what proof could there be that all might know of his acceptance in that position by God? In Exod. xxxiv. 29-35 will be found the answer to this question. Moses came down from the mount the second time with his face resplendent with divine glory. Of this Aaron and all the elders were witness. For "when they saw Moses,

behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him." But they had to come nigh, whilst Moses talked with them. Afterwards all the children of Israel came nigh; and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. "And when (as we should read, not till) Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face." All saw the glory in his face. All knew, therefore, where he had been. And all seeing him again could be assured that he was accepted with God. If he was accepted, who was identified with the people, the people were accepted also. The glory shining in his face bore witness of it.

Of the first occasion on which this took place we read. But the passage intimates that, as often as Moses entered the divine presence on subsequent occasions, he came out with his face resplendent with the glory; and in that condition he addressed the people. Having done so, and his communication finished, he covered his face till he again entered the presence of God. Now why was this? Exodus is silent about it. St. Paul, however, in 2 Cor. iii. 13 supplies the answer. Moses veiled his face that the children of Israel should not look to the end of that which is abolished. The light of the glory in his face was but transient. The veil concealed that from the people. And it was transient in character with that dispensation, the glory of which was to pall before the present—the Christian one. Yet that could not then have been known, for the revelation of it, all can see, would not have been in keeping with the ministry of that day. Hence we can understand the silence in Exodus as to the reason of the veiling, whilst simply recording the fact. But now the glory of God shines constantly in the face of Jesus Christ. God has revealed this to us (2 Cor. iv. 6); and has taught us thereby of the continued acceptance of the Mediator, and so of those for whom He is the Mediator.

Here the teaching about mediatorship in Exodus

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xxxii.-xxxiv. ends. Three points have come out. 1st, The identification of the mediator with a people which had sinned. 2nd, The ability of the mediator to hold intercourse with God without first offering a sacrifice on his own behalf. 3rd, The acceptance of the people known by the glory shining in his face.

What was true of Moses in that relation is true of the Lord Jesus Christ as Mediator likewise. And a Mediator of the new covenant, He is also Mediator between God and men (1 Tim. ii. 5). If, then, we ask what is this latter mediatorship to us, it is from Exod. xxxii.-xxxiv. that we get the answer. C. E. S.

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 LUKE XVII.
 

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“ALL things are ready; come!” was once said by the Messiah on earth; but the invited ones refused. The heavens, and Jesus gone up into them, have removed the scene thither, that the final and ultimate blessing in “the kingdom of God” may be independent, and out of the reach of the world as it is, and all the corrupting and corruptible influences of the flesh and the devil. What a blessed counterpart will that day and the opened heavens disclose, when “the voice of the *great* multitude sing 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.” The heavens have now the turn to make “all things ready,” and to invite the earth afresh, by the Son of Man in power and great glory, to sing the song of its redemption, as the new order of God, and previous to the angels’ song (because necessary to it) of “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure to man.” In the meanwhile as to the earth, which has refused all that God in heaven had to bestow, “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse; and because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” Those who are one with the rejected

Christ have to continue a while in such a world ; yea, not only so, but to bring back the grace, and to act in it; and this is the seventeenth chapter—Woe to the world because of offences.

“Then said Jesus to His disciples, It must needs be that offences will come, but woe to him through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.” This new doctrine takes its character from Christ (like all divine truth must needs do), and a Christ not resisting His own rejection, but accepting it at the hands of the offenders, and in grace praying for them. In like manner with His disciples in this school, offences are never to be offered, but only received and meekly borne, committing themselves, as their Master did, to Him that judgeth righteously. More than this: for offences are not only to be borne, but turned to real profit in grace, by becoming the occasion of forgiveness; or likewise of profit to the offender, by rebuke which considers him and his state in the self-same grace of love. The forgiveness and the rebuke grow properly on the same stem, and are but the product of one root. “Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.” The perfection of this forbearance, and even forgiveness, in grace, must needs have greater pressure and bruising to bring out its sweetness in full measure; so that “if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.”

Alive, it may be, to the nature of this grace as they had seen it in Jesus, and aware of what they were in reference to its character and this measure one towards another, they rightly turn to Jesus, and say, “Lord, Increase our faith;” for He alone could supply what was needed for this exercise of grace out of His own fulness.

And He said to them, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up, and be thou planted in the midst of the sea, and it should obey you;" that is to say, the things which are most unlikely, and contrary to nature, should be brought about by the power of God, on which they were cast, and of which faith always takes hold. The trees of the Lord's right-hand planting, and the stateliest too, are those trees which by grace and faith have been thus plucked up, out of where they naturally grew, and have been planted in the sea, where alone they could grow and become verdant by the grace of Christ and the power of the living God. This instruction closes to the disciples by the rule of propriety between a servant and his master, after returning from plowing, or feeding cattle, and sitting down to meat, by which He taught them: "When ye shall have done all those things, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do;" for there had been no real profit to the Master: they had only done their duty. And a very important principle to be remembered in this day: that the most diligent, at the plough, or in the field, or serving the Master in the house, is but an *unprofitable* servant!

On His way to Jerusalem, Jesus passed through Samaria and Galilee. "And as He entered into a certain village, there met Him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: and they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." And this outflow of grace and power to these ten lepers was but a sample and witness of what He was still ready to do, not only as a passer through unclean Samaria, but likewise in Jerusalem and all Israel, had she but faith to lift up her voice and cry, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."

"And when He saw them, He said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed." And what (we

may ask) were these exercises of faith on their part, and power on His, but a carrying out before their eyes of the dry sycamine tree, plucked up by the roots? for these ten came by faith into His presence in their foul leprosy, and took hold of His power to plant them anew, as in the sea, washed and clean every whit; and their priests were to do their duty, and pronounce them so. "And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed." Before this, Jesus had sent a solitary leper upon this convicting errand to the priests; but now He sends ten of them at a time, that they might witness, by declaring them clean, to the power of God still in their midst, which at the call of mercy, in the confession of "Jesus, Master," had brought it out. Would they learn this grace, and own this power for themselves, and, as the appointed priesthood, come forth into the midst of Jerusalem, and "prepare the way of the Lord, and make His paths straight"? He had come back in spirit "from the dead," with these new patterns of grace and power, in a tenfold measure too; and had taken up the similitude of the scyamine tree to His disciples, for their encouragement in the exercise of this ministry with Himself. Would the priests *now* teach the people by the sycamine tree, and put them into the pathway of Jesus, that, like these ten lepers, Israel might be healed, and planted in the sea?

"And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks: and he was a Samaritan." Nor are these actions, or "this law of the leper," a whit changed as respects the leprosy of sin, and the sinner's nature in flesh and blood, at this present day of Christ's ministry from heaven, by the Holy Ghost and the consecrated apostles at Pentecost. Whether rejected or accepted, the power and the grace are in the hands and heart of Jesus, and none besides. He has not given this glory to another! Whether exercised from heaven,

or as on the earth, is merely a question of place, and only comes down in a tenfold manner now that it is from above; as He said to the disciples, "And greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto My Father."

Jesus settled the matter of leprosy with the ten, at the call of mercy; and this is the only way by which the far deeper matters between God and a sinner in his sins are settled day by day in this world. It must be with Jesus, by the faith which brought the ten lepers, or brings the ten thousand times ten thousand sinners, into His own presence, before God in His holiness, to learn Him as the "Day's Man" who lays His hand upon both, and to know that He has reconciled us to God by His own blood; and He is on the way, going up to Jerusalem to accomplish *this* by His decease.

Nor should "the law of the cleansed sinner" now be transgressed by any towards Jesus, the Saviour, any more than towards God and the glory which is His due, but like the one leper *who returned*, when he saw that he was healed, to give thanks unto Jesus and to glorify God, so should the faith of the leprous sinner now, in thankfulness of heart and conscience, not be wanting in his dues on "the return journey"! May be, that what the ten could not question as lepers is but feebly accepted by the sinner, as touching the entire and hopeless leprosy of his nature as born in sin and shapen in iniquity; and so he spends his living upon physicians, with the disappointing experience of nothing bettered, but rather "grew worse." Certain it is, that the knowledge of sin in the flesh, as the root of the sins and iniquities actually committed, brings all *such*, with lifted voices too, into the presence of Christ for full and complete deliverance, and the faith of *such*, by faith alone, takes up the healing, "and returns" to thank Jesus, like this one leper did, and to give God the glory. "I thank God" (says the once wretched man) "through Jesus Christ our Lord" I am

delivered from that plague. We may well ask the question of one another, What else could bring any back to the feet of Jesus, much less to fall down upon the face, but seeing we are healed by His stripes, and made whiter than snow? Nor can there possibly be the loud voice in glorifying God, any more than in the giving thanks to Jesus, except in the knowledge that the leprosy which excluded from His presence, and commanded the leper to cover his face with his hand, and cry out, "Unclean! unclean!" in the face of the sun at noonday, has been for ever put away from the sight of God, and the sinner's consciousness too. Could the leper, while excluded from the camp, and with his upper lip covered, his head bare, his clothes rent, and he crying out, "Unclean!" before God and men, ever find a moment when he could alter these utterances, or modify his experiences? True, he might be justifying God in the acknowledgment, and cry from morning to night, and even say "Undone" as well as "Unclean"; and so much the better when any soul has accepted the sentence of death upon the flesh, that they should not trust in themselves; but this justification of God, and of His holiness in antagonism against the leprosy of sin in the flesh, must not and cannot be confounded with glorifying God, or giving thanks to Jesus, for having cleansed the leper so entirely as to fit him for the sanctuary, and bring him there as an anointed worshipper to give glory to God, and prostrate himself before Jesus, in simple and undoubted confidence in the love which had done it all, and brought him into the holiest to be at home there!

And now we may also ask, What kept the nine away in that day of grace? and with much more point, What oftentimes keeps the cleansed nine back with the priests, in this day of grace and glory? What, but the imperfect way in which possibly the law of the leper when under his leprosy, as to the lip and the cry, have been carried out, so as to have been brought

to the point of "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" or else it may be that the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing has been questioned, and the leper detained with the priesthood, instead of returning into the enjoyment of God's presence, in the faith and confidence of the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. May be still, that some fault may rest with the priests of this day, and their unreadiness (as tied and bound by Moses and the law) to allow the rights of Jesus to take the law of the leper out of the hands of the formal priesthood, yea, and outside of the house of Moses too, in this new position of the heavenly Man which He has taken for Himself, and into which He is leading His disciples, and all who come to Him like these ten lepers, to own His power and grace. Be this as it may, the one on his way to the priests, as a testimony to them and to Moses and to the law that there was somebody on the earth greater than them all, and who was in truth and in fact setting aside that earthly system, and its whole economy of external cleansing, and remembrance of sins, turned back, when he saw that he was healed, to confess Jesus, as greater than Moses and all that house, and God as known in Christ after an entirely different order and pattern. This one leper left the nine to carry this kind of witness to the priests, and perhaps they all went with one accord into the shadows and ritual of earthly things in the worldly sanctuary, and were content with the Levitical law of cleansing, and to accept the things which Moses commanded to be offered, and never to know the Father and the Son in the light where God dwells, and where there is no vail, as a witness that the way into the Holiest could not be manifested whilst the first tabernacle was still standing.

*We* have the mind of Jesus upon these matters, which is conclusive enough to the opened ear. "And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found any that

returned to give glory to God, save this stranger." Does He reprove him? Nay, He justifies him; and if Moses had been alive, or could have risen from the dead, he would, methinks, have been the leader and commander of the people out of his own house into the house of the Son, to which and to whom the Holy Ghost is now the ready and all-sufficient Witness to those who understand the sycamine tree, and the ten lepers which at the onset "stood afar off!"

And Jesus said unto this stranger—and *now no* stranger—"Arise, go thy way; thy faith had made thee whole;" for this leper's faith had but proved and learnt the blessed lesson of the grace of Christ and the power of God. What an answer to the disciples' prayer, "Lord, Increase our faith." The former economy was being rooted up, and another, outside nature and contrary to all that is natural and of the earth too, was being planted in the sea! The next enquiry is upon a different subject, and yet connected with these changes and this uprooting. How would they affect the kingdom of God?

"And when He was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is among you;" because there He stood in the midst of them to present it and to preach it, as He had done from the first day with the twelve and the seventy, if they would only accept the kingdom by accepting its King, and believing the testimony He had brought from God.

Two men in the glory and three disciples from the earth "had been eye-witnesses" of the majesty of the Son of Man coming in His kingdom, and had "seen the kingdom of God in its outward and manifested glory" as centered in His person on the mount of His transfiguration. "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light"; all things were ready, in reference to Himself and the kingdom,

but they were not willing—as afterwards, when He invited them to the great supper, because all things were ready, but they refused the kingdom and the supper. As we have already noticed in these matters, in chapter ix., He postponed His personal glory and the kingdom in outward manifestation by accepting His decease and coming down from that mount. By His being “lifted up,” as we have likewise observed, He would, by means of death and resurrection, raise the starting point of His own kingly glory, and of the kingdom itself, into the heavens. He would there make all sure, by Himself as the sure nail in resurrection, upon whom all the glory of His Father’s house should securely hang, till the heavens would as faithfully and willingly deliver it all up again, and the heavenly Jerusalem take the lead in bringing all down from God, in rebuke of the city of the great King, where He is here journeying to be betrayed by the chief priests and rulers of the people of Israel.

Therefore Jesus replied to the Pharisees, “The kingdom of God cometh not with outward show,” and yet it is in your midst, for He was still among them. Could they understand it at the mount? or, if not, could they receive it from His lips now that He was come down again, and the outward manifestations deferred? And He said unto the disciples, “The days will come, when *ye* shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and ye shall not see it;” for these days, looked at in the light of prophecy, as declared by Daniel, in the night visions (which were now actually setting in), stood in connection with the seventy weeks and the cutting off of the Messiah, as in chapter ix. of that prophecy; and how could the disciples *see* one of the proper prophetic and promised days of the regnant Son of Man, when the time comes for Him to take the kingdom under the whole heavens, seeing He has accepted His decease from the voice and the cloud at the mount, and waiting as the Messiah of Israel to be cut off? Ye shall *not* see it, is the word of the

rejected Jesus ; and thus it has continued from that day to this, and must till the second coming ; for all things in heaven above and the earth beneath rise or fall, open themselves out or close themselves up, in relation to Himself and the place He takes before God—whether hidden, as now ; or manifested, as He will presently be—but in the midst of the last week He was to be cut off, and get nothing, and this is the time and the ground He is upon with His disciples. It is of great moment to understand and receive the teaching that is here given by the Son of Man as to His own days : “And they shall say to you, See here ; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them. For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven ; so shall also the Son of Man be in His day ;” that is, He will be manifested with the kingdom as it was exhibited for a moment when upon the mount. No one need say, “See here ; or, see there” to the lightnings, for they command the attention of every one. “And so shall the Son of Man be in His day.” Jesus now gives to His disciples the order of these days, and says, “But *first* must He suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.” His rejection comes first in order, and His sufferings on the cross, in full agreement with Daniel, and the cutting off of their Messiah, and with His decease from the mount. Moreover, that evil generation of Israel did it, whose ways towards the Messiah we have traced in these chapters. In these relations with them, as made after the flesh of David, they have rejected and thus lost Him ; whilst He as their Messiah has been cut off, and got nothing.

It is, as thus refused by His own, and accepting the pathway of His sufferings, that believers are now called out to know Him “lifted up” and passed through the heavens, to occupy another position at the right hand of God, as the Last Adam, and Head of the new creation. Whilst hidden there, Jesus tells His disciples what the world would be during the

interval of His absence from it and them, and the destruction which would fall upon its inhabitants on His return. "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man," when properly He ought to be on the earth, and in the midst of men, but is not; the appointed order being that *first* He must suffer many things and be rejected. The world therefore becomes like the world before the flood, for man can only repeat himself by his wickedness. "They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all." The character of *this* departure from God, whether then or now, is more by the personal and relative associations of mankind, in their social and every day life, sinking down into the enjoyments they afford, and being sunk and corrupted by them.

The Lord adds to this form of apostacy another, and says: "Likewise as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;" and have thus added to the Noah form of socialism what man has become as a builder at Babel after the flood, and the constructor of his own fortunes, by the artificial and scientific inventions which the cities and city life, with their exchanges and commerce, exhibit, and what all the great cities agree to call by the name of civilisation. How little does the world or its inhabitants see that they are but filling up the measure of their iniquity—just as the evil and adulterous generation of Israel is completing their own, whilst living without a city of their name and nation, and scattered amongst the cities of the Gentiles, till their times are fulfilled.

Would that all could see the plain facts which are thus taught by Jesus, viz., that where the grace of Christ is accepted, and the power of God owned by faith for present salvation, as in the case of the ten lepers, all goes for healing and recovery to Jesus

where He now is, and for glorifying God ; or else, where Christ and the love of God are refused, this same power must connect itself with them for destruction ; for every man is to know this power of the Almighty, either for them and their eternal blessing, or against them in their everlasting destruction. This judgment of God upon the world before the flood, as well as in the cities which they built after, was not by the resurrection of the wicked at the last day, as multitudes like to think, who try to put off the judgment, which they are unprepared to meet, and have not met by faith in Christ, who bore it for every believer ; for remark, "*the same day* that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be when the Son of Man is revealed."

There are few things which mankind is so unready to admit as God's interposition on behalf of men by sending them a Saviour in the person of His beloved Son, if they will only accept Him, or God's interference with the world, as men have corrupted it and filled it with violence, on account of which He has appointed a day and ordained the Man by whom He will judge it, "whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised up Christ from the dead." Pursuing men by the glad tidings of salvation is, alas ! considered an intrusion, and so whispered round the world, where men and women dare not openly declare it ; and the second coming of the Lord in flaming fire to judge the dwellers upon the earth is scoffed at, and declared to be both sanguinary and a wrong to the progress of this age. But the rejection of Christ is plain beyond a doubt ; for where is He ? and the revelation of the Son of Man is in the keeping of His righteous Father, till the day when He comes forth as the lightning.

This Scripture further tells us, that "the day when the Son or Man is revealed" will have to do not only with the world and its destruction as in the days of

Noah and Lot, but it will have a reference also to the evil generation of Israel, and gathering out the elect remnant from their midst; for those who are Christ's during the period of His rejection, and are thus by grace one with Him *now* in the Father's house, will be caught up to meet Him in the air before the day of His revelation to Israel and the world.

The hope of the Church is the coming of the Lord; for "He will descend from heaven with a shout, and the voice of the archangel," to carry us away and present us in the presence of His Father faultless, and with exceeding joy! though the Church as the Bride, the Lamb's wife, will accompany Him and be manifested with Him in glory on the day of His revelation. She will be caught up to heaven on the day of her espousals, when the marriage of the Lamb is come; and then return for the coronation in the kingdom of God, when all things are once more and eternally made ready, upon the earth too, to celebrate the *marriage of the King's Son!*

But to return to the spared and elect remnant of Israel on "the day when the Son of Man is revealed." "In that day," Jesus says, "he who shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife." She looked back behind her, and became a pillar of salt. Hell from beneath, and the rich man tormented in its flames, has been uncovered: the Father's house, and the prodigal welcomed home with music and dancing, has been disclosed: and now this earth points to the pillar of salt, as a token of the righteous judgment of God which fell upon the reluctant wife, who looked back lingeringly at the very hour of Sodom's destruction. "Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it;" for all must look beyond themselves, and find motives which may rightly guide at such a crisis as the revelation of the Son of Man, or the

world's destruction, from One who rules above, in power and grace too.

Besides the example of Lot and his wife, there follows the sure discriminative eye of God that cannot err, as regards those who are His and those who are not; whether men be in the forgetfulness of sleep at night, or in the busy wakefulness of the women at the mill, or the labour of the field by day: "I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. And they answered and said unto Him, Where, Lord?" Would these takings and leavings be for the earth, or for hell and its torments, or where? "And He said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together;" for "He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness; because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth."

J. E. B.

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Keep yourselves in the love of God. This is the one stay of the faithful in Jude when everything is gone. That never fails.

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2 COR. XII.—Flesh is seen in three distinct positions: first, when the man is in the third heaven and there has no consciousness of it at all; secondly, in the activity of its own will at the end of the chapter when it is sin; and thirdly, in conflict, but disallowed. Here the man is not unconscious of it, but it is known and conscious weakness, but the soul having Christ's power with it, and this relied on by faith. As respects the sphere it acts and works in, it is weakness, but thus a testimony to another power which does its own work in this sphere—the power of Christ. The saint is obliged to feel it as weakness because of the tendency to self-confidence and forgetfulness of dependence; and that the Lord alone can do the Lord's work whatever instruments He uses.

## HYMN OF PRAISE.

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GLORY be and adoration  
 To our Father and our God ;  
 That He gave His Son to save us  
 Strikes in us the sweetest chord :  
 Praise and worship  
 To the Father of our Lord !

Praise and worship, adoration,  
 Unto Him who shed His blood,  
 Unto Him who died to save us,  
 Son of man and Son of God :  
 Endless praises  
 Crown the everlasting Word !

Praise and worship, adoration,  
 By the Eternal Spirit be ;  
 He alone the power and unction  
 Of each suited melody :  
 Praise the Father ;  
 Christ as Priest our praises leads !

Glory be and adoration  
 To the Eternal Majesty,  
 With whose praise the heavens resound,  
 Glorious, endless harmony :  
 Praise and worship  
 Be to God, supremely blest !

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“GOD could not become an object of *confidence* to Adam after he sinned, apart from a fresh revelation of Himself in such a way as would meet his conscience, and set it at rest in His presence, in the full light of all His perfections undimmed ; holiness, righteousness, and truth all satisfied about sin. This is essential. No grace could meet the case apart from *atonement*.”

“AGAIN, when *Sin* as it is *before God* is out of view, how impossible it is to have the truth on any subject. All God’s dealings with *sinner*s are based on this, and what He has done about it.” A. R.

## THE HOUSE OF GOD AT JERUSALEM.

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VIRTUES make an object more attractive to a right mind than dignities or station. If a stranger passed before us, and we were told that he was one who by his courage or intellect had won great consideration for himself among men; and then another passed, of whom it was said that he was a man of the largest heart, rich in deeds of self-denying, unpretending benevolence, it is this one who would be the more engaging to a right mind.

David took great delight in God's house. His word to Zadok evinces this (2 Sam. xv. 25). God's tabernacles were ravishing in his sight (Psalm lxxxiv.). And doubtless, because he enjoyed specially the sense of the divine presence there, and God was witnessed to his soul in life and power. But still he enquired there (Psalm xxvii. 4). And what did he find of God in it? In that mystic house, I may reply, God passed before him in His virtues (to speak as a man) rather than in His dignities.

The Lord did not, in that house, hang out His trophies, the ensigns of His glories or greatness. The furniture of it did not tell of His omniscience or almightiness or universal sovereignty, but of His goodness and of the interests which poor sinners had in the provisions of that goodness. It left the personal dignities of the Lord of hosts (again to speak as a man) without a direct formal witness. It was in His love rather than in His glory He passed before them in that mysterious, significant house, and thus won the heart of the worshipper by the dearest attractions.

In such a picture of Himself as this, in the light of a perfect love toward sinners, God was seen in the tabernacle; and on the principles of the heart it was therefore for David to say, "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!"

It is surely wonderful so to speak, but so we may, that God's house was built for the sinner rather than

## THE HOUSE OF GOD AT JERUSALEM. 165

for God. The structure and furniture of it declared this.

At the entry stood the brazen altar, which told him of God's provision for his sins, or his condition as a sinner. Behind it was seen the laver, which told him of provision, in like manner, for his ease and assurance in going into the divine presence. Within the first veil he saw the candlestick, the table, and the golden altar, which told him of his high condition in Christ, and in what character of worth and honour he was welcomed in the house of God. And the presence-chamber, reached within the sacred veil, let out the wondrous secret, that God Himself had found an abiding rest in that house just because it was suited to the need of a sinner, and that His heavenly hosts, the angels, delighted in it also; for there the glory was enthroned on the mercy-seat, and the cherubim with fixed eye gazed upon it.

The beauty of a love which took such counsels for us as all this mystic furniture of the house revealed might well have charmed the heart of David. Well might he say, "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!"\*

So the servants of that house, as well as the furniture, told the sinner that all was for him. If the priests and Levites waited to do the commands of the Lord of the house, by His express and standing orders the business of all who came there was to be made principal. Every guest, every visitor, saw himself diligently attended. This was the character of the whole domestic arrangement. The priest and the Levite were always in waiting to do the needed service at the altar for the sinner-guest who visited the house.

The apparel of these servants of the house was all of a piece with this. The family dress, the livery, told the guest that it was the Lord's pleasure to have his

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\* The ark contained the law and sustained the mercy-seat, a beautiful symbol expressive of the great gospel mystery, that God is just while He justifies (Rom. iii.), that mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, are found in company in the perfect way of God.

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wants and himself chiefly attended to. The shoulders of the chief servant of that house bore their names, the names of the guests, and so did his breast. All that either strength or affection could secure them was theirs. And he wore on his forehead a mitre, which ever let them know the unsullied light in which they were ever presented before the Lord of that holy place Himself.

Surely, like the Queen of Sheba, we may well notice, among other things, "the apparel of the servants," and be lost in wonder.

So also the occasional ways or ordinances of the house, as well as its fixed furniture, servants, and their standing orders, were for the sinner.

Some of them, indeed, evinced that sinners appeared at that house as debtors or worshippers; but commonly they witnessed that it was as beggars, or needy, or guilty ones they were there. And what was the joyous and august round of festivities performed in that house every year, but the celebration of the sinner's history? Each of the annual feasts recited some one stage of the wondrous journey of a poor captive sinner from redemption to glory, from the passover in Egypt to the ingathering or harvest of Canaan (Lev. xxiii.).

J. G. B.

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FATHER Almighty, let Thy love,  
In rich effusion from above,  
Descend and draw our hearts to Thee  
In grateful praise and melody.

Sing, sav'd ones, to the God of grace  
Whose promise, oath, and faithfulness  
Are pledged to guard you to the end,  
And will through all *His own* defend.

Sing of His love, His grace, His pow'r,  
His triumph in His dying hour,  
His victory over sin and death,  
Yea, sing of these while ye have breath.

*Derby, about 1830.*

G. R.

## FRAGMENTS.

IF Israel is turned to go round the wilderness, Caleb and Joshua, though quite separate from the evil, must go round with them. The faithful remnant may be separate from the evil, but cannot be separate from the sorrow. So with the Church; so Daniel in Babylon.

MARK i. 35.—He opened His ear to hear as the learner, and now, with this early-wakened ear He went forth to hear; and to hold that blessed communion with the Father, where in a world of evil, alone His soul could find delight and refreshment, and where He renewed the strength of His joy—the conscious ground of His coming forth into the world, and in the apprehensions of His soul all passed in intercourse with His Father. The most blessed, perhaps the most interesting part of all our Saviour's life, and where He brings us, in spirit with Him, into His Father's presence, into His Father's bosom, where He pours all His requests, and passes through the evil in the strength of it. (Oh, it is a blessed portion! Are we to suppose the Saviour the only Man who ever had it?) And so to be an example. How, withal, does the Holy Ghost intercede in us? Far different as we are from Him. He had His own portion in, and He loved to be alone with God, though always the servant of all. Blessed Jesus! May our hearts follow Thee there! It is a good thing to see Thy perfectness.—This was His way in ministry; may it be ours!

I have long remarked that "From the beginning," in 1 John i., means from the beginning of Christ's path down here. But the importance of this is very great. It is the true beginning, not of that which has none, nor, what is important to notice, of the provisional and first presented scheme of creation (though what abides

was first in purpose) as to that. In the beginning "was," and then came creation. This is the historical statement of the Gospel, before declaring what the Word, the Creator, was in Himself, and as made flesh. . . . This was the true beginning—that was by redemption and Christ's work as to righteousness, but it was the beginning of that manifestation of God in the person of Christ, in which we have part in its full display in glory by redemption. J. N. D.

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"FROM the beginning it has been the same grace at bottom, and the same working, though the manifestation and display of it different, *e.g.*, Abel equally lost, equally saved, and on the same footing; the Father working hitherto, then the Son and the Spirit." A. R.

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EVERLASTING.—Two days ago I was reading, accidentally, as men call it, the epistle of Jude, and in the 6th verse I came to this, "Reserved in *everlasting* chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Words that seem to crush all hope out of any soul. One man stood face to face with me, a worldling, and said, "I have heard from a learned canon, a far greater gun than you have in the Church of to-day, who said, 'If I had sinned ever so greatly, there is an eternal hope for me in the world to come,' and I tell you, if it means millions of years, I am willing to go into that damnation for the sake of enjoying my pleasures now, and I tell you the canon is bigger than you, and I mean to sin and take the consequence." Oh, my dear hearers, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel? Take heed, whilst thou art in the way. Believe God, and God's Son, who died to show that "God is love;" and remember that, if a man ever gets into that prison, he shall never come out until he has paid the very last mite.—*Extract.*

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JUNE, 1892.

## THE MINISTRY OF PETER.

### EVANGELIZING AND TEACHING.

PETER, in common with Paul, was a preacher as well as a writer. To his ministry in preaching the Acts of the Apostles bears witness; of his ability as a writer his two epistles are proof.

As a preacher he occupied the foremost place in the early days of the Church's history; and that was fitting, since to him, and to him alone, were given the keys of the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. xvi. 19). So in the carrying out of his special service in connection with the keys, we are made acquainted both with his first Christian sermon, that on the day of Pentecost, and also with the first gospel address that had Gentiles for an audience. The results in both cases were remarkable, and probably unique.

In Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, his sermon resulted in the conviction and real conversion of three thousand souls. His discourse in the house of Cornelius was fruitful in blessing to every Gentile who heard it; for on each and all of them the Holy Ghost fell ere Peter had finished all he meant to say (Acts xi. 15). God's attestation that was, that the gospel of forgiveness of sins had been received by every one of them. Never since Pentecost have three thousand been added to the company of the faithful as the fruit of one address. And what labourer since Peter can affirm, that the whole company, to whom he preached, received at the same time the gospel of their salvation, and became indwelt by the Holy Ghost?

Naturally of a forward disposition (Matt. xvi. 22; xvii. 4; xix. 27; xxvi. 33; John xiii. 8; xviii. 10; xxi. 20, 21), we see how the Spirit of God could make use of him. At the Beautiful Gate of the Temple he addressed the impotent man, and healed him; and, though John was with him, he preached to the crowd gathered consequently in Solomon's porch of the Lord

Jesus Christ as the Holy One, the Just, the Prince of Life, and the Prophet like unto Moses (Acts iii.). Detained in prison for a night in company with John, he it was who on the following day, filled with the Holy Ghost, addressed the Sanhedrim, proclaiming the Lord Jesus Christ as the Stone of Ps. cxviii., and boldly telling them that there was salvation in none other (Acts iv.). Next convicting Ananias and Sapphira of their lie against the Holy Ghost, and subsequently with the rest of the apostles cast into the common prison, Peter, it would seem, was their spokesman before the council on the following day, when he proclaimed the Lord Jesus Christ, whom they had slain, as exalted by God's right hand to be a Prince and Saviour, to give to Israel repentance and remission of sins (Acts v.). Next in Samaria with John, he unmasked Simon Magus, and returning to Jerusalem was in due time led forth afresh, and on this occasion alone, to open the door of the kingdom to the Gentiles (x.).

With this his evangelistic work ceased, as far as we have any record of it. Imprisoned a third time, and now by Herod, the civil power having entered on the path of persecution, but delivered miraculously, he disappeared for a time (xii. 17); figuring again, and for the last time in the Acts, in the council of Jerusalem (xv.), in which he took a prominent part. The acts of Peter, as far as Luke has recorded them, here end. Henceforth to those of Paul that historian confined himself.

Peter, however, was not idle, as Paul intimates (1 Cor. ix. 5); though whether the path of these two apostles ever met, after the rebuke administered to him by Paul at Antioch, is a matter we shall never know on this side of heaven. His two epistles vouch for his continued activity. And the spirit in which he indited his second (2 Peter i. 12-15) betokens that to the close of his ministry of upwards of thirty years he retained the spirit of a real pastor. Time, age, and

suffering had not quenched it. For the appearance of the Chief Shepherd he waited (1 Pet. v. 4), and surely made himself an example to the elders; and finally he suffered martyrdom, as the Lord had foretold (John xxi. 18-19).

In passing, we may notice what an example of divine grace he was. He denied his Lord, yet was the honoured instrument of opening the kingdom of the heavens to both Jews and Gentiles (Acts ii. x.). He Judaized at Antioch, leaving Paul there to contend alone for the maintenance of Christian truth. He walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, wrote Paul (Gal. ii. 14), and thereby fell under the deserved and public rebuke of the latter; yet to the end of his life he was entrusted with service for the Lord, and his two epistles show us how he discharged it. Failure, marked and grievous, on those two occasions attached to him, and doubtless from the same cause—fear of man. What creatures we are if not upheld by grace! Remembering his past falls, how well comes the exhortation from him: "Be sober, be vigilant; your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (1 Pet. v. 8-9). He surely had experienced the attacks of the enemy in the character which he here gives him.

To turn to the later ministry of Peter, preserved in his two epistles, we see him labouring in the field specially recognised as his, viz., that of the circumcision (Gal. ii. 7). To the strangers (or sojourners) of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia he writes his first epistle (1 Pet. i. 1). For the same people he indited his second (2 Pet. iii. 1). But Peter was not the evangelist of Asia Minor.

The work of evangelising Asia Minor had been commenced by Paul on that missionary journey undertaken in company with Barnabas, when they

visited the provinces of Pamphylia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia. That work was continued and greatly increased during Paul's second journey, starting a second time from Antioch, in Syria, but now accompanied by Silas. During this circuit Galatia was evangelised, and Phrygia also. The work was afterwards more fully carried out during the great apostle's third journey, when, having revisited the scenes of former labour, viz., Galatia and Phrygia, he reached Ephesus, in proconsular Asia, by the way of the upper coasts. Labouring at Ephesus for about three years, all in proconsular Asia, both Jews and Greeks heard the word of the Lord (Acts xix. 10). So fully indeed had he evangelised the country, that writing to the Romans (xv. 19) after this he could say, "from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum" he had fully preached the gospel of Christ; for he made it his aim to preach not where Christ had been already named. To Paul, then, Asia Minor was indebted for the gospel. But, as time went on, there would naturally be a sphere for Peter's especial labours; and we see him in his first epistle recognising it, as he wrote therein to the strangers of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. And room there was for his ministry, seeing that there were circumstances in which those formerly Jews found themselves on the acceptance of the gospel, to which any who had been Gentiles were necessarily strangers. For such converts, and to them especially, Peter wrote.

Strangers, or sojourners, of the Dispersion in these different provinces enumerated, thus men would view them. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," in this light God viewed them. And these sojourners on earth in a strange land, as God's elect, had not only a home on high, but an inheritance likewise reserved for them in heaven, who were kept on earth by God through faith unto salvation.

*Elect, sanctified*, thus Peter describes them. With election and sanctification they were as Jews already familiar. But election of old was national. Now it was individual. Sanctification by legal ceremonies the law recognised. Now it was by the Spirit, men being set apart by Him as holy vessels for the service of God. Sprinkling of the blood of sacrifices they all understood. Now they were set apart by the Spirit to the obedience of Jesus Christ, *i.e.*, to obey as He obeyed; and to the sprinkling of His precious blood, *i.e.*, to partake in the blessings which flow from it.

To such Peter writes, and with an overflowing heart. For he begins his letter in a way which finds its parallel in but two others of the apostolic epistles, both of which were written by his beloved brother Paul. In the one—the second to the Corinthians—Paul, who had recently experienced great temporal mercies, begins with blessing God for his deliverance at Ephesus. In the other—that to the Ephesians—his heart, overflowing with praise as he thought of the divine purposes and counsels, found fitting relief in ascribing blessing to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter, in his turn, recalling to mind the reviving effect on himself and others of the resurrection of the Lord from the dead, and looking forward to the assured fulfilment of God's counsels about His saints, commences in a similar way: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter i. 3, 4).

How these words give an insight into the experiences passed through by the disciples, consequent first on the Lord's crucifixion, and next on

His resurrection. Hopes fondly cherished, but dashed to the ground on the fourteenth of Nisan, were revived, to rest ever after on an immutable foundation by that which took place ere sunrise of the 16th of that same month. Peter, and those with him who had known the Lord personally, and had believed on Him, passed through a crisis in their spiritual history peculiar, all can understand, to themselves. The language of the two on their way to Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 21), and the condition of the disciples when Mary announced the joyful news of the resurrection (Mark xvi. 10), alike confirm this. Sorrow, overwhelming sorrow had taken possession of them. By the Lord's resurrection that sorrow was turned into joy. For they were begotten again unto a living hope, the mercies of David being now made sure (Acts xiii. 34). All seemed lost ere sunset on the day of the Lord's crucifixion. All could be seen to be secure from the day of the resurrection and onwards. The revival of the hope was confined to Peter and the disciples of that time. The inheritance is sure to all who, in common with them, shall now be truly ranked as disciples of the common Master. Hence, the force of *us* in verse 3, and of *you* in verse 4.

An inheritance then was theirs, but in heaven, kept there for them, and they whilst on earth kept by God for it through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Of final, full salvation he here writes. Of this, Paul also makes mention in his epistles to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. v. 8, 9; 2 Thess. ii. 13) and elsewhere. Of an inheritance they could formerly speak, the land given to Abraham and to his seed (Gen. xiii. 15) by an inalienable grant. An inheritance Peter now mentions as assured to them, but in heaven. Hence, like their fathers in the wilderness, they were as yet on the way to that which was promised them; and on the way, but as disciples of Christ, they might be in heaviness through manifold temptations (6). Were these to crush or depress them?

By such, God was testing their faith. And the faith which stands such trial is more precious to God than the most precious of earthly metals, gold tried in the fire, and so purged from all dross. Moreover, their faith, if steadfast, would be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Of the appearing he here writes, not of the rapture, because then, and not before, will rewards be publicly bestowed.

What encouragement for them! What encouragement also for us! Heaviness, if need be, now with *present* joy at the prospect, to be followed by public approval from the Lord in the *future*. Thus the heaviness was far from being without any measure of relief. They had joy as they contemplated the prospect, and they had joy also in the Lord as they sped on their way, a joy in One whom they had never seen, but on whom they believed; and as believers they shared in the present salvation of their souls (i. 9).

Now soul salvation as distinct from final salvation of the whole person at the end of the course was a new doctrine, first proclaimed by the Lord Himself, though previously borne witness to by the prophets of old, who predicted the grace that should come unto Christians whilst still on earth. Israel will know the salvation of their souls, when they experience God's delivering power from all their enemies. Christians enjoy the one whilst hoping for the other. And, having mentioned the prophets, Peter acquaints his readers with the exercise of heart these prophets went through, searching, he says, "what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories which should follow."\* Nor

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\* "The sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow." These the apostle keeps before his readers. Many and varied are the glories which *belong to the Lord*, for in different characters will He appear when He comes in glory, who suffered once, the Just for the unjust. The sufferings, however, are all past, yet are never to be forgotten. How Peter reminds us of them (i. 2; ii. 21, 23; iii. 18; iv. 1, 13; v. 1).

was that exercise in vain. God revealed to them "That not unto themselves but unto *you*," wrote Peter, "did they minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Ghost sent forth (rather than, down) from heaven; which things angels desire to look into" (i. 10-12).

Very distinct then is the character of the Christian dispensation from all that preceded it. To those who live under it the prophets ministered, and ministered of those things which were announced in Peter's day through those who preached the gospel by the Holy Ghost sent forth from heaven. Moreover, the very angels were interested in those things, desiring to look into them. Marked indeed is this dispensation. Prophets looked on to it. Angels are interested in it. So Christians, though in heaviness, were, with the loins of their mind girded, to be sober, setting their hope perfectly on the grace to be brought unto them at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Heaviness was not to paralyze all energy, nor to land any saint in despair.

Partakers of grace, and that of a wondrous character, the apostle proceeds to remind them of their calling, their public profession, of redemption by blood, and of the new birth, in all of which they really shared. For of elect saints, not of an elect nation, Peter writes.

Called by God, they were to be holy, for He is holy. Grace relaxes nothing of our responsibility. So on that which the law enjoined (Levit. xix. 2) Peter insists. Calling, too, on the Father, they were to pass the time of their sojourning here in fear. Relationship to God was not to weaken in them the feeling of holy reverence. The Father judges according to every man's work, and they were to remember that they had been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. Subjects, too, of the new birth, the reality of that was to be displayed in their ways one with another, both in the exercise of love and in the putting away of all malice, hypocrisies, and evil speaking. Love

and light are the characteristics of the divine nature. Both of them were to be manifested by Christians (i. 13-ii. 3).

But more. Christians were a holy priesthood, and also a royal priesthood, and the people of God, having been made subjects of divine grace (ii. 5-10). With these two priesthods all Jews were familiar. But the holy priesthood was for earth restricted to the house of Aaron. The royal priesthood, on the other hand, had been offered by God, through Moses, to the whole nation at Sinai on the condition of obedience (Exod. xix. 5-6). Forfeiting it by the golden calf which they made and worshipped, God will in grace make this good to the godly remnant of the future (Isa. lxi. 6).

But the holy priesthood *on earth*, as we have said, is restricted, and ever will be, to the house of Aaron. In that none of the twelve tribes can have part. But these sojourners of the Dispersion, as part of a heavenly people, shared already in both.

Perfectly distinct are these two priesthods. They exercised the former as they offered up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (ii. 5). They exercised the latter as they shewed forth the virtues of Him who had called them out of darkness into His marvellous light (9). Thus they had a double privilege, in common now with all believers; for Christian blessing far exceeds that of which the nation will partake in a coming day.

Elect, sanctified, with an inheritance kept for them in heaven, enjoying the salvation of their souls, with the certainty of final salvation by and by, called by God, calling too on the Father, redeemed by the blood of Christ, born again by the word of God, living stones, built up a spiritual house, to be members of a holy priesthood, sharers too in the royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, these were part of the blessings which were theirs as believers on the Lord Jesus Christ. And all this seems fittingly set forth in an epistle addressed to

those who had formerly been Jews, to whom pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises (Rom. ix. 4). To Israelites belonged great things. To all Christians appertained far greater. And they shared in privileges bestowed on them in grace; some of which they never could have claimed, their fathers having forfeited them by disobedience; others for which they never could have looked; but all secured now by a title indefeasible indeed, the free grant on the part of their God.

So far we see Peter as a teacher. His ministry, however, was not concluded. He had still much to say to those who had started forth on their wilderness journey to reach the inheritance reserved for them on high.

C. E. S.

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### THE ARCH OF TITUS.

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BEHOLD the sculptured stone! Judah Capta!  
 Yea, see God's word fulfilled, Jehovah's people,  
 Israel's noblest sons, gracing a Roman triumph!  
 Vespasian's son, victorious Titus in his quadriga borne  
 Drags in his train the captives and the spoil--  
 The golden vessels of God's house on earth,  
 The seven-branched candlestick, the shew-bread table,  
 The silver trumpets, all are seen in that stern record!  
 But who shall tell the anguish of the vanquished?  
 What shattered hopes that God would intervene  
 And fight for Judah! Alas, they had refused His Son;  
 Oh! would that they had known their Shiloh come!  
 But now the bitter fruit they eat which His own words  
 Full plainly had foretold—God was their foe!  
 Their temple and their city burnt with fire!  
 And here we read what eighteen centuries have not effaced,  
 The stony record that our God is God,  
 And will avenge His Son! Judah shall then return  
 And own Her Lord, mourning in bitterness of soul,  
 But He will dry her tears, and fill her cup with joy,  
 And in the silence of His love will over her rejoice!

## THE LORD'S WORK AND WORKERS. 179

Her Pagan conquerors, where are they?  
 But she, Jehovah's boast, shall yet arise,  
 And 'neath His sway shall fill the earth with gladness:  
 All glory then to Him, great David's Son and Lord!

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 THE LORD'S WORK AND WORKERS.
 

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## [EXTRACTS.]

CHRISTCHURCH, N.Z.—“One dare scarcely look ahead, except *upwards*. May we be kept. We are capable of anything apart from grace. Spite of all, I have had encouragement. At Timaru, where I was for three weeks, we had conversions, and three saints were delivered from bad doctrine, . . . two restored to fellowship again. . . . I got larger meetings than brethren ever had in Timaru. I intend going to Geraldine on Saturday (D.V.), but am almost afraid, as last Sunday my throat nearly gave way.”—W. E. to W. B., dated March 16th.

CHRISTCHURCH, N.Z.—There is a little help through lectures just now in the gathering. Mr. Easton is encouraged at Timaru.—W. C. J. to W. B.

SILCHAR, ASSAM, INDIA.—“In the bazaar we get great crowds to listen to the word. . . . There is a great spirit of concern. . . . There has come a Hindu missionary propounding their religious fables; another one, I believe, is coming this week. . . . Passing one evening one of these, giving a lecture or address, several young men came out of his audience, and said to us that they could not believe what that man said; the most of it was nonsense, it is nothing like the gospel you preach. We want to be Christians. . . . One other case I must speak of, and it is this: the young man that teaches us Bengali, I gave a Bible to, and he has been reading it very attentively since. . . . The result of this has been, on Tuesday evening he came to see me, and I went for a walk with him, and while walking he told me that he believed on

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the Lord Jesus Christ. He said that book you gave is the best book I ever saw or read. Whenever anything troubles me, I go to it, and find that it cheers and comforts me, as no other book ever did. That book (and he had it in his hand) is the Word of God, and I believe it; and Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the only Saviour of sinners, and I believe in Him as this book says. . . . He has written to his mother and brothers in connection with this subject, his father being dead, and is expecting that he will not be able to go home again or eat with any of his friends; still he says, whatever they say or do, he does not mind, he is convinced that this step is the right one."—J. C. to W. B., April 14th, 1892.

[This young brother went out some months ago when Theosophy was the public discussion; convinced from the word that our blessed God would not be indifferent to the manner of treatment His message has had here, knowing, "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." If men and women here import the teaching of jugglers, and thus resist the truth, our blessed God is pleased to give to the household of faith tidings of deliverance, and His word being blessed there to poor heathen who have not had the privileges of an open Bible and general proclamation of the tidings of peace. What an answer to the mockers—an answer that will sting and burn when time is no more; and what an answer to the cry for labourers, and blessing upon His word and work: "Beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."—W. B.]

## THE LORD'S WORK AND WORKERS. 181

NASSAU, N.P., BAHAMAS, W.I.—Brother Slomans and I have just returned from a trip up the Eleuthera shore, where we have had much to refresh us in the work there. At Savannah Sound and Governor's Harbour a few were gathered out. Much to encourage from \_\_\_\_\_ and brother T\_\_\_\_\_’s work; the judgment-seat of Christ will only reveal the extent of it; found plenty of open doors and an ear for the truth.—G. P. to W. B.

NASSAU.—“I will take the opportunity of giving you a little news of brothers S\_\_\_\_\_’s and P\_\_\_\_\_’s career in these parts which may be interesting to you. They have been with us pretty nearly four months, if not quite. They have visited the following places in succession: Abaco, Nicholl's Town, Governor's Harbour, Palmetto Point, and Savannah Sound. They have met with much to encourage their hearts, spite of the trials and temptations they have met with by the way. We have had our share of their stay, as they were not only with us a month at the first, but they have been stopping here a few days at a time ere leaving for the other places, when we have shared their joys in the tidings of the work being rehearsed. . . . At Marsh Harbour the Lord blessed their labours in a special way by bringing several to the knowlege of their lost condition, and His wondrous saving grace that lifts them out of it and puts them into a new and never-changing one. . . . I know you would be glad to spend a little time with us if it were His will. What a contrast would present itself to you, though, to what it was. Twenty or more in fellowship now; only a few in my little room when you were here; and the good Lord has given quietness to us, and has so graciously raised up ministry amongst us.”—T. W. S. to W. B., April 13th, 1892.

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SMALL and neglected sins and unjudged confidence of heart lead to forgetfulness of God, and denial of Him in the truth.

## THE LAST DAYS.

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YEARS ago some of us read Paul's second letter to Timothy with a kind of thought that we had not yet reached the last days. We can do so no longer. We are fully on the wave of that sea of peril so fully described by the apostle.

However, it is a grand epistle—the writer in his own spirit is quiet and confident. It is no losing game. The issue will be bright. He knows whom he has believed. He is confident in His power to keep that which he committed to Him against “that day.” “That day” will turn out well for all who *believe God*.

Paul's faith in the grace of God does not get feeble, and he writes as able to cheer his son Timothy, who had not yet learned so much of the fulness of Christ. Paul was aware he was near the end of his journey, and that Timothy would have to breast the storm alone. But on no account was his son in the faith to yield his banner and judge the battle to be lost.

Beautiful to observe how Paul starts from the will of God. In the first epistle it is “an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Saviour.” But in the second epistle he gets behind the commandment to that which gave birth to it—even the will of God.

Paul holds fast his credentials, and seeks to bind his beloved son closer to the stronghold, as he witnesses all around him yielding up the ground.

The claim on Timothy's attention is simply stated, but mighty in its character. “The will of God, and the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus.” These two factors can never alter, however man may fail in the trust which has been confided to him.

Paul, in Phillipians i., writes to the brethren of their being associated with him in the *defence* of the Gospel. God and Christ are sadly lost sight of in these days. Generally man's need is the farthest point reached.

## "DIFFICULT TIMES."

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Timothy was to contend for the faith, and to remember "God had not given him a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

These are restless days in what is called the "Evangelical world," as well as in the ungodly world. The Lord, by giving us His estimate of the place Mary chose, is surely inviting us to be like her. It will not result, if we choose to sit at His feet, in indifference to His work among sinners yet in their sins.

D. S.

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 "DIFFICULT TIMES."—2 *Tim.* iii. 1.
 

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"By Thee, O God, invited,  
We look unto the Son ;  
In whom Thy soul delighted,  
Who all *They will* hath done."

SUCH are the lines which have been sung from the depths of the heart of many a saint. In such a way do we have fellowship with the Father. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth ; but if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Who can fully estimate the privilege thus conferred upon us ? but only are we able to avail ourselves of it when we are occupied with Him who is holy and true ; to have all our thoughts shaped by Him, being in the light as He is in the light. This, then, is the fellowship which has Christ, the Son of God, for its centre, and enables us to have fellowship with one another.

It is Christ that keeps the heart from being distracted and the mind from being disturbed, and if we are attracted to Him, we give Him those thanks which His grace has produced in hearts who hold His Name dear and His Word precious.

He thinks of His poor, weary ones treading this

scene, and desiring to be used for His glory ; and do we not prove Him more than enough, beloved Christian reader, and His grace more than sufficient for the difficult times through which we are passing? Let us hold Him fast; for, having Him, He will keep us steady amidst the bustle and confusion. Ah! He is the antidote for all the trouble and restlessness. "*In Me, peace*" was His word to those whom He was about to leave, and it remains good to-day.

Obedience and devotedness are the two characteristics of those who desire to afford refreshment for His heart. "*Thou hast kept My Word, and hast not denied My Name.*"

And if the commandments and ordinances of Jehovah were commended to those who had an ear to hear, as we read in Malachi iv. 4, "Remember ye the law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for *all* Israel, with the statutes and judgments," so are the few whom the Spirit of God has noticed commended for their obedience and devotedness. "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" (Luke i. 6). These things surely, happening as they did at the close of the last dispensation, with darkness and difficulty abounding, are for our encouragement, and come with double force upon us in these last days, especially as we find words of a similar character at the close of the New Testament (Rev. i. 3 ; iii. 7-13 ; xxii. 7, 12-14, 20). May these words ring in our ears, dear reader. He is the centre. Obedience to His word calls for separation from all that which is contrary to it: walking worthy of Him and the position in which He has placed us; imitating Him, the meek and lowly One; and exhibiting that love begotten in our hearts by His Spirit to those who may differ from us; and yet in all this being faithful to Him, and endeavouring to keep the unity which the Spirit has wrought in the uniting bond of peace—a perfect unity, of which the *seven*

## "DIFFICULT TIMES."

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component parts the apostle enumerates (Ephes. iv. 4-6). And so in writing to Timothy, he says, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." We may surely remember this, for have we no fight in which we are engaged? Are we not running our course? Are we not to contend for the faith? Does this mean we are to make overtures for the sake of enlarging our borders, or compromises for the sake of ease or peace? Does this mean we are to look back? Does it not rather mean we are to forget those things which are behind, and press forward for the prize? Can we be indifferent to what is truth and what is error? Is this devotedness to Christ? Is this fellowship with the Father? Oh, to hold those words as an incentive before the gaze of all saints to-day: "THOU HAST NOT DENIED MY NAME." Is He worthy? Yea, ten thousand times worthy! He will bring us safely through all; but oh! what joy to His heart (and let us think of His heart more) to praise Him, to tell of His matchlessness, to spend and be spent for Him. This surely is fellowship with the Father and with one another. May our hearts enter more deeply into it for His own glory. Amen.

J. H. I.

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"For let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; who subsisting in the form of God, did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God; but emptied Himself, taking a bondsman's form, taking His place in likeness of men; and having been found in figure as a man, humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross" (Phil. ii., New Trans. See also Luke xxii. 24-30).

A MISSIONARY in Jamaica once asked the question of a black boy, when examining the school, "Who are the meek?" The boy answered, "Those who give soft answers to rough questions."

## IN DARKNESS AND IN LIGHT.

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“What I tell you in the darkness,  
That proclaim ye in the light.”  
In the silence of the chamber  
Make ye ready for the fight :  
Then arise with fresher courage,  
Steadfast stand, where others fall,  
Strong in Him, Jehovah-Nissi,  
He who guideth through it all.

“What I tell you in the darkness,”  
When the heart is sore afraid,  
Tell it out to others stricken,  
Unto others “sore dismayed.”  
Words of love from heaven given—  
Seeds of comfort—freely sown,  
Fraught with deep and truest blessing,  
Germinate for all His own.

What was told you in the darkness,  
Unrevealed to men of might,  
Shall be told in other ages ;  
Ye are children of the light !  
Till that day, go forth portraying  
Virtues of the Christ, the Son ;  
Prove to all, by love unceasing,  
Ye are His, and ye are one. J. M. I.

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## DIVINE HEALING.

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**THAT** there was such a thing as divine healing, and that it is taught in Scripture no one who reads it can deny. The Lord Jesus healed the sick when here on earth as a proof of His Messiahship (Mat. viii. 16; ix. 35). He commissioned and empowered His disciples to do the same when He sent them forth to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. x. 5-8). And when Christianity began, and God would give it a start in the world, “the gift of healing” was given to some in the Church (1 Cor. xii. 9). All this was blessedly true.

Besides this, God always did and always does respond to faith, and never disappoints the one who trusts Him, though he may have to wait His time ere the answer is given. Witness the case of Jeremiah, who had to wait ten days ere he got his answer (Jer. xlii. 7); or Daniel, who had to wait twenty-one days (Dan. x. 12, 13); or Abraham, who had to wait for years ere Isaac was born, after he had believed God's promise. But faith, whether believing promises or clinging to God for needed mercies, was always rewarded; and He is still the prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God. But this is not the point. All Christians would surely agree as to this. The question is, does Scripture teach what the present advocates of "Divine Healing" say it teaches? We shall see.

And here let me add, that no amount of "testimonies" can prove the correctness of the position taken up by our friends who plead for it. And this is most important. Many of its zealous advocates evidence that they are completely carried away, not by its correctness from Scripture, but by the number of successful "cases" recorded. In divine things "success" must never be the standard of right. Scripture alone can settle that for us. Assuming for the moment that all the "testimonies" are genuine cases of healing (and there is no reason to doubt many of them), it only proves the exceeding goodness of a sovereign and gracious God, and not in any way the correctness of the position taken up by His sinful and oft-mistaken people. I repeat, the Scripture alone can settle that. Well for us when we can say, "Therefore I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way" (Ps. cxix. 128). "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. viii. 20). Let us turn to it, then, and compare it with the teaching of the advocates of "Divine Healing."

They lay down the premise that "all bodily ailment

is the work of the devil," giving Acts x. 38 as their proof text, and then they reason that "if nineteen centuries ago all whom Jesus healed were oppressed of the devil, then it is the devil's work to-day, and that Christ came to destroy the works of the devil. Therefore, it is the privilege of all who believe in Him to enjoy perfect and perpetual bodily health." We reject at once both the premise and the reasonings, and shall show that Scripture nowhere teaches such a system. The very Scripture adduced (Acts x. 38) is quite misunderstood, or the remark could not have been made that "all whom Jesus healed were oppressed of the devil." The verse does not speak of healing in the sense of healing sickness, but of demoniacal possession, and the two things are kept quite distinct in the Word (see Luke iv. 40, 41 and Matt. x. 8 as examples); so that it will not do to attach such a meaning to that verse. But the root of the question is, *is* all bodily sickness the work of the devil? Let us see.

If we begin with the history of Job, one of the oldest books, if not the oldest in Scripture, and which is evidently outside of all dispensations, we learn that so far from bodily sickness being the ordinary and usual work of Satan, he had to have a special license ere he could touch Job. He complained of his being "hedged round," and challenged God to put forth His hand and remove his worldly substance, and he would curse Him to His face. God allowed Satan to do this, and when that failed, he was permitted to try again by afflicting him with a loathsome disease—for he was the instrument used in this divine dealing—and when that also failed, we hear no more of Satan in the case. Nor does the teaching of the New Testament as to the principles of Christianity differ from this dealing. Satan could not touch any of the saints unless they were handed over to him, as were Hymenæus and Alexander (1 Tim. i. 20), and the incestuous man (1 Cor. v. 5); or he was allowed to afflict them as in

the case of Paul, who had a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him (2 Cor. xii. 7). In all this, Satan was merely an instrument used of God for the carrying out of His governmental dealings with His people; otherwise he cannot touch the bodies of God's saints.

Then if we take the history of Israel under law, we find again that so far from bodily ailment being the work of the devil, it was the direct infliction of Jehovah on account of their disobedience. They were an earthly people, with earthly blessings and hopes, and on the ground of their obedience were to be blessed on the earth with every temporal blessing, and immunity from the diseases of which they knew so much and had seen so much in Egypt (Exod. xv. 26, and Deut. xxviii.). If they disobeyed, then they were to be visited by the displeasure of Jehovah, and all manner of sickness and disease, &c. should overtake them. "*The Lord shall smite thee* with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation," &c. The Lord shall smite thee—not, Satan will do it. "I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand" (Deut. xxxii. 39). Again, it was not Satan, but the Lord who smote Jehoram with disease of the bowels for two years ere he died (2 Chron. xxi. 18, 19). It was not Satan who struck David's child with sickness. Nor was it he who sent weakness, sickness, and death among the Corinthian saints because they refused to judge themselves for their sinful ways (1 Cor. xi. 27-32). Nor will it be Satan who will cause men "pain and sores" in the day that is yet to come (Rev. xvi. 10-11). Texts need not surely be multiplied to prove this. At the same time we must avoid the opposite error—that all sickness is from God. Both are wrong. Wisdom is needed to discern.

We may be told that many of these cases were not children of God, and that they were guilty of sin. It matters not *who* they were, nor *what* the dealing was

for ; it proves beyond controversy and by direct and distinct statements of Scripture that all bodily ailment is *not* the work of the devil, and that the position advocated is a false one, and this false idea is the foundation of the system, and if the foundation be destroyed the superstructure falls. Besides the position being *false*, it leads its advocates into positive *bad doctrine*, as well as the misapplication and confusion of Scripture, and does not "rightly divide the word of truth" (2 Tim. ii. 15). For example, we are told that "the Holy Spirit of God is the Spirit of life and health, and that if He dwell in our mortal bodies disease will not." Then we are to conclude that all who are sick and have diseased bodies are not belonging to Christ ! They cannot be if the Spirit does not dwell in them, since Scripture says, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9). This is a shocking statement. Then the verse, "With His stripes we are healed," is made to apply to bodily disease. And "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses" is treated in a similar way, and thus the blessed Lord is made to have borne in His own blessed body our actual physical diseases ! A dreadful thing to subject the person of the Lord to such unholy handling as this, even though it be done in ignorance.

A noted advocate of "Divine Healing" says, that they "recognise a union between our body and the risen body of the Lord Jesus Christ, which gives us the right to claim for our mortal frame all the vital energy of His perfect life." And that "His risen body is ours, and it is all-sufficient." Then if this be true there can be no need of resurrection, nor of being changed at the Lord's coming. Besides being shocking bad doctrine, by practically saying the resurrection is past since "we have Christ's risen body" (a meaningless thing in reality, for how can I have *His* body ?), it is a piece of presumption on the part of its advocates, because only those can say it

who are exempt from disease and sickness, and it cannot be true of all saints. Thus it ministers to spiritual pride. When fairly examined, the system as such is more serious than many suppose, and most pernicious in its effects, and no amount of "testimonies" will square it with the word of God.

We are met by the remark that God gave gifts of healing to the Church, and that some have that gift still. But this is quite a mistaken idea. If they have, then why do they not go to any person who is sick and cure him at once, and thus prove they possess that gift? It does not depend on the faith of the sick one. There was no faith that we read of in the barbarous people of Malta, whom Paul healed (Acts xxviii. 8, 9). Those who were thus gifted were *not* dependent on the faith of the persons they healed; nor did they fail in certain cases, and then blame the want of faith in the persons, or their not confessing everything to God, &c., as in this day. To be thus gifted was a special thing, and quite different from healing by faith with the *conditions* that all the parties must believe in Divine Healing—that all must believe it *is* God's will to heal the person—not saying "if it be Thy will"—that the sick one must be able to say they know of no reason why God should not heal them, &c. The two things are quite different, and must not be confounded.

That there were gifts of healing no one can question; but that there are those gifts now we do not believe. They were special sign gifts that God gave at the commencement of the Church's history which evidently exist no longer now that Christianity has become a recognised thing in the world. We do not believe that "the gift of tongues" or "the interpretation of tongues" exists to-day; nor "the working of miracles;" nor yet "the gift of healing;" though there is no lack of assumption on the part of some to the possession of them.

There *is* a text, however, which is always con-

spicuous by its absence from "Divine Healing" literature which we must notice. Yet it is in a connection which they are rather fond of using. I refer to 1 John v. 16: "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he shall pray for it." Now supposing a man sin a sin unto death, and he is laid down in sickness which has to end in death, the advocates of "Divine Healing" would say, "All sickness is from Satan, and it is not God's will that any of His children should be sick; therefore we must pray for our brother that God would heal him." Here, then, there is conflict at once between the system of "Divine Healing" and God's word. All the prayers in the world would be useless in this case; it is "a sin unto death," and God means to take the man away home. The failure of the case, however, would not be attributed to the mistaken views of these people, but to the want of faith on the part of the man, for they never blame themselves for lack of faith.

Notice, too, how all the holy discipline of the Father with His children is missed, by attributing these dealings to the work of Satan. Indeed there can be no such thing as discipline, since it is all the work of Satan; hence Job, and David, and the Apostle all made a mistake when they attribute chastening to the Lord (Job v. 17, 18; Ps. xciv. 12; Prov. iii. 11, 12; Heb. xii. 5, 11). Such teaching claims a very near relationship to the awful doctrine of the Annihilationists, that God is love, therefore He will never punish men for ever; forgetting that God is *Light* as well as Love.

Nor must we think there are no cases of "a sin unto death." The Corinthians found it true to their cost (1 Cor. xi. 30-31). They had not judged themselves, therefore the Lord judged them. He sent sickness on some, made others weak, and took others home by

death ; it was in the latter cases "sin unto death," and not sent by Satan, but by the Lord. There is such a thing as sin which calls for chastisement, which no prayer can induce God to remove. Moses spoke unadvisedly with his lips, and was prohibited from entering the promised land. And when he prayed to go over and see it, the Lord said, "Let it suffice thee ; speak no more unto Me of this matter" (Deut. iii. 25, 26). God would not hear him. And many cases are on record, and may be some known in our own experiences, which were evidently cases of "a sin unto death," and no prayer would be heard for them.

If then we leave out the Old Testament, which was God's dealings with an earthly people under law ; if we leave out the gospels, which give us the history of the presentation of the Messiah to His earthly people, to be received and reign over them as their King ; if we leave out the Acts of the Apostles, which shew us the start of Christianity in the world ; and turn to the epistles of the New Testament, where we have Christianity unfolded and Christian teaching given (in contrast to Judaism or heathenism) ; what have we left to found "Divine Healing" on ? Simply one passage of Scripture—James v. 14, 15 ! This conclusion may startle some ; but let them examine for themselves and test it, it will repay them for their labour if they will only bow to the result.

The question may well be raised, does even James teach what they say he teaches ? Without taking up the question of who the epistle is addressed to, we may turn to the verses mentioned. "Is any sick among you ? let him call for the elders of the Church ; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord ; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up ; and if he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him.

Notice the three things mentioned here. (1) "The prayer of faith shall *save* the sick." Not the sick man's faith—but the prayer of faith—therefore of those

who were sent for to pray for him. It shall *save* the sick. Evidently there was a particular sin committed for which the man was laid down, but not a sin unto death, though it *might* end in death. The prayer of faith *saves* the sick. God does not allow it to end in death. He hears and answers the prayers of the elders. A very close relationship is thus seen between this passage and 1 John v. 16. (2) "The Lord shall raise him up." Here we have healing for his body. (3) "If he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him." Not only would God's government be removed for the special sin, but with that removal would be given a general forgiveness for other *sins*, if he had been guilty of such.

I have often been asked, "Why do you not act on James?" and I have answered, "If you will find the elders of the Church, I will find the oil, and we can then act on James!" Instead of finding the elders, I find it is oftenest females who are the active agents in this work. Are they elders? This, however, opens up a wide subject as to elders which I do not intend to enter upon here. I would merely add, the qualifications for an elder (bishop is the same person) are seen in 1 Tim. iii. 1-7; and when such men can be found in the Church, I judge it will be an easy matter to act on James when it is called for.

Do we mean, then, to infer that there is no such thing as saints getting together and praying for a sick one? Far be the thought! Only we could not say "Father, we know it is not Thy will for Thy child to be sick, this is the devil's work;" but we should have to say, "If it be Thy will to raise him up," &c. There may be cases where God may lay it on the hearts of a few saints to get together and pray for some one He has been dealing with, and who has learnt his lesson under His discipline; and surely God would hear and answer prayer; and though we should not have the passage in James carried out literally, yet we should have the principle acted on to the joy of all hearts.

God acts in discipline with His children. He is a "Holy Father." And sickness is one of the means He uses in that discipline, as 1 Cor. xi. 30 tells us. He makes use of it. When the tried one bows to this, accepts the chastening, and draws near to God, blessed lessons are learnt as to His ways who "withdraws not His eyes from the righteous," and in His time the saint comes forth from the furnace purified (Isa. i. 25 ; Zech. xiii. 9 ; Mal. iii. 3 ; Heb. xii. 11). "He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." It is not a cruel dealing, but the wisdom of divine love ; and the one who knows the hand of love in all things becomes an experienced saint ; for "tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience," &c. (Rom. v. 3, 4). How much better to see God in everything than saddle these things on Satan ; missing thus divine dealings in the school of God, muddling up things that differ, with a good deal of assumption of greater holiness than others, and a large measure of very serious false doctrine.

Let me repeat, because of its importance, that God is still the hearer and answerer of prayer ; and where the Spirit has distinctly laid it on the hearts of some saints to pray for a sick one, they may surely count on an answer to those prayers. But to make a "system" of it, as is done, and invite all God's children to take the Lord as their Healer as well as their Saviour, under the delusion that all bodily ailment is from Satan, and that it is not God's will for His children to be sick, is to fly in the teeth of Scripture, and make another "sect" to increase the present confusion of Christendom ; and with a greater pretension to holiness. The very fact of its being made another "system" stamps it as unscriptural and not of God, even though all who are in it be true children of God. It is carnal (1 Cor. iii.). Surely the Scripture saith not in vain, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him ; for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and

scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Heb. xii. 5, 6).

It certainly calls for the exercise of a very large amount of faith to believe that the "often infirmities" of Timothy (1 Tim. v. 23); and the sickness of Trophimus, which necessitated his being left sick at Miletum (2 Tim. iv. 20), were the work of Satan! Surely, if divine healing was according to the mind of God, Paul could easily have resorted to it on behalf of these two servants of Christ; not to speak of his own need of it on so many occasions (2 Cor. xi. 23-25), where there is no mention of it ever having been acted on. Blame invariably falls on the subject; seldom, if ever, on the actors. Careful study of Scripture and understanding of the dispensations will deliver from this delusion, without in any way weakening confidence in God as the hearer and answerer of prayer.

May it be ours as His children to trace all up to His loving hand and heart; and in the school of God be apt scholars, and becoming experienced Christians, refusing to receive anything as coming either from Satan or any other hand, even though they be the instruments used, but seeing "God in everything."

WILLIAM EASTON.

*New Zealand.*

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Dr. PAYSON once, when travelling, having occasion to call on a lady, when she and some of her friends were sitting down to tea, she would have him stay, and treated him very hospitably. On leaving he said, "Madam, you have treated me with much kindness and hospitality, for which I sincerely thank you. Allow me to ask you one question before we part: How do you treat my Master?" The visit led to the conversion of the lady and her household.

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JULY, 1892.

## LOVE AND LIGHT.

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IT is interesting and profitable to trace in the epistle to the Ephesians the way in which the Spirit of God develops those kindred truths that "God is Light" and "God is Love." In an epistle which teaches and enforces the very highest truth presented to us in Scripture, one might expect that we should there have unfolded those great principles which connect the saints with the divine nature of which they have morally been made partakers. Nor shall we be disappointed. "We are of God," says John; "*we know* that we are of God," he also says; and "are heavenly," says Paul. It is this which we see plainly from end to end of the epistle; these two things, that we are of God and that we are heavenly. Blessed it is, yea, truly blessed, when our souls apprehend it by the Holy Ghost, and when we give effect to it by a suited walk in exercise of heart before God.

The epistle may be looked at doctrinally and practically. It is chiefly in the latter aspect I would pursue my theme, connecting Paul's teaching with John's axiomatic statements that God's nature is "Light" and "Love" (1 John i. 5; iv. 8, 16). Thus in the 4th verse (Ephesians) we are carried back to the eternal counsels of God for the glory of His Son, and there learn that "in Him" (Christ) we have been chosen, in that far back eternity, that in the coming eternity we might be "before Him" *holy and blameless* (for God is light) and *in love* (for God is love). Now this is essentially *new creation*. God revealed as Light and as Love, having before Himself throughout eternity a people made partakers of His nature, and made capable of displaying the glory of that grace which has taken us into favour in the Beloved. This is a radically different thing to what might have been seen in the Adamic creation. There God "created all things *by* Jesus Christ" (iii. 9); here we are "created *in* Christ Jesus" (ii. 10). There God dis-

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played wisdom, power, and goodness—His attributes ; here He displays that He is light, and that He is love—His *nature*. And of this and not of that it is that the Lord speaks, when He says of Himself that He is “the Beginning of the creation of God” (Rev. iii. 14). How far the one surpasses the other may be seen if we pass on to chap. iii. 17-19. “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith ; that ye being rooted and grounded *in LOVE*, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height ; and to know *the love* of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” Surely this is essentially *new creation*. Try to make it fit in with the first man’s circumstances and experiences, and you will find that not a particle of it can be assimilated. Upright and innocent he was ; a full cup of blessing his ; dignity and distinction conferred upon him, for he was made in the image and likeness of God ; but all the lustre of this pales and vanishes totally before the glory of the second Man and last Adam, “the Beginning of the creation of God.” Notice, too, that what I have quoted from chapter iii. is the common portion and present possession of all who are *in Him*—new creation !

Now we come to the *precepts* which flow herefrom ; that is, from the eternal counsels of chap. i. and the positive statement of chap. iii., that we are rooted and grounded *in love*, and that our portion is to know that which surpasses knowledge, viz., the love of Christ, and thus be filled even to all the fulness of God !

The first of these is *forbearance* with one another *in love* (iv. 2). How much needed amongst saints, and how sadly lacking often is this forbearance ! The apostle, in the wisdom given to him, urged it also upon the Colossian saints, “*forbearing* one another and forgiving one another” (iii. 13) ; and so also he exhorted his son Timothy. How lovely, how Christ-like his words, “A bondsman of the Lord ought not to contend,

but be gentle towards all ; apt to teach ; *forbearing* ; in meekness setting right those who oppose, if God perhaps may sometime give them repentance to acknowledgment of the truth " (2 Tim. ii. 24, 25, New Trans.).

The next precept is "*speaking the truth in love*" (iv. 15), or perhaps more correctly, "holding the truth in love." Again we may say, how needed is the word. We are so apt to be censorious, contentious, dogmatic, priding ourselves upon contending for *the truth*, as though that would cover a multitude of sins in the manner of presenting it. But not so: we are to hold the truth in a gracious spirit, and to speak it with the love from which it springs. What a corrective is that word, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. iv. 11).

Then follows *edification in love* (iv. 16). The same apostle in another Scripture says, "Let all things be done unto edifying" (1 Cor. xiv. 26). That gives the motive ; this supplies the method. Every joint should be a joint of supply. Every part should be in effectual working. All should be tending to the increase of the body, to its building-up, but *in love*, for that is the bond of perfectness (Col. iii. 14). If the building-up is not in love, the work is like a structure composed of stones without mortar. It may *hold* together for a time, but it is not *bound* together ; it lacks the bond of perfectness which is love.

These precepts as to love close with chap. v. 1, 2, where they culminate in Christ Himself: "Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children, *and walk in love*, even as the Christ loved us, and delivered Himself up for us, an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." We are, in a word, to walk as Christ walked (1 John ii. 6). Who ever walked in such love as He who gave up Himself for us? Says the beloved John, "Hereby we have known love, because He has laid down His life for us ; and we ought for the brethren to lay down our lives" (1 John

iii. 16, New Trans.). The very first lesson in walking as Christ walked is to walk in love, "for love is of God" (1 John iv. 7). Oh! that the saints of God would consider all that is implied in that striking word of the Spirit of God by John, "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Why? Because the Lord Jesus Christ laid down His life to make them His, and He can put upon them no lesser value than *what they cost Him*. Little should we be disposed, probably, to lay down our lives for what *they are to us*, but what a different motive is supplied when we consider what they are *to Him!* It then becomes the laying down our lives *for His sake*. Thirty years later, when another generation had arisen, we find the Lord commending all that He could commend in the church at Ephesus, but He had this against them, that they had left *their first love* (Rev. ii. 1-7). That it was the *activities* of divine love in them which had subsided seems conclusive from the words, "Repent, and do the *first works*." The Lord grant that we may "abound in love, one toward another and toward all! To the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints" (1 Thess. iii. 12-13).

Next we have LIGHT. As might be expected, there is first the positive statement, "Now are ye light in the Lord" (Eph. v. 8). How clear, how emphatic is this! We are not told *to be* light, but are told that in the Lord we *are* light. A grave consideration truly for us. This word searches us and humbles us, surely. It brings us back to the truths with which we started, "We are of God," and "are heavenly;" whether recognizing it or not; whether giving effect to it or not; we are partakers morally of the nature of God, Love and Light. As one well said who is now with Him, "We shall never be the people that we ought to be until we know (as to God) what a people we are."

"Walk as *children of light*"—here we have the

practical precept that necessarily follows. Responsibility succeeds privilege. It were impossible for me to be light in the Lord, and be under no obligation to walk as a child of light. The same apostle (1 Thes. v. 5), in the very first words penned by him that have been preserved to us by the Spirit of God, says, "All ye are sons of light and sons of day" (New Trans.). Let us therefore never forget that our privileges and our responsibilities alike are the greatest that ever were known! And then we read the terse and pithy parenthesis, "For the fruit of *the light* is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth." This helps us, for it interprets what walking in the light will shew itself in, viz., these three things—goodness, righteousness, and truth; all which things being of God, we may take to signify that we can only walk in the light by walking in the practical enjoyment and expression of divine goodness, divine righteousness, and divine truth. This brings us afresh to Christ Himself, who alone perfectly did thus walk here, for in Him were divinely personified goodness, righteousness, and truth.

Another positive statement is next afforded us (ver. 13): "All things that are reprov'd (or expos'd) are made manifest *by the light*: for whatsoever doth make manifest *is light*." Need I say that Christ is that light? He is the only true touchstone for the child of God, the test of everything for him while passing through the world. Let the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ impinge upon the world and the things of the world, and their true character is at once exposed, and for us infallibly determined. If the light chase not away the darkness, it all the more exposes how intense that darkness is.

But there is a final and a fittingly final word: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light," or *illuminate* thee (v. 14). Beloved saint of God, will you not respond to the word which Christ by His Spirit here gives you? Can it be that you are sleeping, and sleeping among

the dead (not being yourself dead)? What a place and what a condition to be in! In Christ a new creation, blessed truth! But in the world that lieth in the wicked one, and, alas! asleep there! solemn thing. A dishonour to God's cause and to God's truth; yea, to Christ Himself! But He stands at the door and knocks. He wants you to hear His voice and to open the door, that He may come in and sup with you, and you with Him. What is a saint in Laodicea (Rev. iii. 19, 20)? An anomaly! But not so a saint in the world; for the Lord said, "As Thou has sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" (John xvii. 18); but for a saint to be sleeping in the world, sleeping amongst the dead, that is an anomaly indeed! Well will it be for any such to hear this arousing word (as the son of Amittai heard the voice of the shipmaster, "What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God"), the word of Him who, slumbering not and sleeping not, walketh in the midst of the candlesticks, and though all they have failed as light-bearers, assures us Himself, in the importunity of His imperishable *love*, that He waits to bestow the illumination in our own souls of His unimpaired *light*.

May His voice be truly and effectually heard by each of us, and may we answer from our hearts in the language of one devoted servant of His, "*Speak; for Thy servant heareth;*" or in that of another, whose words of inspiration we have been here considering, "*Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*" And for His Name's sake let us remember, that because He has called us with such a calling as pertains to saints of no dispensation before or after, He counts upon us for what He looks for nowhere else, even that we should shine as lights in the world "to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved."

## GOOD NEWS FROM THE THRONE.

*Rev. xxi. 5-8.*

IN the second chapter of Genesis we have a description, on the part of God, of earth before the fall. Therein we read of the garden planted by Him eastward in Eden. "And out of the ground," so runs the divine record, "made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden" (ii. 9, 10).

What a picture is here presented! Nothing unsightly, nothing that was not pleasing to the eye was found in the vegetation which that garden produced. The whole face of the ground outside was watered by a mist (6). The garden itself was watered by a river (10). Such was the paradise into which were first Adam, then Eve introduced as their dwelling place, if they continued in obedience. But the fall took place, and the garden was to be no longer their home. God drove them out of it, never again to find their delight in its luxuriant vegetation, nor to enjoy refreshment from the fruits of its trees in variety and in abundance. All, as far as they were concerned, was lost, and lost for ever.

In the last chapter but one of the Revelation (xxi.) we read of earth in the eternal state. Millennial blessing the Old Testament prophets delighted to set forth. Everlasting blessing on earth—the new earth, the seer of Patmos was now privileged to describe. Gen. ii. tells us what God had provided for the comfort and delight of His unfallen creatures. Rev. xxi. assures all of the banishment from this globe of the bitter consequences of sin, now so keenly, yet righteously felt by us on earth. God shall wipe away all tears from men's eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain. Earth without these sad accom-

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paniments we have never known. Earth without one lingering trace of the consequences of the fall shall one day be seen. And He, who planted the garden in Eden, will, by divine power, bring about this blessed condition in the future. God prepared the garden for Adam; God will make all things new for the eternal state.

Now the revelation of this bright future was not withheld till the eternal state should begin. Whilst sin on earth is still rampant, whilst death carries on its ravages, whilst sorrow intrudes on many a happy scene, whilst crying and pain are commonly known, God announces what it is that He will do for those who shall be then, and for ever, dwelling upon earth.

To speak to people of a bright future has been always His delight. In their darkest hours He has thus cheered them in the past. And, intimating what He will do, whether in the near or in the distant future, He reminds us that He who is our God has everything in His hands, that all things are completely under His control, and that all is foreknown and provided for by Him. Nothing ever has, or ever can, take Him by surprise.

In this same character, viz., as the God of hope, He spake in the garden of Eden in the first hours of the fall, that our first parents might learn, and that direct from Himself, that simple element of the everlasting gospel—the future and crushing victory over the serpent by the Seed of woman. “Thou shalt bruise His heel,” foretold the power to be put forth by the enemy. The cross witnessed of that. “It shall bruise thy head,” announced his final defeat, for which we yet wait (Rom. xvi. 20).

Bitter must have been the reflection of Adam and Eve for giving way to the enticement of the tempter. As their friend he had introduced himself, and as desiring their enlightenment and acquirement of knowledge. But where was he when they had eaten of the forbidden tree? Where was he when they dis-

covered their nakedness, and tried in vain to cover it? Where was he when the voice of the Lord was heard in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam had to answer to God for himself, and Eve for herself? Their responsibility they each had to bear, and the one who had professed himself to be their friend deserted them in the hour of their need. Before, however, God passed judgment on the guilty pair, He told the serpent in their hearing of the promised Seed who should crush its head.

Adam and Eve were driven out of paradise, with death, temporal death, in prospect; sent forth to labour on ground which would but scantily requite their toil; deprived, too, of the fruits of which they had possessed an abundance in Eden, and henceforth whilst on earth only to eat the herb of the field; they could, in their changed condition, treasure as a hope the final discomfiture of the seducer, and that by the Seed of the woman. Hope, then, was to animate them during all the centuries they might continue denizens of this world. Final victory over the serpent was the good news for that day.

Again, but centuries later, good news came afresh from God. The host led by Moses out of Egypt was evangelized by good tidings of the inheritance in store (Heb. iv. 2). To a land they were journeying, the land promised by God to Abraham and to his descendants (Gen. xii. 7; xiii. 15; xv. 16, 18). Nor was it just that once that the Lord told them of it, viz., before their departure out of Egypt (Exod. vi. 8, 9). From Egypt to Canaan they were reminded of it. In the wilderness, when they had made the golden calf, and thus forfeited all claim to any favour, they were reassured of it. It was a land flowing with milk and honey (Exod. xxxiii. 3) God said. And of the correctness of such a description the twelve spies bore witness after a personal inspection of the country from south to north (Num. xiii. 27). None of them could gainsay it. "Surely it floweth with milk and honey,"

was their unanimous judgment. And later on, after the brook Zered had been crossed, and the hosts of Israel lay encamped in the plains of Moab, Moses again spoke of the land, and described its fertility in yet more beautiful language (Deut. xi. 12). Such was the character of the gospel for Israel in the wilderness. Hope—the hope of the land was thus kept before them, and should have cheered them till they reached it.

Centuries rolled by. The captivity had taken place, and the returned remnant, though in their land, were subject to a foreign yoke, and the house of David had fallen very low, as witnessed by the poverty of Joseph and Mary (Luke ii. 24). But good news from God was heard afresh. A new gospel was preached—the gospel, or glad tidings, of the kingdom. This, first announced by the Lord Jesus when in humiliation, was continued by the twelve (Luke iv. 43, 44; viii. 1; ix. 2). Hope, the hope of Israel's final deliverance from their enemies, was to animate the people of God. And for that, all who would listen, whether in cities or in villages, were to hear in their own tongue the glad tidings of the kingdom of God.

But the King was crucified, and crucified by men of His own nation. Hence the establishment of the kingdom in power, the fulfilment of the glad tidings which He preached, was necessarily delayed. That blessed time must wait for His return. Meanwhile were no glad tidings to be made known? God, who had, as we have seen, from time to time awakened hope in hearts by a gospel which He announced, God had another gospel in store, which after the Lord's death and resurrection was to be proclaimed. It is called the gospel of the grace of God (Acts xx. 24). With this gospel we are familiar. And it differs from all that preceded it, inasmuch as it is essentially a saving gospel. Every one who receives it shares in the salvation of the soul as a present blessing, and will

share in final salvation of the person in the future (1 Pet. i. 5, 9). Moreover, it is addressed to all upon earth, not to Israel only. God is thus seen to be again the God of hope. What He was in the garden of Eden, that He is still. He delights to announce glad tidings. And the good news from the throne confirms this, as we hear that gracious announcement, "I will give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely" (Rev. xxi. 6). Let us turn to this.

Of the eternal state John had been writing. What he saw he states (xxi. 1, 2). What he heard he tells us (3-8). A voice out of the throne\* had spoken, and proclaimed the blessed condition of men upon earth in the eternal state. A voice out of the throne! It was, then, no angelic utterance. Whose voice was it? May not Rev. v. 6 guide us to answer that it was the voice of the Lamb, who in that chapter is seen in the midst of the throne? And to announce the blessedness of that eternal state who more fitted than He? Yea, who *so* fitted as the One to whose sufferings and to whose death it will all be owing? He, we believe it is, who speaks, and who ends with the announcement, "The former (or, first) things have passed away" (xxi. 4). And now another voice John heard. He who sits on the throne spoke, confirming the last words which had just been uttered by saying, "Behold, I make all things new." The voice out of the throne had ceased to speak. He who sat upon the throne then opened His mouth.

On different occasions had John written of the One upon the throne (chap. iv. v. vii.). He received the homage of the living creatures, and of the elders (iv.). He received, too, the worship of all the angelic host (vii.). In His presence the four living creatures and the elders prostrated themselves before the Lamb, rendering to the latter that worship which only should be given to God. Besides that, created things

\* "Out of *the throne*" is the acknowledged better reading.

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in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, gave praise to Him and to the Lamb together (v.). But during all this, He who sat on the throne was seen to be silent. He received worship. He allowed divine honours to be rendered to the Lamb. But He was silent. Now, however, in the twenty-first chapter, He speaks. What does He say? He who is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, confirms the certainty of the coming of the eternal state. But more, He speaks, and declares His readiness *now* to minister refreshment to any one who is conscious of the need of it. He, the eternal One, offers the water of life to any of His sinful creatures who will drink of it. A voice from the throne! One could understand the thundering of judgment being heard when the eternal One speaks. Who could say that such an utterance would be unsuitable to proceed from Him against His creatures who have sinned? But who could have supposed, apart from divine revelation, that He who is on the throne could speak in accents of grace? Yet He does. "I will give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." An *offer* on His part. An offer *freely* made. An offer of refreshment without money and without price! The thirsty one may come and drink. The unsatisfied one may be satiated with gladness. From the fountain, the spring-head as it were, each may drink of the water of life.

The eternal state will certainly be introduced. Then want on earth will be unknown; and sorrow, death, and crying be troubles only of the past. But, now in this vale of tears; here, where death has power; in this scene, where the blight of sorrow withers many a flower of hope, from the throne of God comes a word offering to the thirsty one that which can, and will satisfy the longings, aye, the want of the heart. God delights to bless, and is ready and willing to minister full blessing to those who do not deserve it. So, whilst carrying us on in thought to the

eternal state, we learn of blessing, which leaves nothing to be desired, put *now* within the reach of any one who will receive it. God's character is thus seen to be the same throughout. The God of hope in the garden is the God of hope on the throne.

Nor was that all. He still spoke, and offered an inheritance to all who should overcome, an inheritance bounded only by the confines of heaven and of earth. It is an inheritance not temporal, but everlasting. And to each one who shares in it (and only heavenly saints will), and promised to all who now overcome, He who sits upon the throne will be his God, and that overcomer shall be His son. Here only in the writings of John are believers called *sons* of God. Before all the universe that position, in contrast to one of a bond-slave (Gal. iv. 1-6), will be the overcomer's throughout eternity. *Refreshment*, an *inheritance*, and the *position of a son of God*, these are the good news proclaimed from the throne.

Will all accept and enjoy the blessings offered? The closing utterance of Him who had thus spoken forbids such an expectation. Who *may* be refreshed by the water is made plain. It is the thirsty one. Who *will* enjoy the inheritance is declared. It is the overcomer. But the fearful, or cowardly, those who have been afraid to confess the Lord, afraid to be overcomers, unbelievers too, abominable ones, murderers, whoremongers, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, will have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death (xxi. 8).

Here the voice from Him who sits on the throne ceased speaking. John heard it no more. Keeping silence when He received the homage of His creatures, God spoke at length to thirsty ones to invite them to the fountain of living waters. We can then say to every thirsty one, God speaks to thee. He who spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, and in the end of the age spoke in the Son, He speaks Himself, ere closing the volume of inspiration. He would

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have all to hear and understand how free and full is the offer of blessing.

That voice John first heard confirming the announcement of the future introduction of the eternal state. That same voice offered everlasting blessing to thirsty souls then and now. It declared, too, what is the unending portion of the unsaved, those finally impenitent. And then it relapsed into silence.

C. E. S

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THE RELIGION OF THE KNIFE.—It cannot be denied that all the four evangelists give one account of the crucifixion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. That which was done to the divine Head of the Church is still done to His faithful followers. Stephen testified to the truth, and was stoned for it; Saul, of Tarsus, hailed men and women, and threw them into prison, breathing out threatenings and slaughter; Herod killed James, the brother of John, and then imprisoned Peter, to please the Jews. And what shall we say of all the martyrs for the truth, from Paul and Peter down to our own time? What shall we say of our own brethren—Christians in deed and in truth—who have, by thousands, died violent deaths by order of certain vicars of Jesus Christ? The history of such is so well known that we can afford to dispense with the terrible details. The times are changed, but the descendants of Cain and Herod remain unaltered. Other arguments than the rod, the sword, and the fire are unknown to them. At the present epoch you may say that things are not so bad. Are they not? Go to Barletta, Fara Novarese, and Bergamo, and inquire at these places, whether the Church of Rome has altered her tactics. You will find that she has not!—*Extract.*

## THE LORD JESUS IN HUMILIATION AND SERVICE.

### NOTES OF A LECTURE ON PHILIPPIANS II.

I FELT, beloved friends, that it would be happy to have the Lord, Himself, before our minds this evening as the object of our thoughts. The Christian is so completely brought to God, that he goes out from God to shew the character of God to the world. The subject of this epistle is *Christian Experience*. And you get this experience in the power of the Spirit of God so completely, that you never get sin mentioned in the epistle from beginning to end, nor the flesh, looked at as bad flesh, save to say that Paul didn't trust in it. He here does not know which to do—die or live. "If I die, I am with the Lord; that's better; but I can't work for His saints. If I live there is the activity of love for them, and so he does not know which to choose. There is utter absence of self in that, and power. "Then," he says, "it is more needful for the Church that I stay, and so I know that I shall be permitted;" decides his own case. It is all power, the power of the Spirit of God leading a person out of the reach of sin. If you look at the detail in verses 15, 16, you will find his exhortation to others is an exact picture of what the life of Christ really was—"blameless and harmless;" that is what Christ was—"the sons of God;" that is exactly what He was, Son of God—without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation; such was Jesus—"shine as lights in the world"; when He was in the world He was the light of the world—"Holding forth the word of life;" He was that Word of life. The detail is precisely the same power of the Spirit of God, and the exhortation is just the detail of Christ's life in the world.

In this epistle there are two great principles of Christian life (the last chapter is, he is superior to all cares and all circumstances). In the 3rd chapter, it is

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the energy that carries a man on, so that everything else is dross and dung—that is *Christ in glory*. He has seen Him up there, and he says, “I must get that.” “There are hindrances in the way.” “I’ll throw them aside,” he says. “You’ll lose everything.” “Can’t help it; I must get Him.” “Oh, but you’ll die.” “No matter; that’s all the more like Him; I must get on to Him, the One up there in the glory, whom I have seen.” “If by any means;” that is whatever it may cost me, even life itself. “Resurrection *from among* the dead,” that is the character of Christ’s resurrection. The resurrection of the saints has nothing in common with the resurrection of sinners. Christ is the firstfruits, then those that are Christ’s at His coming. He is not the firstfruits of sinners to be judged. Not a hint in Scripture of saints and sinners being raised together. “That I may attain unto the resurrection from among the dead” (the apostle uses a rare and emphatic word to explain his meaning)—what is there to attain to, if the wickedest man in the world goes up at the same time and in the same way? “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.” What’s the good of that, if all rise together? The character of Christ’s resurrection was the positive seal of God’s approval on Him, and His work, and so is ours. As regards justification His resurrection is of all importance, for it is the seal of God on the excellency and perfectness of the work of Christ. He was taken out from among the dead as a perfect seal upon His work and person, and everything else; and so is our resurrection the seal of our acceptance. Because God delights in us, we are taken out from among the dead, as Christ was. So Paul continues his running till he gets that. You have Christ in glory, and all is dross and dung except that. He wants Christ instead of Paul, and all he gets by the way is nothing—if he gets even death, it is all the more like Him.

In chapter ii. you don’t get Christ in glory as the

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One he is running after; not Christ gone up, but Christ *coming down*—One whom I am to be like in this, the graciousness of the walk that He displayed, and that is always going down—going from the form of Godhead down to death. Where do I find what God is fully displayed—righteousness and love perfectly displayed? In death! It is a wonderful riddle that has come out, the Holy One going down—the Prince of Life going into death. We never completely learn till we see it there—the things that the angels desire to look into. No one knows the Son but the Father. We know the Father, but no one knows the Son; the Divinity of Christ is maintained by the inscrutability of the Incarnation. God becoming a man! That is unfathomable! And the meekest, lowliest man that ever walked this earth. Paul is taking up the truth of lowliness, &c., but the moment he begins he must bring out Christ. The motive of all exhortations is nothing less than the whole scope of Christianity. God come down as Man and bringing salvation, and gone back again as Man. Take the commonest exhortations, the spring and motive is nothing short of obedience to the word of God Himself. Eating and drinking even is sanctified by the word of God and prayer (1 Tim. iv. 4, 5). I am merely eating like a beast if it isn't. He exhorts them to walk in lowliness and love (there had been some little squabbling, I suppose, among them). These Philippians had been sending help to the apostle from a long way off, and he won't reproach them, but says, "Now I see how you love me; I see how you care for me and my being happy. Now, if you want to make me perfectly happy, walk in love among yourselves." It is a reproach so delicately brought in that their hearts could not resist it. "And let each esteem other better than himself." It sounds unpractical and impossible; but if I think of myself with the mind of God, I see the evil, the sin in myself. If I think of another, and I am full of Christ, I shall see all the value of Christ upon him, I shall see with

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Christ's heart, and I can esteem him better than myself, for I see evil in myself, and I see Christ in him. "Let this mind be in you," &c., *i.e.*, the spirit in which Christ was, always going down; first being in the form of Godhead, and in the glory, He takes the place of a Man, and then He humbles Himself again to death. He is the first grand example of "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted," and that is what we have to do—go down. Here we get the principle of Christ's whole personal course, and we get not only what He was, but the delight He took in us. He took us up. His interest is in us, and the expression of this delight was not simply that He acts graciously towards men, but He Himself becomes one of them. He went down to death! We go down to death by sin, He by grace; we by disobedience, He by obedience. So He gets by obedience and grace, what we get by disobedience and sin. From the first step that we go He takes us up till He has us where He is. Speaking in a general way, I cannot look at Christ in His life and walk till my soul is at peace, and settled. If a soul has not settled peace, you will find it wants the Epistles first, not the Gospels, because the Epistles are the reasonings of the Holy Ghost on the value of Christ's work. John's writings bring God down here in grace to sinners. Paul takes man up there in righteousness to God. Paul takes man up to God in the light; John brings God down to man. You get in the Gospel of John, God brought down to us in our need, get Him talking to the woman at the well, and His disciples wondering, and she finds that in this tired Man at the well, she has been speaking to the Lord of Glory. "I thought," she said, "He was a poor tired Jew, who wanted a drink of water." "Oh," He says, "if you knew how that God had come so low as to be dependent on you for a drink of water, you would have confidence in Him at once."

This poor, tired Man was the Lord of Life and Glory, who not only could lay all her life bare before

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her in its sin and shame, but could fully meet her heart, meet her need, and attract her to Himself, so that she loses all her sense of fear, and shame, in her anxiety to bring others to Him too. When our consciences are awakened, we want then to know how a sinner can be just with God, and so we turn to Romans and the reasonings of the Epistles; but when the heart knows I am a child, and that the same favour rests on me as on Jesus, I turn back to the Gospels and say, I must look at Jesus—what a Saviour He is! I want Him *close, close* to me then! brought close to my eye. Then I look back to the Gospel of John and see God come down in Him. I get in Him one, who instead of driving the one who had the defilement away, drives away the defilement, and leaves the poor leper *clean* and *near Him*. Where do we find the blessed Lord going as soon as He is called out to His public ministry! To the baptism of Repentance. Why does he go there? “Oh,” He says, “these poor people going there are those in whom God is working. They are taking the first step in the right direction, and I must go with them.” I find this perfectness and love in Him. “I can’t leave them to go alone,” He says, “I must go with them.” I need not say He needed no repentance, but it was the first right step of that poor remnant, and He will be associated with them. “This is not your place,” says John. “Yes,” He says, but “suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.” He does not haughtily say “becometh Me,” but “becometh us.” He takes His place in grace along with us (here it was with the Jew), and the heaven is opened for Him, and the Holy Ghost descends upon Him, and the Father’s voice proclaims His Son; the model of our place in grace through redemption. We get heaven opened four times. At His Baptism, when the Holy Ghost comes down on Him. Then heaven is opened, and the angels of God ascend and descend on the Son of Man—that is, the highest angels become His servants.

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Heaven is opened, and He comes out on the white horse to judge. And between these two I get heaven opened for Stephen to see Him. The heaven was opened to Stephen as to Christ. But mark how the glory of His person is always maintained. When heaven is opened to Stephen, it is that he may look in and see Jesus; but when at His Baptism heaven was opened, it is for heaven to look down upon Him. He was not looking at an object in heaven. Heaven was looking at Him. The heavens were never opened for heaven to look down on anything in this earth till that Divine and Blessed One is there. The fulness of the Godhead is in Him, but He is sealed as a Man. The Father says, "All my delight is there." What is most despised on earth is the One heaven can't but be opened to, and the Father can't keep silence about Him. A Man is the delight of God. Heaven is opened to Him, the Holy Ghost comes down upon Him, and the Father's voice proclaims Him His Son. And it is of profound interest to see that here first the whole Trinity is fully revealed, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

First, then, His place as the manifestation of accepted man is settled. As soon as that is settled, "Yes," He says, "but these are people in conflict and difficulty, and have got this tyrant over them, I must go and meet him for them." He meets the devil—overcomes him, of course. The devil wants Him to go out of His course, to keep not His first estate; he would have Him leave the place of obedience, and a servant, on the plea of His being a Son. The written Word was sufficient to conquer the devil, and enough for the Son of God to use. All possible salvation depended on His victory; all that victory depended on the written Word of God. Never, save at His death, was there such a solemn moment. What He held for enough, and what Satan held for enough, was the written Word of God. He bound the strong man by that means, and set about spoiling his goods. There is one Man, who knows the truth, because He is the truth, who is

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satisfied with the written Word, and that is the Lord. There is no craft of Satan that the Word of God is not sufficient to meet. There was One, as a Man, wielding a power that was sufficient to deliver man from all the effects of sin. If sick, they were healed—healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him—power working in goodness. And what is the effect? They would not have Him! The Lord on earth had power to remove the effects of Satan's power, but behind those was man's heart, which could ask Him to depart. Where there was a legion of devils, and He sends them off into the herd of swine, they prayed Him to depart out of their coasts—they didn't want Him. The quiet devil that influenced their hearts was worse than all the legion of devils that ran noisily down the steep place into the sea.

Satan says, "If you take this people up, you take them up at your cost. I have got the power of death over them." But He goes on. Presently Satan, prince of this world, raises all the world against Him. The disciples are afraid and leave Him; one betrays Him, one denies Him, and the rest run away. "Well, then," He says, "since this hatred is so great, I must give up My life to redeem them out of it—and 'through death, destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.'"

They ask Peter, "Does not your Master pay tribute?" Peter comes to Jesus, and He shows He is God, by showing that He knows what is in Peter's heart, and says, "Of whom do the kings of the earth take tribute; of their own children or of strangers?" "Of strangers," Peter says. "Then are the children free." He was the Son of the Great King of the temple, and free; and so was Peter. He puts Himself with Peter. "Notwithstanding, lest *we* offend" (puts Himself with Peter again), then shows He is God over all, and Lord of creation, by disposing of creation, commanding the fish of the sea to yield up the tribute money, "that

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give for *thee* and *Me*”—puts Peter and Himself both together again. It's lovely!

While He was God in everything, He was the humblest, most affable Man that ever walked this earth. In death only is He alone. He looked for compassion and found none. “Tarry ye here, and watch with Me.” In His sore trial He looked in Gethsemane for them to watch with Him—they could not, and an angel from heaven comes to strengthen Him. Will He ever give up being a Servant? Never! That form of servant He will never give up. Selfishness likes to be served. Love likes to serve. That is just what I find in Christ.

No intellect knows God. We only know God by our wants. Infidels say you can't have more than the power of man's mind. If I see a decrepit old woman leaning on the arm of a strong man, and supported by his strength, it is not in herself that she knows what strength is—and that is how we know God. No man can know God by “knowing;” he would not be man if he did, and God would not be God at all. It is conscience that knows the way God meets us. It is a want in me. Look at Simon the Pharisee and the woman. What did he know of Christ? He felt no need of Him; thought he was putting honour upon Him in asking Him, though in curiosity, to his house, and does not show Him the courtesy due even to a guest, and Christ is not inattentive to neglect. He knows and feels it. If I am cold and indifferent to Him, He knows and feels it all; it touches His heart. God's essential names are Light and Love. Look at the woman, the light made her know herself, and the love made her know Christ and trust Him. Christ thoroughly knew her heart, and she thoroughly knew Christ's heart. While Simon had thought Him unworthy of the common courtesies of life, she found a fulness of grace, and of light, and love that could meet all her need. Her sins, which are many (He knew them all), are all forgiven, for she loved much. God's

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heart and man's heart, through grace, met in blessedness where the Pharisee was an utter stranger.

I learn this lesson here, that the person of the Lord Jesus may have full power in my heart before I know the fact of forgiveness. The essential names of God, Light and Love, I find both brought out in Christ—the light that reveals everything in me, and the love that puts it all away. When the light comes and manifests me before God, I find myself in the presence of love, that has done everything for me. If I had the light without the love I must run away and hide myself. If I had the love without the light it would not do at all. It could not be. I get both in Christ—the Divine Light that discovers all, and the Divine Love that makes me know that all is put away. When light comes in, the conscience is honest. Take the thief, and hear him—“*We indeed justly*”—light had discovered that to him—“but this Man hath done nothing amiss.” How did he know? By Divine teaching. Would not our hearts all say, “He has done nothing amiss”? Then, again, “*Lord,*” he says—that is Divine teaching as to His person. All His disciples had run away; he alone owns His Lordship there on the cross—comforts His heart in that hour. And what does he ask? Is it relief from his pain? No. Suffering all that terrible agony on the cross, does he ask the One hanging by his side, whose power he owned, to lessen the suffering? No; but to be remembered by Him in His kingdom; and the effect of this is, “To-day thou shalt be with Me in paradise.” Oh, here was a heart that had found out what He was. A Pharisee is a Pharisee, and a whited sepulchre, but a *broken heart* is suited to a *heart-healing God*.

Is He a servant in the glory? Oh, yes, He says, indeed I am. He says to His disciples—I am going to the Father; I can't be your companion any more on earth; but I'm not going to give you up. What's to be done? I must fit you to be with Me; give you “a part with Me.” You are clean, but you will be picking

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up dirt in your walk in this world, and this won't do to be associated with Me in glory; I must wash your feet. And that is what He is doing now. He is a Servant to wash our feet now.\* He sets Himself to that service. We do not cease to be clean, looked at as to our standing before God, but we walk through the world and pick up dirt, and Christ is our servant to wash it away. In Luke xii. we find He will be our servant in the glory. "He will gird Himself, and come forth and serve them." It is Divine love unspeakably blessed. He will never give up being a Man. "Let your loins be girded, and your lights burning." I must have a full profession of Christ, that is, lights burning. Have your loins well tucked up for service, while I am away; when I come again I shall have My own way, and you shall sit down, and I will serve you.

Shall I ever forget the humiliation of Christ? Shall I ever forget His manhood in that way, giving Himself for me, and then taking me up there to be with Himself, where He is remaining a Man for me through all eternity; shall I forget? Never! never! through all eternity. I shall never forget His humiliation on earth. While seeing Him in glory animates the soul to run after Him: what feeds the soul is the Bread that came down. That produces a spirit that thinks of everything but itself. I need not go into detail, but you get in the rest of Philippians ii. all the delicacy of feeling brought out which flows from absence of self, and love to others, because the soul has got imbued with Christ, and is feeding upon Him, till unconsciously it grows to be like Him. I must have the 2nd as well as the 3rd of Philippians; all the energy you like, but then go and study Him, and live by Him, and you will come out in His likeness, in all His grace, and gentleness, and loveliness. Oh, what a place, redeemed by Him, going to be with Him in glory, and set meanwhile to manifest Him on earth!

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\* "Washed," in John xiii. 10, refers to the whole body; "wash," to feet or hands. The words are different in Greek.

The Lord give us to be so occupied with Him who was so full of love, so full of gentleness, so full of lowliness, that we shall manifest the same! The first sin in the world was losing confidence in God. He comes back to us who are in all these sins and says, "Now you may trust Me." It is God winning back the confidence of your heart, unbounded confidence in unbounded love—and that not by exhortations from heaven, but by His presence on earth. "If you are a poor woman, not fit to face any of your fellow-creatures, come to Me; I'll have you, trust Me; if you are hanging on a cross for your crimes, you shall go up to-day with Me to paradise. My blood is enough to put your crimes away, My heart is open to receive you."

The Lord give us to know more of that One, who when He put forth His own sheep went before them—met the lion for them, and delivered them! The Lord give us to realize what He was!

J. N. D.

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## LETTERS OF INTEREST.

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ON JOY AND PEACE.—I quite enter into your feeling about the generality of Christians having *little peace* and *less of joy*. I don't understand it. But it seems to me people are only half converted. And now these new converts [alluding to the Revival] have got the *old real thing in power*. It is all from on high. And it seems as if the Lord from time to time works in power to bring man back to see what He can do, and what reality of power from on high is. Then everything in man's hands gets lower and lower, till the Lord, as it were, re-appears in the matter, and works afresh, and brings man to see what a helpless creature he is, and how truly all good must come from Him.

As to peace, I believe a great part of our want of peace is a looking into ourselves, and expecting some good there; or thinking the Lord expects us to do something towards the mending of ourselves, instead

of looking out of our wretched old selves altogether, and seeing His work, and getting God's thoughts about it. I am sure that a practical undervaluing (through bad teaching and ignorance) of the perfection of the work of the Lord Jesus, by which sin has been condemned, and will be for ever put away for every believer, lies at the root of much *dispeace*; and another cause is, that we don't realise the truth of the promises regarding the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Unbelief and ignorance have brought us generally to a very low state. And now the Lord in mercy is bringing us back to see what we *ought to be*. I am sure reading of books on religion in place of the Bible is one great source of evil. And if instead we returned to the simple word, and, as the poor woman said, "grup a promise and haud to it," was more practised, things would soon be different. Formality would be put away, and reality take the place.

It has all along in these revivals seemed to me that the Lord is bringing us back to the reality of what the Church should be, when everyone who received the word became instantly a preacher *practically* of the gospel to all around. We can but seek to know the mighty working of His "power to usward who believe," the measure of its "exceeding greatness," that which raised up Jesus from the dead, that "we also should walk in newness of life." Nothing short of that power can suffice. We must get rid of our own low, narrow, unbelieving thoughts, and ask the Lord to make us enter into His thoughts, which are high above ours, as the heaven is above the earth. We must be more like little children, seeking wisdom, knowledge, strength, and teaching, as well as righteousness from on high.

October, 1859.

M. C.

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LEFT Ramleh at 9 a.m., and reached Jerusalem 5 p.m. With our Bibles before us, we were able to identify every place of interest along the route. We passed first through the plains of Sharon, where the scarlet anemone and white cyclamen

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blossom in masses. Then we came to the hills of Gibeon, where Joshua won such a mighty victory, and then reached Kirjath Jearim, where the ark of the Lord was kept for 20 years. We climbed 3,000 feet, and sometimes went through very desolate country. There is certainly a curse on the land, and it *is* desolate, but the soil is excellent, and it strikes one as though, but for the curse, it might be the most fertile country in the world. The first view of Jerusalem from the Jaffa Road is disappointing, and we could not realize in the least that we were at last in Jerusalem until we were standing on the roof of this hotel, with the whole city at our feet; the Church of the Holy Sepulchre just below us; the Mount of Olives, with the garden of Gethsemane opposite to us; Mount Zion away to our right; and the mountains of Moab, with Jericho and the Jordan, far away in the distance. I cannot picture it all to you as I should like to do. It is wonderful, and the longer we are here the more we realize its sacred history, and its absorbing interest. The only thing at all irritating to one's feelings is to have Turkish soldiers everywhere, and to find them lounging about and smoking in the most sacred spots. They say that the soldiers are bound to be on guard to prevent the different sects of Christians from flying at each other's throats, as has sometimes happened; but I heartily hope, as everyone must, that this country will some day be governed by civilized Christians, and not by Infidels.

Our first visit was to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, a massive building or buildings, erected over the site of Calvary and the Tomb of the Sepulchre. Each sect has its own chapel, but all own the chapels over the two sites above mentioned. It is hard to realize that the sites are really those of Calvary and the Tomb, and doubly hard with all the costly lamps and marble walls which are there, and especially as the church is now in the very heart of the city. But I believe there is little reason to doubt their authenticity, although several people now try to place Calvary outside the Damascus Gate, on a hill which has *somewhat* the appearance of a skull. The Mosque of Omar is a wonderfully beautiful mosque—but one's great interest in it is centred in the *Rock* which has been on that spot from time immemorial. It is a very large rock, situated in the centre of the Mosque, and Abraham is believed to have offered up Isaac on it,

and Ornan to have used it for his threshing floor, and Solomon to have built the Temple quite near it, or even to have had it in the Temple. In any case Christ Himself must undoubtedly have often seen it, as it is so large and so conspicuous, and is situated on the site of the Temple.

We have been to Bethany, going over the Mount of Olives a way by which Christ very often went, and there we saw the reputed sites of Mary and Martha's house and of the Tomb of Lazarus. It must have been a very peaceful spot where Mary lived, nestling as it does under the Mount of Olives, on the far side from Jerusalem. Bethlehem is a very peaceful looking village, lying on the slope of a hill, and with green fields where one can easily picture Ruth and Boaz in the harvest fields, and the shepherds watching their flocks.

The Lake of Galilee is very beautiful, and as for the wild flowers on the shores and throughout Palestine, I am afraid I can give you no conception of what they are. The Galilee shores are fringed with red and yellow oleanders and tall hollyhocks, and the banks are *masses* of large anemone, and light and dark blue larkspur, besides thousands of other flowers of which I do not know the names. The Lake of Tiberias lies about 900 feet below the Mediterranean, and the heat was really awful. We had to mount 5,000 feet to get to Damascus, and the path was dreadfully rough and stony. It is a thoroughly Oriental city, with its different peoples and costumes, and the great mosque is a wonderful building, but probably not comparable to that of S. Sophia at Constantinople.

*Jerusalem, March 19th, 1892.*

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“IF thine enemy hunger, feed him.” The word refers to the tender and cheerful feeding of their young by parent birds, or of children by kind nurses. “*Feed him,*” says Wesley, “with your own hand; if it be needful, even put bread into his mouth.”

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AUGUST, 1892.

## THE MINISTRY OF PETER.

### EXHORTING (1 *Peter* ii. 11 ; v. 14).

TO the labours of an evangelist and also of a teacher Peter added that of an exhorter. A valuable gift is that of exhortation, and it was one pre-eminently displayed in Barnabas, who was so surnamed on that account.\*

A teacher is occupied with the presentation of truth, which necessarily in its fulness carries us back in thought to the past (Eph. i. 4), as well as takes us on to the future. An evangelist goes forth with the message of grace and of salvation to reach souls in the world. An exhorter comes with words of admonition for those already evangelized, surveying his hearers in the different positions in which they are found upon earth, and exhorting them in connection with their surroundings and, it may be, their special circumstances. The teacher's part is to open up the revealed will of God. He is occupied with the *Word*. The evangelist's part is to tell out to the perishing and the needy the goodness of the grace of God. He unfolds to sinners something of the *heart* of God. The exhorter presses home the practical application of divine truth. He is occupied with the saints in their *walk*, and is desirous that they should answer to that which is characteristic of true children of God. In this character Peter now appears.

Surveying the wide field, and noting the different trials to which Christians might be exposed—the manifold temptations of which he had made mention (i. 6)—the apostle has a suited word about each of them.

And first he speaks in connection with the position

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\* See Acts iv. 36, where *consolation*, of the Authorised Version, is better rendered *exhortation* in the Revised Version. For an instance of Barnabas engaged in that, see Acts xi. 23.

of his readers while on earth, and in their relation to rulers, and to men around them (ii. 11-17). On earth they were strangers and pilgrims; strangers, because they dwelt not in their own land; pilgrims, because they were really, as he had already reminded them (i. 4), on their way to the object of their hope. Like the patriarchs of old (Heb. xi. 13), these their descendants, by embracing Christianity, became necessarily pilgrims here below. As such, from fleshly lusts they should abstain, for these war against the soul. Moreover, as saints of God they had a privilege of which they should avail themselves. In living among Gentiles, idolatrous heathen, they were as Christians evil spoken of, and viewed as evildoers. Now that could be refuted, and turned to the glory of God, by seemly behaviour on their part. For these very enemies, beholding their good works, would be led to glorify God in the day of visitation. Patient continuance in well-doing has an effect on others. In the future that would be manifested. Evil spoken of in the present, their good conduct would be remembered by their opponents in a day that was coming. For the day of visitation will come, that time of judicial dealing on the part of God with the impenitent, when such will have to own the justness of their sentence, who had witnessed in others what was right, though they had not done it. We view the visitation here mentioned in accordance with the frequent use of the term in the Old Testament,\* with which of course the apostle's readers were familiar.

Then as *citizens* these saints were to be in subjection, for the Lord's sake, to every ordinance of man. To kings and governors they were to bow, thus putting to silence by well-doing the ignorance of foolish men; manifesting in all this that they were the bondservants of God. Would the heathen class

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\* See Is. x. 3; Jer. viii. 12; x. 15; xi. 23; xxiii. 12; xlvi. 21; xlviii. 44; I. 27; li. 18; Hosea ix. 7; Micah vii. 4.

Jews and Christians together? It would seem that they did in Asia Minor, from the anxiety manifested by the Jews at Ephesus to put Alexander forward as their spokesman to the enraged worshippers of Diana. A vain attempt. The multitude would not hear him. Now the Christians could show how great was the difference, not by honeyed words to captivate the populace, nor by the skilful defence of a practised special pleader, but by their daily life. Actions, it is said, speak louder than words. So Christians would commend themselves by quiet subjection to the ruling powers, by general well-doing, and by love to the brotherhood. On all this Peter here insists. Of the *brotherhood* he writes, and he only. Those who had been Gentiles had very early manifested their recognition of it (Acts xi. 28-30). It may be that those who had been Jews were more backward in that. So twice are they reminded of its existence (ii. 17; v. 9). And now, in few and simple words, he tells those who might once have boasted of their earthly position of that which became them as Christians. "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king" (ii. 17). *All* men—Gentiles as well as Jews; and the brotherhood—all true believers—were to be recognised; the first as worthy of honour, the second as objects of love.

From addressing all, the apostle turns to consider different classes and saints in varied circumstances. Of *classes* he first treats, beginning with the subject ones of servants and of wives (ii. 18-iii. 6). Servants he writes to; household servants, not slaves. Paul, addressing chiefly converts from the heathen, writes of slaves. Peter, writing to his own countrymen among the dispersion, designates them as household servants. For to the Jews slavery of their own countrymen was forbidden. They were to treat those of their own nation as hired servants (Lev. xxv. 39-43). And though there might be some of Peter's countrymen in the houses of Gentiles, many probably

were in service to those who were Jews. Hence the selection of a term suited to such.

Now the Christian servant was to glorify God in that relation by being in subjection to his own master, whether he was good and gentle, or whether he was froward. The mention of the froward naturally introduces the thought of possibly suffering wrongfully. Hard this is to bear, as we all know. The natural heart rises up in rebellion against it. But true Christian ministry would nerve the servant to bear it. And it is interesting to note the way that Peter does this. Encouragement is afforded by the announcement that suffering wrongfully in patience is acceptable with God. God thus brought in, the servant being reminded that His eye beholds all, would be better able to bear the trial. Moreover, to bear it *patiently* was he called ; for as a Christian he was to remember the example of the Master, "who when He was reviled, reviled not again : when He suffered, threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." That night, the remembrance of which must ever have been associated in our apostle's mind with his most sorrowful experience, could furnish suffering ones ever after with a suitable example—the example of patient suffering exhibited by their Lord. But not only to His example are they pointed. They are likewise reminded of His sufferings for them in bearing their sins in His own body on the tree. In that they cannot follow Him. Yet a practical conclusion was drawn from it, viz., that ye "being dead to sins should live unto righteousness. By whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray ; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (1 Pet. ii. 20-25). Thus the Lord in life and in death was brought before them : His ways in life as an example, His atoning death as a reason that they should act in trial aright.

Next wives are addressed, and the prospect held out—a ground of encouragement indeed—of winning

to the faith an unconverted husband by chaste conversation coupled with fear. Where arguments might embitter, and be barren of good results, chaste conversation, or behaviour, might act beneficially. What a field for a woman to win a moral victory, and to be the instrument of blessing to her husband by quiet demeanour and comely apparel! Moreover (and this Peter so often keeps before his readers), he reminds the wives of the approbation of God. No slight result to be attained, surely. And a meek and quiet spirit, he tells them, is, in the sight of God, of great price. Would the wife be inclined to chafe and bemoan her lot? What a service was open to her! What a reward was set before her (iii. 1-6)!

Then husbands get a word. If the Christian wife is taught the duty of subjection, the Christian husband is reminded that he should honour his wife as the weaker vessel: here the claim of nature comes in. Further, he should honour her, if a Christian, as a fellow heir of the grace of life. And as to others, so to the husband an inducement is added, viz., that your prayers be not hindered (7).

From classes he turns back to all, and urges considerateness for others, brotherly love, and lowly mindedness (rather than courteousness); and instead of the outcome of the feelings of the natural heart when suffering evil, or railing, from the Christian only blessing was to come forth. And here, as before, encouragement is given; this time by a quotation from Ps. xxxiv. 12-16, reminding all of God's governmental dealings, which in this case, for the saint, are quite independent of dispensational differences.\*

And now our apostle would minister to the believer suffering for righteousness sake. To this class of suffering any one of them might be exposed then,

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\* We have said *for the saint*. For the reader may remark that the closing words of the sixteenth verse, applicable to the wicked—"to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth"—the apostle forebore to quote. He was only concerned with the walk of saints.

as any child of God might equally now. How does he minister to such? He has, we may see, much to say. First, those thus suffering are to count themselves blessed. Naturally they might bemoan themselves. As saints, all such feelings were to be banished. Next, the fear of man, which has often such sway over people, was not to sway them. Christ the Lord was to be sanctified in their hearts. Was Peter writing of something new? His readers might recall the words of Isa. viii. 12, 13, addressed there to the godly remnant. Further, open confession, when called for, of a reason for the hope that was in them, was to be given, but in meekness and fear. Nor was this all. The remembrance of the Lord Jesus having suffered for them, the just One for the unjust, was to deter any from wrong-doing. The remembrance, too, of the provision God has made, by the death of His Son, for the Christian's walk upon earth, was not to be forgotten; any more than was the example of Christ, who suffered in the flesh, to be lost on any one of them. All these motives are brought to bear to stimulate them to suffer for righteousness (iii. 13-iv. 6).

We have just sketched out this subject; for it would be impossible within the limits of this paper to enter at any length on the different points of the passage; though to one or two we must briefly refer.

In three lights is the death of Christ here viewed. First and foremost, of His death in making atonement are we reminded (iii. 18). Then Christian baptism is referred to, which, as Paul teaches, expresses burial with Christ unto death. By that rite we are buried with Him unto death, that, like as He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, we also should walk in newness of life (Rom. vi. 4). Hence, as Peter states, it saves. For if Christians carry out practically that of which it speaks, they will not be found in wrong-doing. It saves, he says. Not, however, from the judgment due to our sins, for of that he had written as already shared in by them by faith

(i. 9). But it saves the Christian from *sinning*, if he carries out that of which it speaks. For Christian baptism is always found in Scripture in connection with profession and walk; never in connection with communication of life (Acts xxii. 16; Rom. vi. 1-4; Gal. iii. 27, 28; Col. ii. 12). So, carrying out in practice that of which it is the figure, the individual will have that good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Christ, which he desires, and of which Peter had just written (iii. 16).\*

But not only does our apostle remind us of the beneficial aspects of the Lord's death; first, in meeting the question of our guilt, and then providing that the Christian, if obedient, might be kept from sinning; but he also would impress on all the *example* with which it furnishes us. Christ suffered in the flesh, and that to death, because in all things perfectly obedient to His Father. So the Christian is to arm himself with the like mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin, no longer to live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For, if suffering in the flesh the Christian does not yield to sin, he suffers rather than yields to it. Now this was nothing really new; for to those of old, but who were then dead, glad tidings had been preached (though not that of

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\* We have not dwelt above on the Lord's ministry to souls in prison. He preached, we read, to them in spirit, not in person; and to them when disobedient in the days of Noah, by Noah. Thus there is a parallel to be drawn between antediluvian times and Peter's day. A testimony from God went forth by Noah. A testimony from God was going forth by the gospel. The mass rejected it in the days of the patriarch. The mass had rejected it in the days of the apostle. The saved company through the flood was a small one, just eight souls. So, also, in Peter's day it was but a remnant (Rom. xi. 5). By the waters of the flood, Noah and those with him in the ark were preserved to enter on a new scene, freed from the iniquity which had abounded. But that scene was on the same earth on which they had previously dwelt; for they never left it. By Christian baptism, saints were brought into a new position, though still on earth; and, acting in accordance with that new position, they would be saved from old associations and evil courses.

the grace of God), that they might live to God in the spirit.

Peter had referred to past days, speaking of those who were dead. He now warns Christians that they were living when the end of all things was at hand, and the Lord's coming, as he tells them elsewhere (2 Pet. i. 16-19), was the hope to be kept before each one. "The end of all things is at hand" (1 Pet. iv. 7). A solemn announcement indeed! What, then, became Christians personally and in their intercourse with one another? Sobriety, or sound mindedness, and watching unto prayer, and manifesting towards each other that fervent love which covers a multitude of sins. Add to this, hospitality was to be extended one to the other, and ministry of various kinds was to be in exercise. And here again a ground of encouragement is offered, viz., that God, in all things, might be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and dominion for ever and ever (iv. 7-11).

Peter has spoken of suffering unjustly (ii.), and suffering for righteousness (iii.); he will now encourage his readers to suffer for Christ's sake (iv. 12-19). Distinctive Christian suffering this last is, and any passing through it should rejoice; for if partakers of Christ's sufferings, they shall share in joy at His revelation in glory. Blessed indeed were such. Of the world's reproach, for Christ's sake, they need never be ashamed. The spirit of glory and the Spirit of God rested on them.\* Rejoicing then in the prospect of the future, having a joy of which the world could never deprive them, for the present they were, if suffering according to the will of God, to commit the keeping of their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator.

The apostle has thus treated of the three great classes of sufferings, in one or more of which many of his readers might be called to have part. His

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\* Here verse 14 probably ended.

epistle, therefore, draws to a close. A few words are now directed to elders in office, reminding them that the flock is God's, not theirs, but exhorting them to tend it willingly and readily, and when the Chief Shepherd appears they will meet with reward. Next, the proper behaviour of younger brethren is pointed out, coupled with a word of admonition for all (v. 5-9); and the apostle closes with a prayer on behalf of his readers, that the God of all grace, who had called them unto His eternal glory by Christ, after they had suffered awhile, should stablish, strengthen, and settle them. And, maintaining his character of an exhorter, he adds, "By Silvanus, a faithful brother, as I suppose, I have written, briefly exhorting and testifying that is the true grace of God." And faithful to the end in this service, his last words before the final salutations are, "Stand ye fast therein;" for so should we read that clause of verse 12.

Suffering, and how to bear it, whilst standing fast in the true grace of God, is Peter's great theme in this his first epistle.

C. E. S.

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### ANATHEMA, MARANATHA.

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"IF any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha" (1 Cor. xvi. 22). These words appear to have been used by the Apostle Paul as a solemn and fitting conclusion to the first epistle to the Corinthians. This epistle was addressed to saints by calling (as we find in the second verse of chapter i.), but it is added, "*with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.*" And he follows this by saying, "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." Thus it begins with the very fullest presentation of grace to all who in any place called upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, but it closes by declaring condemnation upon

any man amongst them, if such there should be, who loved Him not, adding, Maran (the Lord) atha (cometh)—(Maranatha, *the Lord cometh*). In this respect it reminds us of the book of Revelation, opening with a special blessing upon him who reads and them who hear and keep what is written therein, *for the time is at hand*; and closing with this testimony unto all who hear the words of the prophecy—"If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and out of the holy city, which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things saith, *Surely I come quickly.*"

The conclusion to be drawn is plain enough—God is rich in grace and plenteous in blessing! It rejoices His heart to make known His delight in blessing saints and sinners through our Lord Jesus Christ! But there is along with that, this also to be learnt, that God is *very jealous* for the glory of His beloved Son, and therefore pronounces that Anathema upon any man who calls upon Him by name, thus acknowledging His Lordship, His authority, ranking himself by profession as one of His disciples, one of His followers, and yet *loving Him not*; upon such God's solemn Anathema rests, for the Lord cometh. It is just there, at the House of God formed of those who profess and call themselves Christians, that judgment begins; there of all places does it first fall, and there does it fall the heaviest. Very jealous also is God about His Word, which He tells us He has magnified above all His Name, and therefore are those striking words added at the close of the last book of Scripture which I have quoted above.

God is indeed jealous for His Word and for the glory of His Son, and a most grievous sin is it in His sight to yield a feigned obedience to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ while the heart is an utter

stranger to His love. "We love Him because He first loved us;" and if we love Him not it is clear that we know Him not, for the word is, "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love." It is terrible in the eyes of God to be trafficking, as it were, with the Name of Christ while He has never been given a place in the affections of our hearts; the One who is chief among ten thousand, who is altogether lovely! Such is His Person; and as to His work has He not laid down His life for us? "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;" He for His enemies was slain, what love with His could vie? The glory of His person and the grace of His work present such unchallengeable grounds for our love to Him, such an undeniable claim, that God resents with righteous indignation the denial of it to His adorable Son, our Saviour.

It is recorded that Mr. Flavel on one occasion preached from the above passage. The discourse was unusually solemn, particularly the explanation of the words, *Anathema, Maran-atha*—"cursed with a bitter and a grievous curse." At the conclusion, when he would have pronounced a benediction, he paused and said, "How shall I bless this whole assembly, when every person in it who loveth not the Lord Jesus Christ is *Anathema, Maran-atha*?" The solemnity of this address affected the audience, and one gentleman, a person of rank, was so overcome by his feelings that he fell senseless to the floor. In the congregation was a lad, named Luke Short, about 15 years old, a native of Dartmouth. He went soon after to America, where he passed the rest of his life, which was lengthened much beyond the usual time. When *100 years old*, he had sufficient strength to work on his farm, and his mental faculties were very little impaired. All this time he had lived in carelessness and sin, "without hope and without God in the world." He was a living sinner of a hundred years old, and apparently ready to die accursed!

Now mark how the sovereign grace of God at length wrought with this hoary-headed rejecter of Christ! One day he went to his field, but not to work—he sat down and ruminated upon those 100 years of his history! He reflected upon his career, and his memory recurred to the events of his youth. It has been observed that, whilst aged people readily forget matters of their current life, they often clearly recall events of their youthful days. In this case the aged sinner's memory fastened upon Mr. Flavel's discourse of more than fourscore years before, a considerable part of which came back to him with crushing vehemence. The affectionate earnestness of the preacher's manner, the important truths he made known, and the effect upon the hearers were afresh before his mind. The blessing of God with all this now rolled into his soul, awakening him to the discovery that until now he had never had in his heart a particle of real love to the Lord Jesus Christ! He was in deep agitation, fearing that dreadful "Anathema" of which God had spoken. Conviction was followed by repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ; and thus this venerable sinner found peace with God, and lived sixteen years longer to give evidence of the long-suffering of a Saviour God whose word, after lying dormant in his memory for 85 years, by the grace of God then brought forth fruit to the glory of Christ.

May every professor weigh before God the solemn words of warning with which the first epistle to the Corinthians closes; for Maran-atha, *the Lord cometh*, and then nothing but the Anathema will remain for those who, having professed His name, have never loved our Lord Jesus Christ!

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DAVID'S pen never wrote more sweetly than when dipped in the ink of affliction.—*Mason*.

THE world twines itself round the soul as a serpent about an eagle to hinder its flight upwards and sting it to death.

## NOTES OF A LECTURE BY REV. J. NEIL, OF JERUSALEM.

### THE APPLE OF SCRIPTURE.

After a vivid description of the delightful Joppa gardens, laden with their rich golden produce of miles of orange trees, Mr. Neil went on to support the contention that the orange is the "apple" of Scripture. The "apple" of our Bible may be known by four marks. First, a golden colour—"apples of gold." Secondly, a peculiarly rich fragrance—"the fragrance of thy nostrils is like the apples." Thirdly, a dense foliage—"I sat down under his shadow with great delight." And lastly, sweet fruit; "his fruit was sweet to my taste." Now these four marks meet in the orange, and in that tree alone. This wonderful tree bears, often for hundreds of years, an immense quantity of handsome, nourishing, sweet, and highly medicinal fruit, a mass of beautiful and exceedingly fragrant flowers, and an abundance of thick, shining, rich green leaves, all on the tree together throughout a great part of the year, and especially that part, winter, when other trees stand bare. The peerless vital powers of the orange singularly fit it to be the emblem of the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus we find it said—

As an orange tree among the trees of the rocky-mountain-forest

So is My beloved among the sons.

I sat down under His shadow with eager desire,

And His fruit was sweet to my taste.

Its singularly reviving and refreshing scent sheds a flood of light on a passage which would otherwise be without any meaning. In our version it is, "Comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love." But the word "comfort," *raphad*, which occurs here, in the only two other passages where we find it (Job xvii. 13; xli. 30), means "to spread, or strew"; hence it should be

“strew me,” not “comfort me.” Observe, it is the *bride* in the Song of Songs who is represented as using these words, when faint with emotion. Now, the idea of spreading over a bride either branch, blossom, or fruit of the apple-tree possesses no significance whatever. But if we supply the name of the true blossoms, do we not at once see the appropriateness of the exclamation of the bride, “Strew me with orange”? This is just what is done with a bride down to the present day; and here, surely, we have the often inquired for, natural Eastern origin of the customary Eastern bridal wreath; and, more than this, we have the very reason for its adoption, namely, that, to an Eastern, its pungent and reviving perfume acted as a vinaigrette or bottle of salts would to some sensitive English maiden.

Observe, too, in the light of this explanation, the beauty of that proverb which tells of the excellence of graceful and gentle speech: “A word spoken on its wheels is like oranges of gold in figured work of silver.”

The blossom of the orange is a brilliant white, resembling the hue of the molten silver which is so much seen in the jewellery of the East. As the rich ripe fruit is constantly seen standing out amidst clusters of the shining bloom, it is naturally, to a vivid Oriental imagination, “like oranges of gold in figured work of silver.” “A word spoken on its wheels” means “a smooth, courteous word:” “flowery language,” such as men value so exceedingly in lands like Syria, and carry to the extreme of countless formal compliments and much fulsome flattery. But, while avoiding excess and insincerity, well is it for us when, in all our intercourse with others, the golden orange of good matter is seen set off by the fair silvern flowers of a good manner! Some earnest believers do not attach to this subject the importance it undoubtedly deserves.

#### THE 'ATAL, OR PORTER, OF PALESTINE.

In the complete absence of carts, their services are necessary in all the towns. They wear a coarse, in-

destructible tunic of camel's hair cloth, the "sack-cloth" of Scripture (which, as the dress of the lowest class amongst the people, became a sign of distress and mourning), and they carry a strong rope, about five yards long. They can lift and transport enormous weights. They crouch down in front of a pile of heaped up boxes, or some huge packing case, and skilfully arrange their rope without any knots, so as to catch and sustain the whole load. Then with a sudden spring they rise to their feet, and bring the burden to bear upon their shoulders and the upper part of their back. I have sometimes watched these men with wonder, as they have passed by, laden with burdens so huge in bulk and heavy in weight as to seem altogether beyond human strength.

The familiar office of the *'atal*, the porter, or burden-bearer of the East, is evidently the source of the figure used by David in the words, "My iniquities are gone over my head: like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me." Constantly have I seen the porter's huge load reaching far over and above his head, which he has had to hold down in a bowed and painful position, while he staggered along under a weight so monstrous that, had he fallen, it would probably have crushed him to death. Solemn, never-to-be-forgotten picture of a soul under a deep sense of sin!

Our blessed Lord plainly refers to the toil of the *'atal* when, denouncing the cruelly oppressive ceremonial traditions forced upon the masses by the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees, He tells us that these spiritual taskmasters "bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers." In beautiful contrast to such wearisome ritualistic and ceremonial observances, which only tend to bondage and oppression, the Lord emphatically declares, "My burden is light."

Let me call your attention to the great importance of these realistic Biblical studies as

## A MEANS OF SILENCING INFIDELITY.

Take, for example, the highly damaging objection often urged by Atheists against Holy Scripture, on the ground of the coarseness of the expressions it contains, and the handling of subjects, the very mention of which in such plain terms we should account immodest and even impure. Indeed, I know that this has been a grave and honest difficulty to many earnest and sensitive minds. Yet a comparatively short residence in Palestine serves to remove it altogether. No Eastern could possibly see any objection whatever on this score. They still, as in ancient times, use the greatest plainness of speech throughout Syria. As soon as one acquires a knowledge of colloquial Arabic, the ear is assailed by a plain speaking on the most delicate subjects, which is extremely embarrassing until such time as one learns to become accustomed to it. Things that are never so much as mentioned amongst us, are spoken of publicly in the East by people of the highest class, and of the greatest respectability and refinement. This explains at once the naturalness and innocency of the use of expressions and the mention of matters in the Bible, which our translators have softened down in some instances, and public readers have tacitly agreed to omit in others. The purest-minded Eastern woman would smile at an objection to the Bible on this score! But I may go further, and boldly say that seeing the Bible purports to be an Eastern book, written in the East, and first—and for long ages only—addressed to Easterns, it could not possibly be genuine if these very matters which have given rise to such blasphemous cavils were absent from its pages! Thus, in the light of Palestine life, one of the most terrible objections of coarse infidelity not only melts away, but actually becomes transformed into a very strong evidence of the genuineness and authenticity of Holy Scripture!

“IN A MOMENT”—(1 *Cor.* xv. 52).

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A MOMENT more and I may be  
Caught up in glory, Lord, with Thee ;  
And, rapturous sight, Thy beauty see  
For evermore !

A moment more—Thy chariot-cloud,  
Thy voice of pow’r, Thy summons loud ;  
Ah ! then the vault of heaven shall crowd  
With myriad saints !

A moment more—earth left behind,  
Our bodies their redemption find,  
Our souls the prize for which they pined  
With great desire !

A moment more—what joy to wear  
Thy likeness, Saviour, and to share  
With Thee the place prepared there,  
Where Thou art gone !

A moment more—upon Thy throne,  
Thy place by right, then made our own ;  
Thou wilt not fill that seat alone,  
But with Thy saints !

A moment more—Thy faultless bride,  
In Thine own beauty glorified—  
Thenceforth for ever at Thy side,  
To crown Thy joy !

A moment more—Ah ! can it be  
One moment bring such joys to me ?  
Yea, joy of joys, yield them *to Thee*,  
Our Saviour, Lord !

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LET it be accounted folly, or frenzy, or fury, we care for no knowledge but this, that man hath sinned and God hath saved, that God became the Son of Man and hath made us the righteousness of God.—  
*Hooker.*

## LIKE CHRIST IN GLORY.

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I AM going to be like Christ in glory ; then I must be as like Him now as ever I can be ; of course we shall all fail, but we are to have our hearts full of it. Remember this, that the place you are in is that of the epistle of Christ. We are set for this, that the life of Christ should be manifested in us. Christ has settled the question with God : He appears in the presence of God for us, and we are in the presence of the world for Him. "In that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." If I know He is in me, I am to manifest the life of Christ in everything. If He has loved me with unutterable love which passes knowledge, I feel bound in heart to Him ; my *business* is to glorify Him in everything I do. "Bought with a price"—that is settled : if bought, I am *His*. But, beloved friends, I press upon you that earnestness of heart which cleaves *to Him*, especially in these last evil days, when we wait for the Son from heaven. Oh ! if Christians were more thoroughly *Christians*, the world would understand what it was all about. There is a great deal of profession and talk ; (and the activity of the Spirit of God, thank God there is) ; but DO YOU THINK THAT IF A HEATHEN CAME HERE TO LEARN WHAT CHRISTIANITY MEANT, HE WOULD FIND IT OUT ?

The Lord give you to have such a sense of the love of Christ, that, as bought with a price, the only object of your souls may be to live by Christ and to live for Christ ; and for those who do not know Him, that they may learn how He came down in love to seek us, and, because righteousness could not pass over sin, died to put it away.

J. N. D.

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THE Spirit of God helps us to make good use of even Satan's temptations, by their inducing us the more to seek the Fountain of good.—*Sibbs*.

## THE HOLY GHOST IS GRIEVED.

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WHAT a multitude of varied answers should we get if we sent out a circular to "the churches," asking "What is your present pressing need?" "Money," a host would answer, "to free us from debt." And yet Christ's servant said, "Owe no man anything, but love." Others would say, "We want a new organ, or some musical voices for the choir;" others again, "We want brighter and more attractive services," or, "We want a more liberal theology, as the old dark belief will not do for present thinkers." These, and a hundred similar answers might be given; but they would all be wrong. The church has education enough, surely: look at the long list of academical honours adorning the names of her preachers. She has money enough, if jewelled chalices, costly windows, and gorgeous appointments are true indications of her condition. She has music enough, if choirs, bands, and professional artists go for anything. She has buildings enough also, if we are to credit recent figures, shewing her buildings scarcely half full. What, then, is the want of the church? It will be found in an Old Testament vision looked at with the New Testament lamp. The church is languishing, dull, dry, dead, from want of breath! The Holy Ghost is grieved.

Ezekiel saw a valley full of bones, many and dry. He was told to prophesy the bones to their places, and call the sinews and skin to cover them. And it was so. It seems as if the church was just now in this very position. Pastors, preachers, teachers, bells, bills, and innumerable other means have been used, and multitudes of the people are in their places. But the majority are dead where they sit. Calm, poetic, cold are the prayers; tuneful and musical is the singing; logical and learned is the sermon. But where is the breath that brings life?

Satan seems to be entirely successful nowadays in

arousing the interest of the church in a crowd of side issues. And thus his fell purpose is gained. What meetings to arrange meetings; what appeals for money; what pet schemes to help men, to the exclusion of the essential thing. The one thing the church must have, and have from heaven, not from earth, is life! What foolishness, to be occupied in trimming the sails when the ship is sinking! Erect a reredos to a dead Christ! The spiritually dead may, but that is certainly not the fruit of the Spirit. Arrange a mission, with a famous preacher! Yes, to attract a crowd, if the speaker is eloquent enough. But to call the dead to life is beyond the power of mortal tongue. And yet it is with that end in view the church is left on earth. The old vision says, with terrible iteration and emphasis, "Prophecy! prophecy! come, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live!"—*G. Evans.*

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"RECEIVE YE ONE ANOTHER."

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ROMANS xiv. 1.—A weak brother is to be received, and no questions raised either about *meats* or *days*. He has been received by God (verse 3). What we *are* or judge is, not to put a stumbling-block or fall-trap in the way of such (verse 13). Neither to eat, or drink, or do anything which would stumble or offend, or bring weakness to a brother (verse 21).

Chapter xv. 7. We are to receive one another to the glory of God, referring us back to chapter xiv. 1, 3, and this does not refer to reception at the Lord's table, as is usually supposed (though the principle surely may be acted on), but simply to social gatherings, care being used not to stumble the weak in any way whatever, by those who were strong using, or rather *mis-using*, their liberty, and neglecting their brotherly charity (verse 15). How necessary, both to them and to us, to observe these things, and not allow our "good to be evil spoken of" (verse 16), remembering

that in doing this we "serve Christ, are acceptable to God, and approved of men" (verse 18).

Chapter xvi. 17, 18. We are to consider those who create *divisions* and *occasions of falling*, contrary to the doctrine which we have learnt, and turn away from them. The next verses give the reason, "They serve their own belly;" evidently connecting it with the teaching in the previous chapters as to eating meat and observing days, &c., and thus using their liberty to stumble the weak. There may be a much wider application of these verses, but it is quite evident, I think, that the apostle connects these things as I have pointed out. At any rate, the principles taught have a voice for us to-day, in more ways than one; and we should do well to heed them, and take care, lest in using our supposed liberty in anything we forget our brotherly charity, and stumble others, who, in their ignorance, are taking us as an example instead of Christ. We influence each other more than we think.

*New Zealand.*

W. E.

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HE who seeks first the kingdom of God will find his own salvation added to him without fail. If there be some who cannot "go into the dark mine," like Carey, they can "hold the rope," like Fuller. But woe is me, if in some way or other I preach not the Gospel to a dying world! God puts us in the midst of the unsaved, that we may get out of ourselves. He might send His angels to fly in the midst of the heavens and proclaim the everlasting Gospel, but what would become of the believer? He would be a dwarf and a cripple. God's law is *use or lose*. There is nothing good which is not lessened and lost at last by not using. In God's economy disuse is misuse, abuse. Self-denying service—work for God and for souls—reduces whatever is unworthy of us, and nourishes that other and nobler self. Our spiritual life finds its gymnastics in work for souls.—*Dr. Pearson.*

## WORSHIP.

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WHEN the Holy Spirit leads us into real spiritual worship, it leads us into communion with God, into the presence of God; and then, necessarily, all the infinite acceptability to Him of the offering of Christ is present to our spirit. We are associated with it: it forms an integral and necessary part of our communion and worship. We cannot be in the presence of God in communion without finding it there. It is indeed the ground of our acceptance, as of our communion.

Apart from this then our worship falls back into the flesh; our prayers (or praying well) form what is sometimes called a gift of prayer, than which nothing often is more sorrowful (a fluent rehearsal of known truths and principles, instead of communion and the expression of our wants and desires in the unction of the Spirit); our singing, pleasure of the ear, taste in music, and expressions in which we sympathize: all a form in the flesh, and not communion in the Spirit. All this is evil; the Spirit of God owns it not; it is not in Spirit and in truth; it is really iniquity. J.N.D.

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## THE CHURCH SPEAKING—WHY AND WHEN?

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GOD had an assembly, or church, in the wilderness (Acts vii. 38), and called in the Old Testament the congregation of the Lord, *i.e.*, of Jehovah. God has an assembly, or church, now upon earth in which He dwells by the Spirit (Eph. ii. 22), whilst the congregation of the Lord of the Old Testament and the temple of Jerusalem are bereft of His presence. With this assembly the New Testament deals. And He, who is in especial relations with it as His Body and as His Bride, is the first who speaks of it.

Its beauty He intimated in Matt. xiii. 45, 46. Its closeness to Himself, part of Himself, He declared in

Acts ix. 4. That it was to be a building, and He the Builder, He also foretold (Matt. xvi. 18). Then another, even the Holy Ghost, by the apostles Paul and John, speaks. The devoted service of the Lord Jesus to her, that she should answer to that which He is, holy and without blemish, the Spirit in Eph. v. 25-27 sets forth. Of her apparel when presented to the Lamb, and of her appearance when seen by the world, the Holy Ghost by John has prophetically spoken (Rev. xix. 8 ; xxi. 10, &c.).

In all this, however, the church is silent. Does she never speak? She never teaches, for God has provided teachers from the number of her members (1 Cor. xii. 28 ; Eph. iv. 11). For the church to teach would be to ignore that. Twice only have we any hint of her voice being heard. She can speak, if need be, to win a refractory brother (Matt. xviii. 17). She cannot help speaking to the Lord when He announces Himself as the Bright and Morning Star (Rev. xxii. 17).  
C. E. S.

A MODERN MIRACLE.—When Mr. James Bainham, who suffered under Henry VIII. of England, was in the midst of the flames which had half consumed his arms and legs, he said aloud—"O ye Papists, ye look for miracles ; *here behold one!* For in this fire I feel no more pain than if I were in a bed of down, but it is to me a bed of roses."

GLORIOUS ETERNITY.—When you are come to the other side of the water, and have set down your foot on the shore of glorious eternity, and look back again to the water and your wearisome passage, and shall see in that clear glass of endless glory nearer to the bottom of God's wisdom, you shall then be forced to say, "If God had done otherwise with me than He hath, I had never come to the enjoyment of this crown of glory."—*S. Rutherford.*

## LETTER OF INTEREST.

ASSAM, INDIA.

RECEIVED AUG. 4, 1892.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I cannot express how glad I was to receive your kind letter of May 8th. I hear so very seldom from home that the letters are always very welcome guests. If it were not for "Words in Season," &c., which I regularly receive, and for which I am most deeply grateful to Mrs. T——, and —— that my comrade gets, I should soon lose sight of the real state of things at home. Still one is greatly cheered with the fact you so nicely state, that our Father is so kind. Ah! I have learned a little of that since I came here. We are alone to a large district of some 386,483 inhabitants. There is also a Government chaplain for the station and the many tea planters. But he does nothing else. This is of course a military station, and the capital of the district. We came here for the purpose of studying the Manipure language, with the hope of entering that country when the Lord may open the way. This language is very difficult, far more so than Bengali. There are about 30,000 of these people (Manipures) in this district, and the most of them can understand Bengali, and so even now we are able to do something among them through that language. The three weeks I stayed in —— I was learning Bengali, and also holding evangelistic meetings among the students there in English, and the Lord was very precious and present with us. Since I left there has been a great revival, and souls have been gathered in, I have heard. I was confident it would be so while there. The spirit of enquiry was abroad, and many seemed very anxious to know all they could about the Lord. On reaching ——, about a week before Christmas, I there began the same kind of meetings, and all the Government officials and schoolmasters and students of the highest classes used to attend, and the Lord blessed the word to all. I

don't think I ever enjoyed telling out the story more than I did during these times and since. I continued this all the time I was there; at the same time studied as hard as I could at Bengali; and before I left, along with my present comrade and a native preacher, I went for a preaching tour through \_\_\_\_\_ district, and I was able to speak a little in the many bazaars we visited, in Bengali. Since coming here I have also continued my study of Bengali, as well as Manipure, and now I can speak for about twenty minutes, so as can be understood by all. I seem to have got hold of it pretty fast, for which I am deeply grateful. I acted on your advice, and as soon as I got a few words I began to use them. Of course I made many blunders, but then I just blundered on, and now do not repent doing so. People saw I was in earnest, and have always helped me, and put me right when I went wrong. Manipure is not so simple as Bengali. There are no less than seventy-two different tense endings and forms, with some of them the slightest difference of meaning. Still I am progressing slowly, yet I trust surely. The Manipure is the more beautiful of the two, but most difficult to speak.

There is a large bazaar here every Lord's day and Thursday, and these we attend, and get thousands of people from the surrounding villages to listen to us. On Thursdays we take gospels with us to sell, and up to the present we have sold, I think, nearly 1,000 copies of the four gospels. Praise the Lord for this! supposing it was nothing else we had been able to do. He will bless the reading of His own word. The people are in earnest, and the Spirit of God seems to be leading men to see their position, and I doubt not many have in heart accepted Christ, although they have not as yet come out for Him. Their difficulties in so doing are very numerous, and doubtless the grace of God will lead many of them out soon. His grace is sufficient for all. Still it is possible to be *secret*

disciples. I am fully convinced so from what I have seen, and the different conversations I have had. The young man that has been teaching me Bengali here, gave one Lord's day morning, while I was conversing with him on Acts xvi. 30, 31, a most clear declaration of his acceptance of Christ. I trust to have the joy soon of baptising him. It is really most joyous work to be preaching the gospel to these poor heathen. Ah! the sights one sees are awful, heartrending, and the sin and degradation are appalling. I could give you little idea of it, so don't attempt any. The Lord has been opening up His word to me in a most marvellous way. I find it most precious, and the Lord is becoming more precious daily, for which I am thankful.

Still the Lord has been using me in another way for His glory. My comrade and I since coming here have had Bible readings together, and the Lord has opened up His word to him in a most precious way. He has been led to see the truth of God concerning His church, and dispensational lines of truth have been opened up to him through the readings; the result is that he has come on to the same ground that we are on, without the least expression of my mind on the point, and now it is our precious privilege thus to remember Him and His death in the breaking of bread every Lord's day. Ah! dear brother, I cannot express to you the joy of thus quietly together remembering His death while surrounded by heathenism and Mahommedanism on all sides. What a joy to His heart, surely, to look down on this scene and see two of His own thus giving Him the desire of His heart in this simple way, with no pomp and show, but just quietly looking to Him, and letting our hearts rise thus to Him, to flow out towards Himself in praise and thanksgiving and worship. What is like that on earth? Oh, the joy to His heart, and the knowledge of it, what joy and humility to ours! What a privilege is ours! Who can measure it?

I am at present corresponding with some of the missionaries, that came out in the steamer with me, on these points also. Pray that wisdom and grace to serve Him *alone* may be given.

There is another side to the question, which is a little different to the one just given. The difficulties are very numerous, more so than I care to mention. I shall, however, state some of them. The question of living here is a very great one. As you know, we are both single, and the difficulties of housekeeping and dealing with servants are exceedingly great, as there is not a single one we can trust; they cheat and deceive us on all hands, and there is continually something wrong, or something wanting. I should most gladly do without them, if it did not take so much of our time that we would not be able to do much study. And more, the shop-men in the bazaar would just do us in the same way as our servants; and more, we could not continue at it, supposing we started, it would be more than our health would stand. Living here, because of the number of army officers (European), is very dear on the most careful dealing; but I trust we shall soon get over this difficulty, as we are only to stay here one year, all well, when we hope either to get to Manipur or to the frontier. The difficulties in the work are numerous.

You ask how I feel in my isolated condition. Sometimes rather lonely. I do very often miss the fellowship of Christian friends very much. At these times the tempter comes in great power, and his weapons seem to be legion. I have had no fever as yet, and feel quite free of any tendency to it at the present time; but I have suffered very much from dyspepsia; in fact, I fear very much I have a touch of another complaint. I have had to write to Calcutta to a doctor, and am now under his treatment. Along with this, I have had several very severe seasons of depression, in a degree I never imagined could be before. I would rather leave this side as it is, and say no more on that

score. The Lord, however, has none of the state of depression, and here I find comfort.

I often think I should like to have awhile on a mission at home, telling out the story, as I can but do it in a very limited way here. But patience and perseverance will make all right by and by, if the Lord does not be here.

Will you kindly remember me to the W——s and the H——s, &c. Thank God for the testimony you give there. I still remember you all before Him. Ah! yes, how sad the state of the church; as to its testimony in perfect ruins, and men on all hands making it more so. How sad to the heart of that One who bought it at such a cost. We see the fruit of it in this land on a very large scale, more so than is generally admitted by most; I could give you many proofs of it, but need not. The heart of man is just the heart of man, whether in England, Scotland, or India. Denominationalism is rife in this land. In some of the papers, one can see them fighting with each other.

I heartily endorse your thoughts concerning the preaching of the gospel to the heathen, and I am glad to know of the increasing interest you have in that subject. If you were here it would be doubly so, I feel sure. I must be done; I cannot spare longer to write; duty calls—two languages and enquirers.

With kindest Christian love to Mrs. T. and yourself and family.—I am yours, &c.,

J. C.

I have just heard that two Roman Catholic priests are coming here, in about a fortnight, to hold a meeting. They have a place about 20 miles from here. The nearest Christian mission is 80 miles off.

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TIME is the chrysalis of eternity.—*Richter.*

THE faith of Dr. Watts in God's promises was thus expressed: "I believe them enough to venture my eternity on them."

## INCIDENTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

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**THE DANGER OF FLATTERY.**—Mr. Whitefield preaching at Haworth, having spoken severely of those professors who caused the way of truth to be evil spoken of, expressed a hope that it was not necessary for him to enlarge on that topic to those who had long enjoyed the benefit of so able a preacher. This roused Mr. Grimshaw's spirit, who, notwithstanding his high estimate of the preacher, interrupted him with the exclamation, "Oh! sir, for God's sake do not speak so; I pray you, do not flatter; I fear the greater part of them are going to hell with their eyes open."

**SAFE IN OUR FATHER'S HAND.**—There is a mountain gorge in the Highlands of Scotland 200 feet deep. Its perpendicular walls are bare of vegetation, save in their crevices, where grow numerous plants of rare beauty. Some botanists, desirous of obtaining specimens of these mountain beauties, offered a Highland boy a handsome reward if he would gather a basket of them, being lowered down by a rope. The boy looked wistfully at the money, for his parents were poor, and then gazing at the yawning chasm he shuddered, and declined the task. But filial love was strong; his eyes flashed; his heart grew strong within him, and he exclaimed, "I will go *if my father will hold the rope.*" Then with unshrinking nerves, unblanched cheek, and unquivering heart, he allowed the rope to be put about him, when his father lowered him into the abyss and held him suspended while he filled his little basket with the coveted plants, and then brought him safely to the surface. Thus his faith in the love of *a father's heart*, and in the strength of *a father's arm*, carried the little fellow successfully through his trying experience.

**THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN.**—The prophecy of Genesis xlix. 27 was markedly fulfilled in the case of Saul, the son of Kish (1 Samuel ix. 1), and that other Saul who afterwards (as Paul) wrote of himself in Phil. iii. 5.

**HAVING GOD ON OUR SIDE.**—Three hundred years ago, in Holland, about one million people stood for Protestantism and freedom, in opposition to the mightiest empire of that age, whose banners the pope had superstitiously blessed. William, the Prince of Orange, a man who feared God, was the champion of the righteous cause. When the young republic appeared to be about to be overwhelmed, William received a missive from one of his generals commanding an important post, asking if he had succeeded in effecting a treaty with any foreign power, as France or England, for their aid. His reply was, "You ask me if I have made a treaty for aid with any great foreign power; and I answer, that, before I undertook the cause of the oppressed Christians in these provinces, *I made a close alliance with the King of kings*; and I doubt not that He will give us the victory." *And so He did.*

**A SEARCHING QUESTION.**—Legh Richmond was once conversing with a gentleman on the case of one who had been inconsistent with his religious profession, when the latter remarked, "I will have nothing to do with him." "Nay, brother," replied Mr. Richmond, "let us be humble and moderate. With opportunity on one hand, and Satan on the other, and the eye off Christ, where should you and I be?"

**MEEKNESS UNDER INSULT.**—Mr. Deering, one of the Puritan ministers of the sixteenth century, being at table, had opposite him a young man who indulged in profane swearing, for which he reprov'd him, when the young man, taking it as an affront, threw a glass of beer at him. Mr. Deering took no notice of the insult, wiped his face, and continued his dinner. The irreverent young man soon renewed his profane conversation, when Mr. Deering a second time reprov'd him; and he then threw another glass of beer in Mr. Deering's face, and with increased violence. Mr. Deering, unmoved, bore the insult with Christian meekness and in silence. This so astonished the evildoer that he rose from the table, fell on his knees, and, asking Mr. Deering's pardon, declared that had any one thus treated him he would have stabbed him with his sword. In this was verified, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

**MURMURINGS AND THEIR PUNISHMENT.**—That at Tabarah by *fire*; that at Kibroth Hattaavah by *plague*; that at Hazeroth by *leprosy*. See Psalms lxxviii., cvi., and I Corinthians x.

**THE FIRST GREENLAND CONVERT.**—The Moravian missionaries laboured long in Greenland with no success. They endeavoured to instruct the natives in the existence of God, the creation, the nature of the soul, &c., and all this excited no attention. But on one occasion, while translating the gospels, a missionary was visited by a number of these savages, who were desirous of knowing the contents of the book. Therefore he gave them some general information from Scripture, and gradually slid into a narration of the sufferings of our Lord, reading them the account of His agony, and speaking much of that anguish in the garden which made Him sweat, as it were, great drops of blood. Now began the Spirit of God to work. One named Haiarnock stepped forward to the table, and said in an earnest and affecting tone, "How was that? Tell me that once more; for I would fain be saved too!" Never had such language been heard before from a Greenlander. This man became converted to God, and was very useful. Thus began the remarkable work of God in Greenland.

**A SALUTARY WARNING.**—In Seward's Journal of Whitefield's preaching tours is the following:—"Heard of a drinking club that had a Negro boy attending them, who used to mimic people for the diversion of the club. They bade him mimic Mr. Whitefield, which he was very averse to doing. On their insisting upon it he stood forth, saying, 'I speak the truth in Christ; I lie not. Unless you repent you will be damned.' This unexpected rebuff broke up the club, which has not met since."

**THE MICROSCOPE APPLIED TO THE WORD OF GOD.**—If the microscope, applied to God's *works*, reveals more and more of wonder, shall it be thought strange that a higher power of attention directed to His *word* shall also elicit more and more things to marvel at? —*Dean Burgon.*

**POPERY UP TO DATE.**—"I would rather one half of the people of this nation should be brought to the stake and burned, than that one man should read the Bible, and form his judgment from its contents." —*Bishop Spottswood, quoted by Professor Townsend, of Boston University, in his Report to the New England Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.*

UNITY.—*Psalm cxxxiii.*

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THIS "song of degrees" is replete with interest and instruction for those who study the Word. It has only three verses, but how divinely pregnant with meaning is each! The first is an *exclamation*, and the other two are parallel *illustrations* of that which had kindled the heart of the sweet singer of Israel, and caused it to burst forth in song. First, remark that every bit of this miniature Psalm is precious, not a word must be lost; every mark of the pencil in the divine hand adds beauty to the picture. May we value every touch of the Spirit of God! Notice, then, the exclamation, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Are we not reminded of the Lord's word, "Behold the lilies how they grow," &c.? As He had doubtless under His eye at the moment the flowers of Palestine, marvellous in their beauty, so probably had David a group of priests and Levites before him in the courts of the tabernacle, and as he marked their kindly courtesy and gracious intimacy, and how they pondered together over the book of the Law, and aided each other in acquiring and ministering instruction as to the things of Jehovah the Lord, his heart broke forth, and with the pen of a ready writer he composed, by direct inspiration, this "*Song of degrees of David.*"

And in so doing, may we not say? he was carried beyond his day and generation; for "brethren" is no ordinary term for Old Testament saints. "All ye are brethren;" "Go tell My brethren," &c., are words that found their first expression at the mouth of our beloved Lord, expressive of the relationship to each other and to Him which should be founded upon death and resurrection only. Thus we venture to find ourselves, as saints of the Church of God, contemplated here, as also in Psalm xxii. 22; while not denying that it had its application in David's day, as it also will have more fully in the glory of the king-

dom. And surely at Pentecost such an exclamation might fittingly have broken forth from the lips of those who were of one heart and one mind, of one accord in one place! Observe the words, "How good and how pleasant." Good in itself, and more especially as before God and according to God: At the same time, how pleasant! When the heart is right with God, attuned and touched by the Spirit of God, then that which is good Godward is also pleasant manward; that which is acceptable before God is also agreeable to His saints, for we have the mind of Christ, and are one spirit with the Lord.

Then follow the parallel lines of illustration. In the first of these, the high-priest, we have a notable type of the Lord Jesus in His priesthood, which priesthood is for us. See how the figure involves this. Aaron was anointed by Moses with the holy oil, divinely prescribed and rigidly reserved to the divine purpose (figure of the Spirit of God); so also was the ante-typical High-priest anointed by God (Acts iv. 27).

On the shoulders of the high-priest were borne the names of the twelve tribes, six on each shoulder, and as the oil descended from the head of Aaron it flowed over his shoulders, and thus anointed figuratively the people of God. (See 2 Cor. i. 21; 1 John ii. 27.) Again, the oil flowed from Aaron's beard also ("His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow," Rev. i. 14, plainly suggests the Ancient of days), and inasmuch as the names of the tribes were engraved upon the twelve precious stones of the breastplate, these names would be again overflowed with the holy oil as it descended to the skirts of his garments, even to the very lowest fringe, suggesting to us that holy unction of divine grace from the Head in heaven, which by the Holy Ghost flows down to the lowest and the least member of the One body.

Nothing that is not "good" before God ought to be "pleasant" to His saints. It was only the *holy* anointing oil that could be allowed to flow down

over the shoulders and the breast of the high priest, thus embracing and, as it were, binding together the saints in unity! That alone which was worthy of the Head was worthy of the members. Any other unguent than this would in His sight have been a filthy compound (however agreeable to man's senses), and the pouring it over the person of His high priest would have been in God's eyes an outrage on Christ and His saints, who were set forth by the person of the high priest bearing on his breast and his shoulders the names of the tribes. Such daubing with untempered mortar (Ez. xiii. 10-15 and xxii. 28), which is noxious in character because it can never bind souls together in purity and holiness, is obnoxious to the Holy Ghost as an ungrieved Spirit, because He is, Himself alone, the power of that unity which is owned of God (Eph. iv. 30).

Coming now to the second illustration, that in verse 3 of our Psalm, I desire first of all to suggest to my readers that in Mount Hermon we have a remarkable figure of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was the most conspicuous and most beautiful of the mountains of Israel. Whilst it rose from the mighty range of Lebanon, with its widely extended base built upon the rocks, its summit towered into the heavens 10,000 feet above the level of the plain. Such an altitude can only be understood by comparison. The height of St. Paul's Cathedral, in London, being about 500 feet, the altitude of Hermon is no less than about twenty times the height of that building.

Moreover, it was clothed with perpetual snow, expressive figure of His unsullied holiness; and when in early summer the snow partially melted, it became broken up into numbers of white lines, giving the top of the mountain the appearance of a hoary head surrounded with fleecy locks, aptly suggesting the Eternal, the Ancient of days.

When fully explored, the summit of Hermon is found to be triune, *i.e.*, to consist of really three sum-

mits, forming a triangle of equi-distant angles and of about equal height, and thus spoken of in Ps. xlii. 6 as the Hermonites, suggesting to us that in Him all the fulness was pleased to dwell, the fulness of the Godhead bodily! How blessedly did He reveal the Father, do the Father's works, give utterance to the Father's words, and all His heart unfold; adding in His last words to His own, He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father! In His own person, the Eternal Son of the Father and the Eternal God. Yet all His works were wrought in the power of the Holy Ghost, and He baptized with Him. And it is this revelation of the Trinity, disclosed at His baptism, witnessed in His life and testimony, and corroborated in His death and resurrection, which at Pentecost became the foundation of Christianity.

Upon the heights of Hermon may be seen the reflection of the blue vault of heaven, the delicate tinge of azure upon its slopes, reminding us of the heavenly Man, the One from heaven and who went back to heaven, being as heavenly as holy! As truly as He was divine was He human, but we could never say He was earthly as well as heavenly. On the contrary, He was on earth the Son of Man in heaven (Is. iii. 13).

Again, of Hermon it might be said, in the language of an Eastern poet, winter was borne on his head, spring fell on his shoulders, summer lay in his bosom, and autumn slept at his feet; all the seasons, as it were, at different altitudes are thus found to meet in Him whom Hermon figures, who is suited to the babes, the children, the young men, and the fathers in Christ! (1 John ii. 13-18).

But should any object that in Ps. cxxxiii. 3 there appear to be two figures, of far different and far distant mountains, fatally marring my illustration, I answer No; we have really but one figure in the verse. Were the mountains of Zion to be identified with Jerusalem it were so; but on the contrary, leaving out the words in italics, we see that the Psalmist is

but poetically speaking of Hermon afresh by another name. This is proved by other Scriptures. In Deut. iv. 48, Mount Sion is identified with Hermon, and more obscurely this is seen again in chap. iii, 8, 9, and in Canticles iv. 8. The last Scripture connects Hermon and Shenir, while the former identifies Shenir with Sirion, for which the Hebrew word is Sion or Zion. It is thus one commanding figure which is divinely presented to us, as there is one also in the previous verse, each designed to convey to our minds the greatness and the grandeur, the glory and the grace of Him whose majesty fills heaven and earth.

But we have by no means as yet exhausted the figure of Hermon. So elevated above all others was the triple summit of the mountain that it gathered around its brow the floating clouds of the higher region of the atmosphere, and these being condensed by the snow, fell in abundant dew upon its slopes, which descending copiously to its base, carried fertility wheresoever it went. At the same season all the rest of the land might be parched by the rays of the sun and unshaded by the faintest cloud. At such a time how graphically are the dews of Hermon described, in the chapter already referred to in Solomon's Song (iv. 15), as "A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon."

A still further thing is, that in this vicinity, as replenished by the dews of Hermon, the Jordan derived its source. It was the fountain-head of that living stream which watered all God's favoured land. Taking its rise in the forests and heights, amid the majestic cedars of the mighty Lebanon, it pursued its serpentine course throughout the whole length of the country. Beginning in the high rocky ranges which stood at the head of Palestine, and formed its northern boundary, fed by bursting fountains and gushing streams, it passed along in a southerly direction until it entered the Lake of Galilee, through the waters of which it is said to pass without ever mingling with

them. Quitting that inland sea, it pursues its southerly course through the plains of Jordan, passing by Bethshan and Jericho to the west, and Gerasa, Pella, and Gadara to the east, near to the spot where the Israelites crossed under Joshua, and at length is lost in the leaden waters of the Salt Sea.

Lastly, as to Hermon, I would point out what an object it was physically to every Israelite, as Christ is spiritually to the eyes and hearts of His saints. There was scarcely a spot anywhere in the land of Israel (for we must remember that it was only about the size of Wales, scarcely 140 miles in length) from which its majestic outline could not be discerned; impressive figure for faith to behold! "For there" (*i.e.*, from thence), in other words, from *the person of Christ*, "the Lord commanded the blessing," the ante-typical Jordan, "even life for evermore."

In conclusion, let me add that we can scarcely fail to be reminded as to this commanded blessing, and its life-giving character, of that word of the Lord found in John xii. 49, 50. "I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is *life everlasting*: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak."

It were not well, perhaps, to dismiss this study without one final word as to the fact that we find in the Psalm not only two expressive figures of the person of Christ, but equally two incontestible figures of the Holy Ghost, both used in the New Testament (Matt. xxv. 3-8; John vii. 38, 39), viz., the anointing oil and the living water, whether regarded as the dew of Hermon or the streams of Jordan. It is only in the unction and power of the Holy Ghost that the unity of the One Spirit is produced and preserved—that unity which is so "good" before God, and so "pleasant" among saints, and which we are ever responsible to endeavour to keep "in the uniting bond of peace" (Eph. iv. 3).

The Lord impress our souls more distinctly and more practically with this word of His—"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

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THE MINISTRY OF PETER.  
PROPHETIC—2 *Peter*.

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AGAIN Peter takes up his pen. In this 2nd epistle he appears in the character of a prophet, embracing within the range of his vision the dissolution of the heavens by fire and the burning up of the earth with its works, the prelude to the eternal state. All that has been defiled by the presence of the enemy or by man must be subject to the action of fire.

Now the introduction of the eternal state has been ever before the mind of God. First *shadowed forth* in symbol in the law by the eighth day of the feast of Tabernacles (Levit. xxiii. 39; Numb. xxix. 35-38), (for that day was the commencement of a new period to which no end was mentioned), it was *predicted* in Isaiah lxvi. 22; it was *referred to* not obscurely in that petition of the Lord's prayer, "Thy kingdom come"; and it was *mentioned* more plainly by Paul (1 Cor. xv. 24-28). The kingdom of God, even the Father, lasts for ever. The *blessedness* of that state it was given to John to describe (Rev. xxi. 1-7), whilst Peter was the chosen vessel to foretell the convulsions of nature which must take place previous to its introduction.

But this—the day of God—must be preceded by the day of the Lord. And this our apostle, as we shall see, clearly intimates (2 Pet. iii. 10-12). For the kingdom of God must first be established in power under the governing hand of the Son of His love, in order to put down all rule, all authority, and power, as the prelude to the giving it up to God, even the Father, for the introduction of everlasting peace and

righteousness on the new earth. So, in view of the nearer event, Peter first writes to encourage saints to continued perseverance.

Those formerly addressed are addressed again (2 Pet. iii. 1); for he keeps to his special sphere of labour, and writes to them as saints who have obtained through (or, in) the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, like precious faith with him and others. God, acting in righteousness, had bestowed faith on them, for whom the apostle desired the multiplying of grace and peace through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. This wish, as so expressed, is peculiar to Peter.

Not only, however, had they received precious faith, but all things that pertain to life and godliness had been already bestowed on them by divine power, through the knowledge of Him that had called them by His own glory and virtue. Partakers, then, of the heavenly calling—for they were called to be in glory on high—partakers, too, they were of the life of God (Eph. iv. 18), and thus could be called by His virtue as well. Of this he had already told them (1 Pet. ii. 9), pointing out that it became them as part of the royal priesthood to shew forth His virtues who had called them out of darkness into His marvellous light. Precious and exceeding great promises were likewise theirs, that through them—*i.e.*, laying hold of them—they might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Thus fully furnished on the part of God, exhortation could fitly find its place (5-11), reminding them of that which they should add, so as not to be idle nor unfruitful unto (or, as regards) the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. And, if they were diligent to make their calling and election sure, richly would there be ministered unto them the entrance (as Peter wrote) into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It was not, then, simply *an*

entrance that Peter desired. Every child of God will have that. All heavenly saints will reign with Christ. An abundant entrance he craved on their behalf.

The kingdom is everlasting; so the dissolution of the atmospheric heavens, accompanied as it will be with the burning of the earth, will not terminate it, though the form of its administration will undergo a change (1 Cor. xv. 24). The saints shall reign for ever, even for ever and ever (Dan. vii. 18); and the kingdom in which they will reign will be the kingdom of God (Luke xii. 31, 32).

The future is certain. Ere, however, giving a special proof of that, which was within his cognisance, the apostle desired to remind them of that which Christians should cultivate in view of it. Hence he wrote this second letter, as he had done the first, to stir up their sincere minds by putting them in remembrance (iii. 1, 2). And the need he felt was great, in view both of the in-coming evils and of his own near departure from earth. His time for ministry here would be short; his death, as he was aware, being near at hand; and though, as long as he was in the body, he would labour to remind them of these things, although they knew them, and were established in the truth, he would by written ministry provide for the keeping of them in remembrance after his decease.

Of his death the Lord had warned him (John xxi. 18, 19). It would be a martyr's death, from which it is plain he did not now shrink. It was the putting off of his tabernacle, the body, to be for a time with Christ, though in the unclothed state. In this light he viewed his death; in this same light Paul had written of death years before (2 Cor. v. 1); in this light Christians should view it—a departing to be with Christ, which is far better (Phil. i. 23). And we see in the cases of Paul and of Peter how perfectly free in the prospect of it grace can make the believer. The one, who had persecuted the Church, and thus persecuted Christ; and the other, who had denied his

Master, had neither of them the slightest doubt about his future, nor any shrinking from meeting his Lord.

Peter, as we have said, knew he was to die, and knew that before the Lord's ascension. Did that militate against the common expectation of the Lord's return, for which the early Christians were taught to wait (1 Thess. i. 10)? Surely not. Peter knew he was to die, but when was not at first unfolded; and as for John, the Lord declared that, should He will it, he might tarry till He came—not saying that he would tarry for that, but if it so pleased the Lord he might. So the early Christians, for aught they knew, might be alive at the rapture. This Paul, in the early years of his ministry, evidently thought might be his portion (1 Thess. iv. 17; 1 Cor. xv. 51). As time went on, it was shown to one and another that they would pass away by death (2 Tim. iv. 6); yet they could write, and did, as if those they addressed might witness and share in the being caught up. So Paul, near the close of his life, wrote to Timothy as if the latter might be alive in the last days (2 Tim. iii. 5). And Peter exhorts his readers, as if they might witness the end of the days (2 Pet. iii. 1-17). The Lord, too, in the epistles to certain churches, speaks as if those then alive might survive till He came (Rev. ii. 25; iii. 10). In truth, the thought of His return was always kept before saints as, perhaps, near at hand. For though individuals might understand that they would first die, their friends around them might survive till that hour should come. That day and hour are hidden from us; so, till any are given to know that they will die first, the proper Church's hope should be tenaciously held fast. And if Christians in early days were addressed as if that hope might be fulfilled in their day, how much more should we hold it fast who live in days when the evils have been developed which we are warned must first appear (1 Tim. iv. 1-3; 2 Tim. iii. 1-5; 2 Pet. iii. 3).

Passing from this point, which to some minds seems to present a real difficulty, let us proceed to notice the proof which our apostle can furnish of the certainty of the coming kingdom. He points us to the transfiguration. Witnessed by three disciples—Peter, James, and John—John is the only evangelist who does not notice it, and Peter is the only New Testament writer who deduces a practical lesson from it. On the mount the King was seen in His millennial glory. Certainly, then, He will reign. Peter had seen Him in that glory in which He will one day appear. True, that day had not arrived. Would any, then, stigmatise apostolic teaching on that point as a cunningly devised fable? The King's majesty had been seen, though it was only for a brief moment. That vision, however, was the earnest of the future. Let none be shaken, then, in their faith. The prophetic word had foretold the advent of the kingdom, and the prophets sung of the blessing connected with it. Now these predictions were more sure; the transfiguration scene confirmed them. And Peter, with James and John, had seen, what no prophet had beheld, the King Himself, who was none other than the beloved Son of God (Matt. xvii. 1-9).

The importance of the transfiguration here comes out. All Christians were to be made aware of it. The King Himself had appeared in majesty. The kingdom in power will assuredly in due time be established. For that, however, to be brought about, the heavenly saints must, as other Scriptures teach, be all away from earth. And for Christians—*i.e.*, those who have the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Christ (Rom. viii. 9), dwelling in them—that blessed consummation will be brought about either by death, if the Lord should tarry, or by the rapture (1 Thess. iv. 15-17). Prophecy, then, about the future they were to hold fast. It was like a light shining in a dark place; for, as has been remarked, prophecy is concerned with the events to take place connected with

earth. So it sheds a light on this dark scene. What it foretells Christians must hold fast—"until," as Peter adds, "the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts" (i. 19), that hope specially connected with the Church of God, viz., the coming of the Lord into the air for His saints, ere the Sun of righteousness shall "arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. iv. 2). For just as the morning star is the harbinger of day, so will the Lord's descent into the air be the harbinger of His coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matt. xxiv. 30).

Here Peter, who had already shown his acquaintance with Church truth, so fully dwelt on by Paul, shows that the Church's hope, first revealed by the Lord (John xiv. 3), and taught in its greatest fulness by Paul, was truth of which all Christians should get a firm hold. Each New Testament writer had his special line of ministry to set forth, but all held equally the one common faith. And now, having touched on prophecy, our apostle reminds us that no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation. It is not elaborated from the human mind, nor does it originate from any human plan, its desired solution having given rise to the prediction. "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost" (i. 20, 21). Thus Peter, it seems, wrote. The Lord's coming introduced, certain evils that would be manifested ere the rapture, are now disclosed. False teachers and mockers would appear. Of these he now speaks, and in the order in which such works of the enemy would be developed.

Imitation characterises Satan. God originates; Satan imitates. It was so in the past. God opened up a channel of communication with His people Israel by means of prophets; Satan, to corrupt that people, introduced false prophets. Ministry in the Word by teaching characterises Christianity. God has set some in the Church—teachers (1 Cor. xii. 28),

who are gifts from the ascended Christ (Eph. iv. 11). False teachers are, therefore, introduced by Satan. He does not originate an order professedly differing in service from that which God has appointed, lest saints should be startled. He works in wiliness where he cannot oppose by intimidation or direct opposition. So false teachers, Peter tells them, would arise, who should privily bring in damnable heresies (or, destructive heresies), denying even the Master who bought them. The spirit of true subjection would be flung aside, and man's self-asserted freedom to act as he likes would be boldly proclaimed. And the fruits of such teaching would be manifested in lasciviousness, covetousness, and an utter lack of reverence.

How contrary to the spirit of Christ and of true Christianity! We seek not yours, but you, Paul could say (2 Cor. xii. 14). Those of whom Peter was writing would, Balaam-like, traffic in divine things—in covetousness, with feigned words making merchandise of Christians. For a time, evidently, that course might seem to answer; but there is another world, and a tribunal beyond earth, before which such must stand, when judgment against them would go forth and condemnation infallibly overtake them.

Of the certainty of a future judgment all are then warned. Is God too merciful to punish sinners? What can the fallen angels tell? What does the flood? And what does the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah distinctly announce? Punishment has overtaken sinners, and punishment will overtake the finally impenitent. There is a future judgment, when the final condition of the ungodly will be settled; and that approaches. For it, and awaiting it, the fallen angels are now kept in dens (or, chains) of darkness; they are examples of present dealing with sinners, and there will be also final dealing with them in the future.

Not alone, however, have angels been punitively dealt with. The ancient world was destroyed by the flood, and the cities of the plain were consumed by

fire from heaven, to be an example to those who should live ungodly. So both orders of intelligent creatures have felt divine vengeance ; angels and men are witnesses that God does punish sinners. And who can say, in reference to these instances, that the punishment was unrighteous or excessive ?

We have pointed out that the past dealings with fallen angels, apart from the future and final judgment which awaits them, illustrate how God may punish creatures in time, who nevertheless await that awful day when their doom for eternity will be pronounced and carried out. But their history affords no illustration of any delivered from the judgment that fell on the rest. For that we must turn to the history of *men*. In it we learn how at the flood God delivered righteous Noah and those with him in the ark. And again have we an instance of the same in His deliverance of Lot from the doom of Sodom and Gomorrah. "The Lord," writes Peter, "knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment unto the day of judgment" (ii. 9). Reminded of this, the godly are to keep steadfast in a day of abounding iniquity, and to count on divine deliverance out of temptation. Would any plead the difficulty of the path or the strength of the current as that which it was impossible to resist ? Let them remember Noah and Lot, and read aright the lesson of their history as furnished us by Peter.

And why does he dwell on these instances of punishment in the past, and of the deliverance of the godly ? Because the false teachers would come in, by means of which many would be corrupted, and the way of truth in consequence be evil spoken of. The character and the ways of those teachers are then set forth at some length, that the simplest believer may take warning and be delivered. And would they be really converted people who would play such a part amongst Christians ? Conversion they clearly never knew. So to two animals, both unclean, does the apostle

liken them—the dog and the sow. “The dog,” he writes, “is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.” No inward change had taken place; they were like a washed sow, which was a sow still.

Looking on to a further stage in the history of this world, the apostle warns us of an evil which would be manifested “in the last of the days,” as he really wrote. Mockers would come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For from the days that the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation” (iii. 3, 4). Of the latter times (1 Tim. iv. 1) and of the last days (2 Tim. iii. 1) Paul wrote. Here, of the end of the days, the latest period of all before the rapture, Peter instructs us. Boldly would the hope of the Lord’s return be scoffed at, and the assertion be made, as if it were unquestionable, that all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. No change, no interruption in the order of nature has taken place, these mockers would affirm; no change can take place, would be the conclusion at which they would arrive.

How does Peter meet this? How are saints to be guarded against it? To the words of the holy prophets and to the commandments of the Lord and Saviour through our apostles we are turned, and bidden to remember them. In the written word could be found sufficient to detect and condemn the error. The Lord’s coming both Old and New Testament revelation plainly declares. All, then, should look for that event as certain to take place.

Now these scoffers were *wilfully* forgetful of the inspired history of Gen. i. 6-10, as well as of that of the deluge (Gen. vii.); and because the Lord’s coming seemed to be delayed, they would argue that it never would take place. These people might be forgetful, but Christians were not to imitate them; on the contrary, they should remember that time with the

Eternal One is of no account, one day being as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. Slackness on the Lord's part in coming there was not. Why, then, has He delayed? With an answer to this question the apostle at once furnishes us. He has delayed, because He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. His long-suffering is salvation. Men would scoff at the thought of the return of Him, who had delayed because He is waiting to be gracious!

The day of the Lord will, then, come, and the day of God likewise. Are they the same? We believe from 1 Cor. xv. 28 that they are not. The day of the Lord is that period during which the Lord reigns to put down all rule and all authority and power. The day of God is the eternal state, when God shall be all in all. And Peter would intimate that they are distinct. In the former the heavens will be dissolved, the elements will melt with fervent heat, and the earth and its works be burned up. And all this necessarily precedes the day of God (ver. 12). The prepositions used by the apostle clear this. In ver. 10 we read of the day of the Lord, *in the which*, &c.; in ver. 12 we read of the day of God, *by reason of which* dissolution will take place, the prelude to the new heaven and new earth, in both of which will dwell righteousness; and how these great, coming convulsions should affect us now we learn in vers. 11-14.

Peter's ministry, then, carries on, like that of Paul's (1 Cor. xv.) and that of John's (Rev. xxi.), to the commencement of the eternal state. There it ends, and with a few closing exhortations, in the midst of which he authenticates Paul's epistles as part of the Scriptures of truth, he ascribes glory to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, both now and for ever, adding to that wish, what is really not so common in the epistles, the word "Amen."\*

C. E. S.

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\* "Amen" comes in only at the close of Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Hebrews, 2 Peter, Jude, and perhaps Philemon.

## NOTHING LIKE HIM.

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“THE value of revelation, of the Word, increases for me daily, in a manner that I know not how to express. What a precious thing to have God revealed in Christ! How the Person of Christ stands out alone against the background of the scene of this world, to attract our gaze, and associate us in heart with God. In this respect the commencement of the Gospel of John has been of much blessing to me of late. Christ is unfolded there in so complete a manner! He gathers around Himself; He must be God, otherwise He would be turning us away from Him. He says, ‘Follow Me.’ He is the Man who makes the way, the only way, across the desert; for, for man there is none, since he is separated from God. On the Man Christ heaven is open; He is, as Man, the object of heaven, and of the service of the angels of God. John (a beautiful example of the absence of all selfishness and of all self-regard) receives a testimony from above, but he speaks of that which is earthly. Now that is but a testimony; but He who *came* from above bears witness of what He has seen, and *in Himself He reveals heaven*. He gives—He is—the eternal life, in order that we may enjoy it. What a thing to say—that heaven, its nature, its joys, what it is, should be revealed to us by the word and *by the presence of Him* who dwells there, who is its centre and glory! Now, without doubt, man has entered into heaven, but it is none the less precious that God should have come down to earth. Man admitted into heaven is the subject of Paul; God, and the life manifested upon earth, that of John. The one is heavenly, as to man, the other divine. This is why John has such attractions for the heart. There is nothing like *Him*.”

J. N. D.

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FAITH is the pencil of the soul that pictures heavenly things.—*Burbidge*.

“THAT I MAY KNOW HIM.”—*Phil.* iii. 10.

IT is cheering to find, amongst those who owe all that is worth having to that blessed One who loved us, and gave Himself for us, some who are ready to deny themselves for His sake; for it is characteristic of these days, as it was even before Paul departed, that “all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s” (*Phil.* ii. 21). Too many, alas! are content with the mere knowledge of salvation (and blessed indeed that is, for it is the alphabet of all true knowledge); they love the Lord Jesus after a sort. “We love Him because He first loved us;” but they “mind earthly things” (*Phil.* iii. 19); their glory is not in “the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (*Gal.* vi. 14), but “in their shame.” They are practically of the world, for their hearts are there, and those of the world wonder wherein lies the difference, except in word. “With their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.” They talk of the “unsearchable riches of Christ,” while their hearts are set on the “treasures of Egypt,” and their energies spent upon that which is not bread, and which cannot satisfy. What a shrinking there is from what the cross of Christ involves! How little self-denial in those who profess to follow the Lord! But “whosoever will save his life shall lose it,” for life does not consist in the abundance of the things which we possess; and if these things are occupying the heart, we are not living, in the *true* sense of the word; they afford no true joy, for that can be found only in Him.

Oh! how rich we are in Him who is the Son, the Heir of all things, the Maker of the worlds, the Brightness of God’s glory, the express Image of His person, the Upholder of all things, and the *Purger of our sins* (*Heb.* i.). Can we be poor with such treasure? Poor we may be as regards this world’s goods (and God grant that in this respect we may seek more to

follow in His steps, who though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor), yet we may make many rich. We may be dispensers of those "unsearchable riches" in the power of that One who, Christ said, should be in us a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. But to give we must have. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and real service must be the overflowing of a heart filled with Christ. To know Him therefore in all His wondrous beauty is the longing desire of all who wish to serve Him well.

The babes in Christ know the Father (1 John ii. 13), have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father (Rom. viii. 15); and the anointing which they have received abideth in them, and they need not that any man teach them, but the same anointing teaches them all things (1 John ii. 27). He receives of that which is Christ's, and shows it unto us. How encouraging to the weakest, and how blessed! There is in the "young men" strength, and a knowledge of truth; the word of God abides in them; but what characterises the "fathers" is the knowledge of Him who is the Truth--of "Him that is from the beginning" (1 John ii. 13, 14). The exhortation was not to them to "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," for doubtless they were esteeming all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord, and having Him as their gain counted all else but dung (Phil. iii. 8). And this is perfection, or full growth.

But even then there is the "reaching forth unto those things which are before," the pressing toward the mark, the being like Christ in glory. Paul writes, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but 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. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect (*i.e.*, have reached full growth) be thus minded; and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you" (Phil. iii. 12-15).

While it is blessedly true that we all, babes, young men, and fathers, stand in all the perfection of Christ's wondrous work, yet there is the other side, the practical side, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. v. 48); and it is equally God's word with "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 14). As new-born babes we are to desire the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby (1 Pet. ii. 2). Christ who is our life must also be our food, otherwise there will be no growth, and the "babe" state will become an unnatural one. "Be not children in understanding . . . but in understanding be men" (margin, perfect, or full grown—1 Cor. xiv. 20), and it is by "the knowledge of the Son of God" that we all come "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children" (Eph. iv. 13, 14).

May we "grow up to Him in all things;" "know Him," in whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," and in whom we are complete, filled full (Col. ii. 9, 10). Why should He be as a stranger to us, as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night, when His surpassing loveliness might be filling our souls, causing us to "rejoice in the Lord always?" Well might He say to us as to Philip, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me?" And He may be known. But the Revealer, Searcher, Knower, and Teacher (1 Cor. ii.) must be in us in His fulness, ungrieved by the love of the world, or aught of the flesh; otherwise He has to occupy us with ourselves, instead of with Christ.

How many of the Lord's dear people are selling their birthright for a mess of pottage; yet not

satisfied, for only Christ can satisfy, but starving in the midst of plenty, while they might be eating the fat, and drinking the sweet, and sending portions to those who have need. "Freely ye have received, freely give." Our treasure is inexhaustible. May we be drawing on it largely, and being enriched ourselves, out of overflowing hearts enriching others, and thus may we swell the chorus of praise to Him who is worthy.

H. W. D.

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"THE MIND OF CHRIST."—1 *Cor.* ii. 16.

How wondrous is the thought expressed of Him serving *them*, as depicted in Luke xii. 37. The word searches the heart when we consider the rich One, King of kings, assuming again a character so expressive and wondrous for Him towards those whom He has given life to, and in the energy and outlet of it confessed Him in practice, during His absence; and yet, knowing He will come, we to acquit ourselves as taught of Him in a way the reverse of self-seeking and self-serving. We wait for our Lord. "Blessed are those bondmen whom the Lord coming shall find watching; verily I say unto you, that He will gird Himself and make them recline at table, and coming up will serve them."

"The Lord's mind." How poorly we know the meaning of this, yet a phrase so common as to suppose it is known by all. Oh! how distorted, traditional, and cumbered with so much of superstition and imagination are we!

To speak is one thing, and this He did; yea, God spoke in the Person of His Son. But speaking did not do for man what God's word did for creation—"the worlds were framed by the Word of God." We, as fallen ones, needed more, yea, how much more than speaking to; for alas, what doing, what serving, was necessary to lift out of the ruin and misery into which we had fallen through sin. "Let this mind be in you which was

also in Christ Jesus ; who, subsisting in the form of God, did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God ; but emptied Himself, taking a bondman's form, taking His place in likeness of men ; and having been found in figure as a man, humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death—and that the death of the cross." What shall He do for Him who has humbled Himself thus? Highly exalt Him, and give Him a name above every name—Jesus Christ! It is what only we can do as new creatures in association with Him, who are not of the world, who have been taken out, and sent into it to serve Him, to have His mind, His will, His interests at heart. What grace is this! Otherwise, how could we humble ourselves?

We who were in that most solemn condition, so repugnant, so humiliating, where the glory of man is at zero, his strength all gone—in a condition of death. James says : "According to His own will begat He us by the word of truth, that we should be a certain first-fruits of His creatures. So that, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath ; for man's wrath does not work God's righteousness. . . . Accept with meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, beguiling yourselves." Here, perhaps, might come in a tinge of legality ; and how the enemy would like to introduce such thoughts as *doing* out of a sense of duty, obligation or necessity, not that service which is by love, not hire, not for wage or reward, but for Him who is love and light ; who communicates His mind, who more than speaks, who emptied Himself and took the servant's place. The poorly taught count it folly to lose all here below, to serve all but sin and self. The proud seek prominence! it may be by position, by wealth, by surrounding themselves with serving men and women, &c. God's fear is far from such ; but he who humbles himself shall be exalted. In this He has the pre-eminence. He served God

incessantly ; He came to do His will. There was that matter of sin, so difficult ; none exempt from its consequences here, save Himself. But co-workers He would have ; not for any to help Him put away sin ; He did that alone. He delivers, gives life, and leads liberated ones to His side, to quietly learn at His feet, of Him ! Serving to Him was no drudgery, joy lay before Him. He knew the mind, and heart, and will of Him who sent Him, strove lawfully, toiled honestly, contended and used aright the sword of the Spirit. He is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

It is to His glory that His labour has not been in vain ; the light He has lit in a dark scene is to His praise. Himself unseen, He served not only in the way of speaking well of Him, but doing deeds in His name provoking to love and good works. The saying without the practising righteousness is anti-Christian, denies Him come in flesh. Though one is counted the off-scouring, and day by day delivered up to death for His sake, can this quench the worshipful adoration from our hearts reaching Him who thus privileges us here to serve ? But there He will serve, while those who have served Him through grace recline ; but as taught of Him, we serve now in lowly dependence Him who sends us from His presence. How unselfish He. Oh ! the bliss He experienced in doing God's will. Shall this be all Mine ? Shall not those He has given Me know it too—taste and drink the wine with Me in My kingdom ; at My hand they shall take. "Blessed those bondmen." "Let a man so account of us as servants of Christ." Could there be that if Christ was not all ? Would it be serving Christ to put on a par with Him Peter, John, Paul, Apollos ? Is there no difference between Master and servant ? no difference between reigning without Him and with Him ? Suffer with Him, reign with Him ; suffering and glory to follow, labour and a rest that remains to the people of God. What poor half-hearted ones we are ! A little persecution, our spirits droop, we faint and waver,

strive unlawfully, serve not of a free heart with a ready mind. Attract, it may be, to ourselves by an address well delivered, a book ably written, a furnished table; by our dress of costly silk or showy attire; by adding a bouquet or a button-hole to sober monastic dress, discarding all ornament. "For to me to live is Christ" was the language of one. Oh! for grace to take up those words, and in life commend Him. The lip profession has its myriad of followers and imitators. But how ready we are to say, "What shall this man do?" Quick to discern dim lamps. Has He not said, "Follow thou Me"? Who would require a second bidding? He has said it, and means it. Would you have more? Then hearken: "He that loves his life shall lose it, and he that hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal. If any one serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there also shall be My servant. And if any one serve Me, him shall My Father honour." Enough, blessed Lord Jesus; and now for grace, O God, to serve Him. W. B.

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THE INCARNATION.—Behold the greatness of thy Creator veiled in the grace of thy Redeemer; the perfect Man to suffer, the perfect God to pardon; and both God and Man in one Person at the same instant, able and willing to give and to take a perfect satisfaction for thee. O my soul, a wonder above wonders! an incomprehensibility beyond all admiration! a depth past finding out! Under this shadow, O my soul, refresh thyself! If thy sins make thee fear the hand of His justice, behold Him as thy sanctuary! If thy offences tremble before the Judge, behold thy Advocate! If thy creditor threaten a prison, is He not thy bail? Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Behold the Blessed of heaven and of earth, that hath prepared a kingdom for thee. Be ravished, O my soul! O bless the name of Elohim! O bless the name of our Emmanuel with praises and eternal hallelujahs!—*Quarles*.

THE WORD OF GOD.—Because the days are evil fortify yourselves “as saints” with the Word of God, which all the powers of evil cannot resist or overthrow. “It is written” was the Master’s reply, when assailed by the temptations of the enemy. Let us follow His example; we have a never-failing resource in the written word.—T. H. W., *Swansea*.

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THERE is nothing more dangerous than to use the Word when it has not touched my conscience. I put myself into Satan’s hands if I go beyond what I have from God, what is in possession of my soul, and use it in ministry or privately. There is nothing more dangerous than the handling of the Word apart from the guidance of the Spirit. To talk with saints on the things of God beyond what I hold in communion is most pernicious. There would be a great deal not said that is said were we watchful as to this, and the Word not so used in an unclean way. I know of nothing that more separates from God than truth spoken out of communion with Him; there is uncommon danger in it.—1 *John* i. 5. J. N. D.

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WHAT IS OUR MOTIVE?—See yonder eagle how it mounts! Does it care for the ethereal blue, or aspire to commune with the stars of heaven? Not a whit; such airy considerations have no weight with the ravenous bird; and yet you will not wonder that it soars aloft when you remember that it thus obtains a broader range of vision, and so becomes the better able to provide for its nest. The bird mounts towards heaven, but it keeps its eye evermore upon the outlook for its prey. No celestial impulse is needed; its love of blood bears it aloft. It soars only that it may flash downwards with fell swoop upon the object of its desires. Wonder not that men with the hearts of devils yet mount like angels: there is a reason which explains it all.—*Spurgeon*.

**GOD'S PURPOSE INSIDE SEEN EVENTS.**—The external course of events tells us nothing of what is really going on *inside*. If the plannings of men or of Satan further God's plans, they succeed ; if not, they come to nothing. The Jews would not take Jesus on the feast day to avoid uproar, but He was to be the Pascal Lamb, and therefore *is* taken. Often would they have taken Him, but His hour was not yet come : when it was, they take Him, and their wicked plans succeed. The heartless superstition of the Jews had the malefactors' legs broken ; what they really did was to send the repentant one to paradise. To the outward eye there happened to Job raids of Arabs and Chaldeans, ordinary predatory raids ; and a violent storm blew down the house. Satan was in it all, and above him God was arranging to purify Job's heart and to instruct saints in all ages. The political measures of Augustus, as to the census of the empire, brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus ; and then it would seem that it was not carried out for nine years, when Cyrenius, or Quirinus, was governor. All we have to do is to discern God's will, and find by faith the courage to do it. All His strength is power to carry us forward. It may seem all to turn out ill or to be a cross—it may be so ; but we shall have the result of God's counsel and blessing by the way.—J. N. D.

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**NOTHING LITTLE IN GOD'S SIGHT (Luke xxi. 2).**  
—Now the one circumstance to which we wish to call attention is, that amid all these mighty discourses and amazing prophecies ; amid all the weariness of His human body, and the anguish of His human soul ; amid griefs unrevealed and bitterness of spirit unutterable, the Lord of heaven and earth was at leisure to sit down and watch the ways of one of the very humblest of His creatures. "He saw, also, a certain poor widow." After His eight withering woes upon the scribes and Pharisees, which must have goaded them to madness (for they were at once the proudest

and the most powerful of the people), after *this*, and just *before* He entered upon that far-sighted prophecy, which glanced onward from the coming destruction of the city to the very end, blending the near and the far future so wondrously, and showing that the Blessed Speaker's eye was filled with images of grandeur and glory unspeakable, is the occasion before us. The moment is well worth observing; for it is the brief moment which separated the Saviour's discourse concerning the things of time and eternity—the little halting-place between His leave-taking of His enemies, and His anticipation of the ruin which was to be brought upon them; first by His avenging armies; next by His legions of angels. It was at that particular instant, and therefore while His heart must have been occupied in the way we have been describing, that our Lord, seating Himself over against the treasury, looked up, and beheld how they cast money into the treasury. He saw before Him the destruction of the temple and the fall of Jerusalem; and the gathering together of all the tribes of the earth: all this He saw. But He saw, also, *a certain poor widow* casting in thither two mites. He had the leisure, had the inclination, had the sovereign will to scrutinise the act, and to weigh it in a heavenly balance, and to pronounce upon it calmly and at length—as if life and death hung upon the issue. He called unto Him His disciples, and said unto them, "Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all; for all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God; but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had." These precious words on the lips of our Saviour awaken in us a deep sense of wonder and admiration. Nothing is so little as to escape His eye, nothing so trifling as not to interest and engage Him. The Psalmist has expressed this in but two verses (Ps. cxiii. 5,6)—"Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high; who humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth."—*Dean Burgon.*

**“THE LETTER OF THE TEN.”**  
TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

“COMMUNION between those who HOLD and those who ABHOR the latitudinarian principle of the ‘Letter’ is simply an impossibility. Let the letter of the Ten be seen and owned by Bethesda to have been a slight put upon Christ, and a grievous sin against God, and no barrier would remain to the re-union with her of those who have been obliged by that document to stand apart from her and her supporters. Let it still, as at present, be maintained, and, for one, I can only say, solemnly and deliberately, that precious as is the communion of saints, I should prefer walking alone the remainder of my days on earth, to the taking any step which would imply approbation of that document, acquiescence in it, or indifference to its contents. Who that understands it can be indifferent to it, while He values Christ’s glory, cares for the uncorrupted truth of God, or feels any concern for the real welfare of his brethren in Christ?”—*W. Trotter, 1857.*

[The above is as true, as important and as unanswerable to-day as it was 35 years ago. Whatever Bethesda’s practice may be, her principles remain *unchanged*. They are as *corrupt* and as *corrupting* as ever, and communion with her, either direct or indirect, or any *palliation of her sin*, those who have intelligence of the Lord’s mind and are walking with Him, will *surely refuse*. The necessity for our saying this arises from the lamentable fact that the “Letter of the Ten” has this summer been virtually re-affirmed on the one hand, and its principles condoned, apparently, on the other. We thank God that in this country those who by His grace have been gathered in separation from evil as God’s principle of unity; recognising before Him that the Holy Ghost as an ungrieved Spirit is the power of that unity, and that holiness becometh God’s house for ever, maintain as strenuously as for the last 44 years that we can have no fellowship with the sin of Bethesda or her people, or with “open brethren,” professedly *neutral* (for neutrality in what dishonours Christ is really *complicity*), or with any of their supporters or excusers. “Wherefore receive ye one another . . . *to the glory of God?*” —EDITOR.]

INSPIRATION.—As for *thoughts* being inspired, apart from the words which give them expression, you might as well talk of a tune without notes, or a sum without figures. No such dream can abide the daylight for a moment.—*Dean Burgon.*

GENESIS i. is in no way a “scientific” account of creation; but it does supply with plain certainty the divine revelation of that creation of which all true science professes its total ignorance. The records written in the rocks are wholly out of view in the Scriptural account, which speaks solely of the absolute beginning in general (ver. 1), and in detail only of the time immediately connected with *man's earth*. The scene of geological research lies between, and is passed by in Scripture as quite outside its moral scope.—*Bible Treasury, Sept., 1892.*

GEOLOGY AND GENESIS.—A masterly sermon, preached before the University of Oxford by Dr. Buckland (a great scientific authority), sufficiently solves all difficulties. After Gen. i. 1, simply recording the creation by Almighty power of all things out of nothing, a lapse of as many ages as the geologists may require may be supposed, in entire consistency with the sacred narrative. In what follows Gen. i. 1, the account of the reconstitution of the ruined earth out of the chaos and its furniture for the abode of man, the days are to be taken as literal days, as the reason assigned for the Sabbatical rest requires.

THE EXISTENCE OF WATERS AND VEGETATION BEFORE THE APPEARANCE OF THE SUN.—The writer of Genesis speaks phenomenally in recording the creation of the luminaries on the fourth day. The work of the fourth day was the summoning into view the two great luminaries whose orbs had been hitherto obscured by the aqueous vapour which enwrapped the earth, and the assigning new functions to them in connection with man. As to the difficulty of the successive stages of creation occupying only a single day, why not if God so willed it? And He tells us (what there could be no human witness of) that He *did* will it. I insist on taking everything in this chapter *quite literally*, neither as a poem nor as a psalm. The book of Job is the former, and the 104th Psalm is a Psalm of Creation indeed. But Genesis i. is very severe, very unadorned prose. It purports to be, and undoubtedly is, history in the strictest sense, *revealed* history, and therefore *true* history. It claims to be, and therefore is, the history of six ordinary days. Scripture reveals nothing concerning the universe during the pre-historic period, except the fact that God was its Creator. While not denying that the word Day is sometimes employed in Scripture (as in the familiar speech of men) with metaphorical license, the understanding of literal days in the Mosaic account of creation is necessitated by these facts:—(1) That God called the light *day* and the darkness *night*. (2) That each one of these days (except the seventh) was furnished with its own evening and morning. (3) That the reason assigned by God for the observance of the Sabbath (Exod. xx. 10, 11) would be without force if long geologic periods were occupied by the creation of our earth, &c. in its present state.—*Dean of Chichester.*

DIVISIONS OF THE LAW.—Moral, Deut. iv. to xi. Ceremonial, xii. to xvi. Civil, xvii. to xxvi.

GREAT MEN SOMETIMES MAKE GREAT MISTAKES.—Luther is an example of this, in having passed a slur on the Epistle of James as “an epistle of straw.”

EVOLUTION is but scientific mythology in contempt of Scripture ; and the worst class in that school consists of those who are audacious enough to reduce the written Word of God to an analagous growth from human elements. The sole field or groundwork of science is the fixed order everywhere observable in the created universe ; but of creation, of the production of what exists, true science avowedly and necessarily knows nothing, only of existing natural order, and consequently should be wholly silent where its ignorance is blank. Faith alone understands it on the warrant of God's Word, which is infinite'y simpler and surer to every individual than in any other way. Nor can any proof of man's need be conceived more demonstrative than the adoption by scientific men of an hypothesis so irrational, which is at issue with every fact really ascertained in the geologic ages no less than in historic times. Speculation is not science, which does not exist save by just deduction from fixed principles or constant order among the beings that exist. This is quite compatible with God's creation ; not so the ancient notion of a constant flux or the modern evolution, both of which are ultimately due to man's anxiety to get rid of God and His will and energy here below. To unfold creation is not the function of science, which therefore, if alone, leaves men infidel. But Scripture supplies what science stops short of, speaks with divine authority and admirable clearness to the open ear, and makes the truth a matter of testimony, not reasoning, and hence adapted to all who believe.—*Bible Treasury*.

THE UNREASON OF DARWINISM.—It is foolish and profane, illogical and not proven. Those who have the slightest reverence for the Word of God, and appreciation of divine principles, know that the system will remain hypothetical. It is to be noted also that even Professor Huxley has carefully guarded against committing himself absolutely to the Darwinian hypothesis. But when we bear in mind that these so-called scientific men reject Christianity *in toto* (*i. e.*, as a revelation), and that some (I grant not all) have gone so far as to say, "We have no need of the hypothesis of God," one need not hesitate before rejecting their theories. The pet dream of modern scientists—by which Professor Drummond has been led astray—is that all things are what they are by virtue of their environment. And of course the evolution doctrine stands or falls with this. But it is an undoubted fact that there have been found in savages latent capacities, physical as well as spiritual, that no environment can have coaxed into being (as they are utterly opposed to it), but which bear eloquent testimony to primitive endowment. It is seen in the structure of the hand and in the mechanism of the voice ; it is witnessed in the capacity to receive spiritual truths. One and all of those who belong to this school (Darwinism) drive the Deity back into the infinite past, when and where only they reluctantly allow Him to have given birth to one or two primordial germs. One and all, I mean, of those who admit a God. Others, like the late Professor W. K. Clifford, who said (one wonders how he dared) that "the great companion was dead," would affirm that every subsequent phenomenon was latent in the original star-dust. Yet there are others—Wallace, and, I doubt not, Dawson—who contend that man's body cannot be the product of evolution. These scientists are "blind guides" when they enter the realm of speculation, as indeed everyone must be. Is it not flying without wings?—*R. B., Jun.*

“EVERY WHIT OF IT UTTERETH HIS  
GLORY.”—*Ps.* xxix. 9 (margin).

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WE all know that David, the writer of this Psalm, never saw the Temple; but he did more, even that which was morally higher and spiritually deeper—he *foresaw* it. The “eyes of his heart” were enlightened by the Spirit of God, and with prophetic vision he looked on to that which Solomon his son, by God’s ordinance, should be privileged to erect on Mount Moriah. He “being a prophet,” as Peter says (*Acts* ii. 30), and the sweet singer in Israel, celebrated aforehand the erection of the Temple. With all his might, we read (*1 Chron.* xxix.), because he had set his affection to the house of his God, he prepared quantities of gold and silver, and brass and iron and wood, “onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistening stones, and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones and marble stones in abundance.” Beautiful it is to see how his heart was engaged in the work, rejoicing “with great joy,” and how he gave all the glory to Jehovah his God, affirming “All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee” (vers. 9 and 14).

But not only do we learn the exercises of David’s heart, but also God’s estimate of the Temple, which was to be “exceeding magnificent” for Him, as well as “of fame and of glory throughout all countries” (*1 Chron.* xxii. 5), the enduring witness for Jehovah to all nations. The plan and the arrangements, both within and without; the altars and the offerings; the smoking sacrifices and the burning incense; the flesh and fat and blood of the victims; the gold and silver vessels; the curiously wrought texture of the veil, with its elaborate embroidery; the beaten gold and the flashing jewels; all were full of eloquence in the ear of God, all full of significance to His eye! From

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end to end, from base to summit, there was not a feature of it but told of Christ. And the words that head this paper might not unfittingly be regarded as the ejaculation of God Himself, by the mouth of "the patriarch David;" for surely he was moved by the Holy Ghost when he exclaimed, "Every whit of it uttereth His glory."

But fourteen generations pass, and then, for the iniquity of God's people, there is the carrying away into Babylon, and the Temple is despoiled and destroyed! Again there pass fourteen generations, and David's Son and Lord is upon the scene (Matt. i. 17), the One who, looking back not for fourteen generations only, but for three times fourteen generations, could say, "Before Abraham was, I am!" He, upon Peter's confession that He is "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (which He declares is the revelation of the Father to him), Himself reveals the cherished purpose of His heart to build His Church, and adds that "the gates of hell (or, hades) shall not prevail against it" (Matt. xvi. 16-18). The foundation having been laid in His death and resurrection, the Holy Ghost comes down from heaven, and comes down to *dwell*. Thus the occasion again arises to form a dwelling-place for God upon earth. Not now a material structure, but an edifice infinitely higher in character, composed of living stones, builded together for an habitation of God in Spirit (Eph. ii. 22).

My contention then is, that for God this structure, of which He is the Builder, has for the time being, superseded the former, and that until the day when He shall turn again in mercy towards an earthly people, and build afresh a material "Temple of the Lord" for their renewed worship to Him (see Zech. vi. 13), He has no building on earth save this of which the Spirit of God speaks by the apostle. And thus it is we find Paul saying to the saints (1 Cor. iii. 16), "Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any

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man destroy the Temple of God, him shall God destroy.” Is it not, then, a fair and a forcible argument that, if God required the material Temple in each and every form and feature, in each essential element, to speak in His unwearied ear and to portray to His unclouded eye the beauties, virtues, excellencies, and glories of Christ, He is far more entitled to require, and does far more emphatically claim, this from that much higher and more spiritual thing, the present Temple of God upon earth? And the responsibility of the saints now is tersely and deftly summed up by the psalmist, for what God looks for is that He should be able to say, “Every whit of it uttereth His glory.”

Turning now to Eph. v. 25-27, we find the apostle Paul revealing to us the imperishable love of Christ to His Body the Church. Once for all has He given Himself for it, for at no lesser cost could it be His or could it be worthy of Him. He *must* die for it. The righteousness, the holiness of God, the attributes which are essentially His, made any revocation of this impossible. Therefore did He give Himself for it. And therefore, too, does He expend upon it the daily, hourly activities of His undying and unwearying love, bringing the Word by the Spirit of God so to bear upon the consciences of the saints that they may reflect Christ more and more visibly to His glory in their walk and ways. And all this in view of a coming day of manifested glory together with Him. A glorified Christ could only present to Himself a glorified Church. She must be like Him. Thus we also find appended, “Not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.” Turning to Ex. xii. 5 we read, “Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year.” Herein we see Christ, the ante-typical Paschal Lamb. “Spotless, undefiled, and pure, the great Redeemer stood.” The first feature is that He was without a blemish—“that holy thing.” And the second is that He was without a

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wrinkle, for as "a male lamb of the first year" is a lamb at its best, so was the Lord Jesus, as "Christ our Passover—sacrificed for us," in the full maturity of His true humanity when He died upon the tree, as much without a wrinkle as without a blemish! We therefore conclude that what He looks for and will eventually behold in the Church is that which characterised Him when He "through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God" (Heb. ix. 14). What a solemn but blessed consideration is this for us in communion with Him, viz., that the Church *must be* the reflex of Christ! As God can have no lower standard for His saints personally than that we should walk as Christ walked (1 John ii. 6), so Christ can only have us before Himself as the perfect reflection of the ineffable beauty and grace and spotless holiness which essentially pertain to, and shall eternally shine forth in, Him.

And finally, if my readers and I are divinely impressed with this we shall, through grace, be preserved from tolerating anything in ourselves or sanctioning anything corporately which would grieve the Holy Spirit of God or be a practical denial of that holiness which becometh God's house *for ever* (Psalm xciii. 5). Oh that God, surveying that which bears Christ's name now on earth, could complacently exclaim, "Every whit of it uttereth His glory;" instead of having to say, "How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed! the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street" (Lam. iv. 1).

May He keep us humble before Himself, seeking grace to witness for Him in the midst of such general ruin and defection of that which has been entrusted to our responsibility, while yet rejoicing that that which is His handiwork neither human nor Satanic power shall ever damage or destroy. "The gates of hades shall not prevail against it."

## THE CONFLICT ON THE HEIGHTS OF MOAB.—*Num.* xxii.-xxiv.

THE book of Numbers, as we call it, treats of thirty-nine eventful years of Israel's history, commencing with the second year of their political existence, and ending with the fortieth year from their coming out of Egypt. Known in the Hebrew canon by the title of *In the wilderness*, it comprises most of that which has been preserved of the people's history during their desert wanderings. We say *most*; for Leviticus xxiv. 10-23 records one of the two good deeds (*Num.* xv. 32-36 recounting the other) that is put to their account during all that time; and Deut. x. 6-7 mentions a portion of their journey, a turn in the road, not accounted for in *Num.* xxxiii.

Perusing *Numbers*, we can readily see how naturally it divides into three great parts, viz., i.-x. 10; x. 11-xxi. 12; xxi. 13 to end. In the first part, the people are seen encamped under Sinai. In the second, they are on their wilderness journey. In the third, they are encamped in the plains of Moab, having begun the conquest of the territory assigned to them by God. They have crossed the brook Zered, which terminated the wilderness wanderings, and have found in the land of their possession supplies of water from a well. These three parts of the book are specially connected with something about God. In the *first* we see God dwelling *in* their midst, so arranging the tribes around Himself, cleansing the camp, and preparing the people in everything for their march. In the *second* division we see God *with* them in all their wanderings, and in spite of all their murmurings. In the *third* we read of God *for* them against their enemies, both human and spiritual. In the third part Balaam's history chronologically and morally finds its place.

In xxi., the overthrow of the southern Amorite power east of Jordan, in the person of Sihon, who

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dwelt at Heshbon, is briefly related. Invincible was Israel. Every one of that doomed race—men, women, and children—all were destroyed. A nation was cut off; its very existence in that territory completely blotted out. Never before, never since, has such an extermination taken place. Nor could Og, of the remnant of the powerful Rephaim, or giants, withstand the people. Like a devastating torrent, which carries all before it, Israel overflowed the whole country. Bolts, bars, fenced cities, nothing could stay them. Every one on the east of Jordan within the territories of Sihon and Og was cut off (Deut. ii. 30-iii. 6). Yet not a life was lost among the hosts of Israel. God was for them. Who could be against them?

At this juncture Balaam appears on the scene, sent for by Balak from Pethor, which was by the River, *i.e.*, the Euphrates, to curse Israel, in order that Moab might overcome them. Had Moab known of God's command by Moses to leave her territory alone, for He had given it to the children of Lot (Deut. ii. 9), she might have slept in peace. But, ignorant of that, fear possessed Balak her king, lest Israel should "lick up," as they said, "all that is round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field" (Num. xxii. 4). Very natural was the fear, because they had seen the despoiler of their country, who had years before taken a large slice of their kingdom, and had kept it, now utterly worsted by Israel. Sihon, victorious over Moab, was powerless before the new invading force. For Moab, then, to contend successfully in battle with Israel was hopeless. If the Amorites were exterminated by Israel, like an ox licking up the grass of the field, what could Moab expect? Hence Balak's only hope lay in getting Balaam to curse them, that he might overcome them, and regain the lost territory recently occupied by the Amorites.

That was Balak's policy. In conjunction with the elders of Midian, he and the elders of Moab proceeded

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to carry it out, for the Midianites had been tributaries to Sihon, their princes being "dukes of Sihon" (Joshua xiii. 21), *i.e.*, his vassals. A common interest, then, was established by the fall of that Amorite power, to which both Moab and Midian had once been forced to submit. Were they then, the question would present itself, to be tributary to the conquerors of Sihon? or could they get the mastery over Israel? Either they or the invaders must have the supremacy. To ensure that for themselves, we can understand them making common cause in the embassy despatched to Balaam.

Balaam was a prophet (2 Pet. ii. 16). His reputation was established. "I know," said Balak, "that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed" (Num. xxii. 6). Moreover, he professed to get the mind of Jehovah, the God of Israel (8). If that should be favourable to Moab, all might be well. Balak's move in sending to Balaam seemed, therefore, a very wise one, and the very best thing, as men would think, that he could do. The messengers despatched duly arrived at Balaam's habitation, and were received by the prophet, who promised to tell them in the morning what Jehovah would say unto him.

Now began the real conflict. And it opened with God speaking to Balaam, and not, as far as we learn, Balaam speaking first to God. "God came unto Balaam, and said, What men are these with thee?" In the silence and solitude of the night God began to speak, and the prophet had to listen. God, watching over Israel encamped in the plains of Moab, spoke that night to Balaam, who was far off, near the river Euphrates. Who in the camp of Israel knew what was taking place on their behalf at Pethor? Balaam was ready to comply with Balak's request; God, however, forbade him. "Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed" (12). A short but definite announcement, to which

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Balaam gave heed, though very probably with reluctance. "The Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you" was his answer to the princes of Moab. He was hindered, otherwise he would readily have complied with Balak's request.

Balak, aware probably of Balaam's covetous disposition, did not think the reply was really the prophet's last word in the matter. So he sent again, and this time princes more and more honourable, and offers of great rewards, accompanied by a promise of subservience to the prophet's wishes. "Whatsoever thou sayest unto me I will do." Fame and honour almost within Balaam's reach! A temptation indeed! Fame, if he could successfully curse that mighty and victorious people; honours, if from his lips maledictions could proceed against them. The temptation to a character like Balaam's was great. His first refusal had not destroyed all Balak's hopes. Nor did God's plain announcement to Balaam deter him from listening to the fresh overtures on the part of the Moabite king, and on that of the chiefs of Midian also. For, whilst answering the messengers, he yet evidently hoped that some fresh communication might modify God's previous definite declaration.

For a second time was his abode opened, therein to lodge the Moabitish embassy. Night came. A word more from God he did receive. A conditional permission to go was accorded him, accompanied by an intimation that God's word to him, whatever it might be, he was to do. "If the men call thee," was the condition, "rise up, go with them." Morning succeeded night. Balaam saddled his ass and went. Yet, it would seem, they had not called him. The conditional permission he acted upon as if it had been accorded unconditionally. The spirit of Balaam showed itself. The temptation to acquire temporal profit he could not resist. He went, conscious, surely, that it was in a spirit of disobedience.

Now God would make that publicly manifest, using

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the ass on which Balaam rode as His instrument. Three times did his ass intimate her unwillingness to proceed. Three times did the prophet smite it for its unusual conduct. Then the Lord opened her mouth, and she spoke. To a dumb animal God gave, for the occasion, the power of articulate utterance. The ass spoke. Balaam replied. The ass rejoined, and then relapsed into its natural condition, never again to hold oral communication with a man.

Now the Lord opened Balaam's eyes to see what his ass had seen—the angel of the Lord with his sword drawn, ready, if the prophet had advanced, to kill him. The conduct of the ass was thus explained. The madness of the prophet was demonstrated. The angel now addressed the prophet, and told him how it was that he was yet alive. He had been saved by his ass. But further, and the angel's words make plain who was speaking, "Thy way," he said, "is perverse before *Me*." The Lord whom Balaam professed to serve, the God of Israel too, had met him in the way to withstand him. Forbidden distinctly, at first, to listen to Balak's proposals, allowed to go on a condition which never was fulfilled, the Lord now met him on his way, and death would have overtaken him in disobedience had it not have been for his ass. God was not indifferent to, nor unconcerned about, Balak's desire and efforts to get Israel cursed.

Balaam, professedly penitent, offered to turn back. His offer really betrayed his unwillingness to return, and disclosed his utter insincerity. He was allowed, now unconditionally, to proceed; to be, however unwillingly, the mouthpiece of God. Was God repenting of His purpose about Israel? "He is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent." Balaam should go as the prophet, really uttering the mind of God in the words chosen of God. He should go as a captive restrained by Almighty power, and constrained to utter that which was foreign to his real desire. All should learn the

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impossibility of human or Satanic power reversing the settled purpose of God. Balaam, reproached by Balak for his delay in coming, tells him of his position. "Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say anything? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak." The king vaunted of his power to promote Balaam to honour. The prophet declared his inability to be anything but the mouthpiece of the Almighty. True inspiration is a very real thing. The vessel of it utters the mind of another, in words chosen by God the Spirit.

There was a feast that night at Kirjath-huzoth. Balak was evidently rejoicing at the advent of the prophet, assured that what he said would come true. Those whom he cursed would be cursed, and those whom he blessed would be blessed. But on whom would the curse fall? Who would be the subjects of the prophet's blessing? A few hours must decide. Meanwhile the guest should be honoured; and the events of the morrow were awaited, surely, in anxious expectation. There was that night a prophet, and a professed servant of God (xxii. 18), at the court of the king of Moab, and brought there for the express purpose of cursing Israel. The morrow would reveal the feasibility of Balak's scheme. Unconscious, probably, were the people of Israel of the arrival of that visitor, or of the purpose of his coming. We may well understand that it was not for Moab's interest that news of it should reach the camp of Israel. Unconscious, too, most likely, were the people on the morrow that two men were surveying their extensive camp from the high places of Baal. They took, therefore, no steps to frustrate the king's designs. If, then, they should be defeated, it must be by another power than Israel's.

The morrow had come. The two went up to the high places of Baal, from whence the prophet could see the whole extent of the people he had been summoned from Pethor to curse. For that, however, God's favour must be sought; so, in accordance with the

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customs of that day, sacrifices were provided. Seven altars Balaam ordered to be prepared. On each of them he and Balak offered a bullock and a ram. Thus seeking the favour of heaven, he withdrew to a little distance, to await, if it should please the Lord to give it, a communication from the Almighty, selecting a bare height within sight probably of Balak, but not perhaps within earshot. God met him. Reading the narrative, the impression is conveyed that there was no delay. Balaam reached the chosen spot, and God at once met him. Everything had been done to secure a favourable answer; of that the prophet, who was the first to speak, assured God. He told Him of the altars he had built; he enumerated the sacrifices he had offered. Now the Lord spoke. But not a word was there of approbation of the altars, not a syllable of acceptance of the sacrifices. Was not silence about that most ominous? Balaam had laid stress on what he had done. God passed it over without notice.

There is such a thing as attempting to make a charm of divine things. God, however, is not mocked. Balaam's attempt to secure His favour by sacrifice was wholly unsuccessful. Was God indifferent to sacrifices? They were His bread on which, as it were, He would feed (Num. xxviii. 2). But Balaam's sacrifices, offered to work as a charm, could no more change the settled purpose of God about His people than could the presence of the ark in the camp (1 Sam. iv.), in the days of Eli, stave off defeat at the hands of the Philistines.

And now we witness the unchangeableness of God's purpose about His people, and of the complete discomfiture in this conflict of the enemy. Balaam throughout was not left a moment, as we might say, to himself. In his own dwelling-place God had come to him at night, and enquired about the men who were with him. Now, on the high places of Baal, God met him, and put a word in his mouth, and taught him what he was to speak. "How shall I curse," he was

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constrained to say to Balak, in the presence of his princes, "whom God hath not cursed? and how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied?" Here was the kernel of the whole matter. Neither Satan nor men can curse effectively unless God permits it. A comfort this is for the troubled saint. Curse Israel? Impossible. Defy them? That was hopeless. "From the tops of the rocks," proceeded the prophet, "I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, it is a people that dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, or number the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" Their nationality could not be extinguished. Their increase could not be checked. Their end would be a blessed one.

Balaam had delivered himself, and he ceased speaking. The word of the Lord had flowed forth from his lips in a poetic as well as a prophetic strain. Balak, vexed at the result, understood well enough what had just been uttered. It was the word of the Lord, and, unlike heathen oracles, was couched in no dubious language. "I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, lo, thou hast blessed them altogether," evinced at once the king's disappointment, and his perfect understanding of the purpose of the prophecy.

Could nothing be done to ensure a favourable issue? Had the sight of the people at large overcome the prophet? Let Balaam come to another place, and see but the end of them, from thence he might curse them. So reasoned Balak, evidencing, however, his ignorance of the real source of true prophecy. How could any sight of the people that Balaam might get, however restricted, change the mind of God? If Balaam spoke under the inspiration of the Spirit, he spoke the mind of God, and in the words chosen of God, unaffected by any feelings or wishes of his own.

Bent, however, on his purpose, the king took the prophet to the top of Pisgah, in the field of Zophim.

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Seven altars built, and sacrifices duly offered, Balak awaited the issue of this fresh move. As before, Balaam left him, but to meet—whom? The One was this time unnamed. The Lord, however, met him, and put a word in his mouth. Was he seeking inspiration from an unhallowed source? The Lord was plainly watching over him, and keeping him as a vessel subservient to His will.

With evident eagerness Balak enquired what it was the Lord had spoken. Balaam, in answer, told him that God's purpose was unchangeable. There was no enchantment against Jacob, neither any divination against Israel. Moreover, it was not a question as to what Israel were in themselves; the question was of God's purpose about them, and the light in which He viewed them. God had blessed them, "and," said Balaam, "I cannot reverse it." God, too, was with them (xxiii. 18-24). All depended on God, His purpose, His view of them, His presence with them. These questions answered, must settle the matter. Power, therefore, and future conquest was before them. Here we must remember that of the nation, as such, the prophet spoke. They were a redeemed nation. With us the blessing of redemption is individual. This makes a great difference. Still we learn from God's goodness to them: for whilst they could say, He would never drop their nation; we can say, He will never drop one of His saints.

Alarm took possession of Balak, as disappointment had been expressed before, and he cried, "Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all." The prophet was now anything but a welcome visitor; though Balak's faith in Balaam's prophetic power remained unshaken. What would the king have now given had that continued dormant in respect to Israel? But he had called it forth, and, as he saw, to his own confusion. Still one more attempt he would make. "Come now, I will take thee unto another place: peradventure it will please God that thou mayest curse me

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them from thence" (xxiii. 27). Balaam, however, could as little be neutral in this matter as he could curse the people, for God had blessed them.

To the top of Peor the two next went, very probably a sacred place of the Moabites, dedicated to the worship of Baal. Fresh altars were reared, and fresh sacrifices were offered. No pains were spared to get a favourable prediction. Yet no change of place could change the mind of God. Balaam could sing of nothing but of the prosperity and further victorious career of those of whom Balak was afraid; and he ended this time with a reiteration, though in an inverse order, of words of Isaac's blessing of Jacob: "Blessed be every one that blesseth thee, and cursed be every one that curseth thee" (xxiv. 9). The prophetic words of Isaac, of which, probably, Balaam was wholly ignorant, were not out of date. To disappointment and alarm, now succeeded anger. Curtly was Balaam dismissed, without any recognition in the shape of temporal reward.

One more prophetic deliverance on the part of Balaam finished their interview. A person now filled his eye, and he spoke of Him—a King—the King of Jacob, a conqueror too, to whose power Moab and Edom would have to yield. Hitherto, of Israel had he spoken. Now, about this King, in a prophetic and poetic strain he took up his parable. "I see Him, but not now: I behold Him, but not nigh: there shall come forth a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite through the corners of Moab, and break down all the sons of tumult. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession, which were His enemies; while Israel doeth valiantly. And out of Jacob shall One have dominion, and shall destroy the remnant from the city." Hopeless, indeed, to curse a people associated with such a King, and destined to have such a future. But more. Amalek must suffer destruction; Ashur, and the power that was to afflict him, must be destroyed

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likewise. But to the King whom Balaam saw afar off he could speak of no successor. The rise of His power he foretold. The end of it he could not see, for it will never pass away.

The contest was over. God had prevailed. He was for Israel; who could be against them? Shall we read this history only as it concerns that people? May we not view it as illustrative of Rom. viii. 31-39? If God is for His people, He justifies them, and makes them victorious over all that is against them. Neither man nor devil can thwart His purpose, nor successfully curse those whom He has blessed. C. E. S.

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 GOD'S WAY OF SALVATION.
 

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IF God be righteous, and judges sin, can He exercise love to us in all its fulness—toward us who are sinners? Now here it is the death and atonement of Christ come in. The blessed Lord willingly undertook this task, to glorify God perfectly, and prove infinite love to us, and yet maintain God's perfect righteousness. He bore our sins, He was made sin for us. He drank the bitter cup of death and judgment which our sins had filled. He gave Himself for us, He was bruised for our iniquities, and wounded for our transgressions. Was not this love? *Oh! reader, was it not?* Yet there God's righteous judgment against sin was fully maintained, so that there was not the least allowance of it. What could shew it like the death of the Son of God when He was made sin for us? How then can any persevere in rejecting mercy through Him? Was it possible this cup could pass unless He drank it? It could not. For whom then shall it, if not drunk by Him?

And see how the notion of mere dying under the hands of wicked men destroys all the glory of the cross. I read, Christ gave Himself, offered up Himself. Here I find the holy perfectness of His own soul in a way that nothing else shews.

What love! What devotedness! What giving Himself up to the Father's glory! "No man taketh it from Me," says He, "but I lay it down of Myself" (John x. 18). "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me; but that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do" (John xiv. 30, 31). You will say, How could this glorify His Father—to give Himself up to a cruel death and wrath? Because of your sins: *they* made it necessary. If love was to be shewn to you, it must be in this way; God's holiness must be maintained—the impossibility of allowing sin. You (if indeed through grace you believe) are not to be taken away from before Him, because of your sins and defilement. Instead of that, as they could not be allowed, they were taken away, that you might be in peace before Him and know this God of love. "God commendeth *His* love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8).

And see how the cross glorifies God in everything. If I look at it as a sacrifice for sins, as Christ giving Himself up, that God may be fully glorified. And how glorious Christ Himself is there, by His doing it! For, remember, if it was a bitter cup, yet Christ never was so glorified as there. Never was His glorious perfection so shewn out; so that, though it may seem a hard task to impose on Him, yet it really was, as to His work, His greatest glory: as He says, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him" (John xiii. 31). For it was a glorious thing to Him who accomplished it, that, so to speak, God should be debtor for His glory to Him who thus gave Himself. For, indeed, it was a common counsel between the Father and the Son. God's will was that He should come, and His will was to come. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God."

But see how He was glorified in it. Is God righteous in judgment against sin? The cross has fully

shewn it forth. Is God perfect love to the poor sinner? The cross has shewn it forth. Did the majesty of God require that it should be vindicated against rebellious sin? The cross has done it; yet the sinner is spared. Is God true, and has He said that death should follow sin, the devil saying, as he yet does, it should not? Where such a witness that it *must*, as when the blessed Son of God died as man on the cross? Yet He has obtained for us life by it, beyond all the power of death and judgment. Were our sins pressing upon us, so that we did not dare to look up? They are gone. I can see God in the light without fear: He has proved His love, and I can enjoy His love. And just when man shewed his hatred to God in slaying His Son, God has shewn His love to man in giving Him to put away the sin shewn in slaying Him. Where was obedience shewn as on the cross? He was "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. ii. 8). Where love to us? Where the desire to glorify His Father? Thus the Son of man was glorified, and God, in every part of His nature, glorified in Him: His love, His righteousness, His truth, His majesty, all displayed!

And what is the consequence? The power and fear of death are gone for the believer. It is for him but the entrance into paradise. The sins that he feared, as bringing judgment, are taken away and blotted out. He knows God loves him—so loves him that He has not spared His own Son to save him; he knows that He has nothing to impute to him, for Christ has borne all. God is faithful and just to forgive him his sins.

And yet is sin a light thing to one who has this perfect peace with the God of love? *It has cost the death of the Son of God.* True, it is condemned; he is justified, and has perfect peace with God. But how? By that which makes sin to his soul the most frightful thing that could possibly be; and knits his heart to Jesus, who was willing to suffer thus to put it away.

Whether we think of God's glory, or Christ's glory, or the practical effect on our hearts, it is Christ's cross, as being a real sacrifice for sin, that is really efficacious. It glorifies God infinitely, it honours Christ, and perfectly blesses man ; telling him he is the object of God's infinite love, and yet maintaining righteousness in his heart. Jesus was God manifest in the flesh ; and, as to His person, supremely glorious in dignity. This indeed enabled Him to do such a work ; but never, as to His work and service, was He so glorious as He was upon the cross. I speak to you feebly, dear reader ; but is it not the truth—words, as Paul says, of truth and soberness ? And this thing was not done in a corner.

There is a judgment (terrible it will be to them that have *despised mercy* and have *rejected the Saviour*) ; but to those who, as poor sinners, have submitted to God's righteousness, believing in His love, Christ shall "appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. ix. 28). That is, having quite put sin away for them the first time, He will come the second time, without having anything to say to it as to them, for their full possession of the glorious result. As He said Himself, "I go to prepare a place for you ; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John xiv. 2, 3).

Weigh that passage I quoted just now. Christ has appeared "once in the end of the world . . . to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself ; and *as* it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment"—there is the natural portion of the sinner—"so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many ; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin unto salvation" (Heb. ix. 26-28). The first time He came, He bore the sins ; the second, He comes apart from that for the full salvation of them that look for Him.

Reader, are you prepared to give up all this for the

notion that He fell a victim to self-seeking men who put Him to a violent death? Did He not offer Himself up as a sacrifice to put away sin? Did not the Lord bruise Him? Did He not say, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me" (Matt. xxvii. 46)? Does not your soul need to have sin put away? Is not the love of God shewn in the way you need it, by Christ's being thus given? Has He not glorified God in it? Has He not been glorified in it and by it, bitter though it was? Is it not peace to know He has done it, and put away sin for us by it? Does not the word so present it to us? The Lord give you to believe it in truth. It has given me peace, perfect yet increasing peace, these fifty years and more, while He has all the glory; and I know God is love, who has purged my conscience from sins. May you, dear reader, be enabled so to know it, and with as much joy! If you do, you know what I say is true. May the grace of God make Him, who has wrought it for us, more precious to us both! It is a blessing and a joy to think we shall have an eternity in which to praise Him for it.

Even if I think of the way good and evil were brought out by it, there is *nothing like the cross*. Everything moral is there brought to a glorious centre, from which it flows down on every poor believing heart, in the proof that evil has been met and put away, and that good has triumphed. Where has death been shewn in its terrible power as in the cross? Where has sin in all its terrible character and effects? Where do I see man's hatred against goodness itself, and the Son of God bearing sins before God? Yet where was eternal life obtained for us, such as death can never touch? Where were goodness and love displayed as there? Where were righteousness and obedience accomplished in spite of all? Where was sin brought so immediately under God's eye and punished as there? Yet where was it put away, and His perfect delight in absolute obedience at all costs

so drawn out? Where was the bowing in weakness under death shewn as in Him whose soul was melted like wax in the midst of His bowels? Yet where the divine strength which carried Him through all that weakness, death, man's hatred, Satan's power, and God's wrath, could accumulate on His head who drank that bitter cup? All this is told us in Scripture. "He was crucified through weakness" (2 Cor. xiii. 4). "This is your hour, and the power of darkness," said the Lord (Luke xxii. 53). "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matt. xxvi. 38). "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matt. xxvii. 46).

In a word, would I know what sin is? I look there. Righteousness? I look there. Hatred without a cause? I look there. Love without bounds? I look there. Judgment and condemnation of sin? I look there. Divine wrath against evil? I look there. Perfect divine favour and delight in what infinitely glorified God? I look there. Weakness and death, though willingly bowing under it? it is there. Strength, divine, which has met and removed evil? it is there. Peace and wrath? it is there also: the world under Satan's power rising up, to get finally rid of a God of love; and God, by this very act, delivering the world and making peace by the blood of His own Son. As it is said, "That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 14, 15). As I have said, good and evil in all their extremes and forms meet there for the triumph of love in once suffering the evil, that good may have its full force.

Do you ask, reader, Why then are we in such a world still? I will tell you. Scripture tells us, God in grace is still leading souls to profit by and enjoy this. It is a world of misery, and sorrow, and oppression. Did God interfere to change it, He must come in judgment and close the time of mercy; and that

He does not do, while yet any have ears to hear. Therefore He allows the evil which He will judge to go on meanwhile. And we, though we may thus have to suffer awhile in the world, ought in this sense to rejoice that it is yet allowed ; because it is still *a time of mercy* extended to others. The end will be everlasting joy in a much better world. Christ is gone to prepare a place for us, and He will come again and take us to Himself, that where He is, there we may be also. Thus Peter says, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness ; but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. iii. 9).

Finally, my reader, you may not have, in peace of soul, been able to contemplate all the glory of the cross. You have a blessed portion yet before you ; but remember, it is presented to you, *just as you are*, for your need in all the grace of it toward a poor sinner. It meets you in all your sins, if it infinitely glorifies God. A Saviour dying on the cross for the vilest meets the wants and burdens of the vilest—comes home through grace to his heart. If his sins are a burden to him, he may see Christ bearing them, that he may be free and have peace. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). "And by Him, all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39). "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Is. i. 18). If you are heavy laden, come to Him who came in love to give you rest, and has died in love for you.

The Lord's peace be with you, dear reader—be with you, whoever you may be. May you be washed in that blood which cleanses from all sin ; and the Lord will preserve you for His heavenly kingdom.

J. N. D.

## SPIRIT OF SACRED POETRY.

RIST, a clergyman in North Germany, who suffered much in his youth from mental conflicts, and in after years from rapine, pestilence, and all the horrors of the period known as *The thirty years War*, used to say, "The dear Cross hath pressed many songs out of me;" and this seems to have been equally true of many of his contemporaries. Here are a few stanzas of one of Rist's hymns. The translation is by Catherine Winkworth:—

O living Bread from heaven,  
 How richly hast Thou fed Thy guests!  
 The gifts Thou now hast given  
 Have filled my heart with joy and rest.  
 O wondrous food of blessing! O cup that heals our woes!  
 My heart, this gift possessing, in thankful song o'erflows.  
 For while the life and strength in me  
 Were quickened by this food,  
 My soul hath gazed awhile on Thee,  
 O highest, only Good!  
 And Thou hast freely given, what earth could never buy,—  
 The Bread of life from heaven,—that now I shall not die!

O Love incomprehensible!  
 What wrought in Thee, my Saviour, thus  
 That Thou should'st have descended  
 From highest heaven to dwell with us!  
 Creator! love hath brought Thee to succour such as I,  
 Who else had vainly sought Thee! Then grant me now to  
 die  
 To sin, and live alone to Thee, that, when this life is o'er,  
 Thy face, O Saviour! I may see in heaven for evermore.

But I, in sinful blindness, am erring every hour,  
 Yet boundless is Thy kindness and righteous is Thy power:  
 And yet Thyself Thou gavest for a sinner, Lord, like me!  
 Ah, how can I Thy love return? what gift have I for Thee?

Johann Heermann (1585-1647) was a native of Silesia. Being much tried during the horrors of war, his mind seems to have become the more spiritually enlightened through his bodily sufferings, in the midst of which he wrote the greater number of his hymns. The following beautiful lines are a translation from one of his hymns, by Frances Elizabeth Cox :—

Such wondrous love would baffle my endeavour  
To find its equal, should I strive for ever :  
How should my works, could I in all obey Thee,  
Ever repay Thee !

Yet this shall please Thee : if devoutly trying  
To do Thy will, mine own wrong will denying,  
I watch my heart, lest sin again ensnare it,  
And from Thee tear it.

But since I have not strength to flee temptation,  
To crucify each sinful inclination,  
Oh ! let Thy Spirit, grace, and strength provide me,  
And gently guide me.

Then shall I see Thy grace, and duly prize it,  
For Thee renounce the world, for Thee despise it :  
Then, of my life, Thyself shalt be the measure :  
Thy will, my pleasure !

And when, O Lord ! before Thy throne so glorious,  
Upon my head is placed the crown victorious,  
Thy praise I will, while heaven's full chime is ringing,  
Be ever singing !

Wulffer wrote, in 1648, some impressive stanzas on Eternity. The greater part of the poem is believed to be of ancient origin :—

Eternity ! eternity ! how long art thou, eternity !  
And yet to thee time hastes away,  
Like as the war-horse to the fray,  
Or swift as couriers homeward go,  
Or ship to port, or shaft from bow.  
Ponder, O man, eternity !

Eternity! eternity! how long art thou, eternity!  
 For even as in a perfect sphere  
 End nor beginning can appear,  
 Even so, eternity, in thee,  
 Entrance nor exit can there be.  
 Ponder, O man, eternity!

Eternity! eternity! how long art thou, eternity!  
 A circle infinite art thou,  
 Thy centre an eternal Now:  
 Never we name thy outward bound,  
 For never end therein is found.  
 Ponder, O man, eternity!

Eternity! eternity! how long art thou, eternity!  
 As long as God is God, so long  
 Endure the pains of hell and wrong,  
 So long the joys of heaven remain:  
 O lasting joy! O lasting pain!  
 Ponder! O man, eternity!

Very beautiful is this hymn on the "Name of Jesus," by Baron von Canitz, who lived 1654 to 1699:—

Ah, Jesus, Lord! whose faithfulness in heaven or in earth,  
 No human lips can celebrate enough to tell Thy worth!  
 I render thanks to Thee, that Thou in lowly guise wast born,  
 That Thou didst stoop to pity me, a helpless one forlorn.

Whate'er the anguish of my breast, its fluttering doth cease,  
 Whene'er Thy name of comfort fills my spirit with Thy peace!  
 No consolation is so sweet as that Thy name doth give,—  
 Thy *Jesus'* name! O David's Son and Lord by whom I live!

Thy name Lord Jesus is a store of all that heart can need,  
 Enfolding every precious thing,—fruit, blossom, leaf, and  
 seed!

He spends his time most worthily, who seeks that Name to  
 know:

Its ocean-fulness riseth still as ages onward flow!

Apart from Jesus' precious name, I've nothing to desire;  
 Of all beside, e'en were it mine, my heart would only tire.

Apart from Him, there's naught of worth, created things are  
vain :

He is my glory and my wealth, my honour and my gain !

Thy precious name, *Lord Jesus Christ!* is better far to me,  
'Than all the wealth that can be found in earth, or air, or sea!  
Thou art the paradise, set forth by God's own hand of love ;  
Thy presence is itself the heaven, where I shall dwell above.

All that I ever undertake, I would begin in Thee,—  
Thee first, Thee last, Thee midst, O Lord ! and evermore  
to be !

These lines are from the German of Frederick  
Arndt :—

Amid life's wild commotion, where naught the heart can cheer,  
Who points beyond its ocean to heaven's brighter sphere ?  
Our feeble footsteps guiding, when from the path we stray,  
Who leads to bliss abiding ? Christ is our only *Way!*

When doubts and fears distress us, and all around is gloom,  
And shame and fear oppress us, who can our souls illumine ?  
Heaven's rays are round us gleaming, and making all things  
bright,  
The Sun of *Truth* is beaming in glory on our sight !

Who fills our hearts with gladness that none can take away ?  
Who shows us, 'midst our sadness, the distant realms of day ?  
'Tis Christ ! our aid unfailing, the Truth, the Life, the Way !

Ulrich, Duke of Brunswick, wrote the following  
touching lines, in 1667 :—

Leave all to God, forsaken one, and still thy fears,  
For the Highest knows thy tears ; thou shalt not wait His  
help in vain,

Leave all to God.

Be still, and trust ! for His strokes are strokes of love  
Thou must for thy profit bear ;  
He thy filial fear would move, trust thy Father's loving care,  
Be still and trust !

Know, God is near ! Though you think Him far away,

Though His mercy long have slept, He will come, and not  
 delay,  
 When His child enough hath wept, for God is near !

The following stanzas form part of a translation  
 from the German of De Wette, by Whittier :—

World Redeemer ! Lord of Glory ! as of old to zealous Paul,  
 Thou didst come in sudden splendour, and from out the  
 clouds didst call ;  
 As to Mary in the garden, did Thy risen form appear,—  
 Come, arrayed in heavenly beauty : come, and speak, and I  
 will hear !

In my heart the voice made answer, Ask thou not a sign  
 from heaven ;  
 In the Gospel of thy Saviour, Life as well as Light is given.  
 Ever looking unto Jesus, all His glory thou shalt see :  
 From thy heart the veil be taken, and the Word made clear  
 to thee.

Love the Lord, and thou shalt see Him ; do His will, and  
 thou shalt know  
 How the Spirit lights the letter,—how a little child may go,  
 Where the wise and prudent stumble ; how a heavenly glory  
 shines, [lines !  
 In His acts of love and mercy, from the Gospel's simplest

The following verses, entitled "Going Home," are  
 from the German of Lange (1650-1727) :—

Our beloved have departed !  
 While we tarry, broken-hearted,  
 In the dreary, empty house,  
 They have ended life's brief story,  
 They have reached the home of glory,  
 Over death victorious !

Whilst with bitter tears we're mourning,  
 Thought to buried loves returning,  
 Time is hasting us along ;  
 Is it to the grave's dark dwelling ?  
 No, but to the fountain welling  
 With eternal life and song !

. . . . .  
 Or we haste, to home invited,  
 There with friends to be united  
 In a surer bond than here ;  
 Meeting soon, and met for ever !  
 Glorious hope ! forsake us never,—  
 Scatter every doubt and fear !

Here are his lines on the future estate of being :—

What no human eye hath seen, what no mortal ear hath  
 heard,  
 What on thought hath never been, in its noblest flights,  
 conferred,—\*  
 These hath God prepared in store,  
 For His people evermore !

When the shaded pilgrim-land fades before the closing eye,  
 Then, revealed on either hand, heaven's own scenery shall  
 lie ;  
 Then the veil of flesh shall fall,  
 Now concealing, darkening all !

. . . . .  
 When this aching heart shall rest, all its busy pulses o'er,  
 From her mortal robes undrest, shall my spirit upward soar :  
 Then shall unimagined joy  
 All my thoughts and powers employ !

Johann Frank, who died at Guben, in Prussia, in  
 1677, was the author of this,—considered, in the  
 original, one of the richest German "communion"  
 hymns :—

Deck thyself, my soul, with gladness ;  
 Leave the gloomy haunts of sadness,  
 Come into the daylight's splendour ;  
 There, with joy, thy praises render  
 . Unto Him whose boundless grace  
 Grants thee, at His feast, a place ;

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\* "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit" (1 Cor. ii. 10) seems forgotten here.—*Editor.*

He whom all the heavens obey  
Deigns to dwell with thee to-day !

Sun, who all my life dost brighten,  
Light, who dost my soul enlighten,  
Joy, the sweetest, man e'er knoweth,  
Fount, whence all my being floweth !  
Here I fall before Thy feet :  
Grant me worthily to eat  
Of this blessed heavenly food,  
To Thy praise, and to my good !

These brief specimens of German hymnology afford but a very imperfect conception of the rich resources which exist ; but these will serve, at least, to illustrate the status of Christian piety during an epoch of almost unparalleled tribulation. These sacred lyrics have comforted and solaced many an afflicted Christian, and were to them, as were also those of the mediæval times, "songs in the night ;" and, as such, they speak to us with a peculiar emphasis and force. Listen to this sweet song to the Saviour, by Lindemann, who lived during these troublous times of persecution for the truth :—

In Thee is gladness amid all sadness,  
Jesus, Thou sunshine of my heart !  
By Thee are given the gifts of heaven,  
Thou the true Redeemer art !  
Our souls Thou wakest, our bonds Thou breakest ;  
Who trusts Thee surely, hath built securely,—  
He stands for ever : Hallelujah !

If He is ours, we fear no powers  
Of earth or Satan, sin or death !  
He sees and blesses in worst distresses,  
He can change them with a breath !  
Wherefore the story tell of His glory,  
With heart and voices ; all heaven rejoices  
In Him for ever : Hallelujah !

THE BOOK OF GENESIS.—The attitude which a man takes up as regards the first chapter (which is a specimen of pure revelation, and where human testimony could not have been, as in so many other parts of Holy Scripture it was, the vehicle of the Divine communication) is decisive of the soundness or unsoundness of his views as regards the question of Scriptural inspiration generally.—*Dr. Goulburn.*

THE WORTH OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.—For Christians it will be enough to know that our Lord Jesus Christ set the seal of His infallible sanction on the whole. He found the Hebrew canon as we have it, and He treated it as an authority that was above discussion. Nay, more; He went out of His way, if we may so speak, to sanction not a few portions which modern scepticism rejects. When He would warn His hearers against spiritual relapse, He bids them “remember Lot’s wife.” When He would point how worldly engagements may blind the soul to a coming judgment, He reminds them how men ate and drank, and married, and were given in marriage until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. When He would put His finger on a fact in past Jewish history, which, by its admitted reality, would warrant belief in His own coming resurrection, He points to Jonah’s being three days and three nights in the whale’s belly. When standing on Olivet with the holy city at His feet, He would quote a prophecy as to its doom, He goes back to Daniel the prophet. The trustworthiness of our Lord Jesus Christ and that of the Old Testament are inseparably bound up. If we believe Him the true Light of the world, we shall close our ears against suggestions impairing the credit of the Jewish Scriptures.—*Canon Liddon, 1889.*

COWARDICE OF CHRISTIANS.—Where is the Deistical philosopher who is ashamed to own the *God of Nature?* or the Jew who is ashamed of *Moses?* or the Moslem who is ashamed of *Mahomet?* but alas! how many Christians are practically ashamed of CHRIST. Let me be ashamed of my sins, of myself, of the world; but oh! let me never, never be ashamed of my Saviour and my Lord!

JONAH AND THE GENTILES.—The intercourse between him and God is under the name of Jehovah. When the seamen learn who his God is whom he is running away from, they fear Jehovah and call upon Jehovah. Where it is a general testimony of repentance to strangers (Ps. iii. 5 to end), it is Elohim. And when we have the general supreme dealings of God with Jonah, to make him show what He was with man as God, it is again Elohim. Now in Jonah this has peculiar force, because the relationship of Israel with Gentiles and of Gentiles with Jehovah is in question. It is the last public direct testimony of God to Gentiles before Christ. And this goodness of God to Gentiles is really what Jonah dreaded, as discrediting his message of judgment, which Jewish pride might like to see executed (Jon. iv. 2). Hence we have Gentiles brought, in the moment of judgment on the Israelite, to confess Jehovah; and God, as such, shewing Himself good, the faithful Creator, who thought of those who could not distinguish between their right hand and their left, and even of the cattle. At the same time the proper relationship of Jehovah to His prophet, as such, is fully maintained, and the word Jehovah, his God, more than once repeated.—“*Irrationalism of Infidelity,*” 1853.

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WATERS in motion are purest, so SAINTS in affliction are holiest.

THE PROPHET SAMUEL.—He was descended from Korah (compare I Chronicles vi. 33 with 37), and was the grandfather of Heman, who wrote Psalm lxxxviii. and others. Shemuel is Hebrew for Samuel. His eldest son went by two names, Joel and Vashni. See I Chronicles vi. 28 with I Samuel viii. 2.

JEHOVAH (Ex. vi. 3).—Not that "Jehovah" was new to all before Moses, but that then for the first time God was pleased to adopt it as a name of positive and special relationship.

DRINKING OF THE ROCK (I Cor. x. 4).—This may easily be understood to mean the water from the rock, by a common metaphor. It may be said to have followed the Israelites because it flowed like a river (see Ps. lxxviii. 16), and doubtless supplied the camp for the eight miles between Rephidim and Sinai. It is not said that it always followed. At Sinai there was water (see Ex. xxxii. 20 and Deut. ix. 21).

PREACHING UNTO THE SPIRITS IN PRISON (I Pet. iii. 18-20).—To be understood, this must be taken with what goes before. Christ was "put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah," &c. Just as we read in I Pet. i. 10-12 of Christ's Spirit in the prophets testifying, so we learn that His Spirit preached, *i. e.*, in Noah. Those who heard were disobedient then, and their spirits are in prison now, kept for judgment. The collocation of the Greek is decisive.—W. K.

INSPIRATION.—Supposing we were in undoubted possession of the original autograph writings of Moses, Isaiah, the evangelists, Peter, Paul, should we be willing to admit that a single verse or word could be inspired, and yet dispense with it freely, as being immaterial, in our vain conceptions, to the just expression of the Holy Spirit's meaning? Without being at all prepared to assert that all parts of Holy Scripture are *equally precious, equally vital, or have an equally deep spiritual import*—an assertion surely which would carry its own refutation—must we not maintain, if we hold inspiration at all, that as in the natural body of man the breath of life is diffused through the whole frame (resides in the extremities—in the hair and nails as well as in the head and the heart), so there is not a single jot or tittle of inspired Scripture which has not God's breath in it, and which, as having God's breath in it, has not some function or other to fulfil in the design of His inscrutable wisdom, though we may not always know, or be able to discern, what that design is. If this image conveys a real truth, no part of the Bible, however apparently insignificant to us, not even the catalogue of the dukes of Edom, or the long string of names and persons, of whom it is given us to know nothing but the names, as in Rom. xvi., could be dispensed with.—*Dr. Goulburn.*

HEAVEN IS OUR FATHERLAND; HEAVEN IS OUR HOME!—Thus we sing, and we shall soon see the lovely home above. But meanwhile God knows no Sabbath on earth; "My Father worketh and I work," said the Lord, for sin prevails and misery abounds. There, however, "He will rest in His love," a rest more sweet than that of paradise, more holy than the Sabbaths in Israel. Then will He joy over His own with singing, and the joy shall never end.

## VOICES FROM THE WILDERNESS.

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“To humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no” (Deut. viii. 2), such was God’s purpose in leading Israel through the wilderness. It is a testing place for any who are in it.

Israel, when tested, failed; and to one instance of failure we would here draw attention. “They soon,” the Psalmist wrote (cvi. 13, 14), “forgot His works; they waited not for His counsel; but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.” An explanation this affords us of their conduct at Kibroth-hattaavah, the history of which is found in Num. xi. 4-6. “The mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely (*i.e.*, without cost); the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: but now our soul is dried away: and there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.” Such was their complaint, the fruit of forgetfulness and of impatience. “Who shall give us flesh to eat?” Where was God in that? Truly the Psalmist correctly described them: “They soon forgot His works.” The history of the past should have afforded instruction for the then present. It was, however, forgotten.

Led by the mixed multitude, they waited not for God’s counsel. That multitude had come out with them from Egypt (Exod. xii. 38), and had departed from Sinai in their company. Here, for the last time, do we read of them. Henceforth they disappear from history. They came out of Egypt, went through the Red Sea, journeyed to Sinai, must have witnessed the giving of the Law, departed from the Mount towards Canaan, but perished, it would appear, at Kibroth-hattaavah.

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But Israel, how foolish! how forgetful! That mixed multitude were not God's people. They had no promises of an inheritance in the land. Israel were God's redeemed people, and the land of Canaan was to be their undoubted possession. Would God, who had redeemed them with the arm of His power, forsake them in the wilderness? Would He desert them in the place into which He had led them? Had He no power to sustain them in life, and to minister sufficient and suited food to the people whom He had taken for His inheritance?

Flesh they craved for. Flesh they should have. Flesh they got. What must they have thought of their question, "Who shall give us flesh to eat?" when the Lord "rained flesh upon them as dust, and feathered fowl like as the sand of the sea" (Ps. lxxviii. 27). Ability to provide flesh the quails fully demonstrated. "He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul." Had they waited for His counsel, would they not have been cared for? Is that a mere hypothesis, a surmise for which there is no foundation?

Let us turn to another wilderness, and read what took place therein. One was there quite alone, among wild beasts, and away from the haunts of men (Mark i. 13). He was hungry, which Israel were not. They had the manna each day; He had nothing, and had fasted forty days and forty nights. Led by the mixed multitude, Israel clamoured for flesh. Tempted by the devil to turn a stone into bread, He would not. The lesson of the wilderness, lost on Israel, that "man does not live by bread alone," He remembered, and fully acquiesced in. He had received no command to turn the stone into bread. He would wait for God's counsel.

Tempted still by the enemy, as yet no relief came. His hunger was unappeased. What was He to wait for? For God's counsel. Just what Israel did not do He did; and He was fully justified in waiting. For, when the devil left Him, angels came and ministered

unto Him (Matt. iv. 11). What a contrast! Of the evil effects of not waiting for God's counsel the graves at Kibroth-hattaavah were melancholy memorials. The blessedness of waiting for God's counsel the ministry of angels to that hungry One beautifully demonstrates.

C. E. S.

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## BETHANY AND CALVARY.

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SIX days before the Lord's last passover He came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom He had raised from the dead. When He had been there four days, they made Him a supper in the house of Simon the leper. All the apostles were there, and Lazarus also sat at the table with Him. Many Jews came out of curiosity, not only to see Jesus, but to see Lazarus also, whom He had raised from the dead. Martha served, as was her wont. It was no secret in Jerusalem that the chief priests and elders intended to take Jesus by subtlety, and put Him to death. Indeed, they had openly given a commandment that, "if any one knew where He were, he should shew it, that they might take Him" (Jno. xi. 57; Matt. xxvi. 3, 5; Mark xiv. 1, 2).

These rumours must have reached the quick ears of Mary, who, convinced that the time was come for the accomplishment of His predicted sufferings and death, of which He had told them so plainly and so often (Matt. xvi. 21), came, bringing an alabaster flask of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed His head (Matt. xxvi. 7; Mark xiv. 3) and His feet (Jno. xii. 3). It might seem a bold thing to do in the presence of such a company, but her faith and intelligence were far in advance of those who were filled with indignation at this waste of the ointment. It was not done on the sudden impulse of the moment. From the time she knew that her Lord would be delivered up to be crucified she had kept this ointment, and

possibly had even prepared it for this special occasion. She loved much ; and was she not conscious that she was anointing Him beforehand for the burial? The Lord knew that too. "Against the day of My burying hath she kept this." She had treasured it up for this very purpose. But her faith did not stop here. She looked beyond the grave ; and if she had believed the Lord's predictions about His sufferings and death, equally did she believe also that on the third day He would rise again. In this faith the family at Bethany could calmly and peacefully remain at home, while others of less intelligence were witnessing the heartrending scenes of Calvary. Never could that family forget the memorable words, "I am the Resurrection and the Life ;" and in the person of Lazarus they had a living witness to His power over death and the grave. Neither Mary nor Martha took any part in the hurried preparation of the ointments on that Saturday evening. In divine wisdom, no further anointing was permitted beyond that which had already taken place in life. And the intervention of the Sabbath left no opportunity for carrying out the intentions of loving, tearful women, who would have counted no ointment too costly to prevent the body of the Lord of heaven and earth turning to corruption! The third day had already set in, and Mary calmly awaited its eventful issue. In the course of the night there was "a great earthquake" (Matt xxviii. 2) : a solemn but welcome voice, surely, to her waiting soul.

The Lord's mother was not present with those who were busy with the ointments as soon as the Sabbath was past. Had she also believed? It is more than probable.

In the days of Noah "few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water," a larger number than were found waiting for the Lord's return from the grave. How many are now waiting His near return from heaven? "Surely, I come quickly. Amen : even so, come, Lord Jesus."

J. M.

## THE TEMPLE AND HOUSE OF GOD.

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IN 2 Chron. iii., iv. and v. we have the Holy Ghost's record of the building and the inauguration of the Temple of God at Jerusalem; a short, but striking account of that great work, and the manifest approval of God and His delight in it! In the following chapter (vi.), we are permitted to read the words of the prayer of Dedication which Solomon offered; and, as we pass from verse to verse, we cannot but be impressed with its direct inspiration. How beautifully does he exclaim, "But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house which I have built!" And the prayer culminates in these closing words, "Now therefore arise, O Lord God, into Thy resting place, Thou, and the ark of Thy strength: let Thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let Thy saints rejoice in goodness. O Lord God, turn not away the face of Thine anointed: remember the mercies of David Thy servant." Then broke forth God's answer in fire, coming down from heaven to consume "the burnt-offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house" (vii. i.). But more than this, Solomon had a visit from the Lord by night, who graciously responded to his prayer and assured him, "For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there for ever; and Mine eyes and Mine heart shall be there perpetually" (ver. 16).

It is deeply interesting to note that it was when the priests were all assembled, and the Levites arrayed in white linen, and when with cymbals, and psalteries, and harps, and with trumpets, the singers were *as one* to make *one sound*, praising and thanking the Lord, then it was the house was filled with a cloud, "for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God" (2 Chron. v. 13, 14). This suggests to us that word in the twenty-second Psalm (ver. 3), "Thou art holy, O Thou

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that *inhabitest* the praises of Israel." Thus it was that when the worshippers were, so to speak, of one heart and one mind, making one joyous sound of worship before God, that He came down to make the praises of His people a dwelling place for Himself.

Surely we may say, "Happy is that people, that is in such a case : yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord" (Ps. cxliv. 15). David himself loved to contemplate this dwelling place of God, for which he had accumulated the most precious treasures ; mark his utterance in Psalm xxvii. 4, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after ; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple." May we not see clearly here the *upgrade*, which we might term the ascending steps to the house of the Lord ? First he *desires* this *one thing* ; next he seeks after it, and that which is the object of his heart becomes the object of his *effort* ; thirdly, he would *dwell* where his heart is ; fourthly, he would be occupied with Jehovah's beauty ; and lastly, he would wait upon Him continually there. Again, in Psalm lxxxiv., what a lovely inspiration of the poet-king is found, when he exclaims, "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts ! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord ! For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." If these were David's aspirations as to the material house of God, what must be the thoughts of David's Lord as to the spiritual House that has superseded the earthly structure as His witness below.

If we now follow on to the New Testament, we find this spiritual House first indicated by the Lord's word in Mat. xvi., that memorable word, "Upon this Rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it." Proceeding to Acts ii., we find that when the day of Pentecost had fully come, and

## THE TEMPLE AND HOUSE OF GOD. 321

the disciples were all with one accord in one place, like the priests and Levites in the great day of Dedication, the Holy Ghost descended in cloven tongues of fire sitting upon each of them ; just as in the case of the material temple the fire from heaven descended upon the sacrifice, and the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord. Thus then the Holy Ghost descended into the gathered company of saints, and constituted them by that act the dwelling place of God on earth, God's new and spiritual house. The Lord came to die ; not to live, save temporarily as it were. He came to sojourn rather than to dwell. The Holy Ghost came *to abide*, and consequently the saints were constituted into God's house by His advent amongst them. That house of which the Lord spoke, of which He would be the Builder, and which the Holy Ghost came to occupy at Pentecost, had its foundation in the death and resurrection of Christ. So we find Paul—the great teacher concerning the Church—saying, “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (I Cor. iii.). “Now,” says he, “if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble ; every man's work shall be made manifest : for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire ; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.” We have thus reached the subject in the light of the day of the Lord and the judgment seat of Christ ; and the apostle proceeds to speak, first of all, of good work, that which abides the fire, and which, in grace, meets with reward. Then of bad work, which the fire consumes to the workman's loss, though he himself be saved ; but, in contrast to the former case, it is added, “yet so as by fire.” Then, lastly, of corrupt work ; nothing is here said of the workman being saved. All converges on the evil character of the work ; if any man corrupt or defile the temple of God, him shall God *destroy*. It is the same word, but is, in Scripture, translated

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*corrupt, defile, destroy.* Whatever may be the more suited word in this case, of this we may rest assured, that the Spirit of God sought, by Paul, to impress the saints with this fact, that such an evil worker would be the object, not only of God's disapproval, but of His fiery indignation.

By this, then, we learn how jealously God regards the congregation of His saints, and of all that which bears Christ's name in the world, that in which He dwells, the totality on earth of that which professes Christ; as we find in the preamble of the epistle, "All that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." It is this which is God's house on earth, and which will perhaps be best understood by the very ordinary term, *Christendom*. But another aspect of the house of God is seen in Ephesians ii. 19-22, where the divine building appears, and that only. In the Corinthian aspect Paul is the wise master-builder, and the work of the other human builders comes under review, and thus responsibility in service is the leading thought. But here, in Ephesians, it is God's work only, the divine masonry where all is precious and perfect and permanent, as enduring as God Himself, whose glory it for ever and ever displays. Note, however, that in Corinthians we read, "the temple of God *is holy*," no less than in Ephesians, "*an holy temple to the Lord.*" And we see again in 1 Tim. iii. 15 how the apostle characterises the house of God after a *divine* fashion in these words, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of *the living God*, the pillar and base of *the truth.*" In these Scriptures we learn the Holy Ghost's teaching as to the house of God; have we learned, beloved, how we ought to behave ourselves in it? Alas! how few have learnt that important lesson; and alas! how many, how very many, are they whose minds have been "corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ," and who are themselves

corrupting the saints and the work of God! How solemnly does God tell of His indignation towards such, had they but ears to hear! There is a final word for us on this subject in 1 Peter ii. 4-7; we find Christ, the sure foundation, spoken of as the "*living stone*," chosen of God, elect and precious; spoken of also as the "*chief corner stone*," and thirdly as "*the head of the corner*!" How blessedly does Peter thus speak of Him who, on the confession of this distinguished apostle, revealed for the first time His eternal purpose of *building* His impregnable Church—the house of God! And what about the superstructure? Beloved, let us give heed to the word, "Ye also, as *living stones*, are built up a *spiritual* house, an *holy* priesthood, to offer up *spiritual* sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Surely this gives us, on Peter's testimony by the Holy Ghost, what constitutes the character and object of the house of God on earth. It is a spiritual house, built up of living stones, divinely shaped and divinely cemented together in the abiding unction of the Holy Ghost, qualified for offering spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. It is for the glory of God in Christ Jesus; and the spiritual worship of this holy priesthood beautifully recalls the scene at the Dedication to which we have already referred.

Let us remember, too, that this same apostle is the one who tells us, "The time is come that *judgment* must begin at the house of God" (1 Pet. iv. 17). Solemn, solemn word for all who bear Christ's name in the world!

May we be warned—every one of us—against in any wise corrupting God's dwelling place; and may we, on the other hand, recognise more practically than hitherto the solemn responsibilities and blessed privileges of this house of God on earth; looking on, too, to that eternal day when God's tabernacle will be with men, and He will *dwell with them* (Rev. xxi. 3); when He will rest in His love, and His glory and His joy shall never depart from them.

## SPIRIT OF SACRED POETRY.

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PAUL GERHARDT ranks next to Luther, whom he in some respects resembles, and from whom he was separated in time by about a century. His hymns happily combine simplicity with depth and force. They are the heart-utterances of one who had a simple but sublime faith in God.

A certain impressiveness, a certain sorrowfulness, a certain fervour, were peculiar to him : he was a guest on earth ; and everywhere, in his one hundred and twenty-three songs, sun-flowers are sown. This flower ever turns to the sun, so does Gerhardt to a blessed eternity. The love with which his contemporaries turned to his song has only one precedent,—the veneration, the devotion, with which Luther's songs were regarded. He was born in Saxony in 1606. When he had attained his twelfth year, the terrible thirty years' war broke out ; and his family seems to have suffered much by its ravages. His religious sentiments did not wholly coincide with those of the king ; and Gerhardt, too conscientious to dissemble, was ordered to resign his appointment and quit the country. Utterly destitute, not knowing where to lay his head or how to provide for his helpless family, Gerhardt left the home where he had spent so many happy years. "But no affliction, however terrible, could shake his confidence in divine wisdom and mercy. After some consideration, he determined on directing his steps towards his native land, Saxony, where he yet hoped to find friends. The journey, performed on foot, was long and weary. Gerhardt bore up manfully : his heart failed him only when he gazed on his wife and little ones. When night arrived, the travellers sought repose in a little village inn by the road-side ; where Gerhardt's wife, unable to restrain her anguish, gave way to a burst of natural emotion. Her husband, concealing his anxious cares, reminded her of that beautiful word of Scripture,

‘Trust in the Lord ; in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.’ The words, uttered to comfort his afflicted partner, impressed his own mind so deeply, that, seating himself in a little arbour in the garden, he composed that hymn which has rendered his name celebrated :”\*—

Commit thou all thy griefs and ways into His hands,  
To His sure truth and tender care, who earth and heaven  
    commands ;  
Who points the clouds their course, whom winds and seas  
    obey,—  
He shall direct thy wandering feet, He shall prepare thy way.

And then listen to the fine closing stanza :—

Give to the winds thy fears ; hope, and be undismayed :  
God hears thy sighs, and counts thy tears,—God shall lift up  
    thy head.

We are informed that he composed this beautiful hymn of trust in the dark hour of his destitution without pause or effort. It was one of the many German hymns born of sorrow and suffering. “Evening had now deepened, and the pastor and his wife were about to retire to rest, when two gentlemen entered the little parlour in which they were seated. They began to converse with the poet ; and soon told him that they were on their way to Berlin to seek the deposed clergyman, Paul Gerhardt, by order of their lord, Duke Christian of Meresberg. At these words, Madame Gerhardt turned pale, dreading some further calamity. But her husband, calm in his trust in God, at once declared that he was the individual they were in search of, and inquired their errand. Great was the astonishment and delight of both wife and husband, when one of the strangers presented Gerhardt with an autograph letter from the duke himself, informing him that he had settled a considerable pension on him, to

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\* De Pontes.

atone for the injustice of which he had been the victim. Then the pious and gifted preacher turned towards his wife, and gave her the hymn he had composed during his brief absence, with the words, 'See, how God provides! Did I not bid you confide in Him, and all would be well?' "

The following translation of another of his fine hymns is from the "Lyra Germanica:"—

Go forth, my heart, and seek delight  
 In all the gifts of God's great might,  
 These pleasant summer hours ;  
 Look, how the plains for thee and me  
 Have decked themselves most fair to see,  
 All bright and sweet with flowers.

The lark soars singing into space,  
 The dove forsakes her hiding-place,  
 And coos the woods among ;  
 The richly gifted nightingale  
 Pours forth her voice o'er hill and dale,  
 And floods the fields with song.

I think, art Thou so good to us,  
 And scatterest joy and beauty thus,  
 O'er this poor earth of ours ;  
 What nobler glories shall be given  
 Hereafter in Thy shining heaven  
 Set round with golden towers !

What thrilling joy, when on our sight  
 Christ's garden beams in cloudless light,  
 Where all the air is sweet,  
 Still laden with the unwearied hymn  
 From all the thousand seraphim,  
 Who God's high praise repeat !

Gerhardt was peculiarly a "son of consolation:" his hymns of charity, hope, and faith were full of thanksgiving and cheer.

George Neumark, born 1621, when asked if he made the hymn, from which the following stanza is taken, modestly replied : " Well, yes : I am the instrument, but God swept the strings. All I knew was that these words, ' Who trusts in God's unchanging love,' lay like a soft burden on my heart. I went over them again and again, and so they shaped themselves into this song ; how, I cannot tell. I began to sing and to pray for joy, and my soul blessed the Lord ; and word followed word, like water from a fountain."

Leave God to order all thy ways,  
 And hope in Him, whate'er betide ;  
 Thou'lt find Him, in the evil days,  
 Thine all-sufficient strength and guide.  
 Who trusts in God's unchanging love,  
 Builds on the rock that naught can move !

These beautiful stanzas are from the German of Zehn :—

God liveth ever !  
 Wherefore, soul, despair thou never !  
 He who can earth and heaven control,  
 Who spreads the clouds o'er sea and land,  
 Whose presence fills the mighty whole,  
 In each true heart is close at hand.  
 Love Him, He will surely send  
 Help and joy that never end.  
 Soul, remember in thy pains,  
 God o'er all for ever reigns !

God liveth ever !  
 Wherefore, soul, despair thou never !  
 Scarce canst thou bear thy cross ? Then fly  
 To Him where rest is only sweet ;  
 Thy God is great, His mercy nigh,  
 His strength upholds the tottering feet.  
 Trust Him, for His grace is sure,  
 Ever doth His truth endure ;  
 Soul, forget not in thy pains,  
 God o'er all for ever reigns !

God liveth ever !  
 Wherefore, soul, despair thou never !  
 What though thou tread with bleeding feet  
 A thorny path of grief and gloom,  
 Thy God will choose the way most meet  
 To lead thee heavenward, lead thee home.  
 For this life's long night of sadness,  
 He will give thee peace and gladness !  
 Soul, forget not in thy pains,  
 God o'er all for ever reigns !

Count Zinzendorf was not one of the least among the sacred brotherhood of song, as he was the founder and champion of the United Moravian Brethren. He was born at Dresden, in the year 1700, and died in 1760. One of his celebrated hymns, consisting of thirty-three stanzas, and made familiar to us by Wesley's translation, is, "Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness !"

Here is a compact stanza on Christian Unity :—

Thou who didst die for all and each, and in that last, sad  
 night,  
 Didst to Thy flock so sweetly teach Love's all-controlling  
 might ;  
 Still on Thy little band impress, who else may disagree,  
 Thy last and dying care was this,—Thy members' unity !

The fine hymn, from which the following lines are taken, has been rendered into German, from the Latin, by Count Zinzendorf ; or, rather, was poured forth from St. Bernard's heart into his. Here is the English version :—

Jesus, the very thought of Thee  
 With sweetness fills my breast ;  
 But sweeter far Thy face to see,  
 And in Thy presence rest.  
 No voice can sing, nor heart can frame,  
 Nor can the memory find,  
 A sweeter sound than Thy blest Name,  
 O Saviour of mankind !

O hope of every contrite heart !  
 O joy of all the meek !  
 To those who fall, how kind Thou art,  
 How good to those who seek !

But what to those who find? Ah ! this  
 Nor tongue nor pen can show ;  
 The love of Jesus, what it is  
 None but His loved ones know !

A. H. Francke (1691) composed a fine hymn, on his journey to Gotha, after his unjust expulsion from Erfurt, "in the full experience of the unspeakable consolations of the Holy Spirit." We cite only two specimen stanzas.

Thank God that towards eternity another step is won !  
 Oh, longing turns my heart to Thee, as time flows slowly on !  
 Thou Fountain whence my life is born,  
 Whence those rich streams of grace are drawn,  
 That through my being run !

Oh, that I soon might Thee behold ! I count the moments  
 o'er ;  
 Ah, come, ere yet my heart grows cold, and cannot call Thee  
 more !  
 Come in Thy glory, for Thy Bride  
 Hath girt her for the holy-tide,  
 And waiteth at the door.

Simon Dach, a professor at Königsberg, where he died in 1659, was remarkable for the contemplative serenity and correct structure of his hymns. Here are two stanzas :—

Wouldst thou inherit life with Christ on high ?  
 Then count the cost, and know  
 That here on earth below  
 Thou needs must suffer with Thy Lord, and die.  
 We reach that gain, to which all else is loss,  
 But through the Cross !

Not e'en the sharpest sorrows we can feel,  
 Nor keenest pangs, we dare  
 With that great bliss compare,

When God His glory shall in us reveal,  
That shall endure when our brief woes are o'er  
For evermore !

There is impressive grandeur about the following poem, translated from the German of Seidl, by C. T. Brooks :—

“ Lord, Thou art great !” I cry, when in the east  
The day is blooming like a rose of fire ;  
When, to partake anew of life’s rich feast,  
Nature and man awake with fresh desire.  
When art Thou seen more gracious, God of power !  
Than in the morn’s great resurrection-hour ?

“ Lord, Thou art great !” I cry, when blackness shrouds  
The noon-day heavens, and crinkling lightnings flame,  
And on the tablet of the thunder-clouds  
In fiery letters write Thy dreadful Name.  
When art Thou, Lord, more terrible in wrath,  
Than in the mid-day tempest’s lowering path ?

“ Lord, Thou art great !” I cry, when in the west  
Day, softly-vanquished, shuts his glowing eye ;  
When song-feasts ring from every woodland nest,  
And all in melancholy sweetness die.  
When giv’st Thou, Lord, our hearts more blest repose  
Than in the magic of Thy evening shows ?

“ Lord, Thou art great !” I cry, at dead of night,  
When silence broods alike on land and deep ;  
When stars go up and down the blue-arched height,  
And on the silver clouds the moonbeams sleep.  
When beckonest Thou, O Lord ! to loftier heights,  
Than in the silent praise of holy nights ?

“ Lord, Thou art great !” in nature’s every form ;  
Greater in none,—simply most great in all ;  
In tears and terrors, sunshine, smile, and storm,  
And all that stirs the heart, is felt Thy call.  
“ Lord, Thou art great !” Oh, let me praise Thy Name,  
And grow in greatness as I Thine proclaim !

There is simple pathos and melody in the following lyric of Gleim, born 1719 :—

For whom hast Thou created, O Lord! this world so bright?  
For whom are bud and blossom in the glen and on the  
height?

For whom the golden cornfield, where our glad footsteps rove?  
For whom do yonder sunbeams gild the meadow and the  
grove?

The blessings that surround us, should be a call of love,  
To raise, with each returning morn, our thoughts to Him  
above.

Not vainly dost Thou give us this, a heart to feel and love,—  
A foretaste of the purer bliss which shall be ours above!

C. F. Gellert, one of the most esteemed and honoured  
of the sacred poets of Germany, wrote this:—

Creator! when I see Thy might, Thy wisdom, and Thy love,  
For ever watching, day and night, o'er all below, above;  
Melted with gratitude and praise,  
I know not how my voice to raise,  
My Father and my God!

Where'er I turn, my dazzled eye beholds Thy wonders still,—  
The glorious heavens, the azure sky, adore their Maker's skill.  
Who bids the sun so brightly shine,  
Clothed in his majesty divine,  
Who calls the starry host?

Here is a beautiful lyric gem from the German of  
Arndt. The translation is by E. F. Cox.

Therefore, now, a last good night! Sun, and moon, and  
stars of fire,  
Farewell to your splendour bright! Higher now I soar, far  
higher.

Where there is such glorious day, Ye will vanish quite away.  
Weep not, that I bid farewell To the world and all its errors  
Far from vanity to dwell, Far from darkness and its terrors;  
Weep not, that I take my flight To the land of endless light!  
Weep not, my Redeemer lives, High above dark earth  
ascending:

Hope, her heavenly comfort gives; Faith stands by, her  
shield extending;

Love eternal whispers near, "Child of God, no longer fear!"

## 332 A FEW THOUGHTS ON GENESIS IV. 3-5.

Our selections from German hymnology have been necessarily very limited,—scarcely sufficient to afford even an approximate conception of its great wealth. In dismissing this department of sacred song, we are impressed with one characteristic defect common to most of these compositions; *i.e.*, their prolixity. Yet there is in them much of the true poetic element, which is not to be ignored, and their spirituality is truly refreshing.

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A FEW THOUGHTS ON GENESIS IV. 3-5.

WE have here the record of how two men approached God in worship; for worship, let us remember, is bringing something to God; and not, as is so often thought, asking something of Him. Cain brought of the fruit of the ground, cursed by reason of Adam's sin of disobedience; while Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof.

How different both in form and spirit were these two brothers' offerings! The offering of the former was, doubtless, the result of a great deal of labour spent in tilling the soil, which, since the Fall, brought forth "thorns also and thistles;" and in tending the herbs which grew upon it; and he would offer the choicest results of his toil and industry to the Lord. He had done his best, perhaps, and that best should be given to the Lord. How many since Cain's day have done likewise; done it, too, with a good motive and a real desire to serve the Lord; but lacking, or not seeking, His mind: for "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord" (Isaiah lv. 8). Compared with Abel's offering, and judged by its merits according to man's standard of things, Cain's offering greatly excelled that of his brother's. "But unto Cain and to his offering the Lord had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell." The secret of Cain's heart was out. He had been worshipping in a manner suited to

## A FEW THOUGHTS ON GENESIS IV. 3-5. 333

his own heart, and in conformity to his own, and not God's will. He had, to use the language of to-day, enjoyed his own opinion as to the way in which he should worship God. That which is acceptable to the Lord will not find its display in outward things, be they never so beautiful or comely to our taste or senses ; but in recognising what is pleasing to HIS mind ; in ceasing to gratify one's own will, and, in its place, bowing to the will of the Lord ; in fact, in losing sight of self altogether. Abel had discovered that, belonging to a ruined race, he had no access to God save by owning his lost condition ; and that death was his due. Death, therefore, must come in ; blood must be shed ; for "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22).

He had learnt some of the "deep things" of God, and could therefore render to Him intelligent and acceptable worship. So he "brought of the firstlings of his flock and," it is added, "of the fat thereof." "All the fat is the LORD'S" (Lev. iii. 16). In the animal economy fat has no very precise function to perform, but it is, to use the words of another, "the energy of nature expressing itself." This, then, surrendered to God (as He, indeed, demanded) teaches, in a typical way, that the will must be yielded up to God ; it is, in effect, "Thy will, not mine, be done." Thus we learn what was Abel's condition of soul in his approach to God ; and such, too, must be the condition of soul of all who would worship in spirit and truth : the *only* way to worship aright. What a contrast between opiniative Cain and submissive Abel ! With no surprise we read, "the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering :" a blessed issue, and full of encouragement to the Lord's people for all time ; and also a beautiful instance of God's faithfulness to His own word : "Them that honour Me, I will honour."

If there be aught of man in any offering to the Lord, whether it be due to his toil, his industry, his good works, his virtues, his learning, it partakes of the

## 334 A FEW THOUGHTS ON GENESIS IV. 3-5.

nature of Cain's offering, and to such the Lord cannot have respect. Whatever ministers to the senses : the ear, eye, &c., or, in other words, "the flesh," is in opposition to that which is of the Spirit, who alone can direct our worship, "for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh : and these are contrary the one to the other" (Gal. v. 17).

Both these brothers acknowledged God ; both were worshippers ; but with the elder, worship was, as events afterward showed, but an outward profession—an empty form—and his ante-type is to be found among the worldly professors of Christianity of to-day. With the younger, however, was sincerity of heart ; his desire was to act in accordance with the mind of God ; and acting thus, the worst passions of his brother were aroused against him. All through the history of man, the faithful man of God has been subjected to bad treatment at the hands of mere professors of religion, as the Word of God and Church history (so-called) abundantly testify. Popular religion—that which pleases the people, and which now-a-days is so much contended for—may satisfy, in a measure, the craving of the natural heart, and may offer to the natural conscience some balm of comfort ; but he whose conscience is quickened by the Spirit of God rejects all that is of man, and finds delight only in that which is of God. He has the mind of Christ (1 Cor. ii. 16). "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him : neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14). Hence it will be found that to please the people is to dishonour God (see 1 Sam. xv. 24), and to please the Lord is to provoke, alas ! how often, the hostility of man. It is beyond the range of possibility to please, by one act, both the Lord and "the people," that is, the world and worldly professors of religion ; for the carnal mind (or mind of the flesh) is enmity against God (Rom. iii.). "Vox populi, vox dei"—the voice of the people is the

voice of God—is a blasphemous cry. *A* god, truly ; but not God. The god of this world and of darkness ; not the God of light and love.

To whose voice, then, my reader, are you listening ? to God's voice, or to the people's ? Is your worship expressed in any outward display like Cain's, having perhaps the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof ; or is it like Abel's, after the mind of God, delighting His heart and glorifying Him ? To act as did Abel may excite prejudice and even passion in the minds of many who profess, and *in their own way* acknowledge, God as Cain did ; but know, that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. iii.). The reward, however, is both sure and eternal (2 Tim. iv. 8).

"Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord ? Behold, TO OBEY is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. xv. 22).

A. C. H.

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"THE MAN CHRIST JESUS."—I *Tim.* ii. 5.

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"THIS is the mystery. It is the same Jesus, Immanuel, the Son, and yet the kinsman of the seed of Abraham. And here I would say, for there is a call for it, I know we are not to confound the natures in this glorious and blessed One. I fully bow in faith to the truth that the Sanctifier took part of flesh and blood. I avow with my whole soul the true humanity in His Person ; but it was not an *imperfect* humanity, in the condition, or under the results of sin, in any wise. But I ask, with that, is there not some unsuspected and yet real unbelief touching the mystery of the Person in the mind of many ? Is the *undividedness* of the Person throughout all the periods and transitions of this glorious, mysterious history, kept in the view of the soul ?

"I would have grace to delight myself in the lan-

guage of the Holy Ghost, and speak of 'the Man Christ Jesus.' The *Man* that is risen is declared to be the pledge of resurrection to us (1 Cor. xv. 21). The *Man* that is ascended is the great assurance to us that our interests are, every moment, before God in heaven (1 Tim. ii. 5). The *Man* to return from heaven by-and-by will be the security and joy of the coming kingdom (Ps. viii). The mystery of *Man obedient, dead, raised, ascended, and returned* thus sustains, we may say, the whole counsel of God. But still, again I say, the Person *in His undividedness* is to be kept in the view of the soul. 'The perfect and complete work of Christ in every act of His office, in all that He did, in all that He suffered, in all that He continueth to do, is the act and work of His whole Person.' Yea, indeed, and His whole Person was on the cross, as everywhere else. The Person was the Sacrifice, and that Person was the Son, 'over all, God blessed for ever.' He *gave up* the Ghost, though He died under God's judgment against sin, and though He was by the hands of wicked men crucified and slain. And this is an infinite mercy.

"It was *Himself*, beloved, from first to last. He trod the mysterious way *Himself*, and He trod it unaided and alone. None other than He, 'God manifest in the flesh,' could have been there. The Son became the Lamb for the altar here, and then the Lamb that was slain reached the place of glory, far above all heavens. It is the *Person* which gives efficacy to all. Services would be nothing—sorrows would be nothing—death, resurrection, and ascension would all be nothing (could we conceive them), if Jesus were not the One He is. His Person is the rock; therefore His work is perfect. It is the mystery of mysteries. But He is not presented for our discussion, but for our apprehension, faith, confidence, love, and worship.

"God and Man, heaven and earth, are together before the thoughts of faith in this great mystery. God has been here on earth, and that too in flesh; and Man glorified is there on high in heaven. It is the

*links* between these great things I have sought to look at particularly, fitted as this exercise is to make the things of heaven and eternity *real* and *near* to our souls. The moral distances are infinite, but the distances themselves are now nothing. Nature, beset with lusts and worldliness, makes it hard indeed for the soul to pass in ; but the distance itself is nothing. Jesus, after He was in heaven, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, shewed Himself to Stephen just outside the city of the Jews ; and in a like moment of time, shone across the path of Saul of Tarsus, as he travelled from Jerusalem to Damascus ; and though we have not like visits from the glory, the nearness and reality of it are pledged afresh, and made good to our souls, by the sight of these great mysteries.

"And is not the kingdom to be the exhibition of the results of these mysterious links? For heaven and earth, in their different ways, shall witness and celebrate them. 'Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad.' The church, one with this exalted, glorified Man, will be on high, far above all principalities and powers. The ladder which Jacob saw shall (in the mystery) be set up, the Son of Man shall be the centre as well as the stay of all this predestinated system of glory and of government. The nations shall learn war no more. The stick of Judah and the stick of Ephraim shall be one, and one King shall be to them both. 'And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth ; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil ; and they shall hear Jezreel.' And what is all this, but the happy fruit, to be gathered in the days of the coming kingdom, of these links which have been, as we have been seeing, already formed? The germs and principles of all these manifestations in heaven and on earth, among angels, and men, and all creatures, and the creation itself, are found, so to speak, at Bethlehem, in the garden of the Sepulchre, and at the Mount of Olives." J. G. B.

A SPIRITUAL SONG.—*Col. iii. 16.*

Most blessed Saviour, Shepherd, Lord,  
 Thy saints around Thee throng ;  
 "Thou art the everlasting Word,"  
 The subject of our song.

To Thee our hearts with joy ascend,  
 To Thee ascribe we praise ;  
 To Thee, our everlasting Friend,  
 With joy the voice we raise.

We give Thee thanks ; we give Thee praise ;  
 We glory give to Thee ;  
 Thy love and grace through pilgrim days  
 Our joy and strength shall be.

All through this desert, dark and drear,  
 We have Thy presence, Lord ;  
 Thy word assures us Thou art near,  
 Our hearts' Beloved, Adored !

The path which Thou Thyself hast trod,  
 Fain would we tread below ;  
 While thus we journey home to God  
 Thou wilt Thy grace bestow.

We soon shall sit upon Thy throne,  
 Soon shall Thy triumph share ;  
 Ere long wilt Thou bring home Thine own,  
 Whose judgment Thou didst bear.

Then shall their eyes with joy behold  
 Thy royal beauty, Lord ;  
 Thy Bride Thou'lt to Thy bosom fold,  
 "Fulfilled each precious word."

Then will she see Thee as Thou art,  
 And Thy blest likeness wear,  
 Recline for ever on Thy heart,  
 Her Bridegroom's glory share !

“WHOSOEVER SHALL CONFESS THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.” How great the grace of the Gospel! How admirable our position because it is in Jesus that we possess it! It is important to hold fast this: that it is the portion of every Christian, the joy of the humble, the strongest reproach to the conscience of the careless. A *Christian* is one who is a partaker of the divine nature, and in whom the Spirit dwells. The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Accordingly, *whosoever* confesses Jesus to be that Son, enjoys all the fulness of its blessed consequences. God dwells in everyone who confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, and he dwells in God. What an encouragement for a timid believer! What a rebuke for a careless one!—J. N. D.

THE LITERAL SENSE OF SCRIPTURE.—“Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father,” &c. It has been truly observed that not until belief in these declarations in their most literal sense becomes the calm and settled habit of the soul, is life ever redeemed from drudgery and dreary emptiness, and made full of meaning, interest, and divine significance.

THE EXODUS.—The passage of the Red Sea and destruction of Pharaoh’s host was typical of the Lord’s death and victory. In Luke ix. 31 the same word is used, “His exodus,” and again Peter (2 Epis. i. 15) uses the word concerning himself, “My exodus.”

CHRIST AND CHRISTIANITY.—In these days of declension and self-complacency, is there aught that Christians need to learn of God more than Christianity as He has revealed it, unless it be Christ Himself on whom all depends? Even saints are slow to believe the grace and glory of His cross, as they instinctively shirk the crucifixion of the world to them, and of themselves to the world which it entails. But this is the word of the Lord for His own now (Gal. vi.).—*B. Treasury.*

EMPTYING HIMSELF, in Phil. ii., refers to the form, not the prerogatives. He was “in the form of God” and “took upon Him the form of a servant.”—*Ibid.*

THE HOLY GHOST abides in the Church (House of God) and the Christian, to make the sanction of evil inexcusable in either.—*Ibid.*

THE FIELD PURCHASED BY BOAS from Ruth (iv. 3, 5, 9) may have been that in which the shepherds kept their flocks (Luke ii. 8).

THE OFFERINGS OF “THE WISE MEN FROM THE EAST” (Matt. ii. 14) may have furnished the means for the flight of the holy family into Egypt.

THE SPLEEN.—The use of this organ of the body no one knows; but it has its use, we may be sure. So, also, certain portions of Scripture *we* see no use for.

SCRIPTURE.—Such sentences as “The Word of God,” or “The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father,” &c., are not a mere letter which we may handle by the rules of art, but august tokens of most simple, ineffable, adorable facts embraced, enshrined according to its measure in the believing mind. For though the development of an idea is a deduction of proposition from proposition, these propositions are ever formed in and round the idea itself, so to speak, and are, in fact, one and all only aspects of it. The pages of Inspiration containing, as they do, the principle of life within them, are capable of infinite existence, and are eternally spreading and developing themselves in fresh forms of being.—*Newman.*

BABYLON (I Pet. v. 13).—The bazaars of Cairo are very interesting, but incomparably the *most* curious thing here is the Roman fortress. It is about two miles off, and was the central point of *Egyptian Babylon*, the Babylon of Peter's first epistle, I do believe.—*Dean Burgon*.

THE GRACE THAT NEVER WEARIES.—Some friends were speaking of a person who, spite of many remonstrances, pursued his evil courses, when one of the company, who, before he had known Christ, had gone great lengths himself, remarked that he saw no necessity for their troubling themselves further with such a character, adding, "If he has an opportunity of knowing the truth, and will not attend to it, let him take the consequences." A lady sitting by, who knew this person's history, gently reminded him, knowing that he had been much indebted to the affectionate appeals of a Christian friend, "Ah! Mr. —, what might have been your state to-day if others had argued thus in regard to you?"

THE HEAVIER CONDEMNATION.—When Fletcher of Madeley was once preaching on Noah and the ark, in the midst of a most animated description of the terrible day of the Lord, he suddenly paused. Every feature of his expressive countenance was marked with painful feeling; and striking his forehead with the palm of his hand, he exclaimed, "Wretched man that I am! Beloved hearers, it often cuts me to the soul, as it does at this moment, to reflect that while I have been endeavouring, by the force of truth, by the beauty of holiness, and even by the terrors of the Lord, to bring you to walk in the peaceable paths of righteousness, I am, with respect to many of you (those who reject the Gospel), only tying millstones round your neck to sink you deeper in perdition!"

THE WRITING ON THE HEART.—The house of Dr. Todd being burnt down, his little girl had a library of 116 volumes destroyed in the conflagration. Next day, while mourning her loss, she suddenly jumped up, wiped away her tears, and, running to her mother, said: "Mother, I will not cry any more. I am glad I have learned so many hymns." "There," said Dr. T. when narrating the story, "though all things material shall be burnt up, the impressions upon the living tablet of the heart will abide for ever."

THE FRESCO AND THE MIRROR.—There is in Rome an elegant fresco by Guido, the Aurora. It covers a lofty ceiling. The owner of the palace has provided a mirror near the floor, and, as you sit and gaze into the mirror, you enjoy the masterpiece reflected in it. Like the Rospigliosi mirror beneath the Aurora, should every believer reflect Christ, the Masterpiece, enthroned above us! I have been to that palace; I have seen that picture and looked into that mirror. I can recall the classic beauty of the principal figure, his graceful mien, the rich and delicate colour of the glory that surrounded him, all distinctly produced on the clean and polished surface of the mirror. The apostle says, "We see Jesus," and this is our privilege; yea, more, it is our *privilege* (we will rather say this than *responsibility*, which it also is), as burnished mirrors, with undimmed and unspotted surfaces to reflect Him to His glory among those around. Had the mirror been soiled or dimmed, it would have presented a blurred and unsightly reflection; but so beautifully was it kept, that one seemed to see in it the very picture itself; and so should men see in us our Master reproduced.