

# WORDS IN SEASON.

---

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

---

1899.

(ISSUED DURING 1898.)

---

ABERDEEN: BOOK & TRACT DEPÔT, 44, CHAPEL ST.  
EDINBURGH: J. S. FERGUSON, 23, SCOTLAND ST.  
LONDON: W. BLATCHLEY, 27, LANCEFIELD ST., QUEEN'S  
PARK, W.  
MONTROSE: DAVID DOUGLAS, 87, MURRAY ST.  
READING: L. A. PIKE, 80, CARNARVON ST.  
CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND: JOHN S. POLSON,  
165, TUAM ST.

## I N D E X .

	PAGE.
Anathema Maranatha .. .. .	29
An Old Man .. .. .	27
Asnamed to Confess Christ .. .. .	59
A Touching Story .. .. .	60
Bible History of Christians .. .. .	16
Bishop Latimer .. .. .	28
British Christians .. .. .	28
Christ as High Priest .. .. .	J. N. D. 24
Christ with His People in this World, &c. .. .. .	C. E. S. 151
Come and See .. .. .	EDITOR. 145
Communion .. .. .	27
Dependence .. .. .	J. N. D. 66
Eternal Punishment .. .. .	120
Fragments .. .. .	6, 24, 26, 148
God's Gift of His Son .. .. .	59
God's Sovereignty in Grace the only Ground of Our Salvation .. .. .	EDITOR. 160
"Henceforth" .. .. .	2
Idle Christians .. .. .	<i>Missionary Review.</i> 1
"I will come again" .. .. .	<i>Girdle of Truth.</i> 61
Incidents, Illustrations, &c. .. .. .	27, 57, 87, 119, 149, 184
Is Jesus Christ the Son of God? &c. .. .. .	J. M. 141
It is Dark .. .. .	150
Jeroboam .. .. .	<i>Present Testimony.</i> 169
Joshua, Judges, Ruth .. .. .	C. E. S. 101
Jesus Wept .. .. .	C. E. S. 83
Long Visits, &c. .. .. .	120
Leviticus xiv. 33-57 .. .. .	C. E. S. 47
Letters of Interest on "Ravenism" .. .. .	C. E. S. & * * * 51
Love's Sweet Work .. .. .	27
Nicodemus .. .. .	<i>Girdle of Truth.</i> 122
No Condemnation .. .. .	149
Never Mind Where you Work .. .. .	59
No Time to Die .. .. .	30
"Not of the World" .. .. .	<i>Bible Treasury.</i> 11
Power .. .. .	28
Psalms cxxxiii. .. .. .	REV. H. BROOKS. 57
Poetry .. .. .	113, 121, 38, 148, 60, 1, 23, 179
Revival of Cambuslang .. .. .	27
Romaine's Congregation .. .. .	59
Saints .. .. .	29
Servants of God .. .. .	58
Shall we Say in our Hearts, "My Lord Delayeth His Coming"? .. .. .	26
"Steadfast and Unmovable" .. .. .	<i>English Churchman.</i> 29
Stephen.— <i>Acts</i> vi.-vii. .. .. .	D. S. 180
Substitution .. .. .	57
"Their Angels."— <i>Matt.</i> xviii. 10 .. .. .	39
The Believer Falling Asleep .. .. .	88
The Corinthians and the Apostle Paul .. .. .	C. E. S. 134
The Corn of Wheat—the First Fruits—the Harvest .. .. .	W. EASTON. 7
The Firmness of Love in Discipline .. .. .	<i>Girdle of Truth.</i> 19
The Epistle of John .. .. .	EDITOR. 31, 69, 115, 131
The Epistle to the Romans .. .. .	J. N. D. 18
The Grace of God .. .. .	29
The Holy Ghost .. .. .	119
The Lord's Supper .. .. .	W. EASTON. 91
The Lord's Table .. .. .	W. EASTON. 72
The Passover .. .. .	W. EASTON. 41
The Power of a Tract .. .. .	90
The Rapture .. .. .	EDITOR. 110
The Significance of Numbers .. .. .	F. W. G. 25
The Wrath of the Lamb .. .. .	87
When, and Where did Christ become a Priest? .. .. .	<i>Bible Herald.</i> 30
Words of Warning .. .. .	J. M. 143

## “NOW IS OUR SALVATION NEARER THAN WHEN WE BELIEVED.”—*Rom.* xiii. 11.

ONE year the less to travel, earth's rough and thorny road ;  
One year the nearer gaining, our peaceful, blest abode !  
One year the less of bearing, the cross that oft weighs down ;  
One year the nearer winning, the glorious, golden crown !  
One year the less of serving, here Him who served thee ;  
One year the nearer seeing, Him whom we long to see !  
Him who e'en now is waiting to make Himself more dear  
To thee, His chosen servant, and draw thee yet more near  
Into a closer union of thought, desire, and will,  
Thus day by day to follow thy Master's steps until  
Thine ear shall catch the music of sweetest sound—His voice,  
Calling thee up to meet Him, making thy heart rejoice,  
Bidding thee drink the pleasure of endless bliss above,  
Losing thyself for ever in the ocean of His love !     A. S.

---

## FOR IDLE CHRISTIANS.

IN the Book of Judges, fifth chapter, twenty-third verse, we find : “Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof ; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.” In an old book we find the following questions and answers upon this verse :—

“Who has commanded to curse Meroz ? Answer : The angel of the Lord. What had Meroz done ? Nothing. How ? why, then, is Meroz cursed ? Because she has done nothing. What should Meroz have done ? Come to the help of the Lord. Could not the Lord, then, have succeeded without Meroz ? The Lord did succeed without Meroz. Then has the Lord met with a loss thereby ? No, but Meroz. Is Meroz, then, to be cursed therefore ? Yes, and that bitterly. Is it right that a man should be cursed for having done nothing ? Yes, when he *should* have done something. Who says that ? The angel of the Lord ; and the Lord Himself says (*Luke* xii. 47) : ‘He that knew his Lord's will and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.’ ”—*Missionary Review*.

## “ HENCEFORTH.”

---

AT a midnight service, at the close of the year, I took for my text one word, “Henceforth.” I said: “We are standing at the threshold of a new year. What is it to be? Henceforth, new and better—or, Henceforth, as before, and worse!” I told the congregation that a friend of mine had for many years, on the anniversary of his conversion, sent me a book or tract containing the story of a clock. “This year,” I said, “the little book I have received contains the account of a clock that would not go. In order to make it do so, the owner tried three things.

“1. First, heavier weights. These did not answer the purpose, but rather oppressed the whole machinery.

“2. Then he changed the face of the clock, and put on a lighter and brighter dial, but that was not more effectual.

“3. Lastly, he put on new hands, but these also failed to indicate a better state of things.

“In the frontispiece of the book was a picture of the man standing before the incorrigible clock, and beside him stood a little boy. The latter suggested to his perplexed parent, that ‘perhaps the poor clock wanted a new inside!’”

I said: “1. I wonder how many of you unsaved ones have in past years put upon yourselves new and heavier weights—have made new rules of life, bound yourselves with strong resolutions, and it may be you began keeping a journal. But, alas! you were obliged to cease, and come to a dead stop. No one can keep good resolutions longer than the devil will let him. So much the worse for you if you do succeed, for when you do, it is as if you were given over, and permitted to go on in your own way.

“There is a great difference between your improving yourself, and God making you into a new creature.

"2. How many of you have started upon a new year, with a new, bright face, intending to run well. Your hopes have been bright, and you have made up your mind to go on trusting, because you think God is so good and merciful. But your good intentions have been as unsuccessful as the new face on the clock.

"3. Again, some of you have determined to engage in good works—Sunday-school teaching, visiting the sick, relieving the poor, or some other work of mercy. But you only went forward as long as your heart was in it, and then you stopped!

"Imagine the Lord Jesus standing in person in our midst, particularly before each unsaved individual, and saying to him or to her, A new heart I will give you! What will you answer Him?

"All the more earnestly does He plead as the moments of this passing year draw to a close. Must the answer be, 'Henceforth, as it was before, if not worse?' or shall it be, 'Henceforth, with a new heart, and a new life open before you?'

"In a few minutes you will begin a new year. You will enter upon a new voyage—whether you will live to reach the end of it you know not, and what may befall you on the way you know not. But understand this: the Lord Jesus, who stands pleading before you, knows all about your future, and can see the end of the year from the beginning. Can I persuade you to trust yourselves to Him?

"Some of you have before this danced the old year out—some of you have spent the time in drinking—some have slept! Will you at this time fall down before the Lord Jesus, and give yourselves to Him, for the new heart He so willingly offers, henceforth to be His, and His for ever?"

We knelt in silence, broken every now and again with sobs and sighs.

At length, one voice said, "Lord Jesus, take my heart." Another soon followed with, "Lord Jesus,

give me a new heart." A third voice in a distinct tone said, "Henceforth!"

When the clock had sounded the knell of the departed year, I rose up from my knees, and said, "Who will rise to thank the Lord for a new heart, henceforth to be His for ever?"

A goodly number rose to their feet. Then I asked the believers present to rise, and we sang together a hymn of praise, with our hearts as well as voices.

At the close of the service a young gentleman came forward, with a bright face, full of enthusiasm. He said, "What shall I do to serve God?"

I inquired, "Have you given yourself to Him?"

He replied, "Yes, indeed I have, and have determined to be His alone—henceforth and for ever."

"Thank God for you," I said. "Your happy new year has begun, and may it go on as well."

This young man had in his own quiet way "tried" the three things mentioned above—resolutions, promises, and good works, and had proved them to be one as fruitless as the other. Now, by God's help, he had made a new start, with a new "inside;" believing in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, he was *born again*.

The bystanders took up again the song of praise we had been singing, and thus our young friend was launched off into his new life with acclamations of thanksgiving to God for himself and his future. When we separated, he went on his way home alone; he said the stars seemed to be brighter than before, and everything was different to him. He said to himself, "Is there so much love in heaven for *me*? Is it true that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over *me*?"

When the congregation had been dismissed, this young man's friends had fled with precipitation, not knowing what was to happen next. They did not speak much going home. Evidently the power of the Lord was upon them all, and somehow it was a relief to them

that he did not accompany them. After a little supper they were just retiring, when they heard him arrive, overflowing with joy and thankfulness. He went first to his mother. "Oh, mother, I never thanked you for telling me about Jesus—I never understood it before." She burst into tears.

"Oh, my dear son, I do not think I understood it myself!"

His father said, "I am afraid I never thought of these things."

His three sisters were in tears too, their hearts too full to speak.

My young friend said, "The power of God was present. I could not help thanking God, and we all knelt down while I prayed! I had never done such a thing in my life! The words came to me—they were given."

"I said, 'God has so loved us that He has given us His only begotten Son, that we may believe in Him and be saved. Lord, give a happy new year to us all.'"

Then he went to each of them, and told them, "It is all done and finished. Christ has died for us, and we may live a new life, thank God! There is nothing more to be done. Thank Him! thank Him!"

He wondered why they did not thank God, for to him it was all so clear and plain. His mother and one of his sisters found peace that midnight or early morning time.

Henceforth there was a kind of wall of separation in the family which had been before so united in worldliness. The father said nothing; but one of the sisters began to speak about excitement and overwrought feelings, and the other assented in a few words. Instead of peace and joy, there was come a sword into the house. My young friend, not knowing enough to argue or explain, had a very miserable time, and was beginning to doubt. His mother came to him and said, "Your father is rather angry with you," which did not help him.

When I called on them, he told me what had happened in the house last night, and what was happening now. It was as much as I could do to hear him out patiently. I began to thank God, and said, "It is all right—it is just as it ought to be. When the shepherds believed the message of the angel on the plains of Bethlehem, the heavenly choir began with 'Glory to God in the highest!'"

"But when the bright manifestations were taken away, and darkness supervened, the shepherds did not yield to doubt; they wisely said, 'Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass.' They came, and saw, and went away rejoicing."

This word of God was the Bethlehem to my friends, and they saw and were reassured, and rejoiced. "What a mercy," I said to my young friend, "that you have your mother and sister with you! Now, take courage, and encourage one another in the Lord. Salvation is come to this house, praise God!"

In due time the father yielded his heart to God, saying, "he thought he was too old a sinner to be saved so easily as all that." The two remaining sisters had a hard struggle to give up the world. The Lord enabled me to show them that God did not ask them to give up anything, but to take something. Moses did not give up Egypt and all its wealth and greatness; the Scripture says he "forsook Egypt," that is, he chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God," and preferred it. So Egypt, with all its charms, faded out of sight.

It was not long before they were all six a united family again; and they are now all fully united in heaven. Truly it was "Henceforth!"—*Extracted.*

---

THE CHRISTIAN is himself the heathen man's Bible. "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness."



## THE CORN OF WHEAT—THE FIRST-FRUIITS—THE HARVEST.

*John* xii. 24 ; *1 Cor.* xv. 23.

---

IT was a solemn moment in our Lord's history when He uttered those memorable words recorded in the twenty-fourth verse of *John* xii., "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone : but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." In chapter xi., He is set forth as the "Son of God" about to be glorified in the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Then, in chapter xii. 12-16, He is owned by many who came up to the feast to be "the King of Israel." He then takes the widest and most comprehensive of all His titles, "the Son of Man" (verse 23). Thus we have presented to us a wonderful unfolding of glories, all centering in that lowly Man, Jesus. But as they pass, as it were, before Him, the fact is pressed upon His soul that before He can take up those glories and introduce others, whether Jews or Greeks, into blessing in association with Himself, He must die, and take them all up on the other side of death in resurrection ; and Jesus, pressed with the weight of what lay before Him, said, "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified." He alone knew what that involved, and how it would be demonstrated. Surely, as we have said, it was a *solemn* moment in the Lord's history.

Yes, the hour had come at last : as in the next chapter He says, "*Now* is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him" (xiii. 31). In both passages He is speaking in the light of the cross, where, as Man, His brightest moral glory would be seen in His absolute and perfect submission to the will of God, even though it took Him down into the place of judgment to experience the forsaking of God in the once-for-all settlement of that awful sin question, so that God might be glorified and men eternally

saved and blessed by grace reigning "through righteousness unto eternal life" (Rom. v. 21).

Need we wonder that the blessed Lord shrank from it as He felt it in its awfulness? No, beloved, we need not. It was *His perfection*. It was sin and judgment known as we could never know it, felt in its loathsomeness, and the awful bitterness and woe which bearing it entailed, hence His deep sorrow told out in those heart-melting words, "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour." But did it stop there? No, blessed be God; and His perfect submission, obedience, and devotedness to do God's will, though at such cost to Himself, shine out in that sublime utterance, "But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy Name" (John xii. 27, 28).

Brethren, such a picture needs no flowery setting to show it off. It speaks volumes to every thoughtful and devoted heart as it stands in all its own blessedness and eternal significance in the few brief Spirit-breathed words recorded by the evangelist. O that our hearts may be better able to take them in in all their divine import, and sing, as we have never sung before:

"We adore Thee evermore. Hallelujah."

The blessed Lord, then, knew that before He could associate others with Himself in life and blessing, He would have to take the place of death where *He* would be glorified—*God* would be glorified—and the basis laid for *our* being glorified (Rom. viii. 30). The corn of wheat would have to fall into the ground and die if fruit of the same kind was to be produced, otherwise it would abide alone. What a wondrous thought! The corn of wheat put into the ground—Jesus in death. Then in resurrection the "much fruit!" Who can say *how much*! What a marvellous yield! And every single grain or corn is of the same life and nature as the One which died. Not a different kind. Not one imperfect, blighted, withered, or lifeless

grain. No! On the other side of death, in resurrection, each believer in the Lord Jesus has the same life and nature as He who died. There is no other life than this blessed eternal life—life in the Son—and it is the possession of every believer in Him. Each one is part of the “much fruit.” Never was there such a prolific grain of wheat known! Nor is the yield all seen. It has not ceased to produce. Day by day, the “much fruit” may be read *more* fruit, and “still there’s more to follow,” until the harvest takes place and the field is reaped, and the great harvest home is celebrated. Blessed be God, it will be a clean reaping then. There will not be a grain left on the field for gleaners, though much will grow afterward for future reaping and gleaning. What great, grand, and glorious results of the death of God’s blessed Son!

But I turn now to a further passage. In 1 Cor. xv. 23, we have another idea and application of firstfruits and harvest. It is not a question of Christ’s death and resurrection as giving the same life and nature to the “much fruit”; but it is the resurrection of *the body*—the resurrection of all who are His. That fundamental truth of the Christian faith was being denied by some at Corinth, and in the most subtle way the saints were being robbed of their Saviour. For, reasons the apostle, “if there be no resurrection, then is not Christ risen; . . . and if Christ be not risen, ye are yet in your sins” (verses 12-17). Is it not thus that Satan often steals away truths from the saints? He suggests that certain things are not true, and they see not what is involved in letting that bit go, until through grace they are recovered, and their eyes open to the snare, then they see what a pit they were near falling into.

The gospel which Paul had preached to them was that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. He repeats it again in verse 20, “But now is Christ risen from the dead,” and adds, “and become the *firstfruits* of them that slept.” The firstfruits, then, have been gathered

from the field. If you turn to Lev. xxiii. 9-14, you will see this set forth in type. When the Israelites *got into the land, they had to bring a sheaf of the first-fruits* before they reaped their harvest. They had to bring it the day after the Sabbath—the eighth day—with its accompanying offerings. Thus even in the types we have the Lord's resurrection set forth on the eighth day—the first day of the week (Matt. xxviii. 1).

Now it is self-evident that if there are firstfruits, there must be a harvest. Not only so, the harvest will be of the same kind as the firstfruits. The firstfruits are taken out of the field, and are the first part of the crop. What kind of harvest, then, has this to be? The most marvellous, the most glorious ever known. Every saint of God who has ever lived and died in this world is to be raised in a body of glory like unto Christ's: every one to be exactly like the firstfruits as to their bodies, as they were exactly like Him in the life and nature which they received for their souls as the result of His "falling into the ground and dying." It is not possible that the harvest can differ from the firstfruits. *His* body of glory is the pattern of ours. We are to be like Him. "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor. xv. 42-44).

But when does the harvest take place? We are told: "Afterward, they that are Christ's at His coming." This, then, is the time when it takes place. This is the hour for which the Spirit-taught Christian looks and longs; for he knows that it is when the dead in Christ rise, and they rise *first*, that he with all the living saints on the earth will be changed, and caught up with the raised ones to meet the Lord in the air, and thus be ever with the Lord (1 Thess. iv. 16-18).

How marvellous the love that could give such a Saviour to be a sacrifice for such wretched sinners as we were! How wondrous the grace that takes us up and gives us the same life and nature as the risen Christ, with all its accompanying blessings, and will,

by and by, complete the story by clothing us with bodies of glory fashioned like unto His own (Phil. iii. 21), and bringing us forth to show "the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" in the ages to come (Eph. ii. 7). May we know it better and enjoy it more in the power of the Holy Ghost.

WILLIAM EASTON.

*New Zealand.*

---

---

## "NOT OF THE WORLD":

### A WORD ON 2 CORINTHIANS I.

---

I DO not pretend to say every Christian is practically in the state in which Paul was when he could say, "Death worketh in us, but life in you" (chapter iv.). Paul held himself as dead; life only was acting in him—the life of Christ was unhindered in him—*death* as regards the world, and all that is in it; therefore, Christ only was working in him. The Christian should *hold* himself as dead; so would the life of Christ be displayed in him. It is important our hearts should understand what *practical* Christianity is. It is not merely gracious effects produced in man as passing through the world as belonging to it. The Christian does not belong to it at all, no more than Jesus did. Jesus was not of the world (John xvii.). *All* that is of the world is not of the Father. Was there ever the smallest link between His heart and the things of this world? *We* are brought into the same place of separation. Our wills must be broken, lusts judged, and then the fulness of divine consolation is poured into the soul. Paul was a vessel into which the direct flow of comfort could be poured. Self must be crucified. He knew what relationship with the soul and God is; tribulations were only the occasion of bringing it out. He could thus "glory in tribulations";

he could "glory in infirmities," &c. They only brought him into more direct communion with the blessed Source of strength. We prove the blessedness of what God is, and thus it flows out to others.

Verse 8: "For we would not have you ignorant, brethren, of our trouble, which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life." The occasion brings before him the distinct consciousness of what life and death is. There was no hope as to natural life. How does it find him? With the sentence of *death* in himself. If death finds a man where natural life has no place, they only want to take that which is already gone. Paul takes Christ's cross into his heart; he reckons himself dead; he holds himself as one living in Christ who had already died. He therefore trusts in Him who *raiseth the dead*.

Here we get the expression of Christ in his soul. It is not merely one passing through the world with the wheels a little better oiled, but every link with the world must be broken.

The *sinner* has to do with God as a Judge. Israel in Egypt was saved *from* God who was executing judgment; but when they had passed the Red Sea (type of death and resurrection), they get a place *with* God—the full salvation of God—Egypt done with totally and for ever, because Egypt has nothing to do with God, nor God with Egypt. He has taken Christ once and for ever out of this world, never to return, save when He comes to reign. When the world put Christ to death, the sentence of *death* was put on all that is in it; but *we* have complete deliverance *out* of it. Israel is brought to the other side of the Red Sea; Egypt is behind. They are brought out TO GOD, and so are we. Christ went down into death for me. In Him I come out the other side, as dead to the flesh and the world. I have got a new place where Christ is. I have left the place of sin by faith, and have got a place with Christ. I am "accepted in

the Beloved." If a Christian, I am not alive in the world. Where have I got my life from? *Christ in heaven*. That is not the world. The first Adam was turned out of paradise. God did not create the world as it is. God created paradise; and this world has grown up to what it is now, sin having come in. God has taken the Second Man into heaven, in virtue of the work done for me. As a *sinner*, my place is in the *world*; as an accepted one, my place is in *heaven*.

Have you got into the place to be able to say with Paul, "When we *were* in the flesh?" (Rom. vii.). In chapter viii., we read, "Ye are not in the flesh, . . . if so be," &c. We are not alive in the world; we are in Christ. If I speak to a sinner, I say, There is salvation for the vilest. To the believer I say, You are *in Christ* before God. It is *Christ*, and nothing else. To realise this practically, you must hold yourself dead: death must be applied to everything down here. Then we get the inflowing of all that belongs to the new life. If links with the world are broken, we have the consolations of Christ abounding, the blessed inflowing of divine favour as it rested on Christ Himself.

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" (2 Cor. iv. 8, 9). The poor vessel may be troubled, but not in despair, for *God is there*; it may be persecuted, but not forsaken, for *God is there*.

"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." Here we get something more. In the death of Christ, was there one link with the world left? Not one. He looked for pity—there was none. He might have looked for justice; but the judge washes his hands, and gives Him up. The priests cry, "Away with Him," &c. His very garments were taken from Him. He stands *alone, deserted*, and cries out, "I am poured out like water; all My bones

are out of joint ; My heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of My bowels." Was there, I ask, a single link with the world left? *Not one.* There was no one ingredient wanting in the death of Christ to make His cup bitter. And Paul could say, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus," &c. There should be no more link between me and the world than there was in the cross of Christ. In verse 11, we see God passes him through circumstances which keep this alive in him. There are things and circumstances which God uses to write the cross upon our will and nature. *Death* must be written upon all, that *Christ* only may be seen. How wonderful to be permitted to walk through the world, and be the epistle of Christ! We are called to manifest the character, ways, spirit, and temper of the Blessed One who is perfect. If self is not crucified, it cannot be so. I am put before God in all the perfectness of Christ Himself ; and Christ, in all His perfectness, is put before me. Do you shrink from this? I do not ask, Do you *realise* it? Even Paul said, "Not as though I had already attained," &c. But how often is the language of the heart : Spare a little nature, it cannot all be crucified ! much as though it were said, Do not let me have *all Christ*. How then can we know the power of joy, if we are thus making terms (I do not say we should own to this, but do not our ways speak thus?) with God, not to have Christ *out and out* ? If I cannot say, "To me to live is *Christ*," as my object, my eye is not single. Paul could say, "This one thing I do," &c. He had no other object ; he reckoned all else dung and dross. It did not cost him much to give up dung and dross. If Christ had such a place in our hearts, the rest is easy, though such a life passes us through exercises and trials. If we reckon ourselves dead and risen, we get a free, open channel between us and heaven for divine consolation to flow in.

As a child of God, I am *in Christ*, and there is no



end to my blessing. The cross has settled my place in Adam. Will you be before God in the day of judgment to answer for what you have done ; or have you believed the fact that Christ has come into this world and taken the whole question up for you, and set you before God in virtue of what *He has done*, instead of what *you* have done? He disciplines us that we may be emptied of self and find everything in Christ, and Christ everything to us. But He begins the lesson with the assurance, *I love you perfectly*. I bring you into the desert to learn what I am, and what you are ; but it is as those I have brought to Myself! He gives us a place with Christ, and then shows us what Christ is and what we are. The discipline of the way teaches this ; but if He, in His love, strikes the furrows in the heart, it is that He may sow the seed which shall ripen in glory. Are you content to be in the wilderness with nothing but the manna, or are you saying, We see nothing but this light food? If we want it for our *journey*, we shall find it every morning, and find it enough ; but if we want to settle down, it will never satisfy us. Are you content to have the flesh crucified? Have you so tasted the love of a dying Jesus, and the glory of a risen Jesus, as to wish for nothing else? He creates a void in order to fill it. May the Lord give the distinct consciousness that we are redeemed out of the place of sin and condemnation, and that we have got a place with God! That is peace ; then we shall have the joy of communion. We are whiter than snow—"accepted in the Beloved." "We shall be like Him." It is *perfect love*. I know that love, though I cannot measure it. I cannot measure eternity, but I am sure I shall never come to the end of it ; yet I know there is eternity : so with God's perfect love. We learn and prove this love in the wilderness, in a way we never can in heaven : our very need brings it out to us. This world is a terrible house to live in, but an excellent school to learn in.—*Bible Treasury*.

## BIBLE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANS.

---

### *What They Were.*

1. YOU hath He quickened who WERE dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. ii. 1).

2. Fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and WERE by nature the children of wrath, even as others (Eph. ii. 3).

3. Ye WERE without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world (Eph. ii. 12).

4. Ye WERE sometime darkness (Eph. v. 8).

5. When we WERE yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. . . . God commended His love toward us, in that while we WERE yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. v. 6-8).

6. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such WERE some of you (1 Cor. vi. 9-11).

7. We ourselves also WERE sometime foolish, disobedient, deceiving, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another (Tit. iii. 3).

### *What Saved Them.*

1. It is the BLOOD that maketh an atonement for the soul (Lev. xvii. 11).

2. This is my BLOOD of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins (Matt. xxvi. 28).

3. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His BLOOD (Rom. iii. 25).

4. In whom we have redemption through His BLOOD, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace (Eph. i. 7).

5. Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious BLOOD of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Pet. i. 18, 19).

6. The BLOOD of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin (1 John i. 7).

7. Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy BLOOD, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation (Rev. v. 9).

### *What They Are.*

1. By grace ARE ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God (Eph. ii. 8).

2. Now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off, ARE made nigh by the blood of Christ (Eph. ii. 13).

3. Ye ARE all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. iii. 26).

4. But ye ARE washed, but ye ARE sanctified, but ye ARE justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God (1 Cor. vi. 11).

5. And ye ARE complete in Him (Col. ii. 10).

6. Beloved, now ARE we the sons of God (1 John iii. 2).

7. 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).

### *What They Have.*

1. He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, HATH everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life (John v. 24).

2. Being justified by faith, we HAVE peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. v. 1).

3. Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye HAVE of God, and ye are not your own (1 Cor. vi. 19).

4. Knowing in yourself that ye HAVE in heaven a better and an enduring substance (Heb. x. 34).

—*Extract.*

## FRAGMENTS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

---

IN the Epistle to the Romans, Christians are looked at as men living and walking on the earth, but possessing the life of Christ and the Holy Spirit, so that they are in Christ. Their sins are forgiven ; they are justified by the work of Christ. Their duty is to present their bodies a living sacrifice—holy, acceptable unto God, as they have been transformed by the renewing of their mind—that they may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

The epistle begins with the responsibility of man, proving all to be guilty on the ground of what they have *done*, and then showing the result of the death of Christ in the forgiveness of sins and the justification of the believer. Afterwards the apostle considers the *condition* in which man is found consequent on Adam's sin, and shows how he is delivered from the power of sin.

As already intimated above, the doctrine of the Epistle to the Romans divides into two parts, the first of which, up to chap. v. 11, treats of *sins*—the putting away of these, and the grace of God therein unfolded.

From thence, up to the end of chapter viii., the second part is taken up, namely, *sin in the flesh*—the condition in which we are found consequent on Adam's sin, as well as our deliverance from the same, and our new condition in Christ.

The first part of chapter 5 (ver. 1-11) summarises all the features of this infinite grace of God. Let us briefly consider the contents of these precious verses. The work is accomplished ; faith knows that God has accepted it, because he has raised up Christ and seated him at His right hand. Nothing remains between the man—born again and sanctified—and God but the value of the work of Christ, and the acceptance of His Person. The blood of Christ is ever before

the eye of God, and He Himself appears in the presence of God for us. This gives us, in the present, the most blessed privileges, as well as the hope of glory for the future which we shall enjoy with Him. We will not, however, go outside our chapter, but confine ourselves to the consideration of the perfection of the grace of God, so wondrously developed in it. We find here what God is for us, whilst our position before Him in Christ is only taken up later on.—*Collected Writings*, vol. 33. J. N. D.

## THE FIRMNESS OF LOVE IN DISCIPLINE

*Numbers xxvii. 12-23.*

THERE is a firmness in real, perfect love which an easy, amiable nature is able neither to appreciate nor exercise. We see it in the Lord Jesus. He maintained His discipline or education of His disciples (of Peter, for instance), and did not relax, as one who sacrificed their *blessing* to *present gratification*. And we see this firmness of love in the Lord towards Moses at the opening of this scene.

The Lord has Moses under discipline, and He will not abate the discipline. Moses had forfeited the land, and the Lord will not let him enter the land. In this He is peremptory. We see it further in Deut. iii. 24-29: "I besought the Lord at that time, saying, O Lord God, Thou hast begun to show Thy servant Thy greatness, and Thy mighty hand: for what God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to Thy works, and according to Thy might? I pray Thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the Lord said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto Me of this matter. Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and north-

## 20 THE FIRMNESS OF LOVE IN DISCIPLINE.

ward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes ; for thou shalt not go over this Jordan." If saints incur chastening, they must go through chastening. Jacob is a wanderer at Bethel, and the Lord does not send him home again, but lets discipline take its course, so that Jacob shall wander still further. It is not the way of divine love, which is perfect love, to slacken the hand in such cases.

The style of the Lord here is peremptory : " And the Lord said unto Moses, Get thee up into this Mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel. And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered. For ye rebelled against My commandment in the desert of Zin, in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify Me at the water before their eyes : that is the water of Meribah in Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin" (ver. 12-14).

Moses then spake, and the excellent character of his words seems to be in this, that in a moment like the present, when he had been humbled and rebuked, and nature might have behaved itself sullenly, or at least been silent and reserved, Moses is all anxiety about the sheep of Israel. For Moses, as I may say, was no hireling, " whose own the sheep are not." He loved them as his own. He had an individual, personal interest in the flock. He loved them and their blessing, and could not bear the thought of their being left in the wilderness without a shepherd. Let another take his office. In meekness he will bear that, and rejoice in it—only let the flock be led and fed. Like himself on an earlier occasion (see chap. xi.), His honour may be put on the seventy, but Moses could say, " Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them." Let him be displaced, so that Israel be fed. " And Moses spake unto the Lord, saying, 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" (ver. 15-17).

This is very lovely workmanship of the Spirit in the servant of the Lord. This earnest care for the people, and this meek forgetfulness of himself, may rebuke our hearts. Moses does not resent the disadvantage into which he was put by the hand of the Lord : he is quiet under that, so that others may be blest. "For we are glad, when we are weak ; and ye are strong," said another like him.

The Lord then replies : "And the Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay thine hand upon him ; and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation ; and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord ; at his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation." And perhaps more excellent than all are these words of the Lord (verses 18-21).

He puts the matter at once into the hand of His servant. He commissions Moses to ordain his own successor, to lay his hand on Joshua. And He will have this done in a way to honour Moses : it shall be before the priest and in the sight of the congregation. And then Moses shall instruct Joshua, give him a charge before the people, and constitute him (though not fully yet in measure) the head of Israel, as he had been, that Israel might be obedient.

This is very blessed. While the Lord, as we said, will not relax the discipline under which Moses had brought himself, or alter the word which had gone out of His lips merely to gratify His servant, yet He

## 22 THE FIRMNESS OF LOVE IN DISCIPLINE.

will let all the people know, and Moses himself know, how He loved His disciplined servant, what a chosen vessel He esteemed him, and what an honoured man He would make him. Moses shall have the honour of ordaining Joshua, of endowing Joshua, of instructing Joshua, and of putting some of his own honour upon Joshua. But still more: He *answers his wishes* to the full, as well as *honours* him. Moses had desired a shepherd for the sheep, one that would lead them out and bring them in; and the Lord now undertakes that Joshua shall be all this and do all this in the presence and in the behalf of Israel.

All this is very lovely in the faithful, unchanging love of God. The Lord would not slacken the hand or the word that was chastening His servant, but His heart is as near His servant as ever, and His purpose both to honour him and to make him happy just as perfect and fresh as ever. It reminds of Jesus and Peter: "I have prayed for thee," says the Lord Jesus to Peter, "that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke xxii.). Was not that putting new honour upon a chastened, humbled Peter? As before, in the time of Matt. xvi., xvii., it was a *rebuked* Peter that was taken up to *the mount of glory*.

What a tale of divine, perfect love all these things tell us! Rebuked Peter is taken up the hill; humbled, chastened Peter is commissioned to strengthen his brethren; Moses, who had lost Canaan, is to ordain, endow, instruct, and dignify his successor; to strengthen—more than strengthen—his brother!

This is the way of perfect, divine love. It is *firm*, but it is *unchanging* in its favour and its objects. A mere easy, amiable nature, again I say, can neither appreciate nor imitate it. Moses does as the Lord commands (ver. 22-23), but that of course. It was his own joy and praise to do so.

This Scripture gives us a beautiful sample of communion between the Lord and one of His servants.—*Girdle of Truth*, 1857.



## WHY REPINE?

---

JESUS, Saviour, Thou art mine,  
 Why, then, should I e'er repine?  
 Rich am I beyond degree—  
 Rich in simply having Thee.

When I came with naught to bring  
 But myself, a sinful thing,  
 Thou didst say, "Look unto Me,  
 I, the Sinless, died for thee."

In Thee now I've sweetest rest,  
 And am from Thy fulness blest ;—  
 Pardoned, clothed, and reconciled,  
 Born of God, and owned His child.

If a child, oh, then an heir—  
 Heir with Thee ! Thy joy to share !—  
 Joy that will for ever last,  
 When all other joy is past.

Blessed, blessed be Thy Name,  
 Thou wilt ever be the same ;  
 Here, and in Thy bright abode,  
 I shall know unchanging good.

Surely Thou should'st have this heart,  
 Come, possess it, ev'ry part ;  
 Thou, with whom none can compare,  
 Reign without a rival there.

Keep, O keep me near Thy side,  
 In Thy love would I abide—  
 I would only live for Thee,  
 Thou in love didst *die* for me !

Happy day when I'm with Thee,  
 And from all that hinders free !  
 I shall praise Thee as I should,  
 And shall love Thee as I would.

*Precious Saviour ! Thou art mine !  
 Why, then, should I e'er repine ?  
 Rich am I beyond degree—  
 Rich in simply having Thee.*

R. H.

*From "Help and Food."*

## CHRIST IN HIS ACCOMPLISHED WORK AS HIGH PRIEST.

---

### AN EXTRACT.

BUT, further, He was anointed alone without sacrifice, as Christ received the Holy Ghost—witness of holiness and Sonship ; but He could not then be priest, nor is Aaron said to be consecrated by this—his hands were not yet filled. The first verse shows that for hallowing them to priesthood the second ram was the ram of consecration (filling the hand) ; the sprinkling of blood hallowed them. Here seen all together (for without the sons He represented there was no need of blood ; but, then, there was no need of priesthood either, that involves others and blood) we must have the sons and, of course, necessarily Aaron with them, or there was nothing. Hence the ram is called the ram of Aaron's consecration (ver. 26). His hands were filled, but in verse 24 his sons, too, with him ; for if Christ goes with Himself as an offered gift, so do we thereupon (v. 24).

What is called consecration is through death, as it is evident Christ's death must come in for His going to offer as priest in the sanctuary, appearing for us ; but it is not the same as the hallowing, which is rather *our idea of consecration*.

It was through death giving them somewhat to offer, as is said in Hebrews, filling their hands. Christ (Aaron) could be anointed on earth and sealed, because He was holy and the Son ; but He could not be a Priest without something to offer, nor, as sin was come in, without blood, and so an offering to carry in.

The anointing alone was the witness of Christ's personal, absolute perfection as a Man. J. N. D.

---

WHEN affliction lieth heavy, sin lieth light. Sanctified afflictions are spiritual promotions.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NUMBERS.

---

*One.*—Unity, Self-sufficiency, Primacy, Origin,—God the Father. (Deut. vi. 4 ; Zech. xiv. 9 ; Is. xli. 4.)

In an evil sense, Independency, Rebellion.

*Two.*—Help, Testimony, Assurance, Salvation,—God the Son. Service, Fellowship, Dependence, Subjection. (Eccl. vi. 9-12 ; John viii. 17.)

In an evil sense, Contradiction, Enmity, Sin, Death.

*Three.*—Manifestation, Fulfilment, Holiness, Resurrection,—God the Holy Spirit. (John ii. 19 ; 1 John v. 8.)

*Four.* — Creation, the Earth, Testing, Weakness, Failure. (Is. xi. 12 ; Mark ii. 3 ; Dan. vii. 2.)

*Five.*—Ability and Responsibility, Recompense, God's Government. (Matt. xiv. 17 ; Matt. xxv. 15 ; 1 Cor. xiv. 9 ; Ex. xxvi. 3.)

*Six.*—Manifestation of Evil (2 x 3), Restraint upon evil, and Victory. (Ex. xx. 9, 11 ; 1 Sam. xvii. 4 ; Dan. iii. 1 ; Matt. xvii. 1 ; Rev. xiii. 18.)

*Seven.*—Completeness, Perfection, Rest. (Gen. ii. 2 ; Ex. xxiii. 11 ; Matt. xviii. 21 ; Rev. v. 1, &c.)

*Eight.*—New Creation. (Gen. xvii. 12 ; Luke ix. 28 ; John xx. 26 ; 1 Pet. iii. 20.)

*Nine.*—Full Display (3 x 3). (Gen. xvii. 1, 24 ; Judges iv. 3.)

*Ten.*—Full Responsibility, Godward and Manward. (Ex. xxvi. 16 ; Deut. x. 4.)

*Twelve.*—Government. (Ex. xxiv. 4 ; Josh. iii. 12 ; Matt. xix. 28.)

*Forty.*—Full Testing under Responsibility. (Gen. vii. 4, 12 ; Ex. xvi. 35 ; Matt. iv. 2.)

F. W. G.

## SHALL WE SAY IN OUR HEARTS, "MY LORD DELAYETH HIS COMING?"

---

"SURELY, I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus," are words which comprise both a promise and a prayer—a glorious statement and a gracious response. They teach us the present attitude of the Lord Jesus and His Bride, the Church. Nearly two thousand years have passed away since those sacred utterances were first recorded, yet the promise abides. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," says the apostle Peter (2 Pet. iii. 8); yet, doubtless, the early Christians looked for an almost immediate fulfilment of the expectation created by the Word. Who shall say that the long centuries, which were appointed to elapse before the Lord's return, were not hidden from them by a tender Providence? In the terrible persecutions which fell to their lot, it was this "blessed hope" (Titus ii. 13) that sustained their hearts. True, there are times when the exercised hearts of God's people grow somewhat weary in their experience of waiting; but they may well remember that what appears to them delay is only due to the blessed fact that the Lord has to gather in the whole body of the redeemed, not being willing that one should perish.—*English Churchman*.

---

THERE are some things we must deny ourselves for others' sakes. Though a man could run his horse full speed without danger to himself, yet he would do very ill to come scouring through a town where children are in the way. Thus some things thou mightest do without sin to thee, if there were no weak Christians in the way to ride over, and so bruise their tender consciences.

IN THE great revival of 1742 in Cambuslang, two young men from Glasgow went to mock. They swore that *they* would not be caught by the spiritual infection, but both got convinced of sin; both sought and found the Lord, confessed Him as their Saviour, and lived to prove their profession genuine. When Gilbert West and Lord Lyttelton agreed to write against Christianity, both read the Bible to be able to disprove its truth, both were brought under conviction, and proved the genuineness of their conversion by writing on the evidences of Christianity, and their books none have been able to answer. When James Kenwick became lost in a labyrinth of doubt, "he was so assaulted with temptations to atheism, that, being in the fields, and looking to the mountains, he said, if these were all devouring furnaces of burning brimstone, he would be content to go through them all, if so be he could be assured there was a God." He was sought and found of the God of His salvation, and at length joyfully accepted martyrdom for the Name of Christ. The late Charles Binns when a young man was an atheist, but honestly desiring to know the truth, he cried, "Lord, if Thou art, reveal Thyself to me." The Lord revealed Himself and His salvation to Charles Binns, and he became a witness-bearer for Him.

LOVE'S sweet work. The aged father of Professor Herkomer lives with him at Bushey. He used in early life to model in clay, and has recently taken to it again. At night he goes early to rest, and when he has retired his talented son takes up his father's feeble attempts and makes them beautiful. On the aged father's coming down in the morning he takes his work in hand and admires it, saying, "Ha! I can do as well as I ever did." May we not believe that our feeble work, if done for God, will be so divinely handled that it will bear the light of day and be perfect for eternity?

COMMUNION.—Do not shrink from the thought of living in full communion with God. Be decided to let Him draw near and put His holy finger on every detail of your daily life, on every detail of your daily work, on every detail of your daily habits, of your conversation, of your reading, of your writing. Very small things can interrupt our communion with the Father and Son. Let us resolve by His grace that our God shall be God during our brief term here. Christ is our life, and if so Christianity is the living exhibition of Christ in our daily walk.

AN OLD MAN, who for years had been seeking after God, was going the round of all the famous shrines and temples, spending money on offerings, &c., and meeting with nothing but disappointment. Often did he pray in vain, and often would he turn upon the idols, who could not answer him, with bitter reproaches: "You old wooden," or "You old mud thing, you are no good; you cannot answer me." One day he got a New Testament, and after reading it a little he saw that there is a *living* God! So excited was he by this discovery that he at once set off and walked 120 *li* (40 English miles) to the nearest mission station, to learn about the wonderful Book and the God it spoke of. His long walk and earnest seeking were not in vain. He is now a bright witness for Christ. Thus God is continually using His own Word to bring men to Himself.—*Mr. Burgess, China Inland Mission.*

BISHOP LATIMER having displeased Henry VIII. by one of his sermons at Court, was ordered to make his recantation the following Sunday. He prefaced his sermon with a kind of dialogue. "Hugh Latimer, dost thou know to whom thou art this day to speak? To the high and mighty monarch, the king's most excellent majesty, that can take away thy life if thou offend; therefore, take heed how thou speakest a word that may displease." But, as if recalling himself, "Hugh, Hugh," said he, "dost know from whence thou comest, upon whose message thou art sent, and who it is that is present with thee and beholdeth all thy ways? Even the great and mighty God, who is able to cast both body and soul into hell for ever; therefore, look about thee, and be sure that thou deliver thy message faithfully." What he delivered the previous Lord's day he confirmed and urged with more vehemency than ever. The Court was full of expectation as to what would be the issue of the matter. After dinner, the king called for Latimer, and asked him how he durst be so bold as to preach after that manner. He answered that duty to God and his prince had enforced him thereunto; and now that he had discharged his conscience in what he had spoken, his life was in his majesty's hands. Upon this the king rose from his seat, and, taking the good man from off his knees, embraced him in his arms, saying he blessed God that he had a man in his kingdom that durst deal so plainly and faithfully with him.

KNOWLEDGE of spiritual things is not spiritual knowledge.

"POWER" (1 Cor. xi. 10).—This word signifies a veil or covering which the apostle ordered to be worn by women who prayed or prophesied before others; 1st, as a sign that she was under the power of her husband; 2nd, in contrast to the idolatrous priestesses who uttered their false oracles with wild looks and dishevelled hair; 3rd, because of the angels, who veil their faces in token of profound humility (Isa. vi. 2). If sinless creatures (angels) thus approach the Deity, with what reverence and godly fear should we appear in His presence.

BRITISH Christians ought to remember that their ancestors were blind idolaters, serving them that are by nature no gods. Dr. Plaifere, in preaching before the University of Cambridge in 1753, stated, "that before the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, no church existed here but the temple of an idol, no priesthood but that of paganism; no God but the sun, moon, or some hideous image. To the cruel rites of the Druidical worship succeeded the abominations of Roman idolatry. In Scotland stood the temple of Mars; in Cornwall the temple of Mercury; in Bangor the temple of Minerva; at Malden the temple of Victoria; in Bath the temple of Apollo; at Leicester the temple of Sanus; at York, where St. Peter's now stands, the temple of Bellona; in London, on the site of St. Paul's, the temple of Diana; and at Westminster, where the Abbey now stands, was the temple of Apollo." Through the mercy of God not only have we now multitudes of gospel preachers, but the land is full of Bibles, and from out of this abundance the benighted nations are being evangelised.

GALEN was converted from atheism by studying the human skeleton, and he remarked that he would give any one a hundred years to find a more commodious situation for any one member of the body.

**THE GRACE OF GOD.**—The Rev. Rowland Hill, being in Scotland, was introduced to an aged Christian somewhat resembling himself in piety and eccentricity, who looked at him very earnestly, and at length said, "Weel, I have been looking for some teem (time) at the leens (lineaments) of your face, and I'm thinking that if the grace of God had na changed your heart, you'd ha' been a most tremendous rogue." Mr. Hill answered, "Well, you have just hit the nail on the head."

**SUBSTITUTION** is the essence of the Gospel. Vicarious sacrifice was an unquestionable truth before the law, and during the law, as it is for ever consecrated in Christ's one offering. The obedience to death of One is that by which alone any can be justified. But where is He said to have obeyed the law for us? where that His life was vicarious? He suffered for us, was made sin, died for us—all most true—His substitution and satisfaction on the cross; which is enfeebled, not strengthened, by the unscriptural addition of His walk on earth, as if this also were substitutional.

"**STEADFAST and unmovable**" (1 Cor. xv. 58).—There is no tautology here. Be steadfast when all goes well, and unmovable when things go ill. That is where many fail; they are steadfast so long as all goes on pleasantly; but when crosses come they go. Yonder oak is steadfast in the summer sunshine and serenity, and it is unmovable in the wintry storm and the howling hurricane! That rock in the sea is steadfast when the ocean around catches the glories of heaven as in a mirror, and it is unmovable when the storm rages around it and seeks to hurl it from its immovable base!

**ANATHEMA MARAN-ATHA** (1 Cor. xvi. 22).—Mr. Flavel, on one occasion when preaching from this Scripture, and about to close his address, said: "How shall I bless this whole assembly, when every person in it who loveth not the Lord Jesus Christ is Anathema Maran-atha, cursed of God with a grievous and bitter curse?" The solemnity of the scene affected the audience, and one gentleman, a person of rank, fell senseless on the floor. In the congregation was a lad of fifteen, Luke Short, who soon after went to America and lived to be one hundred years old, all that time "a sinner," apparently ready to "die accursed." But one day he sat in the field reflecting on his past life. His memory fixed upon Mr. Flavel's address, a good part of which he was able to recall. The blessing of God accompanied his meditation; he felt that he had not loved the Lord Jesus Christ; he feared the dreadful Anathema; conviction was followed by repentance, and at length this hundred year old sinner found peace through the atoning blood of Christ. His life was protracted after this for sixteen years.

**SAINTS** are in Scripture compared to the sun, the stars, light, Mount Zion, Lebanon, treasure, jewels, gold, vessels of gold and silver, stones in a crown, babes, children, obedient children, members of the body, soldiers, runners, wrestlers, good servants, strangers, pilgrims, sheep, lambs, doves, calves of the stalls, lions, eagles, deer, fish, dew, flowers, showers, watered gardens, unfailing springs, vines, pomegranates, figs, willows by watercourses, trees planted by rivers, cedars in Lebanon, palm trees, corn, wheat, salt, bond slaves, free-men, virgins, &c. *So God speaks.*

**FAITH** driven into a corner is sure to find God there.

HOWEVER deep and widespread the evil, faith ever maintains what is due to God; hence we read, "Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever." God's nature and character never change, and His claims are never lowered, whatever the day may be. Faith refuses to go with the stream, however smoothly flowing; but contends for holiness, and that of a collective as well as of an individual character. We are never free to walk with evil—better far to walk alone. The truth of God apart from evil must be maintained at all cost, if we would earn His approval. Separation from evil to the Lord's Name, not continuing in it and groaning over it, is what Scripture requires. This is God's principle. It is a costly one, however, to carry out. God has His 7000; may it be our honour to be numbered amongst them.

WHEN AND WHERE did Christ become a priest? Israel had no official priesthood in Egypt when redemption in figure was accomplished by the blood of the lamb. At Sinai there was no priesthood, yet sacrifices were offered, and Moses sprinkled both the altar and all the people with blood when the first covenant was ratified; and the tabernacle was made before Aaron was clothed and consecrated. God then established priesthood for a people already redeemed and brought to Himself, and standing in an acknowledged relationship to Himself. And when an Israelite offered his sacrifice the priest came in only *after* the sacrifice was offered or killed (Lev. i.). Priesthood begins after the death of the sacrifice. This explains why Christ could not be a priest on earth. "Hebrews" tells us that the sphere of His priesthood is in heaven, not on earth, and the analogy drawn from the nation of Israel shows how it could not have been otherwise, for neither was His offering of Himself in death accomplished when on earth before the cross, nor was redemption by this blood effectuated. But, these accomplished by His death, He passed through the heavens to the tabernacle which God pitched, not man, and appears in the presence of God, with His own blood, as our great high priest. He could not be a priest on earth, for the place was occupied with the God-appointed priesthood of Aaron: "Hebrews" makes this very plain. And we must first be "the house of God" before we can have a great high priest over us, and this we could be only by His offering of Himself once and accomplishing eternal redemption. We have such an high priest—Jesus the Son of God.—*Bible Herald*, 1877.

NO TIME TO DIE.—Mr. D., an extensive manufacturer in the Midland counties, having been called to London on business and engaged to a late hour on Saturday night, remarked, "Well, we cannot settle our accounts to-night, but must do it early in the morning." On the Sunday they were engaged till three o'clock in the afternoon, and at dinner Mr. D. said, "We have been hard at work all morning, *let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.* Not," added he, "that I have any thought of dying for years to come." He arrived home on the Monday night, and next morning, at breakfast with his wife and family, having been told of the death of a gentleman whom he knew, he remarked: "It is very different with me; for my part, I am so engaged in business, that I could not find time to die!" Immediately after so speaking he rose from the table, and while stooping in the act of drawing on his boot, fell on the floor and expired.



## NOTES ON FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

---

TRULY striking and impressive is the way in which, in this chapter, the incarnate One is brought before us by the Spirit of God. "From the beginning" marks His life on earth when it began to be true that His voice could be *heard*; that He could be *seen* by the apostles; could be *contemplated* as John's disciples were led to contemplate Him when the Baptist exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God;" and could be *handled* as, for instance, by the woman who washed His feet with her tears, and by the beloved disciple who wrote these words—the one who leaned on His bosom! How blessedly true that in these real, actual ways the Word of Life, who is the Eternal Life, was manifested to His own. He was presented to their senses as well as revealed to their faith. They knew Him "after the flesh," and in all the veritableness and actuality of it they could give testimony of Him.

Their very eyes and ears, as well as their minds and hearts, had been charged and surcharged with this gracious incarnation. An incalculably blessed fact of immense importance, for without it there had been no manifestation of that Eternal Life which from everlasting had been essentially with the Father, and without it there could have been no surrender of Himself as an offering and sacrifice for our sins—"A body hast Thou prepared Me."

And as one of the most highly favoured ones, one of the apostolic band, John could write: "That which we have seen and heard we report to you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; but our fellowship is indeed with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." How blessedly are the doors here thrown open to faith, and without reservation! All that the apostles had had the privilege of hearing and seeing and contemplating in Him who had, in grace, even made Himself tangible to their touch was not

## 32 NOTES ON THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

intended for their appropriation alone, but much more for their expropriation, that all the many members of the Church of God might thus be brought not only into fellowship with the apostles, but above all, and in an illimitable way, with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. How suitably and how sweetly does the apostle add, "These things write we unto you that your joy may be full."

And we are forcibly reminded of his own word in another place, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we have contemplated His glory, a glory as of an only begotten with a father), full of grace and truth" (John i. 14). Who can possibly recall and devoutly contemplate the moral glory of that incomparable One, and not be struck with the Holy Ghost's testimony, "These things write we unto you that *your joy* may be full," for anything less than that could not be the adequate effect of a believer's contemplating the lovely life and personal beauty and excellency of Him who, even in His humiliation, was the One who had made the world, and was the effulgence of God's glory; never through time or from eternity having ever been less than "The Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen" (Rom. ix. 5).

We have, then, the sublime and oracular declaration as a transmitted message from the Lord, "God is light; and in Him is no darkness at all." It is a new and impressive revelation, the moral issues of which are immediately affirmed. Life not only differs from darkness; it is antagonistic, yea, as much so as good and evil. As everything else in John's writings, the statement here is absolute: "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." And it is Him we know, and with Him we have to do, and in Him we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory! It is that divine and beatific light which gladdens, which cheers, and which elevates, but, above all, which attracts to itself. Not only is there in Him no darkness at all, but by grace we have been so won by, and so assimilated to, the

light that we ask not to have it otherwise, for by that same grace we are able to bask in that unclouded light which is the ineffable nature of God Himself.

Should we profess that we have fellowship with Him, "and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not practice the truth" (verse 6). Here is evil exposed; it is the brand of the unbeliever. He walks in darkness, and only in darkness can he walk. It reveals not so much what he does, or where he is, as it reveals *what* he is. He is of the darkness, and only of the darkness is he. It shows his nature totally antagonistic to the nature of God.

Then we have the other case (verse 7): "But if we walk in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." Happy, blessed contrast! Here is the believer; and here, in a similar way, it is not so much what he does, or where he is, as it is *what* he is. He is not of the night nor of darkness. We are children of the light, and by grace we walk in the light—it is true of our place and our portion. But how much more it is true *of us*, we are made partakers of the divine nature, we are light in the Lord, having by divine grace been assimilated to Him who is light and in Whom there is no darkness at all. Is it asked, Why is the blood then introduced here? I answer, It reminds of the foundation of all blessing, the basis of all our blessedness. It is, I need scarcely say, introduced neither as a remedy nor as a resource. There can be no recurrence to the cross, no fresh application to the blood. It is an abstract statement as to the nature and efficacy of the blood of Christ; true at the cross, it is equally true now, and will equally be true through all eternity. As one might say salt preserves or fire destroys, so it is affirmed of the blood of Christ that its *property*, its *nature* is to cleanse from all sin.

But there have not been wanting those who maintain that verse 7 is designed as a practical exhortation to us to walk in the light, thus making the fellowship

## 34 NOTES ON THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

conditional and the blood our resource. Yet that this cannot be soberly maintained is obvious, for the condition would be (if it be conditional) not simply that we should "walk in the light," but that we should "walk in the light AS *He is in the light*." Surely, be it held that this is practical, it must be admitted that it is utterly and only condemnatory, for who amongst mere men has ever, while here, actually walked in the light AS God is in the light? It is only necessary to point this out in proof that such a contention cannot be accepted, and the alternative solution must be adopted, that our walking in the light tells wholly and solely of the divine grace which, having "made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," has gone the length of declaring that *characteristically* we even now walk in the light as God is in the light. "If we say we have no sin," or, in other words, that the flesh is not in us, "we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." True spiritual discernment would not fail to discover that sin dwelleth in us. He that denies it is self-deceived, and the truth dwelleth not in him.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Nothing could be more practical than verses 8, 9, 10. How blessedly every child of God may have recourse to this 9th verse. By it we are incited to that self-judgment in the case supposed, which goes on to confession and eventuates in a happy sense of forgiveness and restoration produced in our souls on the holy and immutable ground of God's faithfulness and righteousness in view of the work of His Son on our behalf. "If we say we have not sinned we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us." It would be to go in the very teeth of Scripture, for has He not said, "All have sinned"?

How divinely suited is this instruction to meet the varied needs of the saints, affording a divine solution to doubts and difficulties that only too often arise among the beloved of the Lord.

"My little children, these things I write to you in order that ye may not sin; and if any one sin, we have a Patron with the Father, Jesus Christ (the) righteous; and He is the Propitiation for our sins; but not for ours alone, but also for the whole world" (1 John ii. 1, 2). To the believer nothing should be so terrible and intolerable as sin. If we have indeed learnt our place in the light as God is in the light, in whom there is no darkness at all, as the first chapter shows, we shall have His own thoughts of sin, and nothing could possibly be so hateful and so abhorrent to us as that which the Lord Jesus Christ died to put away. The Holy Ghost's inspiration of this word and the Apostle John's ministry of it are that we should "NOT sin." Let the reader, before proceeding further, fully apprehend this gracious, blessed ministry—in order that we should "NOT sin." Let us thoroughly assure ourselves herefrom that there is no necessity that we should sin. I may have sinned to-day and yesterday and the day before, but it would be the greatest of all blunders, and the worst of all conclusions, that I shall be sinning again to-morrow. These things are written with a clearly-stated and definite motive working in the divine mind, viz., that I should "NOT sin." How, then, can I make little or make light of the divine object and effort, and act upon what Satan suggests or upon the misgivings of my own heart. Faith sets to its seal that God is true, and however lamentable may have been my experience since my conversion, I must never for a moment accept the thought that my sinning is in the nature of things inevitable, and is therefore to be looked for.

Were I in the flesh it would be right thus to conclude, but since I am in the Spirit (albeit the flesh is in me), I am bound NOT to SIN, and the mere thought of sinning should be repulsive to my soul. To contemplate sinning is unbelief, yea, it is to affirm, practically, that God's grace is not sufficient for me, that the provisions of His wisdom and love are not

## 36 NOTES ON THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

enough for my preservation. Let us, then, fully and unreservedly acknowledge that there is no necessity whatever for us to sin. Consequently, sinning is back-sliding, and the lost ground has to be recovered by self-judgment and confession, that the soul may be restored to the joy and fellowship which are proper to it.

Not only ought I to refuse the thought that to sin is inevitable—I ought to count continually upon grace being ministered so that I sin not. The Holy Ghost does not appear to regard our sinning as probable even, but He does contemplate the *possibility* of it, and we thankfully recognise that this our extremity has been provided for in the words, “If any one sin, we have a Patron with the Father, Jesus Christ (the) righteous.” It is a provision for an extreme case, but how blessed, how complete is this provision! We have an Advocate with the Father, a divine Paraclete, one who undertakes our cause. He is before God for us, an ever-abiding and ever-prevailing Advocate.

He is our Refuge and our Resource should we have fallen into sin, should we have been betrayed into dishonouring Him who is the Propitiation for our sins, and also for the whole world. Grace has given us the knowledge of Him, to know as also we are known, and as to this a practical test has been given, the keeping His commandments. He that prates about knowing Him, yet keeps not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word (compare Rev. iii. 8), in him verily the love of God is perfected (compare 1 John iv. 12). Thus we *know* that we *know Him*, and moreover *know* that we are *in Him*. It is blessed to know Him, more blessed to be in Him, but it is the superlative thing when keeping His commandments and keeping His word, there is the full intelligence and communion which spring therefrom. We then *know* (quite a characteristic word in the epistle) that we know Him, and moreover *know* that we are in Him. The paragraph

closes with this searching word, "He that says he abides in Him ought, even as He walked, himself also so to walk." No lower standard can the Spirit of God put before us than that of the Lord Himself. We have no loop-hole left to escape from this—I may not, must not sin; I may and I must walk as Christ walked. That I shall ever attain unto this is not the question. No such question is raised. I *ought*—and let us emphasise this which the Spirit of God insists upon—I OUGHT to walk as Christ walked; and if this be my obligation as it is also my privilege, then any and every disparity between my walk and His, humbles me and rebukes me, and brings me in contrition and confession before my Saviour and my Lord.

"Beloved, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment, which ye have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye heard. Again I write a new commandment to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light already shines." John *writes* about the old commandment, which is the word, and we learn that it is not displaced or superseded, but there is a new commandment about which he also *writes*. It was *given* by the Lord (John xiii. 34): "A new commandment I give to you, that ye love one another; as I loved you, that ye also love another." He who gave this word, and who is "the true light," already shone. He gave it as a commandment, a new commandment, true in Him and exemplified in Him, but then to be true in them and now to be true in us. "By this shall all know that ye are disciples of Mine, if ye have love amongst yourselves" (John xiii. 35). Thus He constitutes it the hall-mark of being His disciples. Beloved, have we this brand of discipleship to Him, our ever-loving and self-sacrificing Lord and Saviour, fulfilling that word, "Which thing is true in Him and in you"? How patent, how practical is the instruction here. If I hate my brother, say what I will, I am in darkness and

## HYMN TO THE FATHER.

walk in darkness—a darkness so profound that I know not where I go, for my eyes are blinded. But if I love my brother I abide in the light, and I walk with serenity and security—"there is no occasion of stumbling in him." The Lord grant that the fruit of the Spirit may be seen in us in true discipleship, to the praise of the glory of Him whom we love to serve and follow.

---

## HYMN TO THE FATHER.

God and Father, by Thine option  
 Sons we are, in Christ on high ;  
 By the Spirit of adoption,  
 Abba, Father, now we cry.  
 Wondrous blessing ! Thou didst choose us  
 In Him, ere the world began ;  
 Rich in mercy, Thou hast made us  
 One with Him, th' ascended Man.

Abba Father, Name of blessing,  
 Sweetest Name of grace and love !  
 Blest our portion, this possessing,  
 Jesus brought it from above ;  
 In whom, too, we have redemption  
 Thro' His blood, from guilt are free ;  
 From sin's doom complete exemption,  
 Everlasting praise to Thee !

Abba Father, we confess Thee,  
 Hallowed be Thy gracious Name ;  
 We, Thy children, praise and bless Thee,  
 All Thy praise we would proclaim ;  
 And when home we have been taken,  
 Holy, blameless, then, in love ;  
 Rapturous joy and praise shall waken,  
 " Abba," in Thine house above !

J. S.  
 L.



“THEIR ANGELS.”—*Matt.* xviii. 10.

---

THE first 14 verses of this chapter are devoted to shewing wherein true greatness consists. Again and again did the spirit of emulation show itself among the disciples, and notably so in connection with the prophecy of our Lord's sufferings, as in the passage before us taken in connection with Mark ix. 30-37. More painful yet, this was manifested at the last Supper, when, we should think, all selfish ambition would be checked by the sorrow pressing upon them; but such are our hearts.

In answer to their inquiry, who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, our Lord placed a little child in their midst, and said that only those with the childlike, humble spirit could have any place in the kingdom. Such little ones were not to be offended—better far to be drowned, to lose an eye, a foot, or a hand, than to be an occasion of stumbling. Nor were these little ones, insignificant as they might be in men's eyes, to be despised. On earth they were thrust aside, forbidden to approach the Lord; but how different in heaven! There they had the place of closest access into the immediate presence of God. This brings us to the expression “their angels.” The meaning of the whole passage being clear, we have only to ask what construction of the words in question is most scriptural.

Does “their angels” mean guardian angels—those who are appointed to care for the little ones? In support of this view, Dan x. 13, 20, 21 is cited, to show that there were special angelic princes over nations, as Grecia, Persia, and Israel. Hebrews i. 14, it is claimed, would show the same guardianship in the case of individuals. Of course, it is perfectly clear that angels do minister to the people of God, more especially in the preceding dispensation, as now we have the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

But is the thought of individual guardianship a scriptural one? Does it not rather savour of Rome? National oversight is something different, and hinted at in the mention of "principalities and powers;" but, then, do individuals have evil guardians as well as holy? No other Scripture has a hint of such a thing.

Nor is such a thought suggested in the passage we are considering; indeed, it would do violence to the context. On earth little ones may be despised; in heaven their angels behold the face of God. "Their angels," then, simply means the little ones themselves, but in spirit, not in body. We have this use of the word angel for the disembodied spirit in Acts xii. 15. Peter had been shut up in prison under threat of death. The saints had come together to pray for his deliverance; and, while so engaged, Peter, set free by the angel of the Lord, came and knocked at the gate where the saints were. On being assured that it was Peter himself, they said, "It is his angel;" that is, he has been slain, and this is his spirit.

A similar, though symbolic, use we have of the word angel in the epistles to the seven churches (Rev. i.-iii.). Here the angel is the star or light of the Church, the spiritual part, we might say, represented at the close of each epistle by the words, "he that hath an ear."

We would say, then, that Scripture does not warrant the thought of special guardian angels. They are *all* ministering spirits, engaged, unseen by human eye, in errands of providential care and mercy for the heirs of salvation. They are not prominently brought forward in the New Testament, doubtless for the simple reason that Scripture, foreseeing the misuse by men of this ministry, putting it in the place of Christ and the Holy Ghost, has kept them in the background. Christ, the Sun, has eclipsed the other lights which in darker days might come more prominently into view.—*Extract.*

## THE PASSOVER.

---

THE passover was the first of Israel's great feasts, and was held on the fourteenth day of the first month of their year (Exod. xii. 6). There are seven instances recorded in Scripture of its having been kept; but it may be fairly inferred, I judge, from Amos v. 25-26, quoted by Stephen in Acts vii. 42-43, that in common with the other sacrifices it was not kept as a regular yearly feast. Even in the wilderness they turned to idolatry, and God had to say by the prophet, "Did ye bring unto Me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves" (Amos v. 25, 26—New Translation). The recorded instances of its being kept are—

- (1.) In Egypt, when it was instituted (Exod. xii.)
- (2.) In the wilderness of Sinai (Numbers ix.)
- (3.) In the plains of Jericho (Joshua v. 10).
- (4.) In Jerusalem, in Hezekiah's day (2 Chr. xxx.)
- (5.) In Jerusalem, in the revival in Josiah's reign (2 Chron. xxxv.)
- (6.) In Jerusalem, after the return from Babylon (Ezra vi. 19, 20).
- (7.) In Jerusalem, by the Lord and His disciples (Matt. xxvi. 17, 30).

In the last four instances, you will observe, it was kept in Jerusalem; and inasmuch as they were across the Jordan and in the land, though they had not yet taken possession of any of the cities, when they partook of it in Joshua's day, we are narrowed down to three places where it was kept. Of course, the circumstances in each of those five cases differ, and have their own particular teaching, but they all had one feature in common, viz., it was kept *in the land*. We have, then, the three places where they kept it—in Egypt, in the wilderness, in the land.

- (1.) In Egypt. There God was passing through as

a destroyer, to smite all the firstborn and execute judgment against all their gods (Exod. xii. 12); hence the prominent thought is the *blood*, and the dealing with *it* on that memorable night. The Israelites were equally guilty with the Egyptians (see Ezek. xx. 6-10), but they were to learn "how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel" (Exod. xi. 7). Not that they differed—but, how *the Lord doth put a difference* between them. It was *His* doing, His own devising, and was made by the blood of the lamb. It was not the feeding on the lamb inside the house which made the difference. They might have done that and shared the same judgment as the others, and had to mourn the death of their firstborn. It was the *sprinkled blood* which made it: "When I see *the blood*, I will pass over you" (verses 7, 13-22). The blood on the doorposts and lintel was God's *pass over*; no blood on them was God's *pass in* to destroy. The blood, then, and sprinkled according to God's instructions by Moses, was the prominent thought connected with the passover, as instituted in Egypt and made to be *anticipative* and *preventive*. And this is important. It was not national redemption. *That* was at the Red Sea, and was by *power* (Exod. xv. 1-19). It was *shelter by blood*, and in Egypt. It was just what it says, a *pass over*; and certainly redemption, the bringing a people *out*, cannot possibly be the same as sheltering a people from judgment while they are still *in*, though these two distinct things have been confounded by many.

There were, however, other thoughts connected with it as well, which must not be overlooked nor underestimated. Directions were given as to the dealing with the carcase of the lamb, whose blood had thus sheltered them and made it God's passover. It had to be eaten, but "not raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire," &c. (ver. 9), typical of having borne divine judgment. Then they were to eat it with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, their

staff in their hand, and eat it in haste (ver. 11). All this was characteristic. It was a people in the place of judgment, but who had been taught to anticipate and prevent it, and who were now standing ready to go.

Then they had to eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs (ver. 8). There had to be the complete absence of all leaven, not only in the passover feast, but for the whole of the seven days while they kept the feast of unleavened bread which followed on the passover: the latter, as it were, forming the basis of the former. "And with bitter herbs shall ye eat it"—expressive of the feelings which should fill their hearts at being in such a condition as to call for all this dealing by Jehovah on their behalf. It was a very solemn night, and their hearts must have felt it.

It spoke of sin, of judgment, of grace, and of shelter; but nowhere in it do we find any trace of, or anything to indicate, *joy*. There might be, and no doubt would be, confidence that God would be true to His word, but there could not be joy in such a connection. It was a scene of judgment, and they were in it, and well deserved it; but God made the difference, and they were eating the lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs ready to leave the place. It must, therefore, have been to them a service solemn, silent, and significant; and, may we not add, it may well be to us really solemn, searching, and significant when we remember that "Christ our passover has been sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. v. 7). Therefore let us "keep the feast," *i.e.*, the feast of unleavened bread—intense separation from evil of every kind, outward and inward, and for the term of our natural life—the seven days in type.

(2.) In the wilderness. Here we must observe, not only is there a difference as to the place where it was kept, but there is a difference also as to the way or manner in which it was kept. I have pointed out that in Egypt the great thought was the blood, and that it was sprinkled in anticipation of God's passing

through as judge, and to prevent His entrance into their houses as a destroyer. It was, therefore, anticipative and preventive. But after that, when God had passed over them, and then delivered them from Egypt and "brought them unto Himself" (Exod. xix. 4), there was no further need of thus dealing with the blood,—hence the absence of any mention afterward of sprinkling it to shut God out as was done in Egypt. The service then became wholly *commemorative*.

In Deut. xvi. this question of the blood is made more plain still to us, for we there learn, "Thou shalt not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates, . . . but at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place His Name in . . . thou shalt turn in the morning and go unto thy tents" (ver. 5-7). Whether therefore it were in the wilderness or in the land, and connected either with the tabernacle in the former or the temple in the latter, we see at once there could be no repetition of that particular dealing with the blood which demanded its being sprinkled on the two side posts and upper door post of the houses where they eat the passover (Exod. xii. 7), for they killed it at the place where the Lord had set His Name.

Objection might be made to this from the expression used in Numbers ix. 3, "According to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies of it." But I think, on consideration, it will be allowed that that part of it—the sprinkling of the blood—could not be and never was repeated, though doubtless every other rite and ceremony in connection with it was carried out whenever it was kept.

It became a *commemorative* service, and they looked back to what and where they had been, and the way God had taken to put a difference between them and their oppressors, but the unleavened bread and bitter herbs were never to be wanting in the feast. That which would speak in type of repentance and holiness of life was never to be lacking, nor yet that which spoke of the judgment of God borne by the lamb—

“roast with fire.” The character of the sacrifice, with all its corresponding thoughts and feelings on the part of those who partook of it, was ever to be there, though in the wilderness they would remember it with grateful hearts as a delivered people, and as a thing of the past.

There is a gracious provision made by God in Numbers ix. for those who were not fit to partake of it at the appointed time. He would allow them to keep it in the *second* month if they were not fit to do it on the first, but unsparing judgment was to be meted out to any who would fail, or dare to keep it other than according to God's instructions (ver. 13).

(3.) In the land. Under the leadership of Joshua, the people had completed their wilderness journey, and had crossed the Jordan and entered the land of promise. At Gilgal, their first camping place, they were circumcised, as it had not been done by the way (Joshua v. 7). The reproach of Egypt being thus rolled away, we read, “The children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.”

Here again, as in the wilderness, the feast was *commemorative*. Its character had not altered, but the place of those who kept it had altered. They were no longer on the march through the wilderness to the land which had been promised to them, but they were now in it. God had proved Himself to be “the faithful God” (Deut. vii. 9), and they would not only be able to look back to the moment when they were sheltered in Egypt, and then redeemed out of it; but they would be able to look back and “remember all the way the Lord their God led them in the wilderness for forty years” (Deut. viii.), though the passover only connected itself with that memorable night of judgment in Egypt.

This is made plain in Deut. xvi. 3: “That thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life.” Then they were to eat “unleavened bread, even the bread of

affliction," and not forget that they "came forth in haste." Whether, therefore, it was kept in the wilderness or the land, it was a commemorative service, and their minds turned back to the place of their bondage, to the reason for the service, and the grace that instituted it (Exod. xii. 27). The unleavened bread was to them "bread of affliction," for while it spoke of holiness and separateness from evil, it surely reminded them of the state of evil in which God found them, and from which He had to deliver them after He had passed over them and judged their oppressors.

Thus then we learn that the passover, in the first place, was anticipative and preventive. In the second and third place, it was wholly commemorative. The character of the feast never changed, nor did the place where they kept it in any way alter it. Doubtless there would be, both in the wilderness and in the land, as in the subsequent occasions on which it was kept by Ezra, Hezekiah, Josiah, and the disciples, many and varied thoughts and feelings *connected* with it; but the feast itself spoke only of shelter from judgment by the blood of the lamb (the provision of a gracious God for a graceless and guilty people), with all its solemn surroundings; and deeply solemn they must have been. Night—judgment abroad in the land, and stalking into the houses,—while they themselves were *standing*, equipped, eating in haste, ready to leave that awful scene. May God impress our hearts more and more with the deep solemnity of what is really wrapped up in that passover feast, which sets forth the blood-shedding of His own beloved Son to save us from His awful and righteous judgment which we so justly merited.

It is interesting to note in Deut. xvi. how the feast of unleavened bread is closely linked up with the passover (ver. 3): "Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the Lord thy God of the flock and of the *herd*." Now we know the passover victim was confined to a *lamb* or *kid of the goats* (Exod. xii. 5).



But when we turn to Numbers xxviii., we there learn what sacrifices were to be offered at the feast of unleavened bread, which followed the passover on the next day, and it is evidently to those that the word "herd" applies, and not to the passover itself. This is made plainer still in verse 3 of Deut. xvi. : "Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with *it*; seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread," &c. Indeed, the whole section, verse 1 to verse 8, makes this clear.

There is no more passover feast kept which God can acknowledge while Israel is cast off and cast out of their land (Hos. iii. 4); but by and by they will be restored again, and the passover feast will once more be kept and closely connected with the feast of unleavened bread, but wholly as a commemorative feast (see Ezek. xlv. 21-24).

*New Zealand.*

W. EASTON.

---

## LEVITICUS XIV. 33-57.

---

WE come now to a third revelation, given, as the first was, to both Moses and Aaron, and which treats of leprosy in a house in the land. Leprosy in a man, or in a garment, could be known in the wilderness; that in the house could only be experienced in the land, and it was a direct infliction by the hand of God. "And I put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession." The priest made acquainted with the occupants' suspicion about the house—for it was the duty of one in it to acquaint him with his fears respecting it—he was to order them to empty it, ere he entered therein, that all in the house should not be made unclean. Examining the walls, he judged if the marks were in sight lower than the wall, *i.e.*, not mere superficial marks. If they were, he shut up the house for seven days, for it was the plague which had attacked it. Examining it again at the expiration of that time, if the marks had spread, the plague-stricken

stones were to be taken out, the whole house scraped, new stones put in the place of the diseased ones, and the whole re-plastered, whilst the stones removed and the scraping of the walls were all to be cast into an unclean place without the city. If the plague re-appeared after that, there was nothing for it but the demolition of the whole building, and its stones, timber, and mortar to be carried forth to an unclean place outside the city. Such a house was not to be suffered to remain in the land. What care was to be exercised, and what patience! The plague really there, as evidenced on the first inspection, the priest waited to see whether or not it would spread. If it did, he tried to save the house by the removal of the diseased stones. If, however, the leprosy still worked, unsparing was the treatment to be pursued. But, should the removal of some stones be sufficient to eradicate the plague, the priest offered for the cleansing of the house the same offerings as were enjoined for the leper on the first day of his cleansing. Atonement thus made for it, the house was clean, because the plague was healed. These offerings, however, were to be offered only in the case of the plague having ceased to spread, after the stones had been taken out (xiv. 48) and the house re-plastered. So it would appear that when the second examination of the house (*i.e.*, on the seventh day) showed that the plague had not spread since the priest had first seen it, no sacrifices were required.

The house then was in a condition analogous to that of the man in whom the leprosy had all turned white (xiii. 11). It was clean. Such was the law.

To us, this affords instruction in type about an assembly in which evil has got a footing that requires to be dealt with. For the whole subject of leprosy in these two chapters provides us with principles applicable to the circumstances in which a Christian can be found. Is he himself leprous, the disease still at work in him? Then putting away from the fellowship of the saints is the proper Scriptural way of

dealing with him, and the assembly, certified of his state, is responsible to act as the word directs. Are his surroundings such as God's word forbids? He must get out of them at all cost to himself.

Is any local assembly known to harbour evil, and which ought to be put out? The state of that assembly should be the common concern of all saints. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (1 Cor. v. 6). If it purge itself, so that the evil ceases to work, well and good; but should the disease still work, the authors of it, and those infected by it, must be put away. If that does not succeed the assembly must be broken up, *i.e.*, disowned as an assembly of God.

Do any ask for an example in Scripture of the assembly in general disowning any local assembly? We must answer at once that there is none, though we can point to Corinth as affording instruction about the whole case. Evil, leaven was among them. The apostle wrote to them about it. They dealt with it, and thus got clear of it (2 Cor. vii. 11). The visit of Titus, and his report about them, evidenced that to the apostle. So he proceeded no further. But was Paul unconcerned about it? No. Did he take the ground, that none could urge a local assembly to act? No. And we may be quite sure that the one who could write as he did in 1 Cor. v. 2, 7, 13 would not have tolerated the retention among them of the evil about which he wrote. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," he writes, a very plain intimation of the character they would have borne if the evil had not been purged out; and if he insisted on their dealing with the offender, would he, could he, have held intercourse with them as an assembly of God, supposing they had refused to act? His language forbids it.

The Corinthians dealt with the offender as the priest did with the leper. But they did not do it till Paul, who was not locally connected with them—his language proves that (1 Cor. v. 7, 13)—pressed on them the need of action, and pointed out what should be done; and

waited—and how anxiously!—to learn what they would do. In this he acted somewhat like the priest, who inspected the house, and then waited a week to see if the disease was still working. As an apostle, he personally could do all this, and take such ground with them about the evil in question, for he was an apostle of Christ, and apostolic power was no light thing (2 Cor. x. 1-11 ; xiii. 2-10 ; 1 Cor. iv. 21 ; 1 Tim. i. 20 ; John iii. 10).

But what, some may ask, is to be done now, seeing there are no apostles? John xx. 21-23 supplies us with the answer. The disciples, breathed on by the Lord Jesus, receiving from Him the Holy Ghost, were thereby authorised to act on earth for Him. That authority remains, and that is enough. The assembly, viewed in its general character, has power to act for Christ, to care for His glory as much as the assembly, viewed in its local character. In both aspects it is the body of Christ (Eph. iv. ; 1 Cor. xii.), and in both it is regarded as having all its members, and therefore it is competent to act. God's word gives no sanction to the thought that whilst the local assembly must keep itself clear, the assembly in its general character has no power to deal with evil. It is surely responsible to cleanse itself as the house of God, and has authority to act.

We should also bear in mind the revelation of Levit. xiv. 46, 47, which tells us in what light those were regarded who went into a house after it had been shut up by the priest. They were by entrance into it made unclean, and had to wash their clothes in order to be cleansed. Would it, then, be fitting for any one not locally connected with it to have personal fellowship with an assembly in a state analogous to that of the house? We can all answer such a question. But we must remember that, till the priest examined the house and found it unclean, it was not shut up. So, surely, there should be an investigation into an assembly's condition corresponding to that of the examination by the priest, ere so serious a charge as leprosy within it could be held to be proved.

*Bible Herald*, 1880.

C. E. S.

## LETTERS OF INTEREST ON "RAVENISM."

---

ADDINGTON HOUSE,

READING, DEC. 31ST, 1897.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—

The letter you sent me, with our brother's leave, gives, I suppose, some idea of what is put about as to teaching from my pen by one who is regarded as the chief leader of the so-called Raven party.

First as to propitiation. I quote the different statements in it to make my meaning plain. "The generalizing of 'a standing before the throne,' based on what took place on the day of atonement, served only to destroy the distinctiveness of Christianity, and the special intent and bearing of the death of Christ in relation to the Church." Does this correctly represent what I did write? On page 7 of *Christian Standing and Condition*, to which of course he refers, it was said: "Our standing before God's throne rests solely on that which the Lord has endured for us; and its abiding efficacy is assured to us, if we believe on Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 24, 25). Within the first seven pages of that pamphlet there is found a *complete* refutation of his statement. Now, has he read the pamphlet? If so, could he have written what he did? If he had not, it was bold indeed to attempt to fix on the author what he did not write. Whichever way it was, the attempt in such a way to condemn another is certainly indefensible. In *Propitiation by Blood*, pages 12 and 13, what is set forth convicts the writer of that letter of stating what is not consistent with fact.

But little wonder is it if human writers are thus

## 52     LETTERS OF INTEREST ON "RAVENISM."

treated, considering the treatment meted out to the teaching of the word of God. Verily the inspired writers should have sat at the feet of some in this day, to learn how to set forth divine teaching. What I wrote on propitiation "served only to destroy the distinctiveness of Christianity, and the special intent and bearing of the death of Christ in relation to the Church." What of the distinctiveness of Christianity was destroyed is wisely, surely, left unnoted. But it is singular, if the charge is true that there was destroyed the special intent and bearing of the death of Christ in relation to the Church, that the sacred writers when treating of propitiation do *not* treat of the Church (read Romans iii.-v., Hebrews, and 1 John). The Church is only just hinted at in Rom. xii. 5, xvi. 25, and just mentioned in Heb. xii. 23. It never is introduced where propitiation is treated of. What ignorant people, then, Paul and John must have been! What light would they have got if they had heard certain teachers of the nineteenth century! But looking a little closer into the matter, we can justify their way of treating that important subject of propitiation, since the Lord was High Priest to make propitiation for the sins of the *people* (Heb. ii. 17); the people here including saints in Israel as well as Christians. I presume the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews knew something about the divine teaching on propitiation. If he did, and wrote as he did, what shall we say of the one who in this century finds fault for not introducing teaching about the Church where propitiation is the subject in hand?

Next comes a very startling statement, declaring that the view I had ventured to express regarding new creation "destroyed all real idea of new creation. It was old things had become new"—a startling statement for a professed teacher of Christianity to make, seeing that the thought objected to is just that propounded by the apostle, if we follow the best authorities. "The old things are passed away; behold, they have

become new ;" and the illustration given of the Lord Jesus Christ confirms this as the meaning of the apostle. The Christ who had been on earth on this side of death, after the flesh, Paul knew in that condition no longer. Had Paul found a new Christ? No ; but Christ he now knew as risen, the same Christ, but now in resurrection. Of course, any one may reject, if he pleases, the best attested reading of 2 Cor. v. 17 ; but such an one has no manner of right to condemn another who accepts it, as if he destroyed all real idea of new creation. Nor with the illustration of v. 16 before us, can any one condemn the translation of the Revised Version and others. Least of all is the objector justified in expressing himself, as if that better reading had no existence, or no good authority. His quarrel is with the apostle, and not with me.

Another statement in that letter rests on no better foundation than what has been dealt with. "Many other points came up (as the heavenly in 1 Cor. xv.), and shewed that the effect of his teaching was to cut away the present distinctive place of the Church." Very strange ! But 1 Cor. xv. 48 treats not of the *Church*, but of the *bodies* of the saints. The chapter is about the resurrection, and about our *bodies*. Let the reader keep that in mind, and all is plain. There are two heads of races (47), and the race will be characterised by that which is true of each head (48). But when will all that come about ? At present we bear the image of the earthy man ; we shall also bear that of the heavenly Man (49). Paul wrote of the bodies of *all* saints, not here of the Church. The Church had no existence till after the Lord had died. Who, understanding that, would bring it in in such a connection ?

One more proof of my unsoundness in the faith. "I remember well, at Quemerford, his speaking at length to prove that the redemption of Israel was by power, and of Christians by blood." Well, what says the Lord in Exod. vi. 6, "I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgments." Some-

## 54 LETTERS OF INTEREST ON "RAVENISM."

thing like redemption by power this certainly is. Was God mistaken as to that? Was it reserved for one in the nineteenth century to correct the divine statement in Exodus? The Spirit of God, too, inspired saints centuries after to teach the same (Ps. lxxvii. 15 ; Nehemiah i. 10). Dispensational teaching might keep any one right as to this. Redemption by blood involves full forgiveness of sins and justification (Ephes. i. 7 ; Rom. iii. 24). When Israel will come to know the forgiveness of all their sins, then they will rejoice in the blessing of redemption by blood. With us the order is reversed. We know of redemption by blood, whilst awaiting redemption by power (Rom. viii. 23). Let me repeat, the *national* redemption of Israel in the past was by power (Deut. vii. 8 ; ix. 26 ; xiii. 5 ; xv. 15 ; xxiv. 18). At least, Moses thought that, and taught that ; for the redemption of which he spoke was that from under the Egyptians. Was he, then, all wrong about it? He must have been if redemption by blood—not by power—was true of them then, as it is now of us.

I have gone over the four heads of indictment said to witness the destruction of the distinctiveness of Christianity. On which side is the Word of God in this matter I have endeavoured to point out, and would there leave it, believing that the simplest mind will have no difficulty in determining.

I would just add that in the teaching of this school the authority of Scripture is set aside really : hence the gravest errors have come out affecting the person of Christ, but not resting there. Into these I do not now enter.—Believe me, yours in Christ,

C. E. STUART.

---

At the beginning of the present century, grace wrought still further, and the clear, scriptural use of Matt. xviii. 20 was better apprehended. A clear



gospel was preached, by which thousands of souls were brought from darkness to light—from bondage to liberty. Great numbers got to see from Scripture *they had* everlasting life, and were eternally saved; yea, that Christ at God's right hand in glory *was their life*, and they were members of the One Body; in a word, every one born of God, and sealed with the Holy Spirit, was united to Him, the Head, in heaven. Out of this arose precious gatherings of saints, coming together simply as fellow-members and members of Christ's body. Then Matt. xviii. 20 took a fuller form in faith and practice; the Lord Jesus, manifesting Himself in their midst, filling their souls with joy and gladness.

I may say the presence of the Lord by the Holy Ghost is simply, clearly taught in John xiv., and illustrated in chapter xx.

*Now* it is openly taught, in some assemblies professing to be gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and loudly claiming orthodoxy, to the disowning of very many equally precious saints, that this has been a mistake—the ignorance of early days and infantine condition.

"The Lord does not come into our midst," say these teachers, but "we go into the holiest to Him," giving the name of a well-known teacher—who departed 1897—as having given up the earlier teaching, and having adopted the new and supposed to be *advanced* truth.

Now, I am bold to say that in the epistle of Hebrews we are exhorted to go in *to God*; and the Lord Jesus, in His great grace, largely, yea constantly, takes the intermediate place.

Thus the saints approach God through the priest, *by Him* offer praise, &c. So we, therefore, demur to the saying that we go to Christ in the holiest. Much less can we accept it as "advanced truth." That saints are by grace perfect worshippers, with full title to enter the holiest, has by grace been for years the joy of

## 56    LETTERS OF INTEREST ON "RAVENISM."

many. These spiritual evolutionists rejoice in having advanced beyond their fathers, who were well enough in their day! Brethren, men of God, raised up and qualified for the work, opened up many old wells which the Philistines had filled up; some are gone away, leaving their work behind them, which commends itself to the simple; others still remain, though, alas! as in the world, so in the Church, the children are wiser than their fathers! The great board schools have filled the world with a generation wiser in its own eyes than their parents were, though education rightly used should be a blessing. The same is the attitude of some new prophets to-day in things divine. Has not the *whole scope* of divine truth been wonderfully unfolded years ago? Take, as an example, the "Introduction to the Bible," prefixed to Mr. J. N. D.'s translation of the Old Testament. That a complete synopsis possessed the writer's soul is self-evident to one and all willing to receive it. And there are still living some who contributed mightily to that which is an *already* completed thing, though much detail remains to be learned by us. Beloved saints, it will be found on enquiry that we have not learnt what has already, in the mercy of God, been received for us; and to attempt to open up new wells of our own digging—fountains without water—is the greatest folly we can be guilty of, and must end in pride and exposure of our ignorance.

Such vanity the Lord will surely blow upon. There is far greater ignorance of what has been brought out for us than is believed by us. Being wise in our own eyes hinders spiritual advancement.

Beloved, let us seek to be simple and unpretending, taking the place of knowing nothing as we ought to know. Otherwise, we prove ourselves to be Corinthian rather than Ephesian (1 Cor. viii. 1, 2).

He that hath *ears* to *hear*, let him hear.

\* \* \*

PSALM CXXXIII.—The Psalmist first gives us a symbol inside the house and then one outside. Like the precious ointment upon the head of Aaron. The high priest was anointed inside the tabernacle; only Israel could know about it. We are as truly one body as Aaron's body was one when he was anointed. The precious ointment was specially compounded as prescribed by God, reserved for His exclusive service. The unity is not what we can make; though, alas! it is something that we often mar. The high priest had the names of six tribes on one shoulder and the names of six tribes on the other, with the breastplate on his breast, where also were the twelve names. The sacred oil was poured upon his head and flowed over his shoulders, covering the names of the tribes in the place of strength, and upon the breast and over the breastplate, so that once more the names of the twelve tribes were overflowed with the anointing oil as they rested on the heart of the high priest in the place of love. Thus the Holy Ghost binds the saints together in the strength and love of the high priest before God. Nor does it stop there. The holy oil flows down even to the skirts of his garments, for not even the lowest or remotest members of Christ are beneath or beyond the action of the Holy Ghost. But we have also an outside figure. "As the dew of Hermon and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore" (ver. 3). Mount Hermon was right away at the extreme north of the land. It was the source of the Jordan, the river of blessing. The clouds gathered on Hermon, and then broke away in gentle dews and flowed down throughout the land of Palestine till they came to the south, to Zion, which means arid, or barren. What a course this cloud-mist had to take! It would first pass over Dan, the judging tribe. There must be a meaning in this. We are so ready to judge, and if too ready the blessing is arrested and does not get past the tribe of Dan. Then it comes to Naphtali, which means wrestling, or contention, and that is worse still. Contention for the truth, perhaps, but without love. Next Zebulun, the busy tribe, reaching out to the seashore to do its business. Let us take heed we are not so occupied with business as to neglect dwelling together in unity. Then the dew flows to Issachar, who had understanding of the times. How often Christians who think they know better than others do not show better at all! Like the Corinthians, who "came behind in no gift," but who gave way to contention and strife. Then came Ephraim, the ruling tribe. Let us take care that we do not rule for ourselves instead of for God. On passing Ephraim the blessing flowed to Benjamin, and I do not think it was hindered there, but passed on to Judah, and there rested on Zion, which means arid, or barren, and which thus becomes a fruitful stream for all lands. What a wonderful picture of God's people dwelling together in unity! There the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore. Compare Lev. xxv. 21.—*Rev. H. Brooke.*

SUBSTITUTION.—When it comes to the question of what Christ suffered as my Substitute, I must leave it to God. Never could I, in the measure of my little mind, conceive in the smallest degree what He suffered when that cry broke from Him, "My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?" No; *there* I must bow my head and adore.

SOME years ago, a peer of England who had a chateau and estate in France conceived the idea that, as he lived so much in that country, he would become a citizen of it ; but, when he found that he could not do so without ceasing to be a citizen of England, he abandoned the thought, and contented himself with being a *citizen* of England and a *subject* of France. This illustration vividly shows how believers stand with regard to heaven and earth ; we are *citizens* of heaven, and only *subjects* in this place of our strangership and pilgrimship. By faith in Christ, we have ceased to have *citizenship* in any country under heaven. Wherefore, the believer who mixes himself up with the politics of the day belies his heavenly calling, and practically denies his living association with Christ in glory.

THE FAITH of Dr. Watts in the promises of God was lively and unshaken. "I believe them enough," said he, "to venture an eternity on them." And an aged believer used to say, "It is the plain promises of God are my support ; and I bless God they *are* plain promises, which do not require much labour and pains to understand them."

A SERVANT of the Lord, once preaching on Noah and the flood, gave a most animated description of the day of the Lord, and then 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 ! It often cuts me to the soul, as it does 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 those who reject the gospel, only tying mill-stones round your necks to sink you deeper into perdition !" His hearers were electrified, and it was some time before he could resume his discourse.

ANOTHER servant of God on one occasion found a great concourse of people assembled to hear him ; but when he stood up to preach, his memory so entirely failed him that he had to request them to sing a hymn while he retired. On his return, he preached with much power and blessing. Being spoken to afterwards on the subject, he meekly replied : "We daily confess that we have nothing and can do nothing apart from Christ ; can we then be surprised if He should once and again make this manifest before our hearers ?"

STILL ANOTHER of God's servants, after preaching on the atonement, was addressed thus : "Sir, this preaching won't do for us. It will only suit a congregation of old women." "Do you mean my sermon, sir, or the doctrine?" "Your doctrine." "Why is it that the doctrine is fit only for old women?" "Because it may suit the musings of people tottering upon the brink of the grave, and who are eagerly seeking comfort, but no other." "Thank you, sir, for your concession. The doctrine will not suit people of any age unless it be true ; and if it be true, it is not fitted for old women alone, but is equally important at every age."

DR. LIVINGSTONE, in writing of dangers undergone in his missionary travels in South Africa, very strikingly said : "I do not mention these privations as if I considered them to be 'sacrifices,' for I think that the word ought never to be applied to anything we can do for Him who came down from heaven and died for us."

**GOD'S GIFT** of His Son is the setting forth of His glory throughout eternity. When He is seen on the throne, we shall never lose the thought that because God used the personal glory of His Son to give weight to the sacrifice, we enter into glory. Most important it is ever to remember that we are saved sinners. I could not be in heaven if I forgot when there that I am a saved sinner, forgot the power of the precious blood to wash away every spot of sin. It would not be the heaven of Scripture if I could not there speak about the love and mercy that had cleansed me.

**ASHAMED** to confess Christ. A very remarkable case of this sort is described by a city missionary. "On my district," he writes, "there is an intelligent artisan who works for a firm where several hundred hands are employed, and out of the whole number only three men have the moral courage to attend divine service on the Lord's Day, and these are subject to the derision of their mates, 'Bible-back,' 'Parson,' and 'Methodist' being the names given to them. Some of the men employed by this firm will dare to work on the very verge of sudden death who dare not meet the laughter, scorn, and derision of their shopmates." One man sometimes "works in such a dangerous position that the slightest false movement on his part, or a moment's negligence on the part of another, would result in either instantaneous death or mutilation for life. Yet the man who has the courage to work in such a very perilous position for a few shillings a day dares not go to a religious service on Sunday for fear of the 'chaff' and derision on Monday, although he is imperilling his soul's salvation thereby."

**NEVER MIND** where you work: care more about *how* you work. Never mind who sees, if God approves. If He smiles, be content. We cannot be always sure when we are most useful. A certain minister with very great difficulty reached a place where he had promised to preach. There was deep snow upon the ground, therefore only one hearer came. However, he preached as zealously as if there had been a thousand. Years after, when he was travelling in that same part of the country, he met a man who had been the founder of a chapel in the village, and from it scores of others had been established. The man came to see him, and said, "I have good reason to remember you, sir, for I was once your only hearer; and what has been done here has been brought about instrumentally through my conversion under that sermon." We cannot estimate our success. One child in the Sunday school converted may turn out to be worth five hundred, because he may be the means of bringing ten thousand to Christ.

**THE REV. MR. ROMAINE'S** congregation, considering his style of preaching too plain and common, had requested him to exhibit a little more learning. Accordingly, on a certain occasion, he read his text in Hebrew and said, "I suppose scarcely one in the congregation understands that." He then read it in Greek, and added, "Perhaps there may be one or two that understand me now. I will next read it in Latin." He did so, and said, "Possibly a few more may comprehend me, but the number is still very limited." He last of all repeated the text in English. "There," he continued, "now you all understand it; which do you think is best? I hope always so to preach as that everyone in the congregation may comprehend me."

GOD speaks softly in our breast, softly yet distinctly, showing us what to hold by and what to shun.—*Goethe*.

THERE is a story told of Dr. Blacklock, the blind Scotch poet and preacher, that he once preached in a kirk in the south of Scotland, to the great delight of all who heard him. There was at the time a great prejudice in Scotland against reading sermons. An elder remarked to an old woman coming out of the church that they had heard a fine sermon. "Yes," said the woman, "but does he read?" "No, no," said the elder, "he canna read; he's blind." "Thank God!" exclaimed the old woman, "I wish they were all blind."

A TOUCHING story is told of how a child lifted the lid of the coffin in which her little sister was lying dead, and was kneeling and praying by the side of the dead body. The unconverted mother listened to the child's prayer: "Gentle Jesus, come and take little Annie up to heaven, to live always with Thee and sister Sally. Blessed Saviour, teacher says I am one of Thy lambs, so I want to leave this wicked world. Come and take mother too, and make her fit to die. Amen." The tears trickled down the mother's cheeks as the child, turning round, said, "Tell the man to bring me a larger coffin, and tell teacher next Sunday that I am gone to heaven along with Sally." In the night she was taken ill, and on the following day died, singing, "I love Jesus, Hallelujah! Jesus smiles, and loves me too." From the day of the child's death the mother became a changed character: she gave up drinking and swearing, and now she rejoices in her Saviour. Reader, art thou a Christian? And if thou art, canst thou not do something for thy Lord? Will He not stretch out His arm to nerve thine if thy desire is to serve Him?

A LADY teaching in London, and reading in the Bible about "wheat and chaff," found that not one of her scholars had an idea of what wheat was; but on asking them what "chaff" might be, there was an immediate holding up of hands in signal of comprehension, and a unanimous reply of "Impidence, ma'am!"

THE DISTRIBUTION of religious tracts in various ways has often been attended with astonishing results. The following is related by J. Cross, in his "Gospel Workers": "A gentleman who was ticket-agent at an important railroad station for five years, spent annually £10 in the purchase of tracts for distribution. He made it a rule to give a tract with each ticket sold. He afterwards received letters from *twenty-two* persons who had received tracts from him, stating that they had been the means of their conversion."

FACTS are stubborn things, and those who seek to disprove the fundamental truths of Scripture do so in the face of a thousand certainties.

OH, matchless love of God which freely fixed on me!  
Which drew me from my ruined state to Thee, dear Lord, to Thee;  
Why did I hear Thy voice? why did I seek Thy face?  
What sweetly forced my happy choice? 'twas rich and sovereign grace!  
The work, O Lord, is Thine, no merit falls to me;  
Thy Spirit makes Thy grace to shine, my all I owe to Thee.  
I soon shall see Thy face and all Thy kindness prove,  
For ever bask in Thine embrace, Thy sweet, eternal love!

## “I WILL COME AGAIN.”—*John* xiv.

---

NOTHING is more prominently brought forward in the New Testament than the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This was the first comfort given by the angels to the sorrowing disciples. “This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven” (Acts i. 11). And if you turn to the first of Thessalonians you will find it presented in the end of every chapter as a common doctrine.

It was not at all a strange thing—immediately after conversion to the living God—“to wait for His Son from heaven, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.” Again, in Hebrews ix. we read that “He appeared once in the end of the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself . . . and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” In the second of Thessalonians it is presented in the way of warning, as well as the object of the blessed hope of the saints: “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape.”

From this we see the amazing difference between the coming of Christ for this world, and for those who trust in Him. To the world He comes as a Judge of both quick and dead (see Malachi); but in this 14th of John we find a wonderful difference in the whole principle and spirit of a believer’s expectation of Christ.

“Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him” (Rev. i.). “But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?” (Mal. iii.).

Dear reader, let me ask you—Can you stand before Him at that day? Do you think that you would have confidence before Him at His coming? Could you say, "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him"? "This is He whom I have loved and longed for?" Men always judge according to what is suited to themselves. In 1 Thess. iv. it is said, "So shall we ever be with the Lord." Now, are you suited to be ever with the Lord? Have you this confidence? If it is founded on anything good in yourself, it is a vain ground of confidence. Peter, as soon as he found himself in the presence of the Lord, felt that he was not suited for the Lord. "I am too corrupt," he said. This was a true judgment of Peter; and love for the dignity of the Lord and for holiness. If you are content that holiness should be lowered that you may get off, you do not care for holiness, though you do for getting off. The moment I have seen the holiness of the Lord, and that happiness is in holiness, there is the immediate feeling of my unfitness for that holiness; though there may be the longing for it, which the Lord will doubtless in mercy answer.

Two things are needed thus to meet the Lord. First, the conscience must be right. I may have the kindest father, yet if my conscience is not right I cannot be glad to meet him. And, secondly, affections must be there—the Lord must be my portion. If my heart is on literature, or on anything else here, I shall not like to be where Jesus is. I shall rather be *here* for a time. If you like the world you are fit for the world. Heaven is just the contrary, and you know it; and therefore you do not want to go there, because it would take you from being here in the world. There is the comfort of the Gospel. It did bring down to men's consciences all that could attract to God. But, alas! men no more desired the Lord's company here than they do there. The coming and rejection of Christ here is the plain proof that the world is not fit for Him, and He not fit for them.



But now to turn to our chapter. We find persons here the opposite of all that is in the world. "Let not your heart be troubled." About what? His leaving them. Their happiness, comfort, and joy was in having Christ with them. But now, He says, I am going, but I am not going to be happy without you. There is plenty of room for you. The thing with which He at once comforts their hearts is this: "I'll come again. I cannot stay down here in this vile place. I'm going to prepare a place for you; but I'll come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am ye may be also." The Lord reckons on this satisfying their hearts; and their consciences did not hinder. "The Father's house!" Oh! they could go there. "I will receive you unto Myself." He knew the chord that rang in their hearts; to be with Himself, the source of all blessing. Thus we get the character of these disciples: they were persons whom the absence of Jesus distressed, and whom the presence of Jesus would comfort, not here, but there.

There we find what begot this character. It was all founded on His own word. We do not care for what does not concern us. But as soon as we see a thing that concerns us, it becomes important; and then we want certainty. Now it is very blessed to have God's own word for the basis of our certainty.

For instance, I am a sinner. How, then, can I get into the Father's house? Because God has said, "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more." Well, God is true, and He will not remember them. Do you say I am presumptuous to say so? I do not say so, *God* says so. And again, in John v. 24, "He that heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, *and shall not come into condemnation.*" And John iii. 33, "He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that *God is true.*" Thus when the power of the Spirit brings home the word, I have certainty. Faith is in the word, but it is about something. Christ is presented, and man is

brought to the test. People always judge by their inclination, and not by their reasoning. Now the effect of the testimony of the Spirit of God when Christ is revealed is, that men are not fit for Him, and their hearts do not like to be with Him.

These disciples had loved the Lord. Christ had attraction for their hearts. There, at once, we see the object of their hearts' affections. Christ had fixed their hearts. Take Mary Magdalene, for instance. She was all wrong in her intelligence, yet Christ had attraction for her heart. So with the rest of the disciples. They all ran away for fear; but it was love to Christ that brought them into the place of fear.

Thus we see that Christ Himself was the object of their hearts. They were the companions of Christ—all fear being gone—according to His love and grace. "Ye are they," He said, "which have continued with Me in My temptations." Why? *He* had continued *with them*; but He speaks as if indebted to them for this fellowship. And being in companionship with Christ in heart, He brings them into all the joy into which He is going—nothing less than the Father's house. What attracts is found in Christ, and then it gets from Him the certain assurance that He is coming—and coming for *me*. Now, when the heart is on Christ, what a thing it is to know that He is coming. Am I afraid? No; I am looking for Him. And it is to His Father's house He is to bring me. All that makes heaven a home to Christ will make it a home to me. O come, Lord Jesus. If I have learnt to love Christ, I have learnt to love holiness, to love God. God, in Christ, has brought down to my soul all that God is. What shall I get in heaven? Another Christ? another God? No. It is the One we have seen and known. Whither I go ye know. I am going to the Father, and you have seen the Father in Me.

Ah! but He has not given up His holiness, perhaps you reply. No, indeed, He has not. But Jesus

knew all that is needed for me to be with Him. And if He will make the heart to love, He will put the conscience perfectly at rest, that I may love Him. Will He do that by dulling it? No. He will do something that will enable me to stand in the presence of God, in whose presence I am to find my joy. He reveals fully God in His holiness, and takes away the sin that would hinder my being in the presence of that holiness. And not only does He put sin away, but He purges the conscience *here*, so that I am enabled to enjoy God in full, free affection. Nothing is more attractive than the death of Christ; but, besides that, it puts away the sin of which I was guilty—an act in which I had no part, an act the proof of perfect love, while it meets perfect righteousness. I had done the sins, and I could not undo them. Jesus said to Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." That touched Peter's heart. "If you are not cleansed according to My cleansing, according to what suits God's presence, you have no part with Me."

O what a comfort! Instead of saying, "Depart from Me," Jesus said, "Now ye are clean." And in Peter we see the proof of a good conscience. He said to the Jews, "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just"—the very thing he himself had done fifty days before. Now a man will talk of every sin but that he is guilty of; he will shirk that. But here Peter was in perfect peace about the very sin he was guilty of. His conscience was perfectly purged.

The happiness of the heart that is touched is, to be with Christ; and conscience is purged for being in His presence. Between the Lord's saying this and coming for them, He had put away their sins from God's sight, and from their conscience. "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; . . . and whither I go ye know." There is no uncertainty. We know where we are going to. The soul has found fully the object that has set it at rest, and that will satisfy it up there without fear.

Could the Lord thus address you? Could you say, "O, that is what I am wanting"? Or are you saying, "I've got here what I would like to enjoy"? Is that being a Christian? A Christian may vary in strength of affection, but never in object. I am sure I do not love the Lord enough, but I am sure it is the Lord I love. I have no confidence in my own heart, but all confidence in Him. He has died for me: that is what I count on. He has put away my sins: that is what I need. He is coming again: that is what I am longing for.

Dear reader, let me ask you, was it ever a trouble to you that you had not Christ? Do you know where you are going? It may be you have hope; but have you certainty? Now we Christians have; for Christ is known, and when He is known there is perfect rest in His word. "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.—*Girdle of Truth*, 1857.

---

## DEPENDENCE.

---

IT is evident that no creature can subsist in truth, save in absolute dependence on God. It must be kept to be in the truth—cannot subsist without it—for, if it is not independent, and if dependence is real, the dependent one must be kept. It has lost its place as a creature, if it is not in the truth of it. The first principle of its being, as such, is that dependence; it is in virtue of creation, *i.e.*, it subsists in relationship with the Creator, and with the Creator as such, and does not exist if the Creator has not created it—exists in virtue of His power as Creator, and of His will too; hence, the moment it has made itself, in *will*, independent (in *fact* it cannot), it has falsified its existence—its existence, morally, is a lie in opposition to the

truth of its necessary condition, that by which alone it exists. Thus dependence is alone the truth of any creature.

But, if this be so, there must be an active process of sustainment by Him who creates, otherwise the dependence is in vain ; hence, whenever the creature is left to its responsibility, free to the action of its own will, its first act in will is its fall—it has gone out of dependence ; it has left God—and the truth of its position with God, its subsistence, if it subsists, is a lie, and will become, not a mere part of nature, setting the rest in activity, but, a will of its own, *i.e.*, rebellion against God.

A creature, not positively instanced, necessarily falls ; and, if there is to be responsibility, and moral trial, in whatever shape, this must be gone through. Christ is just the contrary of all this—He was dependent and obedient—came, when in the form of God, having no independent place to seek, in the form of a servant to do God's will. When good and evil are known in a state of things grown up away from God, besides the conscious disposition itself, the Word and prayer are the expression of the two sides of this relationship.

But what an immense thing it is, after all, to have had perfect good come into the midst of evil—perfect good in our nature ; and, tempted, preserving itself in the midst of evil ; and perfect good victorious over the effects of evil. This we have in the blessed Jesus.

But we have more, not evil put away by power—that will come—but evil put away by righteousness ; God dealing in righteousness with sin, so that sin being, as to the moral nature of God, put away, *i.e.*, God perfectly glorified as to it in judgment, righteousness is made good in Him, and in glorifying Christ. The result will be, sin gone out of the world before God ; but now by the Holy Ghost, union with Him who is glorified, who is put away—He is God's Lamb.

The result of sin in death is set aside, too ; so, as

good has been manifested, kept itself, triumphed—so, righteousness is exalted—hence justification a judgment for—and death annihilated and Man glorified. We have more than the reign of good—union with Him who is the centre of it, and who has glorified God. In the work, both parts of it, He was alone, only now we are to manifest the good in the midst of the evil. But perfect good in the midst of evil, where only it could be in grace and in this perfection, is the divine riddle ; hence, a way through the scene—in the two Paradises there is no way.

But I have another remark to make. It is important that we hold fast the sense of the victory of good over evil by faith now, while evil has the upper hand, or our thoughts of God will be wrong—falsely characterised, I do not say false. We cannot, ought not to hide the evil, or palliate it. A world that has rejected the good that came into it, is in itself an evil and judged world ; its works too are evil—there is no good in palliating evil. But then I ought to be so with God, according to the perfection and work of Christ, as to be able to come in according to His mind into the scene of evil, *i.e.*, with a sense and consciousness of perfect good.

This gives a different tone to my having to say to the world ; I shall find evil to say to, evil to know—morally speaking it is all evil, man's mind being in a lie and false—enmity against God. Nor am I to deceive myself as to it ; I know it in knowing myself, but I come into and approach it with the sense of good in my soul—I think no evil—I see in the very creation around me proofs of goodness, see God's creation in it, and by faith look at it, and enjoy it as such, though I know evil is in it—as Christ, who knew all the evil, yet could notice the beauty of a flower, and tell us that God fed the ravens. And so it should be with us—we ought not to let the sense of evil around us shut out God. Christ has entitled us to see good in the midst of evil, though that good has made us conscious of the evil.—*Notes and Comments on Scripture.*

## NOTES ON FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

---

"I WRITE to you, children, because (your) sins are forgiven you for His Name's sake" (1 John ii. 12). Here, as in the first verse of the chapter, the saints are addressed as in the family relationship of children, not "little children," as distinguished from "fathers" and "young men"; but the whole spiritual family is addressed under the term children. That all are children whose sins are forgiven is abundantly clear. Every child of God can thus say that his sins are blotted out, forgiven for His Name's sake. It is this which distinguishes God's family from the children of the devil. The youngest and the feeblest, as much as the oldest and most advanced, has his place in the family circle; of him, by the grace of God, as much as of them, it is true that his sins are forgiven for Christ's Name's sake. Distinctions there are, and they are clearly recognised; but wherever the family of faith is found, every member of it is privileged to say, on the authority of God's impregnable word, that his sins—not are to be, but—*are* forgiven for the Name's sake of Him who bore the judgment due to them on the cross of Calvary.

Then come the distinctions made by the Spirit of God; fathers, young men, and little children (verse 13, and again in verses 14 and 17). First as to fathers, thus he says, "I write to you, fathers, because ye have known Him (that is) from the beginning." This is twice said (verses 13 and 14), and is the only characteristic of the fathers, for nothing in spiritual growth and attainment can surpass the knowledge of Christ.

A Corean Christian was asked how long he had known the Saviour. "Three months," was the answer. "Three months! surely it must be longer than that: why, you have been a Christian for two years." "Yes," he answered, "I have known something of the Saviour for two years; but Himself I have known for only three months!" It was a fine distinction that

was made by this Corean Christian—one worth pondering. We all know something of the Saviour; how many can truthfully say that we know *Him*?

It was this which Paul coveted, and we doubt not as much at the end of his course as at the beginning, “to know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings” (Phil. iii. 10). It has been well said that Christ is God’s encyclopædia given unto us. What an inexhaustible volume for us to expend profound study upon. Christ in the eternal counsels of God; Christ in His creatorial work; Christ in His revelation of the Father; Christ in the moral glory of His Person; Christ in His life on earth as the devoted Servant and faithful Witness for Him who sent Him; Christ as in the world which knew Him not; Christ as presented to Israel—their Messiah—but utterly refused by the nation; Christ in His death, God’s Lamb, the Victim of the cross; Christ in resurrection; Christ in glory; Christ as High Priest and Advocate; Christ returning for the rapture of His saints; Christ subduing all His enemies; Christ manifested with all His heavenly saints in power and great glory; Christ establishing His universal kingdom, and finally delivering it up to “Him (who is) God and Father, that God may be all in all.” Again we say, what volumes of divine truth are here for the profound study of the fathers, both in time and eternity. Surely every heart will say with the apostle—*that I may know Him!*

Then is it twice said of the “young men” that they have overcome the wicked one; also it is added, “Ye are strong, and the word of God abides in you.” These are the commended characteristics of God’s “young men.” They are strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, they are thoroughly furnished with the word of God, and in the energy of faith have met and overcome the assault of the foe. They are in the thick of the conflict, and therefore suited instruction is granted them as to the world through which they



are passing. It is antagonistic to the Father. If the world occupies the heart, the Father is displaced ; the love of the world and the love of the Father are incompatible. Then the world is summarised by one word—*lust* ; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. But all this—the world and its lust, so liable to captivate the young and the strong—is but transitory ; it is passing away, and only he who does the will of God abides for eternity.

Then the little children are addressed (verses 13 and 18). And of them it is said, “Ye have known the Father.” How blessedly and how graciously is this affirmed. That which is so true and so noticeable in every human family equally obtains in the family of faith—the little children know the Father. It is the privilege of even the babes in Christ. They know the Father, but they need a warning voice and a helping hand. Much more is said in the way of instruction to them than is said to the fathers and the young men. They are cautioned against the anti-Christes which even then prevailed, and they are sweetly and tenderly encouraged by reference to the provisions of God’s grace for them—viz., the Holy Ghost, the divine unction, and the truth, the divine word. “The unction which ye have received from Him abides in you, and ye have not need that any one should teach you ; but as the same unction teaches you as to all things, and is true, and is not a lie ; and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him.” Thus closes the instruction to the little children, the lambs of God’s flock.

Then the whole family—fathers, young men, and little children—are embraced under the family term and tie of “children,” and to each and all comes the needed and the suited exhortation to abide in Him ; in other words, to cultivate communion with Himself personally, that should He be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be put to shame before Him at His coming. The Lord give us this preparation of heart for Him.

## THE LORD'S TABLE.

---

I THINK it will be found, on careful examination of Scripture, that the Lord's Table and the Lord's Supper go together, and cannot be separated. At the same time, we know there are not wanting those who do separate them, and teach that only they, and those in their fellowship, as acting on certain principles, are at the Lord's Table; while other Christians merely eat the Supper, though they condescendingly admit that such may eat it "piously." I will quote from a pamphlet now before me.\* "It should be eaten at the Lord's Table; but as the 'members in particular' are found at various human tables, such may piously eat the Supper; but they are not doing it at the Lord's Table, as it ought to be" (p. 55). Some of us have heard this and similar expressions for many years past; but as it is put forth in a very decisive way in this pamphlet, we shall look presently at their chief reasons for believing it.

I repeat, the Table and the Supper cannot be separated, and are not separated in Scripture, although the former is spoken of in 1 Cor. x., the only place where it is mentioned, and the latter in chapter xi. They can be *distinguished*, and each have their distinctive thought connected with them; and that this is so, no sober Christian would think of disputing; but that is quite a different thing from *separating* them as is done. The Table is spoken of in chapter x., but *not* apart from the Supper (see verses 16 and 21). The very word "communion" links them up; for it is in the *actual partaking* of each of the symbols, and which makes it the Supper, that the communion is expressed, and thus the two things are connected.

As I have said, it is the only place where the expression, "The Lord's Table," is used in Scripture, and it is brought in there to show the truth of

---

\* "The Assembly—The Table—The Supper."

*association*, which the Corinthians had either forgotten, or, very probably, never known, and to teach them that they could not possibly have fellowship with the Lord's Table and with demons, as set forth by their eating of what was broken on the Lord's Table and eating of what was sacrificed to demons on idolatrous altars; for they were *one body* with all Christians—"we, being many, *are* one loaf, one body." (For the force of the *we* see chapter i. 2.) Then the apostle adds, "For we are all partakers of *that one loaf*" (verse 17), which symbolises Christ's body. Thus, our corporate fellowship is expressed in breaking the one loaf, which sets forth Christ's body given for us on the cross. When he speaks of what was peculiar to the Corinthians themselves, who had been idolators, and evidently were not altogether free from their old heathen rites and thoughts, he says, "*Ye*"—not we—"Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's Table and the table of demons" (verse 21). And this is an important distinction.

To be at the Lord's Table, I take it, is to be at the place where the Lord's Supper is partaken of, and as partakers of it. To partake of the Supper is to partake thereof of the bread and wine, which symbolise Christ's body which was given for us, and His blood which was shed for us on the cross; and thus, by *eating* the Supper, we become "*partakers* of the Lord's Table." But surely not in merely eating the loaf, and thus only taking *part* of the Supper, but by taking both symbols.

No one would find any difficulty in understanding what is meant when Scripture says "King Solomon's table" (1 Kings iv. 27), or "Jezebel's table" (1 Kings 18, 19), nor yet the Lord's words, "Ye shall eat and drink at My table" (Luke xxii. 30). And would not any ordinary Christian read the words "the Lord's Table," and understand them in a similar way, and naturally conclude that you could not separate the

Table and the Supper, especially seeing that both are connected in the only passage where the former is mentioned? Nor would they think for a moment that it merely meant a literal frame of wood, on which vessels are placed, any more than they would think it was a literal supper that was meant by "the Lord's Supper."

The brazen altar was what characterised Judaism. It was on it that the parts of the *Peace offering* were burnt as Jehovah's part of that communion offering—"the food of the offering made by fire unto Jehovah" (Lev. iii. 11, 16). The officiating priest and the priestly family next had their part of the same offering (Lev. vii. 11, 34), while the offerer and his friends had the rest. Thus all feasted together on the same sacrifice, and had communion with the altar—or, were "partakers of the altar" (1 Cor. x. 18). It was to this altar, and this altar alone, that the apostle referred, to show them what it meant to be "partakers of the altar," and to the Peace offering as the special communion offering. Idolatrous altars were what characterised heathenism. The Gentiles sacrificed to demons in the garb of gods (Deut. xxxii. 17), and to eat of those sacrifices was to have fellowship with demons (1 Cor. x. 20). The Lord's Table is what characterises Christianity. And inasmuch as the *we* of verse 17 ("*We* being many *are* one loaf, *one body*") includes all the members of Christ's body everywhere—not only "the Church of God which was at Corinth, sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called saints"; but it takes in, "with *all* that in *every place* call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours" (1 Cor. i. 2)—*mere individual action* is now out of the question, for all *are one body*, and consequently no one could go and eat at idolatrous altars—"the table of demons"—without involving the rest of the members of the body in that wickedness (verse 21); and this is what the apostle sought to teach the Corinthians.

Each system, then, had that which set forth in its

worship the idea of communion, however little the individuals who formed them might understand it. Judaism had its altar—the brazen altar, called “the table of Jehovah” (Mal. i. 7, 12). Not “the Lord’s Table,” observe. The two must not be confounded. It was neither the golden altar, nor yet the table of shewbread. Neither was it Elijah’s altar, nor any other that was so named or referred to by the apostle in 1 Cor. 10. It was the brazen altar only. And although Israel is to-day “without a sacrifice,” and consequently without an altar (Hos. iii. 4), the day is coming when they will again be in their land, and have their sacrifices, and a table or altar which Jehovah calls His (Ezek. xli. 22 ; and lxiv. 16). Heathenism had its idolatrous altars for demon worship, called “the table of demons” ; while Christianity has its “Lord’s Table,” where Christians, if taught in the Word, are gathered as members of the body of Christ, to have communion together about the death of the One who, in perfect love, died for them.

The terms “human tables,” “men’s tables,” “sectarian tables,” and all such expressions, so often applied to the various systems around, are foolish and altogether out of place. Scripture knows them not. It never even hints at them, although it recognises divisions and schisms as coming in through man’s failure and sin, and points out a path for the faithful in a day of ruin (2 Tim. ii.). But it only knows one Lord’s Table—the one that characterises Christianity. His, because He instituted it ; His, because He is there professedly owned ; His, because at it the symbols of His death are seen, broken, and partaken of ; His, in contrast to the only other two which it recognises as existing. Hence, to talk of others, is to introduce what Scripture does not recognise.

Moreover, the acting on divine principles does not make it His ; though all who are at it *ought* to act on such principles, and will not be held guiltless if acting otherwise, since the Lord’s mind has been

communicated, and they possess it in their Bibles. The *not* acting on divine principles does not prohibit its being His, any more than the constantly increasing evils in Christendom make it to be other than the House of God, where He dwells by His Spirit. At the same time, no sober Christian would seek to justify such conduct and evils. Blessed be God, there *are* principles to guide the Lord's people to-day; and there *is* a path for them in the midst of the ruin and confusion. *That*, we do not question for a moment; but it is not to be found in the narrowing down the Lord's Table to a select few, as some are doing, and thus exalting themselves at the expense of others who have not the same amount of intelligence which God in His grace may have given to them. Nor by seeing the Lord's Table in its Scriptural breadth, as I believe it to be here set forth, does it interfere with or set aside one single divine principle, which ought to command the conscience of every member of the body of Christ, though it may clash with some pre-conceived and long-cherished notions.

I repeat again, the Table is His, and the reasons already given are what make it His. This being so, it follows that *all Christians everywhere are at it* when they sit down and partake of the Lord's Supper. In saying this, and insisting upon it, it is not sought to justify the ignorance, or the wilfulness, nor raise the question as to the title of many to be there who are there. All that must be settled with their Master by and by. But I do insist on the fact that they *are* there. Rightly or wrongly, they are there. They are not at the Jewish altar—there is none. They are not at the table of demons. Then there is nothing left to be at than the Lord's Table. Scripture knows no other.

In connection with these thoughts the remark has been made, "If I believed the sects had the Lord's Table I should go back to them." And in the pamphlet already referred to the same remark is made. Speaking of what they chose to call denominational

tables, they say, "If they are the Lord's Table, we should be there, and ought never to have left. It would be pure schism to do so" (p. 45). I wonder if such people think they have left the House of God because they have separated from the sects? Or that they, and they alone, constitute it? Or will they allow that all Christians compose it; and that their acting according to divine principles, and separating from evil, has not in any way disturbed that truth?

In leaving the sects, surely it was not because they had not the Lord's Table; but, if taught of God, it was because we found they were not acting according to divine principles which He taught us from His word, and which commanded our consciences. Neither did we leave them because there were no Christians in them, or because we found better ones outside. Not at all; but because we were responsible to act on what God in His grace had taught us from His word as our privilege as members of the body of Christ.

How then could we ever dream of returning so long as those principles, privileges, and responsibility remain? Impossible. The fact of its being the Lord's Table in the sects is not what governs us, surely! I certainly know of no Scripture which teaches me to turn away from any company because they have not the Lord's Table, nor is there such a thought in Scripture as "putting away from the Lord's Table." But the principles and conduct of those who *are there* is what we are called upon to examine and judge; and if not those of Scripture, then our path is clearly marked out for us—"from such, turn away" (2 Tim. iii. 5), and we continue with those who have taken similar ground before us, and are seeking to "call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. ii. 22).

In all this narrowing down of truths which characterise Christianity as a system on the earth, there are not wanting traces of spiritual pride and self-satisfaction on the part of some, at least, who take such ground, however unconscious they may be of it

themselves. Besides, they really make the being at the Lord's Table a question of intelligence as to the body, and thus feed such a spirit by inflating themselves with the thought that they, and they alone, act on divine principles, and, therefore, have the Table; whereas, others only partake of the Supper, even though they may hold the very same principles as we do. It may be, indeed, that some of themselves have never even looked at facts in order to see together (as is known to be the case in one instance at least), but they merely take the word of some one whom they think they can trust, and thus shirk their responsibility. "My brethren, these things ought not so to be."

The proofs of its being made a question of intelligence about the body are not far to seek. In the pamphlet already referred to, we are told, "The fellowship of His death, and the Lord in the midst, could both be had before ever He (the Lord) went to heaven; but you could not have the Table till then, nor till a fresh revelation of the Supper was given from there, with that added which constituted it the Table. The *cup* of the Lord even is not the Table of the Lord" (p. 42). Then, of course, if this be true, it was not the Lord's Table when He instituted the Supper and was there amongst them; and we must imagine the first Lord's Supper without the Lord's Table. Nor was it such, if this be true, when, after Pentecost, and *after* "God had made this same Jesus whom they crucified both *Lord* and Christ" (Acts ii. 36); and the Holy Ghost had come down, and the disciples "continued in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the *breaking of bread*, and in prayers" (verse 42)! Strange teaching this! No Lord's Table! Not even then! Can these teachers tell us *when* that was added which made it such? We know about the date of the epistle. Can they tell us *when* Paul first taught it? And there was no Table till then!

But we are further informed, to make it plainer, if



possible, that "for the Table itself, you must have the *principle* which is characteristic of the distinctive *relation* between the saints and Christ in this age as the fruit of His death, and that relation is distinctly declared to be as His body. Apart from that principle, the Lord's Table of Scripture does not exist, and any breaking of bread which leaves this out cannot possibly answer to it" (p. 42). Thus, as I have already remarked, it is wholly a question of intelligence as to the body of Christ whether saints are at the Table or not. For any to be breaking bread, however true to Christ, if ignorant of the principle of one body, they are not at it, for, "apart from this principle, it does not exist!"

I presume that, with Hebrews v. 12 before us, we must admit that the Hebrews were very ignorant of Christian teaching! and that their conduct, as mentioned in Acts xxi. 24, 25, would lead us to infer that they were at that time ignorant of that revelation which Paul received; or, at least, not acting according to it. Moreover, we see that their Jewish prejudices operated strongly against the truth of one body; and what they taught the Galatians, and which so effectually carried away Peter and Barnabas, was distinctly opposed to it (Gal. ii. 12, 13). Are we then to suppose that the Hebrews and the Galatians were not at the Lord's Table? Certainly, they "called on the name of the Lord" (1 Cor. i. 2), and were included in the *we* of chapter x. 16, 17.

Again, was there no Lord's Table, say, during the middle ages, to go no further back, until this century, when the truth of one body was recovered and acted on by brethren? Must we really believe that the godly Waldenses and others, in those dark times, carrying their lives in their hands, but whose hearts burned with love to Christ, were labouring under a great mistake if they thought they were at the Lord's Table, when they were only "piously" eating the Lord's Supper? And yet again, to come to our own times, there *are* meetings which *do* act on this

principle of one body, and who do *not* leave it out in their breaking of bread; yet are not in the same fellowship with those who hold and teach what is set forth in this pamphlet. Are they not at the Lord's Table? And this teaching answers, No! So far as is known, it has not existed since shortly after the apostles' days till this century, and now only a comparative few are at it, some of whom are not slow to say, "No one else is"! High ground this, surely, for any one to take!

But what is it all based on? we may well ask. This—I quote again—"What do you say the Lord's Table is?" I do not say it; Scripture does. It calls the "partakers of that one bread" (in verse 17) "partakers of the Lord's Table" (in verse 21), and that, too, as distinguished from the "cup of the Lord." Accordingly, the one loaf, as the symbol of what "*we are*," namely, "one loaf one body," is called by the Spirit (for it is no question of a literal table), "the Lord's Table," and those *partaking* of "that one bread" in token of their being "one bread one body," are said by the Spirit to be "*partakers* of the Lord's Table."

Here, then, we have stated clearly on what their reasoning is based. The Lord's Table *is* for them "the one loaf, as the symbol of what we are." And "those partaking of that one bread in token of their being one bread one body, are said by the Spirit to be *partakers* of the Lord's Table." Therefore, any one partaking of that one bread, but without any idea of its being "in token of their being one bread one body," merely as remembering their Lord, are not, of course, partakers of the Lord's Table! Here, again, we see how it is wholly a question of intelligence whether Christians partake of the Lord's Table or not. But let us further examine their theory.

In that verse (1 Cor. x. 17) the apostle states *a fact*. "For *we* being many *are* one loaf one body." He does *not* say that the loaf on the table *symbolises us*

as that. It does *not*. It symbolises Christ's body, about which we have communion together (verse 16). And in breaking and partaking, or *eating* it, we give expression to the fact of our association as one, for it is *one loaf* of which *we all* partake. To make the loaf of which we *partake* symbolise *what we are*, makes us to partake of, or eat of *what we are*, which is nonsense. Thus, to say that "the one loaf as the symbol of what *we are* is called by the Spirit the Lord's Table," is a complete blunder. Whereas the expression, "For we are all *partakers* of," or eat "that one loaf," shows clearly it is that one loaf which symbolises Christ's body given for us.

The fact of adducing Israel as an example, in the next verse, proves it. "See Israel after the flesh ; are not they which eat the sacrifices partakers, or in communion with the altar?" It is *partaking* by *eating*, and of that which symbolises Christ's body ; not of what *we are*. Then again, Israel was never "*one body*," and never partook of their sacrifices as such. It was all individual with them. Christians *are one body*, and partake of the Lord's Supper as such, and in so doing are said to be "partakers of the Lord's Table," inasmuch as they eat what was broken thereon. They certainly do not eat the Table. Yet, if "the one loaf is called by the Spirit the Lord's Table," and, "as distinguished from the cup," then we are shut up to this conclusion. Or, on the other hand, if it is insisted that the loaf is but the symbol of what we are, and in that connection called the Table, then we are shut up to the other folly, viz., that we eat that which symbolises *what we are*.

Nor will it do to say, as they do, in order to escape this conclusion—"Our partaking even from the Table-side is not in the sense of eating as *feeding*, but partakers in the sense that my arm is partaker of the life of my body" (p. 56). Such an idea is foreign to the whole subject. The teaching of the passage is *partaking* in the sense of *eating* the sacrifices, whether

on Jewish or heathen altars; or the symbols of Christ's body and blood on the Lord's Table. There is no thought of partaking of *a common life*, like an arm of a body; but of *eating* of *that one loaf*, and eating it as members of one body. The whole reasoning is false, and we see at once that that which is said to represent us as one body is *not* called by the Spirit the Lord's Table, for we do *not* partake of what symbolises us.

From the passage itself, I should gather that in their heathen rites the cup came first in their feasts. They drank to their gods, and from ch. xi. it is evident they drank too much, and from which evil habit they had not been entirely freed when they became Christians. Hence the cup is put first in ver. 16, 21, and then the bread. But the great thought is *communion* with the blood and body of Christ, and to teach them the truth of *association*; namely, that as *one body* with all saints, and expressing it by all *partaking* of the *one loaf*, they could not any longer act as mere individuals, and go to these idolatrous tables, as it linked up others with them, and connected them with the table of demons. But to call the Lord's Table "a divine principle," and that principle "the one body," and speak of being *at* it, sounds very strange if we read "*principle*" instead of "*Table*." We could understand being *at* the Table, but should have a difficulty in understanding what it is to be *at* a "divine principle," even though it be "embodied in symbol," for we could not well speak of being *at* the symbol, nor yet *at* the loaf which is the symbol, and which is said to be "the Lord's Table."

The Lord save His beloved people from all these mere human reasonings constantly creeping in, and which tend to narrow down the truth, for the exaltation of some and at the expense of others; and, on the other hand, making it wider than Scripture. May He give us all to be broken and teachable, remembering we are all learners yet; and may we all seek to commend

Christ in all our ways till we see His face, and hear His "well done, good and faithful servant."

*New Zealand.*

WILLIAM EASTON.

---

---

"JESUS WEPT."—*John xi. 35.*

---

A SHORT verse of just two words in our Authorised Version, but how full of meaning, how rich in consolation! He wept. Martha and Mary were weeping, and naturally, in their hour of sorrow. The Jews, too, who came to comfort the sisters, were lamenting in professed sympathy with those whose home had been darkened by the death of their brother. Jesus also wept. A weeping company indeed!

Death had claimed Lazarus. They could not stave it off. Nothing, it seems, they felt could have healed him but the power of Christ. That had been withheld. Born in sin, and a sinner, too, manifested by his death; they, too, sinners—though, in common with him, saints likewise—to the natural lot of a child of Adam it became them to bow. We have said that though saints they were also sinners. Would any demur to that? Paul, who could write of himself as a saint (Ephes. iii. 8), declared that he was the chief of sinners also (1 Tim. i. 15). Who, then, of that once happy family could charge God with injustice for the calamity which had fallen upon them? Neither Martha nor Mary, we feel sure, would have thought of that. They bowed to the hand which afflicted them, whilst saying that if the Lord had been there Lazarus would not have died. And now the Lord had come to them. The Holy One of God was again at Bethany. Did He remind them of their deserts? Did He coldly tell them it was just what they might

have expected? No; He wept with those who wept.

The Son of God weeping! He could, and did subsequently, weep over Jerusalem, lamenting her impenitence, which must bring down judgment on her (Luke xix. 41), a judgment, we have to say, not yet exhausted, and therefore still unrevoked. On that occasion He gave utterance to His lamentation concerning her in words, which that evangelist just referred to has recorded. At Bethany He shed tears. This is the only time that verb is used by John of the Lord, or indeed is met with in the New Testament.

He shed tears, but said nothing; for no word have we from Him between that which is recorded in verse 34—"Where have ye laid him?"—and that told us in verse 39—"Take ye away the stone." Tears can flow down apart from any uttered lamentation. And tears can speak as expressively as the plainest deliverance in words. That was the case here. He had groaned in spirit, and was troubled; but no one, it appears, remarked it. Probably the groaning was inward, and so inaudible to the bystanders. But the tears were seen, and were noticed at once. They testified as they fell, so said the Jews, to His love for Lazarus: "Behold how He loved him!" "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus," so wrote the evangelist. It was true, and the Jews remarked on those tears as expressive of His love for the dead.

The tears flowed, but flowed just because of the death of a friend? We cannot think that. He, who was about to raise Lazarus, had no need to lament for his decease. Martha and Mary might and did mourn for him. We cannot think the Lord did that. Why, then, those tears? We believe they were tears expressive of His deep, His real sympathy. He felt for the sisters in their sorrow. He sympathised with them as they wept.

On not a few occasions had the Lord felt pity for some before Him. He had compassion on the leper

in his affliction (Mark i. 41). He had compassion on the widow of Nain, following the body of her only son to the grave (Luke vii. 13). He had compassion on the multitude who went after Him to the other side of the lake (Mark vi. 34). On none of those occasions, however, did He shed tears. He felt for them in their different conditions. But here at Bethany He thus sympathised with Martha and Mary. Who before in His ministry had seen Him shed tears? On the way to the grave they flowed. He did not repress them. He did not conceal them. All could see them. All could say how He wept.

But who wept? A man, like the rest there present, feeling keenly the sorrow, but conscious of helplessness in the circumstances? Quite the contrary. He had come to awaken Lazarus out of sleep. He intended to raise him, and was there for that purpose. Divine power would be manifested in his resurrection. Yet Jesus wept. How the sisters ever after, as they recalled that day, must have valued that expression of His sympathy. It was unmistakable. Thankful—how thankful—must they have been that He had not healed their brother at once. Thankful, too, must they have been for those tears; for they witnessed, as nothing else could have done, that He, who could and did wield divine power, had a heart of true, deep sympathy for His sorrowing saints. Had the Lord just marched to the grave, and commanded the dead one to come forth, what would the sisters have lost? Poorer, too, should we all have been as to our knowledge of His heart. But ere He raised the dead the tears poured down His cheeks.

It was sympathy, but sympathy for saints. Throughout this history *saints*, and they only, are in view. His words to Martha, explanatory of His being the Resurrection and the Life, concerned only saints. Others were not referred to. They were outside the scope of His teaching that day. He had no word for the unconverted, as He stood at the outskirts of Bethany.

But much indeed there was for the saints in those few words to the elder sister (25-26). What blessing, then, what comfort for true saints—present sympathy, and the exercise of power on their behalf in a coming day. Death will not deprive them of the fulfilment of their hope. They will live and reign with Christ, and be with Him in glory for ever. If sleeping, they will be raised ; if alive, they will never die. Corruption will put on incorruption ; mortal will put on immortality.

Of His sympathy that day with Martha and Mary there was no doubt. But He has died. He is no longer on this side of death. Can we count on His sympathy still? Now we might have had a friend who, in times of great trial, sympathised with us deeply—aye, tenderly—and cheered us in the dark days of sorrow through which we were called to pass. We could ever after speak of his sympathy—recollect and value the remembrance of it. But if that friend had died, on his sympathy we could count no longer. Remembrance of it, in the past, might be sweet ; but fresh exhibitions of it, however great our extremity, we could never again receive. Death had put a stop to that. We must henceforth pursue our way without it.

Is that the case as regards the Lord? True, He has died. But He lives again ; alive for evermore. And we know that He is unchanged in His feelings towards His own. What He was before death, that He is to them still. The record of Him as risen, notably in Luke xxiv., attests that. His visit, therefore, to Bethany, and the incidents of that day, have an interest for saints still. If He could thus feel for Martha and Mary, He can feel as deeply for His own now. That history, whilst a record of the past, is an index to His heart still. He can and does sympathise with His sorrowing ones. Those two words, "Jesus wept," have been, and will be, ministry for His people, if called to pass through the vale of tears : Jesus, the Son of God, feels deeply, tenderly for them.

C. E. S.



THE Rev. Legh Richmond passing through Stockport when Radicalism first agitated the country, a poor fellow offered him his hand, enquiring with great earnestness, "Pray, sir, are you a Radical?" "Yes, my friend," replied he, "I am a thorough radical; but let me explain myself. We all need a radical reformation; our hearts are full of disorders; the root and principle within is altogether corrupt. Let you and me mend matters there, and, if others will only do the same, there will be fewer complaints of the times and the Government."

A SCOTCH girl recently converted, on being asked if her heart was changed, her true and beautiful answer was, "Something, I know, is changed, it may be the world, it may be my heart; there is a great change somewhere, I'm sure, for everything seems different to what it once was."

GOD in Christ. A sick woman said, "Sir, I have no notion of God. I cannot form any notion of Him. You talk to me about Him, but I cannot get a single idea of the subject that seems to contain anything." "But you know," it was replied, "how to conceive of Jesus Christ as a man. God has come down to us in Him, full of mercy and compassion—a Saviour God." "Ah! sir," she said, "that gives me something to lay hold upon. *There* I can rest. I understand God in Christ." "God was *in Christ*, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

"BEHOLD *now* is the accepted time." There is a story told in ancient history of a certain king who lighted a lamp and hung it in his palace. He then sent heralds forth to liberate and bring every criminal and every rebel into his presence to receive pardon. Those who came while the lamp was burning were fully forgiven; but those who held back till the lamp had expired met with a terrible death.

How GOD comforts. A godly woman having gone to confide her heavy sorrow to her pastor, before entering his room, heard his little grand-daughter repeating these words, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee" (Ps. lv. 22). These words came with such power to her heart that she acknowledged that the Lord had "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings" dispelled her fear and established her heart in peace.

THE "WRATH of the Lamb" would be less terrible to bear if it were not that it is the lowly and unresisting Lamb whose wrath shall finally be aroused. A clever young lawyer came, some months since, to plead that an old acquaintance would abandon a course which was certain to bring him to ruin. Presuming somewhat on the friendliness and earnestness of the other, the culprit parried and trifled, and finally made an insulting suggestion. Patience had been sorely tried, but now a swift change came over the face of the advocate, and few who heard them would forget the warning words, "I have pleaded with you hitherto as a friend; you will have to deal with me now as a lawyer, and as a lawyer I can show you no mercy." It is a feeble illustration of what must surely take place hereafter. (See John v. 22.) "All the day long have I stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" argues the long-suffering Jehovah. Into those merciful, outstretched hands let us then fall,

In full and glad surrender.

And it shall be well with us for time and for eternity.

A POOR old lady, an "Israelite indeed," whose closing days were passed in a workhouse, being visited by a Christian man, who, while in conversation, saw her face suddenly beaming with heavenly lustre, was asked what thought it was passing through her mind which was the cause of her appearing so joyful. The reply of the old disciple was, "Oh! sir, I was just thinking what a change it will be *from the POOR-HOUSE to HEAVEN!*"

CHARITY (1 Cor. xiii.). Irenæus calleth charity a most excellent present from heaven, the top and zenith of all virtues, gifts, and favours of God.

THE REASONS why our Saviour was tempted were not the same for which His members are tempted; for they are tempted—1. Sometimes to humble them, and that they may not, after great revelations and consolations, be exalted above measure. So Paul. 2. To make them see that their strength is not of nor from themselves. 3. To purify and cleanse them. For none of all these reasons was our Saviour tempted; but, 1. That he might be touched with and feel all our infirmities that were without sin. 2. That He might overcome Satan in all his ways, and vanquish him with one weapon. 3. That no man, be he ever so holy, may think himself free, but expect and provide for temptation. 4. As for caution so for comfort, that no man may judge himself out of God's favour because he hath grievous temptations. 5. That He might show us by His example how to demean ourselves in, and how to overcome temptations.—*Thomas White, B.L.*

AFRICAN SLAVERY.—Speaking of the continued prevalence of the slave trade in tropical Africa, Rev. C. H. Robinson, who has completed a journey of 1,500 miles through the Central Soudan, makes a remarkable statement in his book on "Hausaland," published by Messrs. Sampson Low & Co., with reference to the Hausa-speaking population of Africa:—"It is generally admitted that they number at least fifteen millions, *i.e.*, roughly speaking, one per cent. of the world's population. Colonel Monteil, who has recently travelled through a considerable portion of the Hausa States, gives it as his opinion that the slave population is far in excess of the free. Though this estimate appears to me too high, it is, I think, a fact which admits of no doubt whatever, that at the very least one-third are in a state of slavery, or, in other words, that one out of every three hundred of the world's population is a Hausa-speaking slave."

SOME years ago, a visitor said to a poor wounded soldier who lay dying in the hospital, "What church are you of?" "Of the church of Christ," he replied. "I mean, what persuasion are you of?" "Persuasion," said the dying man, as he looked heavenward, beaming with love to the Saviour, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus." None should rest contented with any hope less sure or bright.

THE BELIEVER FALLING ASLEEP.—We shall find that passing across the river is delightful when at eventide it is light. And O the glory of the everlasting daybreak! The splendour of the sun that goeth no more down! O the bliss of beholding saints and angels, and seeing the King in His beauty! The messengers of God said that heaven is blessed, and it is so—it is so. They said, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord," and it is so.

"DO TELL ME about your conversion." "Well," he said, "no man had anything to do with it; He did it all Himself, praise His name. I was going down to hell as fast as I could, but one night an awful feeling came over me that I should soon be there. I cried out, 'Lord, save me, or I shall perish,' and He did. He lifted me up out of the pit, He washed me and made me clean. So, you see, it was Peter's prayer that saved me; at least, I mean Peter's Lord. Since then I've learnt to read; I couldn't rest till I could read it for myself. Oh, 'tis a glorious book is God's Bible." It was marvellous how that dear man had studied it, too. He had found out that "this same Jesus" is coming again, and he was watching longingly for that moment when His shout would be heard. But what rejoiced me so much was that the Lord Jesus was to him now a "living, bright reality." What a grand teacher he had, even the Spirit of God!

A RED INDIAN AND HIS BIBLE.—"Everything I have is in this book," exclaimed a Christian Sioux, when he was asked why he kept his Bible always beside him. "I like it near me, for I want to look in now and then. Words from it do me good. I was in the night a long time! but the sun has risen, and now I am in the light, and so I keep the book near me."

MR. CATLIN, in one of his published tracts, gives some awful cases of "swearers' prayers answered in judgment," one of which we quote:—"A drover, much addicted to swearing, one day fell and injured his right arm, so that it had to be taken off, at which he cursed and swore. Then he cursed his left arm, and wished it might 'rot.' Abscesses came, which caused him much pain, but *he only cursed the more*. He had frequent quarrels with his paramour on account of his drunken habits. I was passing their door one day when he said, 'If I get drunk again I hope I may break my —— neck.' He got drunk the next day, fell downstairs, dislocated his neck, and was carried to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, where he died in dreadful agony, both of body and of mind."

HALLELUJAH! Word of glory cast to earth from the Holy of holies! A fleck of spray flung from near the golden altar, where beat the waves of Jehovah's praise for ever and for ever. Much defiled and misused in these days, yet with what majesty it swells from the great congregation! Have we not felt on such occasions, in the overpowering joy of worship, as though our very life must rush out at the lips, and chant the hallelujah at His feet! What will the heavenly assembly be when we may know such rapture of worship on earth and still live?

"MEN reverse the words of Christ: they seek first the kingdom of earth and its vanities; and expect that heavenly things shall be added to them." "Some suppose that they can jump into the train with the devil and ride to the first station and get out, and be none the worse for it; but he amuses them, and the stations fly by, and at last they get to the terminus, which is RUIN."

LET US beware of giving up any first principle in theology. Let us not give up the great principle of plenary verbal inspiration because of apparent difficulties. The day may come when they will all be solved. In the meantime, we may rest assured that the difficulties which beset any other theory of inspiration are tenfold greater than any which beset our own.—*Canon Ryle.*

**THE POWER OF A TRACT.**—At a week-night service, an old man arose and made the following extraordinary confession: "Most of you people present know me well. I have been for twenty-six years clerk and sexton of this very parish, and have heard thousands of sermons in the church a few doors off. I was the founder of the day and Sunday schools, yet never knew myself as a lost sinner till I came to these meetings. Will you not pray for me? I want to be saved. It was a tract given me by that dear soul (pointing to Mrs. Catlin, now deceased) that first arrested my serious attention." The old man continued attending the services, and at length found "peace in believing."

A GLASS inkstand was placed on the table so that the sun's rays fell upon it. Brightly and cheerily, no doubt, they played upon its facets and angles; but that inkstand affected these beautiful sunbeams in such a way as to extract from them heat in sufficient force to set the table upon which it stood on fire, reducing it, and all it came in contact with, into ashes. What is there more beautiful than the sunbeams? How they cheer, and cherish, and inspire nature all around! Yet there are some objects which can convert this thing of beauty, and health, and life into a consuming fire. So there are moral characters which extract death out of life—transform the loving, life-giving gospel into an instrument of destruction; in short, cause the God of love to become to them a consuming fire, because they reject His grace!

IT IS STATED that the late Mr. Eddy, Chief Commissioner of Railways in New South Wales, and for many years previously in the service of the London and North-Western, just before he expired exclaimed, "Now then, get the staff; it's time to be away"—an expression not unfrequently addressed by the station-master to the guard of the outgoing train. If true, the story is as suggestive as it is pathetic.

"FAITH gets the most. Humility keeps the most. Love works the most." "Grace provides. Faith receives. Love obeys."

"FAITH. Its source, Eph. ii. 8; its object, Heb. xii. 2; its ground, Roman x. 17; its righteousness, Rom. iv. 13; its unity, Eph. iv. 13; its trial, 1 Peter i. 7; its end, 1 Peter i. 9."

A PIN manufactory, which makes one hundred pins in a minute, if kept at work night and day, would only make fifty-two million pins in a year. And the mill must work twenty thousand years, without stopping night or day, in order to turn out a billion. What a vast number, then, is a billion. And yet, when a billion of years shall have passed, eternity will but have begun!

AN ENGLISHMAN, hearing Phillips Brooks preach for the first time, complained that his words were almost unintelligible and his delivery hurried. "Yes," was the reply, "but there is so much of God's Spirit in his words that we should understand them if he spoke in Chinese."

THERE is a straight line running through life. On one side of it is the wrong side, on the other is the right side; everything is on one side or the other. There is no such thing as almost right. Almost right is always wrong; almost good is bad; almost true is an untruth—a lie—and almost saved is lost.

IF YOU WANT to teach, what is required is first, fulness of knowledge; secondly, lucidity of arranging and explaining that knowledge; thirdly, the freshness born of fresh study of the word of God.

## THE LORD'S SUPPER.

---

IN a former paper I drew attention to the Passover. As instituted in Egypt, it was *anticipative* and clearly so. It was kept in the wilderness by a redeemed people, and was *commemorative*. It was also kept after they had crossed the Jordan and were in the land of their possessions, but still as a *commemorative* feast. They were not only brought *out* of Egypt, but God had brought them *in* to the promised land, as He had said (Exod. vi. 6-8), and they kept the Passover, which reminded them of the night of judgment when they were screened from it by the blood of the lamb, and they ate it in haste with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, ready to start on their journey and learn deliverance by power, as they had experienced shelter by blood. That night God would never have them forget (Exod. xii. 14, 42).

As Christians we do not keep the Passover. That feast is entirely Jewish, and will again be kept by that nation when restored to their land (Ezek. xlv. 21). For us the Lord's Supper takes its place. The Passover was intended to take the mind of those who partook of it back to Egypt to that memorable night; the Lord's Supper carries the minds and hearts of those who intelligently partake of it back to the cross. The Passover, we know, was a type of Christ's death; the Supper also speaks to us of the same event. One pointed forward as a type, the other looks back to an accomplished fact. The Passover was for Israel their last meal ere they started from the place of judgment, Egypt, and is called a "Supper" (John xiii. 2); the Christian feast is also called a "Supper" (1 Cor. xi.), because it is for us the last meal of the day. Christ may come at any moment and catch us away. We announce His death in our feast, "until He come."

It is both interesting and instructive to see the different ways it is spoken of in the New Testament.

It was instituted on the night of the Lord's betrayal (1 Cor. xi. 23). He was about to be delivered into the hands of men ; His hour had come. It was also man's hour, and the power of darkness (Luke xxii. 53). And just at the conclusion of the Paschal Supper, after Judas had gone out to betray his Master (John xiii. 30), Jesus took the bread and wine, and blessed them, and instituted what was to be known ever after as "the Lord's Supper"—a feast to be kept as a commemorative service, till He comes again.

John does not speak of the Lord's Supper, but each of the other three evangelists does, and speaks of it in a different way, and, of course, in keeping with the character of each gospel ; and it is only when we put it all together, with the added revelation given to Paul, that we see the beauty, the fulness, and the perfection of the service which is to the true Christian the most blessed service this side of heaven's gate.

Matthew says, "And as they were eating, Jesus, having taken the bread and blessed, broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat ; this is My body. And having taken the cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it ; for this is My blood, that of the new covenant, that shed for many for remission of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 26-28, New Translation). Now here it is evident that the great thought set forth in it is the value of the blood ; therefore the cup occupies the prominent place. The bread is mentioned, of course, but merely the fact of what it set forth : "This is My body." But the cup speaks of much more. It speaks of Christ's blood : first, as the basis of the new covenant—that covenant which is not yet made, but will be made in a coming day "as regards the house of Israel and as regards the house of Judah" ; and secondly, "that shed for many for remission of sins." The new covenant, when made, will include "the forgiveness of sins" (Hebrews viii. 8-12). We see at once how suited is this account to the character of Matthew's gospel.

Mark, in his account, says: "And as they were eating, Jesus, having taken bread, when He had blessed, brake it, and gave it to them, and said, Take this; this is My body. And having taken the cup, when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank out of it. And He said to them, This is My blood, that of the new covenant, that shed for many" (Mark xiv. 22-24). Mark omits the words "for remission of sins." Here, again, it is manifest that the great thought before the mind of this evangelist as well as Matthew is *results* of Christ's death, and therefore the cup is still prominent. It is the blood of the new covenant, *i.e.*, the basis of it; and it was shed for many. Thus we see that both of these writers speak of the Lord's Supper in a similar way, and as *anticipative* of a work about to be accomplished by the One then in the midst of His disciples, and from which they and others also included in the "many" would derive eternal benefits; and it has in these two gospels a manifest and distinct Jewish aspect, though most certainly not confined to that now we have the light of a fuller revelation.

As Christians, we possess some of the blessings of the new covenant, though not made with us, nor have we anything to do with it. But we have "forgiveness of sins," which is one of its blessings, and that based on the death of Christ (Heb. x. 17). The disciples, however, were still Jews, though attached to a rejected Messiah, and who was about to lay in His death the foundation for a new covenant for the nation, whose hearts will then be changed, and who will be in the same condition of soul as those who partook of the Supper at its institution, and will recognise that all their blessings are based upon the blood of Christ. It seems self-evident, then, that it *must* have linked itself in the minds of the disciples with Jewish blessing, and that alone, whether for themselves or the nation, for they knew no other as yet, and the record

given by Matthew and Mark in great part confine it to that.

Luke, however, gives us what neither of the others does. "And having taken a loaf, when He had given thanks, He broke it, and gave it to them, saying, This is My body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of Me. In like manner also the cup after having supped, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood which is poured out for you" (Luke xxii. 19, 20).

Here, we see at once, it is not *results* of Christ's death that is the leading thought with Luke; but the Lord's love to the disciples, and His desire that they should not forget Him in the display of that love. "This is My body which is *given for you*." "This cup is the new covenant in My blood which is *shed for you*." "This do in *remembrance of Me*." Moreover, if Matthew and Mark speak of it as a service *anticipative* of something about to take place, Luke speaks of it as a *commemorative* service of what has taken place. They could not take the Supper *then* in *remembrance* of Him, when He was in their midst and before death. They could, and of course did, as each of the three evangelists tell us, partake of bread and wine there and then as anticipating what the blessed Lord was about to do for them on the cross. But we learn from Luke, and he alone of the three, that it was a service to be *continued* after the event was past. After the Lord was dead and risen, then they were to *remember* Him. We only *remember* events that are past, or persons or places *not* present. How beautifully in keeping with the wider scope of his gospel is the way that Luke tells of this blessed Supper of the Lord. How evident, too, that the fuller revelation of the Supper given from heaven to Paul is on the same lines as Luke's account.

After the first Passover in Egypt, no one could ever keep it in such form again, as no one could be in the same circumstances. After the first Lord's Supper



in Jerusalem, no one could partake of it in such form again, as no one could be in the same circumstances. It was anticipative in both. Ever after, both must be commemorative. Israel's surroundings might change, and they might be in the wilderness or in the land as to place; but the Passover itself never changed. Whenever it was partaken of, it was to carry their minds back to that night of judgment and shelter from it in Egypt, with all its sobering and solemnizing thoughts as to their state which called for that judgment, and the grace that provided the shelter from it. What a time for those who really understood it and entered into its significance.

The Lord's Supper does not change in its character. It is no longer anticipative, and no one can take it as the disciples did at its institution, as I have said. It is wholly commemorative now, and carries the mind and heart back to the cross, to that wondrous and blessed expression of the Lord's love which led Him into death, and all that death involved for God and for us. New and added truths, revealed subsequently to Paul, have their place and application to those who partake of it; and who would seek to belittle them? But they do not alter the character of the Supper itself, of which they partake. They would, no doubt, if apprehended in the Spirit's power, expand the thoughts of those partaking as to the wonderful *effects* of the Lord's death in bringing about such blessed results. But, after all, it is the heart's appreciation of the Person whose love carried Him into death on our behalf that is valued by the Lord, and which the Supper sets forth, and not so much the blessings which we derive from that death, precious and numerous though they be. "This do in remembrance of Me" is His word, and the desire of His heart.

It is greatly to be feared that much of the simplicity and consequent blessedness of this service, and which characterised what some might perhaps now call the ignorance of the early days of brethren, has been

lost, and the blessings have been put in the place of the Blessor, and the service is now characterised by thanksgivings for the wonderful place and blessing we have been brought into, rather than the wonderful Saviour whose love carried Him down under divine judgment and into death for us.

Then there is another thing. I do not think we can compare the *places* where the Passover was kept with where the saints eat the Lord's Supper. The former was kept in Egypt, and in the wilderness, and in the land. I do not think we can speak of the latter in that way. The *land* for the Christian is "the heavenly places," and certainly in the epistle to the Ephesians, where we are viewed as being there, there is no allusion to the Supper. Even when we take Paul's teaching in connection with it, and think of ourselves as "members of the body," and partaking of it as such, and which, of course, is Christian teaching as to it, the body as such is not in heaven, but on earth. *It* is not seated in Christ in heavenly places—*saints* are (Eph. i. 3 ; ii. 6). Not even as individual members of the body are we viewed as in the heavenlies. So that while all the blessed truths peculiar to Paul's teaching as "minister of the church" (Col. i. 24, 25) have their place in regard to those who eat the Supper, the eating of it is by us as here in this world—in the wilderness, we might say ; not as mere individuals, be it remembered, units, one having nothing to do with another ; but as members of One body, united to Him and to each other by the Holy Ghost, and whose hearts turn back in true affection to the cross where He laid down His life for us and we remember Him.

We now pass on to Acts ii., to the day of Pentecost, when Christianity commenced. Whether the disciples partook of the Supper between the Lord's resurrection and the day of Pentecost or not, when they met together on the first day of the week, we are not informed (John xx. 19). We do meet, however, with

this service after the Holy Ghost had come at Pentecost, but singularly, not called the Lord's Supper, but "the breaking of bread." In fact, Paul is the only writer who calls it by that name. There can be no question that Christianity had commenced, for the characteristic truth of it—viz., the Holy Ghost's presence on earth and in the believer—was an accomplished fact. He had come. The disciples, however, now numbering over three thousand, knew nothing as yet of teaching about "the body"; it had not been revealed. Still, they were indwelt by the Spirit. He was both *with* them and *in* them (Acts ii. 3, 4), according to the Lord's promise (John xiv. 17), and thus they were on Christian ground and in the Christian state, however ignorant of it. They were certainly no longer *Jews*. They had changed their *place* by being baptised unto Jesus Christ. All they could then *know* was that they were a new company in contrast to Jews and Gentiles, by the presence and indwelling of the Holy Ghost, who occupied their hearts in such a way with Christ that, in the energy of their first love, they broke bread *daily* in remembrance of Him (Acts ii. 42, 46). Ignorant though they were of Christian teaching, yet they were in the *enjoyment* of Christian blessings. They were at the Lord's Table, and they partook of the Lord's Supper, and remembered Him who died for them in the "breaking of bread." How blessedly real it was for those early Christians! His death was a thing of the past, and they knew it. Results in blessing flowing from that death had been preached, and they had received them. But it was not the *results* they remembered—they *enjoyed* those, and no doubt gave thanks for them. But they *remembered Him*, and what He suffered.

Is it not remarkable that in the only two places where it is mentioned in the Acts (chap. ii. and chap. xx.) it is spoken of as "the breaking of bread"? Might this not be because they were, as Jews, more or

less familiar with the idea of "breaking bread" in company with mourners for the dead? (Jer. xvi. 7, Revised Version). But when the teaching as to it is set forth by Paul, who received it from the Lord, and with added truth, he speaks of it as "the Lord's Supper" (1 Cor. xi. 20), negatively, at least, in that verse. He did not say they were not "breaking bread," because of the disorder among them, but "this is not to eat *the Lord's Supper*." It would thus appear to be spoken of and recognised in the clear light of Christian teaching as it was first instituted; that is, as "the Lord's Supper," and it is partaken of at "the Lord's Table" (1 Cor. x.). Indeed, it was not called or spoken of at its institution as the Lord's Supper, it is only spoken of as such by Paul, as I have said; and from him we gather it was such from its institution.

The term, "breaking of bread," has become the common way of speaking of it; not that we object to it, nor do we doubt that the term applies to it. But the question is, with the teaching of Paul, is not the true and Scriptural way now to call it "the Lord's Supper" rather than "the breaking of bread"? A fresh revelation of it was committed to Paul, as we are told in 1 Cor. xi. 23, and then it is we learn of its connection with the truth of "One body"; so that to be at the Lord's Table and partake of His Supper in a Scriptural way can only be now as members of that body, and not as mere saved individuals. Nor yet merely as a saved company, ignorant of Christian blessing, like the company in Acts ii., though loving the Lord, who died and is risen; but it *must* be as members of One body (1 Cor. x. 17), and this is most important for saints to-day.

Then there is another element connected with it which was not given at its institution, but in the special revelation to Paul, that is, "until He come." It is still in itself what it ever was for us, a commemorative service; but the Lord's coming again is *connected* with it now, and is set before us as its point of

termination. It is the last feast till He comes. His coming ends it. In glory we shall not partake of the feast, shall not need it; in fact, *cannot* do so, for we cannot *remember* Him, seeing we are there *with* Him. But, blessed be His name, we shall never forget His death, of which the Supper is the symbol, and which appeals to our heart's affections while here, and that death will be the theme of our eternal song in glory up there. Meanwhile we remember Him, and our souls go out in love to Him who told out His love to us in the sorrows and agonies of death.

We announce His death. We publish, as it were, the fact that He has died and all that death involves. In that simple yet most blessed and impressive service there is a voice, as it were, which speaks to us and to all, whether they hear and understand it or not. And God would have us know what is wrapped up in that death; not that we can ever know it in its fulness, but each according to his measure is privileged to enter into it.

What is it for God? What has He found in that death? What is it for the Lord Jesus Himself? What is it for us? What is it for the world? What is it for Satan? What is it for all heaven? What questions! Who could fully answer them? No one. At most, part answers only can be given. For God, it was the perfect devotedness of the beloved Son to do His will; "An offering and a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour." For Christ, it was the gaining the object of His affections and the display of His love to His Father and us. For us, it is the basis of all our blessings and hopes for time and eternity. For the world, it is the witness of its guilt in rejecting Him, and its death knell, for He is risen and coming again. For Satan, it is the witness of His complete defeat. And for all heaven to wonder and adore, as they view the perfection of the sacrifice of that perfect One who offered Himself. And how long is the feast to continue? "Until He come." Till His return, and no

longer. We look *back* to His first coming and all its blessed results. We look *forward* to His second coming and all its blessed results.

To sum up, then, we have set forth in the Lord's supper—(1) The death of our blessed and adorable Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, His blood being the basis of the new covenant ; (2) the blood that was shed for many ; (3) the blood that was shed for remission of sins ; (4) His body given and His blood shed for us ; (5) the outward expression of the communion of the members of His body ; (6) the announcing of His death ; (7) His coming again. How much is taken in ! What wonderful results of His death are here set forth, and yet not all of them ; there is much more. But, surely, these are wonderful and far reaching. It speaks of a new covenant with the nation of Israel. It tells of a means of blessing for members of the human family, for "many," *i.e.*, the many who avail themselves of it. It makes known to such the remission of sins. It speaks of His wonderful love to His own. It expresses the communion of the members of His body, who announce His death, and wait for His coming again. How full and blessed is all this.

Already "the night is far spent." He may be here at any moment. Then the morning will break and the shadows flee away, and the day of glory commence which knows no evening, and consequently has no Supper, but which admits of no forgetfulness of the perfect sacrifice of Him who is the everlasting lover of our souls, and of whose death the Supper speaks. It has fitted us to be in the Father's house, with and like Christ for ever and ever, to whom our song of praise shall arise : "Unto Him that loveth us, and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood, . . . unto Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

*New Zealand.*

WILLIAM EASTON.

## JOSHUA ; JUDGES ; RUTH.

---

GOD reveals Himself at various times, and as it pleases Him. It may be by words, or it may be by His acts ; but, whatever be the manner, it sets Him before us in characters with which it behoves us to be acquainted. Further, we may say that He reveals Himself in characters suited to the times, and fitted to minister instruction to His people. A few remarks in harmony with this we would make on the three canonical books mentioned at the head of this paper.

With the death of Moses, the revelation of the law in its restricted sense came to an end. We say in its *restricted* sense, for since the Hebrew term, *the law*, means *teaching*, we find it used in places in a much wider sense than just comprising the Pentateuch. With the death of Moses, however, the Pentateuch ended. The law in its restricted sense given to Israel was complete. The law-giver had died. God, indeed, reserved to Himself the right to communicate with His people when and how He chose ; but the covenants made with His people, on the observance of which national blessing could be enjoyed and continued, had been communicated ere Moses left this scene. Joshua, therefore, who had lived for long when revelations to Moses were frequent, outlived the law-giver, and found himself in a day when divine communications were made direct to him, and also through the medium of the high priest (Numbers xxvii. 21), furnishing directions for the then present guidance of the people, but not adding one sentence to the statutes and judgments already made known. These were comprised in a book written before the death of Moses (Deut. xxxi. 9, 24-26), known and extant in the life of Joshua (Josh. i. 8, viii. 31, xxiii. 6, and xxiv. 26), being called by him "the book of the law of Moses" (xxiii. 6), as given through Moses, but

also "the law of God" (xxiv. 26), as proceeding from the Divine Being.

Later on in the people's history there commenced the school of the prophets. This dated from, and began with, Samuel. The priesthood then corrupt, that channel of divine communication choked, God opened up, in His sovereignty, a new one, which continued to exist in Israel, off and on, to the close of the Old Testament canon, and was revived for a brief season in the person of John the Baptist ere *the* Prophet appeared—the Lord Jesus Christ—to whom the people were to hearken in all that He would say to them (Deut. xviii. 15-19).

Now, the three books of *Joshua*, *Judges*, and *Ruth* fill up the interval between the death of Moses and the commencement of the school of the prophets. To Joshua God spoke a good deal at the outset. In Judges (ii.) He sent an angel. To Gideon there came One who was the Lord Himself (vi. 14). To Manoah and to his wife it seems to have been the same (xiii. 18-22). We say that on the authority of the angel's answer about His name, "It is secret," or "wonderful." Compare with that Isaiah ix. 6, where the Lord is called "Wonderful." Then, too, Manoah said, "We have seen God" (Judges xiii. 22). And the omission of "angel" in ver. 19 would tend to strengthen the supposition that it was the Lord Himself. On other occasions human agency was employed to indicate the divine mind, as Deborah the prophetess (iv. 6, 7), and perhaps also an answer through the high priest by Urim and Thummim (x. 11-14). But all these were special interpositions of God, the God of Israel, to meet the people at the moment. In Ruth we meet with no prophet, nor any divine communication whatever. But in each book we have something of the character of God brought out. To this we would now turn.

In Joshua i. 3 God tells His servant that He would do for Israel what He said to Moses. He would give



them the land. The first eleven chapters record how that was effected. The walls of Jericho fell down before the ark of the Lord of Hosts ; the Amorite confederacy was completely defeated in the south (x.) ; and the Canaanite host under Jabin of Hazor melted away like snow on the water (xi.) ; all in fulfilment of God's word to Moses, as is referred to in xi. 23. Then the partition of the land into tribal portions took place, and the Levites got the cities that were to be allotted to them. After that we read : "And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which He swore to give unto their fathers ; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that He swore unto their fathers : and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them ; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel ; all came to pass " (xxi. 43-45).

God's *faithfulness* to His word is thus illustrated by this book. We read of wonderful interpositions, beginning with the passage of the Jordan ; but all carried out to fulfil God's word, to make good His oath to their fathers. And of this a contemporary was witness, even Joshua, who, addressing the people near the close of his eventful life, could say, in the hearing of those who must have corroborated it, or, if it had not been true, could have contradicted it : "Ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you ; all hath come to pass, and not one thing hath failed thereof " (xxiii. 14). Israel had trusted to their own strength against Ai, and failed (vii.). They had trusted to their wisdom in the matter of the Gibeonites, and learned their folly (ix.). But God never failed in His word—what He had sworn He fulfilled. So we might write on the face of this book *faithfulness*, as the character of God which it illustrates. He was faithful, and that to those who never could have

deserved it. This last statement the book of *Judges* will confirm. To it we next turn.

Joshua had died. Eleazar, too, has his death recorded at the close of the book of Joshua. Soon, very soon, did the people forget God. During the lifetime of Othniel, Caleb's younger brother, that departure had begun. And whilst Phineas, Aaron's grandson, was high priest sad evils were rife (Judges xx. 28). So if the book of Joshua attests the faithfulness of the Lord, that of Judges witnesses to the unfaithfulness of the people. Of that God could not be unmindful. Chastisement, therefore, was administered time after time. The sacred word thus epitomizes it:—"There arose another generation which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim (*i.e.*, male divinities): and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and He sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed. Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord; *but* they did not so. And when the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord was with

the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge : for it repented the Lord because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them : they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way" (Judges ii. 10-19). The book, from chapters iii. to xvi., amplifies this succinct account, detailing several invasions of enemies, and the instruments used by God to deliver His people, as Othniel, Ehud, Barak, Gideon, and Jephthah. These wrought deliverances for the people. Under Ehud, Barak, Gideon, and Jephthah, Moab, Jabin, Midian, and Ammon were subdued ; whilst Shamgar and Samson dealt heavy blows personally against the Philistines.

Grievous, at times, became the people's condition. Joshua had forewarned them of that which they might expect—a warning which extended in its statement to the catastrophe of the Babylonish captivity ; and Gideon, threshing wheat by a wine-press to hide it from the Midianites, tells us to what a state of terror and enforced subjection they were in his day reduced (vi. 11) ; and the words of the men of Judah to Samson (xv. 11) attest how completely the nation had been cowed.

Crying, however, to God as they did (iii. 9, 15 ; iv. 3 ; vi. 7 ; x. 10-15), He heard them, and each time delivered them. Yet they sinned afresh ; for no disaster, no chastening, made them finally change their ways. No deliverance acted on them to purge them for any length of time from idolatry. This comes out in the days of Jephthah, their state at that time being thus described : They "served Baalim, and Ashtaroth (male and female divinities), and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of

Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the Lord, and served not Him" (Judges x. 6). The people, whose special calling was to be the witness on earth for the One true God, were found worshipping many gods, even the idols of the different nations around them—idols which had proved powerless to protect their votaries when the Lord fought for Israel. "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. vi. 4), had been the word to them by Moses. Their answer, virtually, in the days of Jephthah was: "Our gods are many." How had they fallen! The Mosaic ritual and the Aaronic priesthood failed to keep them true to their God.

Chastisement upon chastisement, as we have said, came upon them, God being obliged to deal in government till, the people crying to the Lord, He in pity raised up deliverer after deliverer. *Government and grace*, then, described His dealings with the nation down to the Philistine oppression, which carries on into the first book of Samuel, ere it was checked by those enemies being subdued under Samuel at Ebenezer (1 Sam. vii. 13). Enemies from without were Chushan-rishathaim, Moab, Midian, and Ammon. Enemies from within were Jabin, King of Hazor, and the Philistines. These were the scourges allowed to chastise them. But who could deliver them in any of these troubles? God had each time an instrument, and in one way or another always made that plain. How interesting to mark that. God had His servants fitted for the purpose, and invariably, and generally effectively, they did their work.

Here we must notice a difference between *delivering* from and *subduing* the enemies. For the latter to be effected, the people, or some of them, worked with the judge. Shamgar and Samson were to deliver Israel (Judges iii. 31 ; xiii. 5) ; but, working alone, the Philistines were not subdued. On the other hand, the Canaanites under Jabin, the Moabites under

Eglon, the Midianites under Zebah and Zalmunna, and the Ammonites under their king, were respectively subdued (Judges iii. 30 ; iv. 23 ; viii. 28 ; xi. 33). May it not in principle be the same now? The people must take part in the conflict if the enemy is to be really subdued.

On the pages of the book of Judges, then, we may write *government and grace*. These were the displays of God's dealings with His people as a nation, exhibiting characteristics of the Divine Being. He is the moral governor ; He is gracious. We have said with *His people*, for they were and are an elect nation. With individuals in the book we see divine government in exercise, but not grace. Abimelech lost his life by a stone from the wall (ix. 53). Micah lost his images, which had cost his mother, so we read, two hundred shekels of silver (xviii.), a good sum for her to expend. And lastly, Gibeah of Benjamin was burnt, and all in the city were destroyed, being smitten with the edge of the sword (xx.). But the tribe of Benjamin, though decimated indeed, was not blotted out of existence. It formed an integral part of the select nation.

We pass on to the book of *Ruth*, and ask what is specially characteristic of God in that history.

The book stands out in striking contrast to the national declension set forth in Judges. It shows us that there were godly ones in Israel, leading a quiet life, and testifying by that life that they feared the Lord. All were not corrupt. All were not idolaters in the days when the judge ruled ; and though the character of the times is described in Judges as every man doing that which was right in his own eyes, there were some godly souls in Israel, respected too by their neighbours and fellow citizens. We refer to Boaz. But our point with the history, at present, is the proof it affords of God ordering events for the coming of His Son, the woman's Seed. That was ever in remembrance before Him.

It is interesting to mark this. The need of the Lord's atoning death known from eternity by God, He ever worked and ordered events, that His gracious purpose through that should not be frustrated. Had the human race perished at the flood, that Seed would never have appeared. But amidst abounding wickedness and lawlessness, God preserved one man, even Noah (Gen. vi. 9 ; vii. 1), whom He would in righteousness exempt from that destruction, and saved his family as connected with him. Then twice over in Abraham's life, before Isaac was born, God watched over Sarah, when taken into Pharaoh's house, and into that also of Abimelech ; so that the Seed promised to Abraham should in due time appear. Abraham, by his weakness, unwittingly imperilled the salvation of men. God, thinking of their salvation, delivered Sarah from the false position in which the patriarch had placed her.

Later on, the attempt of Pharaoh to destroy all the male children of Israel, which seemed to him doubtless politically wise, was an effort of the enemy, we can see, to frustrate God's design about the woman's Seed. But the midwives fearing God, that purpose was defeated, and the decree to drown all the male children, issued subsequently, failed, too, in its purpose.

And now, as we reach the book of Ruth and peruse it to its close, we learn of the unchanging purpose of God. He was thinking of the coming One. The actors and spectators of that day could not, of course, understand that. All seemed natural in the history of Ruth, and of Boaz acting the kinsman's part. Yet all was being ordered for the appearance in due time of the Saviour of the world.

A famine made Elimelech, with his wife, Naomi, and their two sons, move into Moab. There disaster upon disaster followed Naomi. She went out full ; she came back empty. Naomi was her name, which meant *pleasant*. She called herself on her return to

Bethlehem Marah, *i.e.*, *bitter*. A widow, and childless too, she re-entered her city with only one earthly comfort—her daughter-in-law, Ruth. Sorrow had dogged her steps, but joy was to crown her last days. God's dealings with her must have seemed mysterious. Why her sorrow? Why all that bereavement? They formed part of God's ways in connection with the genealogy of the Lord. As with Naomi, so with individuals now, saints of God, the divine purposes in connection with them cannot always be seen at once. Their history really forms part of the great plan working out for the glory of God. So Naomi's vicissitudes may speak to many a one, and counsel confidence in God, whilst waiting the full development of His purposes.

With Ruth she returned. Two widows entered Bethlehem. Ruth became the wife of Boaz, and in due time bare Obed. A joy this was to the widowed Naomi, who, of course, could see nothing beyond the birth of that child. But we learn that God, ever thinking of the blessing of men, was providing for the coming of the Saviour of the world, Obed turning out to be in the direct line of the Lord's ancestry. God allowed the famine, He permitted those bereavements to come about, that Ruth—destined in the divine purpose to be the mother of Obed, David's grandfather—should come on the scene. So, amid all the failure of the people, as recorded in Judges, God was steadily working for the advent of His Son.

These three books, then, named at the head of this article, witness each in its own way about God. His *faithfulness* is manifested in Joshua. His *righteous dealing in government* is displayed in Judges. His *undeviating purpose* to provide a Saviour for sinners is illustrated by the book of Ruth. And now He is working, and marshalling the events which will culminate in the return of the Lord in power to reign.

C. E. S.

## THE RAPTURE.

---

THERE are three distinctive things which come to pass when our beloved Lord returns. I assume that we are all looking for Him with longing hearts, and while in loving expectancy of His advent are animated by the imminence of it. What then are these three things? I name them in their spiritual order: 1, We shall see Him; 2, we shall be with Him; and 3, we shall be like Him. Each of these, as I hope to show, has its practical bearing. Let us consider them separately.

The first of these things is the revelation to our new and newly-opened eyes of His glory and His beauty. David wrote, a millenium before His first coming, "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," &c. And Zechariah 500 years later exclaimed, "How great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!" But neither the Psalmist nor the Prophet had seen or could have seen so ravishing a sight as shall meet our eyes in the very first moment of the Rapture. To apostate Israel He had no form nor comeliness, no beauty that they should desire Him. His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men (Isaiah lii. 14, liii. 2). Yet, as the Spirit of God has put upon record, He was never less than the chiefest among ten thousand. "His mouth is most sweet; yea, He is altogether lovely" (Song of S. v. 10-16). As also said the Psalmist, "Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into Thy lips" (Psalm xlv. 2). And Isaiah encouraged the hearts of the faithful remnant in Israel, "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty" (Is. xxxiii. 17). Israel beheld Aaron, her high priest, in robes of beauty and of glory—how much more shall we behold our High Priest resplen-



dant and transcendant in glory and beauty, when, as John says, we "see Him as He is." His own word was, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am ; that they may *behold My glory*," &c.

" Lord Jesus ! when we think of Thee,  
Of all Thy love and grace,  
Our spirits long, and fain would see  
Thy beauty face to face.

" Blest Saviour, keep our spirits stayed  
Hard following after Thee,  
Till we in robes of white arrayed  
Thy face in glory see."

Now I argue that he whose heart is earnestly and ardently desiring to see his Lord will covet to see as much of Him as is possible with the limitations under which we each of us at present groan. The desire to see Him becomes a stimulating incentive to faith. And to faith it is granted. Peter writes : " Whom having not seen, ye love ; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet *believing*, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Also the Lord said, " Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have *believed*." In each of these cases faith supplies what would otherwise be lacking, and links the heart with its treasure in heaven. The Lord said to His disciples, " Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more ; but ye *see Me* " (John xiv. 19) ; and the writer of the Hebrews (ii. 9) says, " *We see Jesus*, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, *crowned with glory and honour*." Faith thus finds a present answer, our privilege being even here and even now, to behold the glory of the Lord with unveiled face ! (2 Cor. iii. 18). The eyes of our heart being enlightened, may the eyes of our faith never grow dim while we wait the higher blessedness of seeing Him not as He was in humiliation, but " as

He is"—even in all the beauty and the glory which centre in His Person for ever.

But a further blessedness awaits us. (2.) We are to 'be *with Him*. How often and how deeply have our hearts regaled themselves with that touching and tender word of the Lord on the night in which He was betrayed, "I go to 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). As also He afterwards said to His Father, "I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me *be with Me*."

"Yea, with Him shall our rest be on high,  
When in holiness bright we sit down,  
In the joy of His love ever nigh,  
In the place that His presence shall crown."

We all want the company of those whom we love, and especially those for whom we have made great sacrifices. But who shall tell His love to us, who shall sum up the magnitude of His sacrifice for our sakes—His life, His blood, Himself? Therefore He wants us to be *with Him*, and He has prepared and provided for this. He has, as it were, put the Father's house in order for our reception, and He knows just exactly where He will make us sit down to meat, ere He comes forth to serve us in an eternal service. Cold and careless, yea, and disloyal too, must our hearts be if they do not leap with joy at the anticipation of being with Him, not where He was, but *where He is*.

"O blessed home! But such His love  
That He must bring us there,  
To fill that home, to be with Him,  
And all His glory share."

Now what is the practical answer to this at present? I answer in one word, communion. If I want to be with Him, as much as is possible I shall be with Him now, provision for which is found in "the communion

of the Holy Ghost." By His indwelling are we united to the Head in heaven, and all that is of Him is ministered unto us. By Him is our fellowship one with another established and maintained ; above all our fellowship with the Father and with the Son. " Abide in Me, and I in you." Thus the desire to be with Him at His coming induces, and conduces to, communion as here granted unto us, and which all who are truly spiritual gratefully cultivate on the way home to its full fruition *where He is*.

(3.) Yet a greater blessedness have we before us ! We might see Him and not be with Him, and we might be with Him and yet not be like Him, had it been so ordered ; but divine grace has ordained that in the selfsame moment that we see Him we shall be with Him, be welcomed into His presence for ever, and beyond this, that, by the operation of His mighty power (Phil. iii. 21), we shall instantaneously put on the glorified body ; and thus body, soul, and spirit will be brought into conformity, perfect and everlasting conformity, to Him who at the infinite cost of His mighty sacrifice has won all this for us, and who in the patience of His grace is waiting to bring it to pass.

From Romans viii. 29, 30 we learn that we are God's called ones according to His eternal purpose, everlastingly foreknown, and predestinated according to divine counsels. But predestinated unto what ? Not, I answer, unto what we are, but unto what we *are not*—"to be conformed to the image of His Son." That is the grand and the final consummation of our heart's desire. Of such a work nature supplies no emblem ; to such a transformation earth finds no parallel. Well may the Apostle say, " It has not yet been manifested what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him as He is."

" Like Him ! O grace supreme !  
Like Him before Thy face,

## THE RAPTURE.

Like Him to know that glory beam  
Unhindered face to face."

And is it possible for us to render a practical answer to day to this culmination of blessedness? Yes, this also the word supplies: "Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (John iii. 3). It would be idle, yea it would be profane, to profess a deep and devout desire to be changed into His likeness at His coming, and to go on in a careless, worldly way during His absence. He who wants to be like Him, then, authenticates the reality of his desire by following His steps. "For their sakes," said the Lord, "I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." Only in the path of holy separation to His Name and to His glory can we consistently and adequately express that we covet conformity to Him.

"Like Him in faith, in meekness, love,  
In every beauteous grace ;  
From glory unto glory changed,  
Till we behold His face."

Only by beholding the glory of the Lord with unveiled face are we transformed into the same image ; only, that is, according to the measure or degree in which we see Him now, do we become like Him ; but the moment is hastening on when every trace of disparity shall disappear, and we shall exult in the full attainment of His likeness when He shall be manifested as the First-born among many brethren. God's eternal purpose as given in that sublime passage in Romans vii. 29, 30 will be fulfilled. Then for us and for ever will death be swallowed up in victory, mortality "swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. v. 4). For in that moment, death and mortality will for all the heavenly saints be eternally superseded by life for evermore.

“ All taint of sin shall be removed,  
 All evil done away ;  
 And we shall dwell with God's Belov'd  
 Through God's eternal day ! ”

More might be added as to the blessedness of also *hearing His voice*, &c., but enough has been given to lead our souls into the practical results which should be found of that blessed hope which grace has granted to the saints. May our hearts be responsive to what His word unfolds to us of this precious subject. The outgoings of His heart are ever towards us. May the outgoings of our hearts be truly towards Him.

---

## NOTES ON FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

---

“ BEHOLD what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God : and such we are. For this cause the world knoweth us not because it knew Him not ” (chap. iii. 1, R. V.). Do I want to know the *measure* of God's love ? or shall I rather say, Do I want a proof of its being immeasurable ? I find it in His having “ so loved the world ” as to give His Son, His only begotten and eternally beloved Son, to suffer and to die.

But this is another thing. It is here the Father's love to His saints ; the *manner* of that love ; by which we understand the quality and character of it, also, the method or mode of its suited expression. In sovereign grace we have been constituted by divine calling a divinely related family—the children of God. We have been called into family ties with God—ever to hold and to occupy an immutable relationship directly from Him, and collaterally one with another as beloved children of the Father. So says our apostle further on (v. 1), “ Whosoever loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him.” Well may

we exclaim, "Blessed bonds that unite all the *children* of God"—the bonds of parental love, the Father's complacent delight in the affections of His children ; and this enjoyed by them in the unction and power of the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of adoption dwelling in them.

We are not then here introduced into those circles of interest into which Paul conducts us, the Church of God and the new creation, but as with a bugle note the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God, cries to the saints, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed," &c. Gentiles had never possessed such a relationship to God, and Israel, as such, had never known it—but it has been "*bestowed upon us.*" The Father's heart yearns over His children, and He seeks that we should enter into, with love and joy and wonder, that sweet and holy intimacy of divine affection which inseparably belongs to this high and holy and happy relationship ; and moreover, "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God" (Rom. viii. 16). We have then the present effect as to the world, "For this cause the world knoweth us not because it knew Him not" (verse 1). The apostle's heart recalls the eternal Son of the Father, as to whom his testimony had been (John i. 10). "He was in the world, and the world knew Him not." So here, having become God's children, we are also, like our Master, ignored by the world—it knoweth us not ! "The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord" (Mat. x. 24).

The apostle proceeds, and how emphatic is the word, "*Beloved, now are we children of God.*" He has established our title for eternity to this relationship, and he now looks onward to the sequence of it in glory. "It is not yet made manifest what we shall be." The time for its display has not come yet, "the revealing of the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 19). Yet is there no uncertainty : "We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see

Him even as He is." Let me remark now that the hope here is not exactly that of the Lord's coming, but the specific result of it in conformity to His likeness. How sweet and how comforting it is to every saint whose affections are true and ardent towards his beloved Lord, that we are going to be so speedily, and so certainly, and so perfectly LIKE HIM. How the hope of seeing Him is deepened and quickened in our souls as we think of the tides of glory which will roll in for Christ as each of His saints exchanges his body of humiliation for one of glory ! Each, perfectly and for ever, arrayed in all the beauty of our glorified Lord.

Mr. Darby has beautifully given expression to this in these lines :—

" And is it so ! I shall be like Thy Son !  
Is this the grace which He for me has won !  
Father of glory, thought beyond all thought,  
In glory to His own blest likeness brought !

Nor I alone, Thy loved ones all, complete  
In glory round Thee there with joy shall meet,  
All like Thee, for Thy glory like Thee, Lord,  
Object supreme of all, by all adored ! "

Then there follows the practical result of this in the meantime, " Every one that hath this hope set on Him purifieth himself even as He is pure." This becomes a test, then, for our souls. It is in the nature of things impossible that I can ardently desire to be like my Lord in glory, and to this end be waiting and watching to see Him as He is, and yet be going along carelessly day by day—not practically purifying myself from what is contrary to His Name and glory. Did He not say, " For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth " ? (John xvii. 19).

Then sin is affirmed to be lawlessness—*not* the transgression of the law, which is an altogether

unwarrantable gloss upon Scripture that carries its own refutation. Sins and sin are treated and traced to their source. The love of God, divine love, was displayed in Christ's laying down His life for us, "and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (ver. 16). As sin goes far beyond the transgression of the law, so divine love working in us should go far beyond what the law demanded, which never required of an Israelite that he should lay down his life for his brethren. The love we have to God will find its proof in a divine similitude of His love to us. We shall love one another (compare John xv. 12) not "in word, neither in tongue ; but in deed and in truth" (verse 18). Confidence toward God, answers to prayer, obedience to His commandments, brotherly love and the sweets of communion witnessed by the Spirit of God bring our chapter to its close. The Lord grant that its salutary and weighty lessons may mould and fashion our souls to answer to His will concerning us.

---

## A FAVOURITE OLD HYMN.

---

If Jesus is yours, you have a true Friend  
 Whose goodness endures the same to the end ;  
 Your tempers may vary, your comforts decline,  
 You cannot miscarry, your aid is divine !

Be fervent in love, and cast off all fear,  
 Your hearts are above, your treasures are there ;  
 When fiery temptations encompass you round,  
 The sweet consolations of Jesus abound !

Then who shall advance the song of the Lamb ?  
 Can angels enhance the worth of His Name ?  
 Let every believer incessantly praise  
 The bountiful Giver of glory and grace !

ANON.



**THE POPE**, in his discourse delivered lately at St. Peter's, Rome, said :—"It is useless to hide the fact that the ruin of religion accomplished with design has opened the way to moral and material ruin as well. Not only justice, therefore, but political common sense demands that those who are responsible should retrace their steps, restore religion to the honour in which it was held, and approach with confidence and without suspicion him who holds from God the supreme religious authority ; for the words of eternal life, of which the Pope is dispenser, have the virtue of rendering prosperous even this our mortal existence."

**IN A** certain parish contiguous to the district in which Duncan Matheson, the Scottish evangelist, laboured, the minister was one day catechising the people, and put to a woman, noted for the then rare qualities of earnestness and zeal, the question, "How many persons are there in the Godhead?" To the astonishment of all present, she replied, "There are TWO persons in the Godhead—the Father and the Son." Again the minister put the question, and this time with a caution. The same answer was given. "You see," said the parson, turning pompously to his elders, and glancing round upon the people, "you see what comes of highflown zeal and hypocritical pretence. This woman thinks to teach others, and herself is more ignorant than a child. What gross ignorance ! Woman, don't you know that the correct answer is, There are THREE persons in the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," &c. ? "Sir," replied the woman, "I ken verra weel that the catechism says sae, but whether am I to believe, the catechism or yerself ? We hear you name the Father, an' sometimes, but nae often, ye mak mention o' the Son, but wha ever heard you speak about the Holy Ghost ? 'Deed, sir, ye never sae muckle as tould us whether there be ony Holy Ghost, lat alone oor need o' His grace." The minister stood rebuked, and the people went away home to discuss and think.

**LET** the following incident impress upon you the importance of believing in Christ NOW, while your eyes rest on these lines. "Won't you get the matter settled to-night?" were the words addressed to a man at the close of a gospel meeting, by his friend who had brought him there ; but no ! he would not have this solemn question settled then. His friend was uneasy about him, and so asked a second time, "Won't you get the matter settled to-night?" as he went after him towards the door near to which the man had moved and sat down ; but still he adhered to his dreadful decision. His friend followed him out, and inquired for the third time very earnestly, "Won't you get the matter settled TO-NIGHT?" By this time he was angry, and said, "I tell you *not to night*, thank you," and so went home ; but an hour after all his opportunities had fled for ever, for the awful intelligence was brought back that the man was dead ! What madness to be going to eternity with an unsaved soul !—R. G.

**DOCTRINE AND PRECEPT.**—How sweet would gospel doctrine be if gospel precepts were observed. You do not enjoy the Word, because you are out of health and your spiritual appetite is impaired. The high and heavenly joys of the divine life shall be denied to you if you live at a distance from your God ; but if you keep close to Him, you shall have the finest of the wheat, and you shall be satisfied with honey out of the rock.—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

**A NON-HEBREW JEWISH BIBLE.**—It is not generally understood that though all Jews are able to *read* Hebrew, the great masses of uneducated Jews do not *understand* it. The only language with which they are really familiar is a sort of patois which is known as the Judæo-German dialect or yiddish. In England there is literally nothing printed for them in their own language, except translations of atheistic and socialist writings. It has been put into the heart of Mr. Bergmann, of the London City Mission, to give his poor Jewish brethren the Holy Scriptures in this their own language, which they can read and understand. It is hoped that an edition of 10,000 copies will soon be issued. "When, some time ago," writes Mr. Bergmann, "I showed a proof copy of the Pentateuch to a learned Jew, he was so overjoyed that he took off his skull-cap (which all pious Jews wear), and, kissing my hand, said: 'That will indeed be a great boon to our Jewish people all over the world.'"

**THE VERY** soul of the doctrine of atonement is its substitutionary character; that taken away, the whole circle of New Testament phraseology—not only in the English translation, but in the original—would require to be fundamentally changed; it is adapted to a vicarious intervention, and to no other.

**GEN. XLIX. 10.**—The sceptre may be no more than the *tribal* symbol; and if this be the sense, Judah was thus kept till Shiloh, the Prince of Peace, came and was rejected, when in due time the place was lost, till He come again: then, and not before, the gathering or obedience of the peoples shall be unto Him. If it mean one entitled to royal sway in Zion, this also is true. So the line of David through Solomon went on to Jesus, as Matt. i. shows; and in Him dead, risen, and glorified, it abides, to be made good when God's time comes.

**LONG VISITS,** long stories, long essays, long exhortations, and long prayers seldom profit those who have to do with them. Life is short. Time is short. Moments are precious. Learn to condense, abridge, and intensify. We can bear things that are dull, if they are only short. We can endure many an ache and ill, if it is over soon; while even pleasure grows insipid, and pain intolerable, if they are protracted beyond the limits of reason and convenience. Learn to be short. In making a statement, lop off branches; stick to the main facts in your case. If you pray, ask for what you believe you will receive, and get through; if you speak, tell your message and hold your peace; if you write, boil down two sentences into one, and three words into two. Always, when practicable, avoid lengthiness—learn to be short.

**ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.**—A venerable minister, with compassionate earnestness, once preached a sermon upon eternal punishment. On the next day, some thoughtless men agreed that one of their number should go to him, and, if possible, draw him into a discussion. He went accordingly, and began the conversation, saying, "I believe there is a small dispute between you and me, and I thought that I would call this morning and try to settle it." "Ah!" said the good man, "what is it?" "Why," he replied, "you say that the woe of the finally impenitent will be eternal, and I do not think it will." "Oh, if that is all," he answered, "there is no dispute between you and me. If you turn to Matthew xxv. 26, you will find that the dispute is between you and the Lord Jesus Christ, and I advise you to go immediately and settle it with Him."

“AND THEY SHALL SEE HIS FACE, AND  
HIS NAME SHALL BE ON THEIR FORE-  
HEADS” (*Rev.* xxii. 4).

---

LORD, I care not for riches,  
Neither silver nor gold,  
I would make sure of heaven,  
I would enter the fold.  
In the book of Thy kingdom,  
With its pages so fair,  
Tell me, Jesus, my Saviour,  
Is my name written there?

Yes, my name's written there On the page white and fair,  
In the book of Thy kingdom, My name's written there.

Lord, my sins they were many,  
Like the sands of the sea ;  
But Thy blood, O my Saviour,  
Is sufficient for me.  
For Thy promise is written  
In bright letters that glow,  
“Though your sins be as scarlet,  
I will make them like snow.”

Yes, my name's written there On the page white and fair,  
In the book of Thy kingdom, My name's written there.

Oh, that beautiful city,  
With its mansions of light,  
With its glorified beings  
In pure garments of white.  
Where no evil thing cometh  
To despoil what is fair ;  
Where the angels are watching,  
My name's written there.

Yes, my name's written there On the page white and fair,  
In the book of Thy kingdom, My name's written there.

—*Altered.*

## NICODEMUS.—*John* iii., vii., xix.

---

THERE was an interval between the bite of the fiery serpent and the death of the victim. That interval was granted in grace, that the Israelite who had been bitten might look on the serpent of brass and live. This interval may have been longer in some cases than in others. We cannot say. But we know it is so in the analogy or allegory. Many sinners have their lives lengthened out in mercy, that if not in youth, yet in age, they may look to Jesus and live.

The tower in Siloam did not fall on all who were then dwelling in Jerusalem ; the survivors are warned to use the longer time in mercy afforded them. So, some of the bitten Israelites may have looked more immediately and at once, after the bite, than others. Again we cannot say. But we know it is so in the analogy. Some of us have been slow to look to Jesus, even after we have felt the venom of the old serpent's bite ; others make short work of it—as is the common case under the operation of God upon souls at this present time. As one has lately said : “ What in ordinary cases is spread over months and years, is now compressed into an instant. Men comprehend at once that they are lost, and that the Lord is all they need. It is only a look—a cry—an act of reliance—and the day dawns upon them, and their peace begins to flow as a river.”

It is not, however, with Nicodemus after this manner. Nicodemus was long ere he looked. The Lord lets him know in the early time of *John* iii. that he had been bitten, and must look, but he does not look till the distant day of *John* xix.

According to cases more generally recorded in the Gospels, the entrance of souls into light and liberty was rapid. Zaccheus and the dying thief, the Samaritan woman, Peter, and Matthew the publican took but little time to accomplish the journey from

darkness to light. We have, however, instances of a slow and gradual process also. The *spirit* of Nathanael may have been under the shade and over-casting of the fig-tree for years. Lydia may have resorted with a religious but unsettled soul to "the place where prayer was wont to be made," again and again ; and Cornelius may have had his fasts, and devotions, and prayers in long succession. We cannot say ; all this may have been so under pressure of soul-trouble. But we can say—for it is marked under our eye—that the journey which Nicodemus took was but tardy and was lengthened.

He was among those in Jerusalem who had been attracted by the miracles which the Lord was working (John ii. 23 ; iii. 2). This attraction was felt by him. But there was, I am sure, another feeling known to him. He was uneasy in his soul. This separated him.\* I do not say that this uneasiness was the *commanding* affection. I do not believe it was. Had it been so, he would not have come to the Lord as an inquirer after knowledge merely. When conviction was the commanding thing in the soul of Peter, he fell down before Jesus. This did not Nicodemus. Still, I doubt not, light, which disturbs the easy sleep of nature, had penetrated his spirit. Two facts witness this to me—his taking a solitary journey to Christ, apart from the multitude who, like him, had been attracted by the miracles ; and his lingering with the Lord, though He had answered him so strangely and so quickly : unlike the people in chap. vi., who leave Him when His words do not suit them ; and unlike his brother Pharisees in chap. viii., who go out from Him at once when His words convict them.

Thus it begins with Nicodemus, I believe. Conviction had not become the commanding affection in his soul, again I grant. Perhaps some of us are scarcely

---

\* Chapter iii. should open with the word "But," which, under the Spirit, distinguishes him.

aware that it has ever been so with us, though we doubt not the truth of our being quickened. But his conscience has been disturbed ; and such an one as this—an inquirer after truth—one attracted by the miracles, and one carrying some soul-trouble about with him, now comes into the presence of Christ.

And sure I also am, it was this uneasiness, and not his being attracted by the miracles, that interested the Lord. To the people of the city who had been alike attracted, Jesus would not commit Himself, as we read (ii. 24). For a miracle is not the proper, immediate ground of faith, such faith as the Spirit works, and as saves the soul. A miracle, like a book on the Evidences, may draw attention, and thus be the remote cause of faith. But the faith that saves the soul makes such acquaintance with Christ as a convicted conscience leads to. The fragments of convicted hearts and the answer which grace makes to them—in other words, our need and Christ's fulness—are the links of eternal fellowship.

And in this gospel by John, where only we get any notice of Nicodemus, we specially see this. The Lord refuses to be received save as the Friend of sinners. This is strongly expressed, very strongly. The mother would have had Him display Himself, and so would His brethren (chap. ii. ; vii.) The multitude would have made Him a king, the Pharisees a judge (chap. vi. ; viii). Nicodemus treated Him as a teacher, a revealer of heavenly secrets. But these apprehensions of Him were a trouble to Him. He was weary to bear them. He resents them earnestly. His reply to His mother, the shortness with which He turns upon Nicodemus, His quick retreat from the multitude who would have put the crown upon His head, His reply to His brethren, His action when challenged by the Pharisees to sit as judge upon the sinner ; all these tell us of the entire alienation of His spirit from such apprehensions of Him, or such approaches to Him. So that we may indeed assure our-

selves it was none of these, or such like, but his uneasiness of soul, feeble as that may have been, which engaged the regard of the Lord at this time, and kept Him in discourse with him.

But Nicodemus leaves the Lord on this occasion without looking where the Lord had guided his eye. He has not yet so felt the bite of the serpent as to look to the pole. That is most sure. Some good distance of time must have passed between the first and the second occasion on which we see Nicodemus. He had carried his uneasiness of soul with him all through this interval, I doubt not. But now, in chap. vii., he has made but little advance—he is still *of the Pharisees*, one, moreover, of that council of Pharisees who had sent officers to take the Lord by force. But, still, he who had before separated himself, as we saw, from the multitude in Jerusalem by seeking Jesus in solitude, soon separates himself from his brother Pharisees by pleading for the ends of justice in the behalf of Jesus.

This may, perhaps, be progress, but it is surely slow. The cords which were drawing him to the Lord were weak. We track the path of a lingering, slow-paced traveller, and most surely there has been no look at the uplifted serpent yet.

There is again a long interval between the second and third sight we get of him, as there had been between the first and second. But now, when we see him for the third and last time, his soul has advanced indeed ; as I judge, I may say, with all certainty.

The same evangelist, John, who alone notices Nicodemus, says in chap. xii., “ Among the rulers also many believed on Him (Jesus), but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.” Nicodemus may have been one of these rulers. He is called by the same name (see chap. iii. 1 ; xii. 42). But now in chap. xix., he takes a place apart from his fellow rulers, and does so openly—nay, from the whole body of the Jews, rulers,

priests, Pharisees, multitudes, all orders and estates of the nation. He allies himself with the Lord in the moment of His very deepest humiliation.

Nay, he and his companion, Joseph of Arimathea, stand, as with God Himself, in relation to the crucified One. God will presently provide that blessed Sufferer with a triumphant, glorious resurrection ; they provide Him now with a tomb and grave-clothes, and their spices perfume that sepulchre which ere long divine power will rend asunder.

Surely we may say, Nicodemus has now, in spirit as well as in act, reached the cross. Is he not in the place at that moment chiefest in God's eye on the face of the whole earth? When I see him there, and all the disciples fled away and gone, I know not whether I cannot say, "the last are first ;" the timid Joseph and the slow-paced Nicodemus are now before the earnest Peter and the loving John. I know not, I say, whether I have not warrant to say as much as that.

But this I know, and say again, Joseph and Nicodemus are at that moment occupying the spot of chiefest attraction with God, and doing the very highest and most honourable service which could then have been rendered to Him. They are at the cross, taking down the body of Jesus, and fulfilling that word of the prophet who was anticipating their very act of that moment—"with the rich in His death" (Isaiah liii). They were owning the crucified One in the face of the whole world. They were in the place where a sinner first meets a Saviour. They were looking to Him whom sin had just pierced. Nicodemus now stands on the very spot to which the Lord, at the earliest moment, had pointed him. He has now, at last, gained that place. He is at the foot of the pole on which the true Brazen Serpent had been lifted. And he is, in spirit, one with all the other saved ones in this precious gospel to whom Jesus committed Himself; Andrew, and Peter, and Philip, and Nathanael, and the Samaritan, and the adulteress,



and the blind beggar. He has changed company, indeed, now. This is no longer a weak and partial separation; Nicodemus is in a new world, which redemption has formed and planted, and where sinners saved have their new being. He is now "born again," as his Lord told him at the first he must be. It is no longer the travail, but the birth. It is indeed, I feel it, a happy thing to delineate the path of this elect one of God. He has now made the journey of all the elect, the journey from darkness to light. He has been a slow-paced traveller. That is true. But there is comfort in turning to this Israelite in the midst of the busy camp in the wilderness, watching him thus for so long a time struggling, as it were, with the bite of the fiery serpent, and still not looking to the pole.

There is comfort in tracking the lingering, lazy footsteps of this man on the road to God, amid the brilliant speedy journeyings of those more vivid, earnest spirits which gladden the pages of John's gospel. He creeps along among them, and the eye, more attracted by them, almost consents to lose sight of him. But grace did not lose sight of him. It rather abounds in setting at last the slow-paced Nicodemus in company with the liveliest of them.

"O to grace, how great a debtor,  
Daily I'm constrained to be;  
May that grace, Lord, like a fetter,  
Bind my *wandering* heart to Thee."

Ah, as once it bound and kept the *lingering* heart of this man of the Pharisees, this ruler of the Jews.

What wonderful moral variety, what lights and shades of character, not merely in broader outline, but in more minute and delicate touches, do the illustrations of Scripture afford us! There are moral *glories* in the Book, and that in abundance; but surely there are moral *wonders* also—paths which, for their elevation, none but the Spirit of God could reach;

and others which, for their obscurity or intricacy, none but the same Spirit could discover and follow.

Surely we are invited by the evangelist to gather up those fragments which thus lie in the harvest-field of his gospel. They are but fragments, it is true ; but they are not to be lost. There is something of bread-corn for the nourishment of the soul in them, though we may gather but one basketful.

Can we gather this one basketful? If we have delineated the path of this saint of God, can we read the moral of his story ?

It is, I own, the creeping progress of this slow-paced traveller, in the very thick and midst of the earnest and vivid histories which fill the pages of this gospel which I chiefly delight to contemplate. There is such comfort in it for some of us, who know the sluggishness of our souls, in comparison with much that one sees all around at present. For truly it is an earnest, vivid thing, again I say, which one sees around us at this moment. The present work of God with souls is very much of that character. The journey from darkness to light is rapidly performed ; and we are conscious that we are breaking the atmosphere of John's gospel. The Lord is, as it were, acting on His own models, and taking His first impressions as the order and standard of those which may be among His last. Indeed, the very earliest samples of faith and of divine workmanship in the soul were of the same character. Adam and Eve and Abel give witness of earnest, simple, unquestioning, unlingering faith. And precious are such specimens of the way of the power of God. But to find among them, as we have said, a sluggish traveller who had, it may be, but half a heart for the journey, is relief to some of us ; and we accept it among the provisions and stores of His boundless riches and grace. And therefore, we will not overlook Nicodemus.

But, then, there is admonition as well as comfort. I grant it, indeed. This slow-heartedness is not of

God, but of ourselves. The grace that meets it, and blesses in spite of it, is of God ; the temper that calls forth that grace is ours.

The Jesus who has now, as we have seen, dealt with Nicodemus and blessed him, is the Jehovah who of old dealt with Gideon. Gideon was a slow-hearted man also. God (to speak as men speak) found it hard to win the confidence of that man of Abiezer. Again and again the heart of Gideon retired. Mistrust of God filled his spirit. But God bore with him, went on with him, and rebuked him in the exercise of His grace, until He prevailed over nature. He heaped the coal of fire on the head, and consumed these suspicions of His goodness. In an eminent manner, God's "gentleness" made Gideon "great." And so now. Nicodemus has been another slow-hearted man ; but Jesus, the God of Gideon, has borne with him and conducted him into the place of blessing—the new world where salvation shines.

Deborah and Samson, in those early days of Gideon, had not been slow-hearted like Gideon, as we have already observed. Andrew and the Samaritan woman had not been slow-hearted like Nicodemus, in these days of John. But the slow-hearted and the ready-hearted are alike in blessing. As the feeble faith and the strong faith ; the faith that can only say, "If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us," and the faith that without asking leave or making apology breaks up the roof of the house to reach the Lord, are alike answered. The small and the great, as we read, are together before Him ; the thirtyfold, the sixtyfold, the hundredfold are, each of them, owned by Him.

Wonderful ! What a witness to us of God ! Not, however, that Jehovah did not go on with earnest Deborah more in full fellowship than with reluctant Barak. Not that Jesus did not more delight in the boldness of the centurion's faith than in the weakness of the leper's. And not but that every servant shall

receive his own reward, according to his own labour; and they who sow sparingly shall reap sparingly, and they who sow bountifully shall reap bountifully. Still, as we read the stories of Gideon and of Nicodemus, we surely see that blessing closes them. But withal, beloved, do we praise this slow-heartedness? We praise it not. It has a root of evil in the heart, we may be sure.

The *fear of man* wrought it in both Gideon and Nicodemus.

The *love of present possessions* wrought it in the rich young ruler. He was uneasy, like Nicodemus, and he would fain have known the rest of Jesus. But the love of what he possessed kept him out of it.

And what was the slow-heartedness of the two disciples that were going to Emmaus, or, indeed, of all—apostles and Galilean women together—touching the resurrection? Why this flocking to the empty sepulchre? Had Christ, in their thoughts, no strength equal to the rising from the dead, or had God no love equal to the giving sinners that pledge of their redemption? Why did it appear a thing incredible with them that God should raise the dead? Whatever form this unbelief may have taken in their hearts, *it involved unworthy thoughts of God*; as the apostle tells us in 1 Cor. xv. And is not this an evil root? “I speak this to your shame,” says the apostle. And surely we will not give this slowness of heart, be it found in ourselves, or where it may, anything but a bad character. But surely this magnifies that grace that blesses in spite of it.

The soul hesitates. It refuses to be comforted. We linger and draw back. Why? *We are occupied with ourselves*. Is that to be commended, after we have been told about the pole in the wilderness? True humbleness forgets self. “It is perfect humility,” says one, “to have every thought of Christ, and not one of ourselves.” Some of us know too well the workings of a legal self-righteous mind. But we will

not, we do not, speak well of it. Faith in silence ascends to God, and dwells in His light. Faith in Joshua, allowed in silence even the mitre to be set on his head; faith in the prodigal, in silence sat at the table, ate of the calf, wore the robe, and listened to the music; as faith in Adam, at the beginning, came forth in silence and in nakedness, to be clothed and blessed.—*Girdle of Truth*, 1860.

---

## NOTES ON FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

---

“BELOVED, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (chap. iv. 1). The Spirit of God has laid upon saints this responsibility, and it is as applicable to-day as when the apostle John was inspired to write it. So long as the Lord has His servants—true prophets—to witness for Him, Satan will have his false prophets going about to deceive, that he may damage and defile the work of God.

There follows a test as to the then-existing spirit of Antichrist, as to which they had been warned previously, and which was then already in the world. And no less is the spirit of Antichrist abroad now, not appearing only in one form, but in many, adapting itself to the varied idiosyncrasies of men, and numbering its votaries by thousands; who, ranking themselves as Christians, are but the tools of Satan’s untiring antagonism to Christ. Therefore, we may not escape the divine obligation to try the spirits.

Thankful we ought to be for spiritual gifts, and we are bound to honour every faithful servant of God; but spiritual discernment is called for, and never more so than in the day in which our lot is cast. For, alas! there are not a few, gifted it may be and popular among men, whom we, nevertheless, are unable to accredit as “of God.”

In verse 4 the apostle comforts the hearts of the saints, as before he had instructed them. "Ye are of God, children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." How blessed thus to be reminded of the omnipotency of the Holy Ghost, the omnipotency of Him who dwells in the feeblest babe in Christ who has joy and peace in believing. The false teachers are of the world; is it strange that the world hears them and runs after them? But the apostle could say, not only that they were "of God," but also that he who knew God heard *them*, the apostles; and he who was not of God did not hear them. So long as the apostles lived this test could be applied; but now the word of truth which they taught and testified stands as the divine witness of what is of God, an unfailing touchstone as to God's estimate of who are His servants, and the character also of their service.

Then enters he, the apostle, upon his great topic—the divine love. "Beloved, let us love one another; because love is of God, and every one that loves has been begotten of God, and knows God. He that loves not has not known God; for God is love." Thus he identifies love with God objectively and God with love subjectively. He follows this with unfolding the way in which love as to us has been *manifested*, viz., by God's sending His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him—the mighty and the magnificent proof, which nothing could surpass, of divine love, as uncalled for as it was undeserved; that love which has its centre in the heart of God, but which embraces in its circumference both the heaven and the earth, wheresoever is a being blessed by the activity of His goodness! With divine force follows the argument, "Beloved, if God has so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has seen God at any time: if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us" (verses 11, 12). Thus we learn that the effect of love

is *communion*—He abides in us, and His love is perfected in us; and this is blessedly authenticated to our souls by the Holy Ghost, who dwelleth in us. He who confesseth Jesus as the Son of God enjoys this communion—God abides in him and he in God. He adds, “And we have known and believed the love which God hath to us.” Fitting language this for an apostle, and no less fitting for us, even for the feeblest babe in Christ. “Reader,” as another has well observed, “it speaks of grace as well as truth. It speaks of God’s grace and love, who gave His only begotten Son that sinners like you and me might be with HIM, know HIM—deeply, intimately, truly know HIM—and enjoy HIM for ever, and enjoy Him NOW; that the conscience, perfectly purged, might be in joy in His presence, without a cloud, without a reproach, without a fear. And to be there in His love, in such a way, is perfect joy. The word will tell you the truth concerning yourself; but it will tell you the truth of a God of love, while unfolding the wisdom of His counsels.”

How blessed to be able to say this, and thus to give testimony to the grace which has separated us for ever from a faithless world. Thus has “love been perfected with us that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, that even as He is, we also are in this world.” How solid is that peace which is unperturbed by any fear of the day of judgment; how perfect is that work which enables us to say that as He is so are we in this world! But the apostle returns to the spring and centre—*we* love because *He* has first loved us. All divine love, that of God to us and equally that of our responsive love to Him, emanates from the heart of God. The chapter closes with a suited admonition as to brotherly love; for it is, moreover, a commandment from God that he who loveth Him should love his brother also.

## THE CORINTHIANS AND THE APOSTLE PAUL: A CONTRAST.

---

WHEN reading the epistles to the Corinthians, one cannot fail to remark the great contrast between the Corinthian converts and their spiritual father, the Apostle Paul ; showing clearly that the possession of gifts is no safeguard against error, and that those who most abound in them may be those who, through unwatchfulness, fall into grave evils.

The Corinthians "came behind in no gift, being enriched in all utterance and all knowledge," as certainly they came behind no Christian assembly of that day in disorders and scandalous proceedings. Divisions had come in—dissensions had arisen—not caused by the entrance of doctrinal evil or immorality of walk, leaving the spiritual-minded to purge out the evil or separate themselves from it ; but arising from the undue exalting of certain teachers among them. It was not faithfulness to the Lord which caused these divisions.

Moral evil there was of the grossest kind, but *that* formed in their minds no ground for separation. A crime such as the very heathen would blush to think of had been committed amongst them, yet the offender had not been put away. So the apostle had to reprove them for their laxity, and to urge the exercise of discipline, ere the assembly was stirred into action. It was not that the assembly had shared in the deed. The apostle, in the second epistle (chapter vii. 11), writes: "In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." But their state of soul was so bad that they had not judged the evil. It was the indulgence of party spirit that had induced this state of things, had blunted the edge of conscience, and had dulled the sensibility of their souls.

Following human teachers, not the Lord—how



much trouble had it occasioned ! Enriched with all gifts, they were intoxicated at the thought of such wealth, and they began to value a teacher for his eloquence or for his display of human wisdom (1 Cor. i. 17 ; ii. 1). It was not so much *what* he taught, as *how* he could speak ; not whether he spake in the Spirit, but whether he displayed the wisdom of words.

Their eyes were diverted from the Giver to the gift. They were occupied with man—the recipient and the channel through whom blessing was to flow—instead of with the Source of all gift, and the Fountain of all blessing. Looking thus at men, they were in danger of forgetting that they were Christ's. Calling themselves by this or that teacher's name, they remembered not that they were God's husbandry, God's building (1 Cor. iii. 9). They were glorying in men when they should have been glorying in the Lord. They were dazzled with a display of eloquence and wisdom, satisfied with the mere natural gifts, without reflecting whether there was "the demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

The practical result soon manifested itself. Unmindful on whom they were dependent, "they were full ; reigning as kings," says the apostle, "without us." And he who had planted the Church at Corinth, and could point to them as a proof of his apostleship, found his claim to be an apostle called in question. The father was well-nigh disowned by his children, the teacher repudiated by his pupils ; so much so, that the apostle was forced to convince them that he had the qualifications of an apostle.

They, indeed, were proofs of it. Did they doubt whether Christ spake in him ? They had only to examine themselves to find out (2 Cor. xiii. 3-5). Nor was this all. He could point to labours and services which showed him to be an apostle indeed. Did labours and trials constitute proofs of apostleship ? Who had encountered more perils, who had laboured more abundantly than he ? Was sympathy with others a

## 136 THE CORINTHIANS AND THE APOSTLE PAUL.

needful qualification for an apostle? "Who," said he, "is offended, and I burn not?" (2 Cor. xi. 29). Were their teachers Israelites? Which of them could boast of a purer descent than his, who was an Hebrew of the Hebrews? Was his bodily infirmity a ground for refusing to him that respect and obedience due by them to an apostle? That infirmity was the result of his being caught up to the third heaven, and hearing words when also caught up into paradise which it was not "lawful for a man to utter." He was crippled indeed, but crippled for a purpose, lest, after all, that he should be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelations given him (2 Cor. xii. 7). They might complain of his bodily appearance and of his speech, but they were forced to confess that his words were weighty (2 Cor. x. 10). They might compare him to his disadvantage with other teachers possessing natural gifts and no infirmity, but his infirmity was the proof of an intercourse with God of which no other man could boast.

But the evil did not rest here. Disorderly proceedings were tolerated, such as no other Christian assembly had admitted. Women, it would appear, spoke in the assembly (1 Cor. xiv. 31-32), and were seen in what for them was really unseemly attire. Whatever anybody might say about it, or however anybody might defend it, the apostle cuts all argument short with the simple sentence: "We have no such custom, neither the churches of God" (1 Cor. xi. 16).

But graver cause for scandal there was. The Lord's Supper had been made an occasion for carnal feasting. One would come to satisfy his hunger; another would be there drunk. Yet we have not fathomed the depth into which they had fallen. "Envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults" had crept in (2 Cor. xii. 20). Having turned from God to man, and magnified the human instrument, their eyes had been diverted from the only object which could keep them straight, that centre round

which, when acknowledged as such, everything would range itself in its proper order, and each assume its due proportion. It was not difficult to descend from man to self. Selfishness in all its forms was prevalent, evidenced, as noticed above, in strifes, &c., and in that litigious spirit which received a rebuke and correction in 1 Cor. vi. Another form of it, the grossest form, was the licentious indulgence of carnal desires (1 Cor. v.; 2 Cor. xii. 21).

But it had yet to be demonstrated in two other ways, showing how far the assembly had fallen. The individual's liberty must be maintained, even at the expense of a weak brother's faith. They had liberty, they affirmed, to eat meats offered to idols. Why should they be restrained in this their Christian liberty? Their spiritual discernment allowed them to sit at meat in the idol temples without joining in the idol worship. Why should they be denied this pleasure? Was a weak brother thereby stumbled? Why should they be in bondage to any man? Hence self, for after all it was self, must be gratified, even though a weak brother's conscience receive damage. Thus their position as freemen in Christ was made the ground of the gratification of their appetite, indulging their natural desires.

But self had yet another aspect, viz., the longing after those spiritual gifts which would bring most glory to the possessor. What gift so suited for that as speaking with tongues? Their aim in that was the exaltation of self rather than the edification of the assembly. What a picture have we in Corinth of the depths to which saints could fall. For saints they were, but placed in circumstances widely differing from any in which a Christian assembly, in Christendom at least, could in these days be found, being surrounded with vices openly and unblushingly practised by the heathen, which the influence of Christianity has driven into the shade. And then the different parties

## 138 THE CORINTHIANS AND THE APOSTLE PAUL.

among them hindered common action in dealing with any of these evils.

Let us now turn to the apostle, and see how high a sinner saved by grace could rise. Were the Corinthians glorying in their teachers, glorying in men, he gloried only in the Lord. They were captivated by the natural gifts of their teachers. He had learnt the lesson, that all human teachers to whom were entrusted gifts of ministry were but earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power might be of God, and not of man (2 Cor. iv. 7). The apostle came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom; and was determined to know nothing among them, but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, that their faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God (1 Cor. ii. 1, 2). They were self-sufficient—"full" (1 Cor. iv. 8). He was not sufficient of himself to think anything as of himself, but his sufficiency was of God (2 Cor. iii. 5). As an apostle he thus spoke of himself. Then they were reigning without him. He would be glad to connect himself humbly with them—reign with them (1 Cor. iv. 8)—were the time for that really come. Then he could say, "Now He that establisheth us with you in Christ." "Helpers of your joy" (2 Cor. i. 21, 24). Again, "Ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. iv. 5). "Shall present us with you" (2 Cor. iv. 14). Not a word in all this of his superiority. He classes himself with them, and makes himself their servant.

Did they stand up for their liberty? So could he. But how different was the case with him! Would he indulge his palate at the expense of a weak brother's faith? Nay; "I will eat no flesh," he said, "while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend" (1 Cor. viii. 13). What, then, was the liberty he claimed for himself? Simply this, that he might preach the gospel to them without charge! What could prompt him to such labour without temporal reward? Was it the hope that they would value such disinterestedness?

He had already felt that, after all his labours on them and affection for them, they had not valued the one nor requited the other. How, then, did this affect him? We see in 2 Cor. xii. 14, 15, "Behold, this third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome: for I seek not your's, but you. . . . And I will gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved."

What grace was here? The divine nature in him showing itself; love working for its own sake, loving objects unworthy of its love. And who was this who thus wrote? Was it one who felt his deficiency in gifts when in such an assembly as that of Corinth, and wished to make up for that deficiency by an assiduous attention to their wants? Far from it. He was not behind the very chiefest apostle. He might, indeed, be rude in speech, but not in knowledge. He had a power—the apostolic power—which he could have used, but he did not. What a contrast between the apostle and the Corinthians!

What caused it? Whence came it? Both he and they were children of Adam, descended after the flesh from the same corrupt stock. Both he and they were subjects of the same divine mercy, and objects of the same divine grace. But he had learnt a lesson which they had not. He had learnt of the crucifixion of the old man with Christ, hence he was not looking at the outward appearance; he looked far higher. He lived, as it were, on the other side of death; they on this side. All that was of nature he estimated at its true value. For him, self was nothing; Christ and God were everything. That was the secret of the difference. What teaching there is in all this. He had "the sentence of death in himself, that he should not trust in himself, but in God who raiseth the dead" (2 Cor. i. 9).

Throughout the first five chapters of the second epistle we see this brought out. His sufficiency was of God (iii.). If the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ had shone

## 140 THE CORINTHIANS AND THE APOSTLE PAUL.

into his heart, it was God who had commanded it (iv.). And the excellency of the power of ministry was of God. And all that he suffered was for the glory of God. With him, God in Christ was everything. And now, as in Christ, he knew no man after the flesh. All this the Corinthians had forgotten, or could have never learnt. So, in the first three chapters of the first epistle we have a continual contrast between man and God, to recall them to their true position as Christians. God had called them to the fellowship of His Son. The calling was of God, not of man. It was God's Church he addressed. God was pleased by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe: and the object preached was Christ, the power and the wisdom of God. Was Paul chosen for the work? God had done that. And God had made Christ "unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." It was God's testimony he declared, that their "faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." And he spoke wisdom, but it was the wisdom of God; and he spoke of things which the natural man could not receive, but God had revealed them by the Spirit. And the Corinthians were God's husbandry, God's building. He recognised these things, as the second epistle shows. They had forgotten them, as the first epistle teaches. Hence the difference.

What a lesson, then, for us. If the eye looks away from God to man, into what may we not fall—what evils may not come in! But, on the other hand, the true remedy for decline of spirituality in the assembly, when man is exalted and self reigns, is to recall it to a right sense about God. It is God's work that goes forward. The instruments are God's. The increase is God's. The building and temple are God's. This truth brought out in 1 Cor. i.-iv. forms the groundwork of the apostle's directions. Christian liberty is to be permitted, but only to the glory of God (1 Cor. x. 31). Spiritual gifts are to be exercised, but in an

orderly manner. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace (1 Cor. xiv. 33). Man may be followed, but only as he follows Christ (1 Cor. xi. 1).

When God gets His place in the assembly and in the hearts of His children, all will go well. But if not, the capacity to judge and deal with moral evil may be weakened; meetings for worship be made opportunities for the display of gifts, as the vanity of the possessor may dictate, and even the Lord's table become a scene of dreadful confusion. How needful, then, to watch against the first departure from the simplicity that is in Christ. But as evil in the assembly is generally the result of evil unchecked in individuals, what need of watchfulness to keep the eye fixed on the true centre. When looking at God, and remembering that we have died and are risen with Christ, the Lord will have *His* place, and man *his*; conscience will be alive; evil if it comes in will be judged; and the assembly be in practice the temple of the Holy Ghost. C. E. S.

---

## EXTRACTS FROM THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, CONTRASTED WITH THE PERNICIOUS AND SOUL-DESTROYING DOCTRINES OF UNITARIANISM, INSPIRED FROM BENEATH.

---

IS JESUS CHRIST THE SON OF GOD BY DIVINE  
DESCENT, BEGOTTEN OF THE HOLY GHOST?

---

“BEHOLD, a VIRGIN shall be with Child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name EMMANUEL; which, being interpreted, is, *God* with us” (Matt. i. 23; Isaiah vii. 14).

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a *Son* is given, and the Government shall be upon His

**142 EXTRACTS FROM THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.**

shoulder ; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father (Father of Eternity), The Prince of Peace " (Is. ix. 6).

" Of whom, as concerning the flesh, *Christ* came, Who is over all, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER. Amen " (Romans ix. 5).

" In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with *God*, and the Word was *God* " (John i. 1).

" And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us " (John i. 14).

" God was manifest in the flesh " (1 Tim. iii. 16).

" Before Abraham was, *I am* " (John viii. 58).

" If ye believe not that *I am*, ye shall die in your sins " (John viii. 24).

" Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven " (Matt. x. 32, 33).

The Father, addressing the Son, saith : " Thy throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever " (Heb. i. 8).

" All things were made by Him " (John i. 3).

" HE was in the world, and the world was made by Him " (John i. 10).

" *I am* the Resurrection and the Life " (John xi. 25).

" Marvel not at this—for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation " (John v. 28, 29).

" And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul ; but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell " (Matt. x. 28).

" And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life, was cast into the lake of fire " (Rev. xx. 15).

" And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone " (Rev. xx. 10).

J. M.



## WORDS OF WARNING.

---

“LITTLE children, it is the last hour ; and as ye have heard that the Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists ; whereby we know that it is the last hour ” (1 John ii. 18).

“Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son ” (1 John ii. 22).

“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist ” (2 John 7).

“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed : for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds ” (2 John 9, 10, 11).

“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us (believers) an understanding, that we may know Him that is true : and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. *This is the true God, and Eternal Life.* ” (1 John v. 20). “He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life ” (1 John v. 12). “There is none righteous, no, not one ” (Romans iii. 10). Man is a fallen and ruined creature, and if not cleansed from his sins by the blood of Jesus Christ, he is on his way to hell. “It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul ” (Lev. xvii. 11). “And without shedding of blood is no remission ” (Heb. ix. 22). “When I see the blood, I will pass over you ” (Ex. xii. 13).

Soon the despised Nazarene will return in power and great glory, and the unsaved shall quake before Him. “Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him ; and all

kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen" (Rev. i. 7). The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son, and at His voice "all that are in the graves shall come forth:" "they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life;" "this is the first resurrection," Pre-Millennial (1 Cor. xv. 51-55; 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17; Rev. xx. 5); "and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation," for the wicked and unbelievers only—this is the second resurrection; Post-Millennial, thus described in Rev. xx. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15: "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah i. 18).

"The Gift of God is Eternal Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Eternal Life" (John iii. 14, 15; Numbers xxi. 89).

"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).

"TO-DAY IF YE WILL HEAR HIS VOICE, HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS" (Heb. iv. 7).

"BEHOLD! I COME QUICKLY."

J. M.

"COME AND SEE."

ONE of the charms of Scripture, one of its greatest beauties, is its many invitations. God *loves* the sinner, not his sins, and not because of his sins, but in spite of them. And God *wants* the sinner for Himself, that His glory may be displayed in his present and eternal salvation. And it is with this object, among others, He has given us His word. What, we may ask, is His first object in giving us His word? Is it not to bring us to God? Unsaved reader, does that thought never strike you as you look upon your so long neglected Bible? That God Himself gave you that book, and speaks to you therein, because He seeks your blessing, your eternal welfare? Surely if you knew this you could not forget Him as you do; you could not make so light of His word as you do.

I have spoken of invitations. Now, the first enquiry as to an invitation is, Who is it from? and the next, Who is it to? The invitations to which I allude come *from God*; they are, therefore, of incomparable excellence and value. They come from Him *to you*, and if to you they are of incomparable importance to yourself individually and personally. To accept them is essential to your present happiness and to your eternal blessedness. To slight them is to imperil both, and to bring direct dishonour upon Him who formed you for His glory and wants you for His praise.

When Nathanael asked of Philip, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip was not tempted to reason on the subject. He opened no argument,

and he broached no opinion. He simply delivered the invitation which the Spirit of God led him to give—"Come and see." And the very next line records that the Lord Jesus saw him coming. The invitation was evidently at once accepted, and Nathanael that day made acquaintance with the true Messiah, his Saviour and his Lord.

In the same chapter (John i. 39) we find that the Lord Himself gave the same invitation to two disciples. Attracted by His person, on the testimony of John the Baptist, they had followed Him. As a loadstone He held them to Himself. Their desire was to continue with Him, and their question, "Master, where dwellest Thou?" He answered with the same invitation as Philip had given to Nathanael—"Come and see." The very next words tell us that they came and saw, and dwelt with Him. In the gospel of Matthew we find the angel at the sepulchre inviting the Maries in these words, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

You will probably tell me, my reader, that all this, if true, has passed away. My answer is, that the facts and truths of God's word constitute a divine *revelation* which never passes away, and the value of which nor time nor eternity can ever diminish. All of which we have spoken remains for faith as much as ever, and without faith was as valueless then as now. When John exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God!" had the two disciples only seen Him with the natural eye they would never have followed Him. He is not upon earth for us to approach physically. We cannot, in that sense, go to Him, or follow Him, or abide with Him, or visit His empty grave. But faith makes all this good to us, and without faith it is impossible to please God.

One of the great secrets of Cæsar's power over his soldiers was, that he seldom said "Ite" (go), but "Venite" (come, follow me). This is the ground we also take; we urge you not to *go* to Christ, but to *come*

to Him. We know whom we have believed, both as to the glory of His person and the value of His work. We argue not, we reason not; we take Philip's place and say to you, our readers, "Come and see." If you have but faith as a grain of mustard seed you will hear the voice of Him who, as once upon earth, says now from heaven, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." How happy to hear His voice, and to come thus unto Him; how happy to be ranked among His followers, and to abide with Him.

"The invitation, 'Come,' is echoed through the entire Bible. One page borrows it from another, and one verse from another, until at last it rests under the very seal of the book. It begins with Genesis and extends to the very last of Revelation, shedding its cheerful light upon every page, and imparting its heavenly influence to every verse. It is the grand refrain of the entire Bible, the epitome and essence of all revealed truth, the whole revelation of God in one single word!"

---

## INFINITE LOVE.

---

HE knows the many thorns  
That in thy pathway lie,  
And His sweet voice is calling low,  
"Fear not, for I am nigh."

Close by thee all the way,  
Never to leave thy side;  
What tho' the way be dark and rough,  
There shall no ill betide.

Sharp were the thorns He bore  
Once, long ago, for thee;  
Suffering the judgment for thy sins,  
That thou might'st ransomed be.

## INFINITE LOVE.

Was ever love like this  
 In any creature found,  
 So boundless, free, and infinite?  
 Its depth we cannot sound.

And as we think on Him  
 Suffering, alone, and poor,  
 With none to comfort, none to save  
 Him from that awful hour :

Our sorrows are forgot  
 In contemplating His,  
 And lighter seems our cross to bear  
 In the sweet thought of this :

This—that He liveth now,  
 Our great High Priest above,  
 Touched with the feeling of our woes,  
 And His blest Name is Love.

Soon shall we hear His voice,  
 Calling us hence away  
 To meet Him in th' appointed place,  
 And dwell with Him for aye.

To see His glorious face,  
 Fairer than aught beside,  
 Shining with love's content to have  
 Close to Himself His Bride.

Oh, what a wondrous sight,  
 Bridegroom and Bride to see,  
 Fully, completely satisfied,  
 Father, at home, with Thee. —A. S.

---

GOOD RECEIVED by children redounds in blessing to their elders. A profane drunkard once burst into tears when his little girl crept from her bed to rebuke him:—"Father, my teacher says, if you get drunk and swear so, you will never go where God is." That man forsook his evil habits; began spending his evenings at home, and was soon a regular hearer of the word.

**CHRISTIAN JOY.**—"The joy of the Lord is your strength," said Nehemiah. No life can be a strong life which has not joy. Morbid melancholy is ever feeble. The joyous Christian can do more than the desponding one. The lad that whistles at his work does not one whit the less ; the girl that sings her way to school gets there sooner than her weeping sister, and accomplishes more when there. Depend upon it, the more of God's music in our hearts, the more heartily shall we march to the battle. Joy is the soul of life : it exhilarates the whole being, it sets the lazy blood throbbing and pulsating through the vessels, and quickens the limbs to action. A Christian's joy should not depend on circumstances. A surrounding God is the Christian's circumstance ; and God is always God. Let the world reel, let sickness fill me with pain, death take all dear to me, still Thou, O God, art mine, and I can and will rejoice. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth I desire beside Thee !" The Christian's joy should be lark and nightingale in one, to sing while the light of prosperity shines in the heavens, and still to sing when the night has hung abroad her sable mourning, and put all other birds to silence. Do you rejoice in the summer ? Any foolish gnat can do that. Rejoice in the winter also. Your stream flows from a fountain which can never freeze. "Be glad, then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God."

**NO CONDEMNATION.**—When a man enters into Christ, the bells for ever, henceforth, ring "No Condemnation." He sees around him no more prison walls ; prison bars no longer obstruct the light ; nor clanking prison chains confine his limbs. He no longer looks at the face of a condemning judge, nor feels himself surrounded by a solemn court, nor hears the sentence echoing from his conscience. He has escaped all these. The judge is become a Father, the chains have dropped at his feet ; the prison is no more. He stands at liberty and breathes free air, and walks and leaps for joy. "No condemnation !" leaps through his soul like a life stream ; it sings to his heart like a refrain from the golden harps above, and he stands a citizen of heaven, a child of God, ransomed, released, acquitted, saying, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

I KNOW a little girl who when reprov'd by her mamma for some fault, and told she should teach her little brothers to do right, replied, "How can I do right when there is no right in me ?" Now, if we would as frankly confess that "in us, that is in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing," and cast ourselves unreservedly on the grace of God, we should know how to be loyal to Christ, not only in the teeth of the fiercest opposition, but also when the enemy we have to encounter is hidden behind specious promises and enchanting smiles. I was once upon the summit of a mountain in the blackness of midnight. I could not see the ground on which I stood, and could barely discern the form of the guide, who held my comrade lest he should fall, and whose steps I was closely to follow. That guide knew the way. Our Guide knows the way. The prospect is often all covered in darkness. We are disappointed and bewildered because of the small progress of the kingdom of Christ. The dark clouds will pass away ere long. The day will dawn : the mystery of God will be finished : and we shall know what it is to enter into the joy of our Lord. Only let us be loyal to Him, come what may.

**IT IS DARK.**—There come seasons of darkness in all our lives—times when there are neither sun, nor moon, nor stars in the sky, and we stand still in fear, or grope, trembling. A few years ago there fell upon my life one of these seasons, in which I could see neither to the right hand nor the left. A terror of darkness was upon me. One night I lay awake, thinking, thinking until my brain grew wild with uncertainty. I could not see even a step in advance, and feared to move onwards lest with the next footfall I should plunge into hopeless ruin. Very strongly was I tempted to turn aside from the way in which I was going—a way reason and conscience approved as right; but something held me back. Again and again I took up and considered the difficulties of my situation, looking to the right hand and the left for ways of extrication; now inclining to go in this direction, and now in that; yet always held away from resolve by inner convictions of right and duty that grew clear at the moment when I was ready to give up my hold on integrity. So the hours went heavy-footed until past midnight. My little daughter was sleeping in the crib beside my bed. But now she began to move uneasily, and presently her timid voice broke faintly the still air:—“Papa! papa!” she called. “What is it, darling?” I asked. “Oh, papa! it is dark! Take Nellie’s hand.” I reached out my hand and took her tiny one in mine own, clasping it firmly. A sigh of relief came up from her little heart. All her loneliness and fear were gone, and in a few moments she was sound asleep again. “*Oh, my Father in Heaven!*” I cried, in a sudden, almost wild, outburst of feeling, “*it is dark, very dark. Take my hand!*” A great peace fell upon me. The terror of darkness was gone. “Keep hold of my hand, oh, our Father!” I prayed fervently; “and though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. Let not my feet wander to the right or to the left.” Sleep fell softly on my eyelids, and morning broke with scarce a seeming interval of time. I felt calm and strong. The day was to be one of severe trial. Dark uncertainty rested over it. But I was resolved to walk steadily through its trials and its pains, holding tightly the hand of the Father. Oh! is not the Lord better to us, if we will trust Him, than all our fears?

**A GODLY COUPLE** living near Salisbury Plain had never possessed a blanket till a Christian friend at Bratton, hearing of their destitution, sent them a pair. They were so overjoyed at the comfort of the blankets as to say that *they hoped they were not going to have their portion in this life.* Think of this, ye whose silks and satins cost you so much, and yet are so little prized. Think of this, all who are plentifully provided for. Next time we receive the Lord’s gracious gifts with an ungrateful indifference let us remember this lonely couple, and let confusion cover us.

**AN O. O.**—An Irish gentleman, pointing to a young man, once said, “Is he an O. O.?”—“What do you mean by O. O.?”—“I mean,” was the reply, “is he out and out for Christ?” This is what all ought to be who bear Christ’s name. “When all who belong to the Lord,” one says, “are willing to speak for Him, willing to work for Him, willing to die for Him, then Christianity will advance, and we shall see the work of the Lord prosper.—*Dr. Robert Macdonald.*”

**IT IS THE** greatest happiness in this world to live much in the exercise of faith. No man lives so free, so holy, so heavenly, so happy a life as he that lives a life of faith.



## CHRIST WITH HIS PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD; HIS PEOPLE WITH HIM IN THE LIFE TO COME.

---

THE Lord's interest in His people is wonderful indeed. His delight is in the saints, the excellent of the earth, we learn from the Psalm (xvi. 3). Who could be counted amongst such the record of His life on earth discloses. "He receiveth sinners and eateth with them" was the sneering remark of the Pharisees and scribes (Luke xv. 2).

Had we asked the Pharisees who were the excellent we can quite understand, from the parable of the Pharisee and the publican, to whom they would have pointed. But who drew near to the Holy One of God in that fifteenth chapter of Luke? It was the publicans and the sinners. And He allowed them to draw nigh. He did not repel them. He who had sat at meat in Matthew's house in the midst of a company of publicans allowed, as we read in Luke, *all* the publicans and sinners to draw nigh. They were attracted to Him. He received them; He could eat with them; for He came not to call the righteous, but sinners (Matt. ix. 13).

Such were the Lord's ways in life. He died. The world saw Him no more. He was no longer to be found walking about amongst men of different classes, whether converted or not. But death, which affects a severance between men departed and all on earth, did not, and could not, make a separation between the Lord and His people still down here. True, they could not, as before, go to Him. But, blessed be His name, He could come to them, and He did at times during the forty days that intervened between His resurrection and His ascension. Unchanged in His feelings towards His own, His disciples should know it, and on that first day of the week on which He rose

to how many did He appear. Mary Magdalene saw Him in the garden by the tomb. He met the company of the women on their way to the city, bearing tidings of His resurrection, communicated to them by angelic agency. He joined the two on their way to Emmaus, walked with them, talked with them, and sat down to meat with them. He appeared likewise to Peter, and then to the eleven and those with them in the upper room. No one expected Him on any of these occasions. He, however, sought out His own.

The soldiers guarding the tomb did not see Him. They entered Jerusalem that morning without encountering Him. But Mary was not finally to leave the garden without seeing Him, and the women on their way to the city were privileged to behold Him. No unconverted Pharisee, however, and no member of the Aaronic priesthood ministering at the altar could have said that He appeared unto them. A wide and marked difference there was now between the Lord's disciples and the rest of their countrymen. The former might meet with closed doors for fear of the Jews, but the Lord of glory could come into their midst, and set them perfectly free in His presence. The guest of a man that is a sinner! so said the Pharisees at Jericho, as the Lord entered the house of Zacchæus. Henceforth the Pharisees would have no opportunity to make such remarks. They would never see Him visit His people. Yet He could be, and would delight to be, in their midst, and for a time in their company visible to natural sight.

What a privilege was theirs! The fear of man caused them to meet with closed doors (John xx. 19), but the Lord could enter nevertheless. He came and stood in their midst. Surely we may say that no one expected Him, yet He appeared. All assembled there saw Him. They were sitting at meat. He stood in their midst. Without warning and without noise, without opening the door, the different accounts lead us to believe, He was present among them. It

was not a dream ; it was not a vision ; it was not a ghostly appearance. It was Himself in His body of flesh and bones (Luke xxiv. 37-39), in that body in which He had been crucified, marked with the print of the nails, and bearing the token of the soldier's spear thrust. Yet a change had passed over it—a change which He indicated as He spoke of flesh and bones, but not a word of blood. It was, nevertheless, Himself that they all saw. He was alive ; He was risen. They saw Him, and were glad. Death had not made a final separation on earth between Him and His disciples. He ate, too, in their presence to assure them that it was Himself. And now He who had ministered to them before His cross ministered again, and opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures (Luke xxiv. 45). Breathing on them that they might receive the Holy Ghost, indicating, too, that a world-wide service was to be before them (Luke xxiv. 47), and adherents were to be gained to swell the company of the disciples (John xx. 23), that day, the first day of the week, significant of the beginning of a new epoch on earth, then drew to its close. But all of them could say, "We have seen the Lord." The testimony of Mary Magdalene—"I have seen the Lord," as we should read in John xx. 18—was not credited by the rest, as Mark writes (xvi. 11). Now they too could say, and told Thomas of it, we have seen the Lord.

Would they see Him again ? He had not promised it. A week apparently passed without any fresh appearance. His promise, "I will see you again" (John xvi. 22), had been fulfilled. His words, too, "Your hearts shall rejoice," had been verified ; and "Your joy no man taketh from you" began from that day to be experienced. The Lord was risen indeed. He could not be holden of death. He could not be shut out from His people. But when and where could they see Him ? He determined that which lay beyond their power to control. A week, we have

already said, went by. Would they ever see Him with outward eyes again? Had He left them and gone to His Father, ascending heavenward, of which He had spoken to Mary Magdalene (John xx. 17)? Then a company gathered out by His ministry, and apart from the Jews who had rejected Him, were meeting again with closed doors, Thomas being with them. A second time, without noise or previous warning, it would seem, the Lord appeared in their midst. The house which He had so recently cleansed and called His own (Matt. xxi. 13) — in which, too, He had taught during the last week of His sojourn on earth — knew Him no more. The priests were daily ministering at the altar, but Him they saw not. The people might crowd the courts at the hour of prayer; but His form, once so familiar to them, was seen there no more. Yet in Jerusalem He was seen. There was a place where He was found. His disciples assembled together, and He came and stood again in their midst. A privileged company, indeed, were they on that occasion likewise.

And now among them He spoke, and addressed Himself to Thomas: "Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing" (John xx. 27). Now, why such words to Thomas? The Lord had heard the reply of Thomas to the testimony of the rest of having seen Him as risen. But He was not visible to any mortal eye when that disciple expressed His unwillingness to believe them. None of the others had told the Lord about it. He, however, had heard it. He was fully aware of that which had passed. Thomas was convinced: "My Lord," he said. But the Lord having shewn His perfect cognisance of the words of His disciple a week previous, Thomas added, "My God." The Lord's reply to Thomas' desire for ocular proof quite overcame him. "My Lord, and my God" was all that he could say. He needed now no tangible proof.

He was convinced ; he was satisfied. But was ocular proof necessary ere the resurrection of Christ should be believed? What should we do if such were the case? The Lord then added a word, precious to us who live between the ascension and the rapture: "Because thou hast seen Me thou hast believed ; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed " (29).

Two important facts this second appearance establishes. The one that, though unseen, He knows all that goes on. The gods of the heathen might be supposed to be pre-occupied, or journeying, or sleeping, needing to be aroused or to be awakened (1 Kings xviii. 27). The Lord knows all that is said, and sees all that is done. Then the second fact appears, that nothing can shut Him out from His people, if true in heart to Him, if He be minded to be present. Must not these appearances have taught the disciples of His continued interest in them, and this last of His perfect cognisance of what each was saying? Nothing was escaping His notice, for He is God ; and His affection for His people remained unchanged. What the sixteenth Psalm had foretold of Him in life was true, and blessedly true after His death—in the excellent of the earth was His delight.

Of a third appearance John tells us. This time it was to seven disciples, of whom Peter, Thomas, John and his brother James, and Nathaniel are named. Engaged as they had been on the lake all the night fishing, but without success, the Lord appeared in the morning on the shore, and addressed them, saying, "Children, have ye any meat?" An answer from them in the negative, in ignorance of the One who addressed them, brought a response to cast the net on the right-hand side of the vessel. That done, their effort was rewarded with an immense haul of fish. Who the stranger was on the shore, John in the boat with Peter now perceived. It was the Lord. He was there to meet them, to direct them, and to minister to them.

For on reaching the shore they found a fire of coals, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Then followed the invitation, "Come and dine." The Lord was again with them, just when none of them expected it. He knew that they were on the waters of the lake of Galilee, and not at Jerusalem. He came to them where they were, brought the fish to their net, and provided refreshment; surely not unneeded after a night of fruitless toil. They had gone fishing. As yet, they had not received power from on high for their work. They were, therefore, not neglecting higher duties for a night at their old occupation, though this may have been the last occasion on which they were found in their former scene of labour—on the lake of Galilee.

The Lord's visits might be frequent (Acts i. 3), but His occupation with them was constant. He came and He went; came without warning, appeared when He chose, and disappeared as suddenly as He had come. Surely this was teaching for them, a preparation for the time when He should have ascended, fixing in each heart the thought that He knew all about them, where they were and in what they were engaged, though they could not see Him as they had been formerly accustomed to do.

They ate, too, and drank in His presence, perfectly at home after they had been assured of His resurrection (Acts x. 41). With His own on earth He was found, and as much interested in them as ever. But the world knew nothing of these precious interviews. Neither the high priest, the chief priests, the Pharisees nor the Sadducees were present on those occasions. With the world the Lord as risen had nothing to do; nor will He concern Himself with it till He comes to judge it. Meanwhile He is working, by the Spirit through the Word, to rescue perishing souls out of it. Such seasons, however, could only be enjoyed during forty days. After that He ascended, no longer to be on earth in that bodily form to which the disciples must have then become accustomed.

Yet He is with His people still, and He who was perfectly aware of the words of Thomas, though no one saw Him standing by, is just as cognisant of all that goes on amongst His people as He was on the day of His resurrection. Found, too, in their midst then, He promised to be with His disciples to the end of the age (Matt. xxviii. 20); and has told us also of a condition, if fulfilled, on which we can count on His presence. During those forty days no disciple could *count* on His personal presence, though they *enjoyed* it. But we can *count* on His presence in spirit if gathered unto His name in accordance with His words in Matt. xviii. 20: "For where two or three are gathered together unto My name, there am I in the midst of them." "*Unto My name*" we have quoted, for that is really what the Lord said, implying that His name was to be centre of gathering for His people during all future time. And if it be but two or three so gathered, He has promised to be in their midst. What delight He must have in being with His own! None can see Him now with outward eyes; the world cannot enjoy such a privilege as His presence; but the poorest, the feeblest, the least intelligent of His people, if only so gathered, can be sure of His presence among them—a privilege indeed! Angels delight to do His will. All the angelic host will, may we not say do? worship Him. All creation will rejoice when He returns, the true Sun, to gladden earth by the brightness of His presence. Meanwhile, His saints now can know what the world does not—the blessedness of being found on earth where He can be and is present.

But the saints, members of His body, will not be always here. How many, indeed, have passed away. A new, a different experience, therefore, is theirs. We can experience His presence *with us*. They experience the blessedness of being *with Him*, proving, though in this very different way, His delight in His own. From Himself came the first intimation of such a favour. To one who had been a thief, and

was justly suffering crucifixion for his sins, was this made known. The dying Saviour addressed him in language surely audible to others, saying, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43).

Did any Pharisee who heard it curl his lip in token of his scorn? That penitent thief had learnt by experience, ere the sun had set in the western horizon, the fulfilment of that promise, and the blessedness of it. And from that day to this he has never been away from Christ. Unclothed though he was, in paradise with Christ he found himself. For the resurrection he assuredly waits to be clothed upon with his house from heaven, but he waits not to be with Christ. He learnt what that was on the day that he had died. The soldiers broke his legs that his death might be hastened, and be ensured before sunset. By breaking his legs they hastened his departure. Yes, but whither? To be with Christ.

What the penitent thief proved, the Apostle Paul in his turn desired, viz., to depart and to be with Christ; and he adds—and who will gainsay it?—"for it is far better" (Phil. i. 23). Would any tell us of purgatory, and picture the sufferings of purgatorial fires? What purgatory was there for the penitent thief, who that day was to be in paradise with Christ? Did the Apostle Paul anticipate purgatory in the other world? Who could desire to be in purgatory, if that indeed existed? He desired to be with Christ, and looked, that if absent from the body he should be present with the Lord (2 Cor. v. 8). To be with Christ, and that immediately, was his expectation, and that is the immediate and sure prospect of the saint when he departs this life.

The penitent thief and the chief of sinners both with Christ, how that speaks to us of what saints are to the Lord! He will have His own—even though unclothed—*with* Himself, and that from the moment of their death. They depart to be with Christ.

But again the Lord speaks concerning the saints,



not only of their immediate blessing, but of final blessedness likewise. "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself" (John xiv. 3) told the apostles of His undying interest in His own, and His purpose to have them for ever with Himself. Would any one confine such a purpose to the company of the apostles? The Lord's words in His prayer to His Father are a corrective of such an idea. He prayed. They heard Him; and we read the words then uttered: "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am (or, that which Thou hast given Me, I will that, where I am, they also may be with Me); that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me" (John xvii. 24). His desires for His people remained unchanged. Embalmed now in the sacred page, they assure us that they are unchangeable. It is He Himself who proclaimed them. It is He who will fulfil them. He will come for His own. And His last words in the sacred volume confirm to us that He has not forgotten them. To John He said, "Surely I come quickly." "Amen: Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. xxii. 21) was the ready response of His servant.

He will come for His people, His servants. And when He speaks of this He affirms it without any condition connected with it. He will certainly come for them. But who can be said to be of that company? Here again we have to say that He has told us. "If any man serve Me let him follow Me; and where I am there shall also My servant be" (John xii. 26). And again He speaks, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit down with Me in My throne" (Rev. iii. 21). The followers in truth, and those who are overcomers, these, He tells us, will be with Him. To them His coming for His own is certain. He would have each one prove that he is one of that company.

*With* His people now who are on earth, He will have His heavenly saints *with* Himself, even if unclothed. He will crown the wondrous story by having them, when raised or changed, *with* Himself in glory

## 160 GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN GRACE, ETC.

throughout eternity. What must His saints be to Him? objects of His present interest; objects, too, of His delight for ever! C. E. S.

---

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN GRACE THE ONLY  
GROUND OF OUR SALVATION.\*

---

*"We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; whereunto He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."*—2 Thess. ii. 13, 14.

---

IN this Scripture we have the past, the present, and the future: God's eternal choice, the effectual call of His grace, and the ultimate glory. It is the Lord "who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (Acts xv. 17, 18). Let me, then, urge my reader's attention to the grounds upon which the apostle felt bound "to give thanks alway to God." In verse 3 of the first chapter we have similar language in a totally different connection; there his thanksgivings were *because of them*, because of what he found in them, the exceeding growth of their faith and the aboundings of their love! But how different is it here, "*because God*;" and all three of these things, yea, everything here, is based upon it. We are, in a word, introduced into that new creation wherein "all things are of God" (2 Cor. v. 18). Let us with holy and reverent minds look into the subject as being deeply desirous of vindicating God against the aspersions of men, and of helping those who have difficulties.

The apostle was writing to Thessalonian believers; but through him the Spirit of God addresses us to-day. And I ask myself and I ask you, Does your heart joyfully accept every word of this without question and without qualification? Let us in this connection look at Eph. ii.: "God, even when we were dead in sins, hath *quickened* us;" and

---

\* This article by the Editor appeared several years ago. It is now reprinted for the benefit of his younger brethren, to whom he specially commends it because of the fundamental importance of the subject, especially to any who labour in the gospel.

again, "We are His workmanship, *created* in Christ Jesus." This is not the Gospel, I grant ; it is not addressed to man's responsibility, but it is the eternal truth of God for those who know Him. "For by grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves ; the gift of God " (ver. 8). And here note that, while in no degree impeaching the statement often made that faith is the gift of God, I would suggest that what is here said to be that gift embraces not merely the faith that saves, but the salvation which is by grace and through faith. That salvation is all and altogether of God, God's gift.

Eternal life when we were dead in sins ; new creation when as of the Adamic creation we were ruined and condemned ; and salvation from eternal wrath—each and all of these, with infinitely more when glory dawns—are only to be apprehended and accounted for by that blessed declaration being accepted, "BECAUSE GOD HATH FROM THE BEGINNING CHOSEN YOU TO SALVATION." Thus it is we find the Lord saying, "No man can come unto Me except the Father which hath sent Me DRAW HIM " (John vi. 44). As He had also said to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again " (iii. 6, 7). Let the reader consider, then, Does a man become born again by an act of his own will ? Does he quicken himself ? Does he new-create himself ? Does he save himself ? Surely the very nature of Scriptural language plainly establishes that the work is *entirely of God*. Salvation is of the Lord, and for this reason and no other, because His purpose was to save.

But how, I may be asked, do you reconcile man's *responsibility* with God's *sovereignty* ? My answer is, I find no antagonism, and consequently have nothing to reconcile. So far as I learn from Scripture, each stands perfectly clear of the other. God's creatorship involves His sovereignty ; man's creatureship involves his responsibility ; nothing of the one clashes with anything of the other. God is absolutely sovereign ; man absolutely responsible.

But, it may be said, if there be no difficulty on the side of man's responsibility, is there not as to his *free agency* ? How, for instance, are we to reconcile with this the Lord's words, "No man *can* come unto Me except the Father which hath

## 162 GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN GRACE, ETC.

sent Me draw him"? I answer that the Lord also said, "Ye *will not come* to Me that ye might have life;" each of which Scriptures throws light on the other. Man is perfectly free to come, and is invited and is urged to come, but he has an evil nature and a corrupt will; he loves darkness rather than light, and is therefore *morally* incapable of coming; in a word, he has no heart for Christ. His will is unfettered; he is undeniably a free agent; but he has to confess, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to *his own way*" (Is. liii. 6).

Thus we find that freedom of will in a fallen creature involves freedom towards evil, and towards evil we have every one turned. In any accurately balanced magnet, there being a bias towards the north, whatever oscillations there may be the needle points only northward; and the more delicately it is suspended, though the more it oscillates, the more certainly will it indicate the bias which governs it.

But man has a conscience, which by the goodness of God he got at the fall, a vestige of testimony for Him which every man carries in his breast; significant witness of his responsibility, although morally fallen. Every intelligent creature, fallen or unfallen, is a responsible being. To be otherwise he must divest himself of his creaturehood. Angels, as intelligent creatures, were responsible, but we read of those who left their first estate; they sinned untempted, and became rebel angels; while of others we read as "elect angels"—thus God's sovereignty in election was manifested as to them. Under responsibility, equally alike, some fell and others were kept, the latter by the sovereign election of God. Innocent man was responsible; fallen men are responsible. Each and every man has elected or chosen to do evil; God has elected or chosen from such to save whom He will. Every mouth is stopped, and all the world is guilty before God (Rom. iii. 19). Righteously, therefore, He might have punished all in His wrath. Conscience testifies to every man that he has *wilfully* sinned; his own conscience accuses him, and will be his accuser throughout eternity. Left to himself, though a Saviour has been provided *for all* that all might be saved, and a sacrifice of *infinite* value offered and accepted, every man would have perished!

It has been said, "Why should He not have given every

one *an equal chance*?" I answer, *He has*; and were there nothing more, each and every man would equally have perished. "Ye will not come to Me" would have been manifested as to every soul of man, though never so earnestly and persistently besought to turn to Him. But in such an issue, where would have been the eternal display that "*God is love*"?

Again it is urged, that if salvation rests with God, and God is love, why should He not *save more*? If this argument could be reverentially urged at all it might be carried further, why should He not save *all*? But where, then, would have been the eternal witnesses that "*God is light*"? His mercy and goodness, His love and His grace, must be eternally displayed on the one hand; His righteousness, His holiness, and His truth, together with His eternal abhorrence of sin, must be eternally displayed on the other. To this end, some must be saved and some perish, and we know that this is so. Therefore it resolves itself into a question of numbers, the proportion of the one to the other; and shall we who know not even what that proportion is, have the temerity to suggest that we could have ordered it more for His glory than His own divine wisdom has done?

But, amongst the various objectors, some there are who find an *arbitrariness* in this which they consider would be a blot upon the character of God! Have they ever read Romans ix.? Does not God, as it were, there permit Himself to be taken to account, that He may answer every cavil and stop every mouth?

There is no unrighteousness with God. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. xviii. 25). God were not God were He not sovereign. Does not every earthly monarch, in one way or another, find it essential to vindicate his sovereignty? He pardons rebels; he liberates prisoners; he mitigates sentences according to his own clemency. Shall the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords have less absolute exercise of sovereignty than they? Shall He be impugned by His creatures if relentless towards some He is not relentless towards all, or pardoning some does not pardon every one? Who are they that would arraign God, and have Him to act according to their poor finite conceptions of how He should conduct Himself towards men? "What if God, willing to

## 164 GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN GRACE, ETC.

shew His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction ; and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory, *even us !*" (Rom. ix. 22-24). How wonderfully significant is every word ! God was *willing* to shew His wrath, *willing* to make His power known ; and He will do this by those vessels of wrath whom He had *endured* with *much longsuffering*, but who were self-fitted for destruction. On the other hand, *that He might* (here comes in His active intervention in blessing, not in the other case in cursing) make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy (not which were self-prepared, but) whom *He had afore prepared unto glory*, even us ! Surely every word vindicates God and magnifies His exceeding grace.

But if men are morally incapable of turning to God, *why then preach* the Gospel ? God Himself shall give the answer. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. i. 21). "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans x. 17). "We are labourers together with God" (1 Cor. iii. 9). "We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish ; to the one we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things ?" (2 Cor. ii. 15, 16). "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things" (Rom. x. 15). Beautiful to whom ? *Beautiful to God !*

Here I would point out that God has in a variety of ways manifested His sovereign election, for "God is love." I have already pointed out that there are elect angels. Recent investigations in astronomy indicate that there are not less than 500 millions of heavenly bodies, many immensely greater than this earth ; yet He *chose* this tiny globe for the display of the exceeding riches of His grace ! And when families were found here, He *chose* Noah and his family as objects of His preserving care ! In like manner He *chose* Abram and his family. And when two children of Rebecca were in the womb, He *chose* one and refused the other ; and when there were nations on earth, He *chose* Israel to be for Himself, though a stiff-necked and rebellious people, but "to

whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." Still further: "They are not all Israel which are of Israel: neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children" (Rom. ix. 4-7). So Ishmael was rejected and Isaac taken; Esau rejected and Jacob taken. "Even so then at this present time, also there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. xi. 5).

And when a new creation was to be formed and displayed, we hear the Lord Jesus say, "I have manifested Thy Name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me." "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine." "Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me" (John xvii. 6, 9, 11). "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you" (xv. 16). Surely every word teaches the sovereign election by God of individuals for the eternal glory of Christ, His Son! Thus we read Acts xiii. 48, "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed;" and in Eph. i. 4, "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." And this brings us round to the Scripture which heads my paper, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." To His eternal praise, be it said, He has seen fit thus to glorify Himself as a Saviour-God through the work of His beloved Son, for us whom in eternity He had chosen, and whom in time He effectually called, that He might ultimately glorify us together with Him.

In 2 Cor. v., we find it explicitly stated that Christ "died *for all*" because all were dead; then we are told of some "which live," and it is said He "died *for them*." Thus in one way His death was for all who were dead, and in another way it was for them which live. There is no conflict in these statements. He was a *Propitiation* for all, whether believers or not. He is a *Substitute* for all who believe. In their place and in their stead He bare the judgment due to their sins, became their sins-bearer before God! Scripture never says that He *bare the sins of all*. All those whose sins Christ bore are for ever cleared from them before

## 166      GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN GRACE, ETC.

God ; all those who die in their sins are judged for them at the great white throne, and are never cleared from them in time or eternity.

Why should God, some have blasphemously said, create men *only to damn them* ? I answer, *He has not done so*. He has created all men for His own glory ; they sinned and came short of it. Then He gave a Saviour, that all men through Him might be saved. This is illustrated in Luke xiv. by the great supper, which sets forth the aboundings of His grace towards those to whom the message of His love and mercy goes out. But they all as one began to make excuse ! First there was the inviting in, but *not one came* : how solemn ! Then follow the bringing in and the constraining to come in, by which means only the house is filled. Does this manifest injustice to those who were invited only ? Who would venture to say so ? The narrative clearly shows they had no appetite for the feast ; each turned to his own way, and followed the bent of his own heart, caring not for that which satisfies God's heart, and which in grace He had provided for theirs !

But it has been said that men are born with an evil nature, and why should God punish them for what *they cannot help* ? I answer, *He never will*. No man, woman, or child will be in eternal punishment for his or her evil nature. Nothing in Scripture indicates that any will suffer in hell on account of "original sin," as it has been termed. We are born with an evil nature, I grant, but I plead that every man has sinned wilfully ; in other words, he *could* avoid sinning, and yet sinned.

The evidences of a sinful nature are seen in a babe, but I could not say that a babe sins ; and He who came to save the lost (Matt. xviii. 11), which a babe is, and died unto sin, is an actual Saviour for every such child which passes into His presence before coming to years of responsibility. Every sinner who has come to years of responsibility has to admit that he has sinned wilfully, that he *could* have helped it and he *would not*, and thus, if honest, he is self-condemned.

But it is said there is *partiality* with God ; His ways are not equal. "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God ? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus ? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one



vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?" (Rom. ix. 20, 21). Shall man possess this power over the clay which he never created, and God's title to do as He will with such creatures of clay as we are, be denied to Him who has created us? What man stigmatises as partiality is really divine sovereignty, and to challenge God's sovereignty is to deny to Him the exercise of the first of all the rights of God. It is man endeavouring to make God amenable to considerations which only have place properly amongst men. God is God, and cannot consent to be subjected to mere human judgment.

Again, it has been objected that "whom He will He *hardeneth*." This objection also has been met by God Himself in the above words. But let us remember that this Scripture supplies but two examples of individuals against whom God's anger had been displayed. "Esau have I hated" is a quotation from Malachi i. 3, not written therefore until he had fully manifested that he was that profane person "who, for one morsel of meat, sold his birthright" (Heb. xii. 16). And Pharaoh's heart was not hardened by God until in his craft and his cruelty he had made the lives of God's chosen people bitter with hard bondage;—"all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour" (Ex. i. 14); and, moreover, he had slaughtered their male children with relentless ferocity (verse 22).

This sovereignty of God, be it emphatically noted, is the foundation of ALL *eternal blessing*, whether to the elect angels, to Israel as a nation, or to the heavenly saints. Had Israel been left on the pure ground of responsibility, God's wrath must have destroyed them for the sin of the golden calf, but it only became the occasion for God to display His *sovereignty* when, after the intervention of Moses as type of Christ, the true Mediator, He proclaimed, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy" (Ex. xxxiii. 19). Had we been left upon the ground of responsibility only, we must also have been swept away in judgment, for "there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. iii. 12). But then for us also has God come in, in the sovereignty of His grace, to justify the ungodly unto His own present and eternal glory.

And if we go further than this, questioning His eternal

## 168      GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN GRACE, ETC.

decrees, we are met by an impassable barrier ; we know not what the divine decrees are, nor their objects. This only we know, that those inscrutable decrees *hinder no man* ; in no respect do they interfere with his liberty. So long as he is in his sins, he can know nothing about them. Let him but believe, he will find that God has decreed his eternal salvation.

The doctrine of reprobation as to those who perish is alien to Scripture. The doctrine of God's sovereignty exercised in blessing is the *door of hope* for every sinner : "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called : and whom He called, them He also justified : and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. viii. 29-30). What a magnificent vista of present and eternal blessing is opened up here for every soul that accepts His word that *God is for us* ! And if He is so, it is in the sovereignty of His grace according to these eternal counsels.

Finally, I would ask my reader to reflect on the moral government of God as Supreme Governor of the universe. Had He, who has taught us that He is able to cast both body and soul into hell, permitted men to believe that because He was mighty to save He would therefore save everyone ; because He was rich in grace He would show grace to everyone, what a licence for wickedness would this have been—what a premium upon every sort of sensual indulgence ! No wise or good king would dream of removing the moral restraints which preserve his subjects from crime ; how much less could a holy God on His own part open the flood-gates of sin and iniquity to the utter destruction of His moral government, and the ruin of the creature's relation to his Creator. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out ! For who hath known the mind of the Lord ? or who hath been His counsellor ? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto Him again ? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things : to whom be glory for ever. Amen." (Rom. xi. 33-36).

## JEROBOAM.

## A KINGDOM GAINED, AND A KINGDOM LOST.

1 *Kings* xi. 26—40.

THE Word of God deals in facts, not theories. Man has been put upon trial in every possible way. The result of these trials has been constant failure. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning." The Scriptures are the testimony of God as to what is in man, and His testimony to what He is in Himself. Scripture is also given for our admonition. Paul writing to the Corinthians (1st epistle, chap. 10) so uses the Old Testament,—drawing examples and warning from the records of the past, as also instruction and stimulus for faith to-day. The actions of men, and the state of the heart which led to them, is put prominently before us. Sometimes we glean from the actions themselves the whereabouts of a man's thoughts ; at other times, the Holy Ghost more explicitly declares the condition of soul. Thus we have a "sure word of prophecy, unto which we do well to take heed." "By the word of Thy lips, I have kept me from the path of the destroyer." "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path." We need faith, not experience. The *latter* is imperatively given to us in Scripture—God's testimony of what was in man, brought out in given circumstances, but existing in man before its development. It is also God's testimony of what is in us. Circumstances may develop this also. But where faith is in exercise and the Scriptures accredited, we do not require to be put upon trial, or to learn by our failure the knowledge of our weakness. Faith accredits God's testimony. We have in the Bible the record of our weakness. Every failure in man related there confirms it. We have also the source of strength in dependence or faith in God. The knowledge of the former works humility and trembling, and in a healthy state of soul knits us

closer to God ; and, conscious of our weakness, we roll ourselves upon Him.

“ His soul which is lifted up is not upright in him : but the just shall live by his faith ” (Habakkuk ii. 4).

Thus facts, not theories, are revealed in the word of God. Now the subject before us is pregnant with meaning. A kingdom was given to Jeroboam by the appointment and power of God, and was lost by his *own* efforts to retain it. The call to the kingdom was of God, and the power to sustain in it His also. God in His gifts has calculated for circumstances. He may use them to prove whether man will confide in Him ; but to be swayed in our judgment by them is to put circumstances above God, and thus to forget that He is Almighty. Unbelief in His power and Godhead does not end in departure from Him only, but to follow another ; as in the case of Israel, “ Up, make us gods to go before us.” So in the case of Jeroboam, “ he set up calves in Dan and Bethel.” But let us look to the narrative. The chapter opens with the account of Solomon’s idolatry : “ For it came to pass when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods ; and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtarothe goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord,” &c. (ver. 6). “ The Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice.” In ver. 14, we read, “ The Lord stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite : he was of the king’s seed in Edom.” In ver. 23, we read, “ God stirred up another adversary, Rezon, the son of Eliadah,” &c. And again, in ver. 26-40 :—

“ And Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon’s servant, whose mother’s name was Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lifted up his hand against

the king. And this was the cause that he lifted up his hand against the king: Solomon built Millo, and repaired the breaches of the city of David his father. And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph. And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field: and Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces: and he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee: (but he shall have one tribe for My servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:) because that they have forsaken Me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in My ways, to do that which is as right in Mine eyes, and to keep My statutes and My judgments, as did David his father. Howbeit I will not take the whole judgment out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David My servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept My commandments and My statutes: but I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes. And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David My servant may have a light alway before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen Me to put My name there. And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel. And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in My ways, and do that is right in My sight, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as David My servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee. And I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever. Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon."

An absolute promise of God is given to Jeroboam in the 31st verse, "I will give ten tribes to thee." The ground of God's judgment upon Solomon in the 33rd verse, viz., his idolatry, the condition of blessing to Jeroboam in the 38th verse, viz., God acknowledged in the kingdom. For God to promise and to perform is one. "Hath He said, and shall He not do it?"

Rehoboam, left to the unrestrained exercise of his will, provokes the people to rebellion. In chapter xii., verse 15, we read, "The king hearkened not unto the people, for the cause was from the Lord, that He might perform the saying which the Lord spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat" (verses 16, 17, 18, 19). In verse 20, "It came to pass when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel." "There was none that followed the house of David but the tribe of Judah only."

Thus the word of the Lord was fulfilled. Jeroboam reigned over the ten tribes of Israel. They unanimously elect him. God forbids the king of Judah to fight against him, commands every man to return to his house, saying, "For this thing is from Me." If Jeroboam reflected on his elevation and the manner of it, nothing could be more manifestly of God, and, because of God, the maintenance of his position secured. What cause for gratitude and thanksgiving, what ground of confidence! Yet it is exactly when in the most favourable position, when there is no excuse for unbelief, that which is in the heart of man is betrayed. Happy for us that, in Christ, "God can be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly."

"Then Jeroboam built Shechem in Mount Ephraim and dwelt therein; and went out from thence and built Penuel. And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David; if this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people

turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah." Now this reasoning of Jeroboam would have been consistant in a man whose advancement had been the result of his own wisdom and strength. Forethought is eminently useful in worldly matters. What a man can attain unto, he may be deprived of; and he is justified in weighing his affairs well over. When we say "justified," we mean there is consistency in such conduct, with the avowed principles of the carnal heart. But it was otherwise with Jeroboam, he owed his kingdom to God. He was chosen of God, called of God, and set up in it by the mighty power of God, and the absolute possession of the throne secured to him, and his seed after him, so long as he walked in the fear of God.

But what manifest unbelief we have in verses 26 and 27,—“And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall this kingdom return to the house of David. If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord,” &c. Circumstances touching his security harass his mind. The thoughts of his heart take the place of the testimony of God by the prophet. He reasons about matters which were only intelligible to faith, and the result is blind infidelity.

When he said, “Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David,” he boldly impugns God’s faithfulness; in fact, what was it but to say incredulously, “Doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?”

His place and his throne were from God, and the security depended upon God also. Circumstances, propitious or otherwise, had nothing to do with God’s promise. The gift was absolute, conditional only as to Jeroboam’s conduct when in possession. God had said, in verse 38 of the 11th chapter, “I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee.” Jeroboam sees the

kingdom in danger, then his life also—"They shall kill me;" his eye looking at circumstances, and his heart overwhelmed. Neglecting God, he takes counsel of others, "and made two calves of gold." His ruin is accomplished by the very means he took to secure his safety. Lacking faith in God for the present, leads to the denial of His power in the past.

Momentous warning! "Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt; and he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin." But his iniquity does not end here. He imitates the order of worship as practised in Judah, observing feasts and ordaining priests of the lowest of the people. And he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel, the 15th day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart. What a terrible picture is this of the baseness of man: Jeroboam disowns God's care and perverts His worship.

The prophet, in the 13th chapter, denounces judgment on the altar, and that by a branch of the house of David. This works no repentance in Jeroboam. In verses 33 and 34, we have presented to us his downward career in sin and apostasy. Chapter xiv., verses 1 to 16, open out the domestic judgment upon him in the death of his child (yet removed in the grace of God, "because in him there was found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam"), and closes with the awful threatenings of the dispersion of Israel for the sin of Jeroboam; "And he shall give Israel up, because of the sin of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin."

"The word of God is quick and powerful." The lapse of ages does not impair its efficacy, nor the force of circumstances obscure its adaptation. The living God by His Spirit applies it in power to the hearts of His children to-day, and when reading the records of the past, we seem but to deal with the present.



They that worship God now, must worship Him in spirit and in truth—the worshippers, poor sinners in themselves, yet in Christ kings and priests unto God and His Father and our Father, because His, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” Thus, believers in Jesus are called to a kingdom, as in Hebrews xii. 28, “Wherefore we, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.” The position of God’s people on earth must needs answer to their destinies in heaven. Fellowship with God the Father and the Lord Jesus, sustained by the power and presence of the Holy Ghost in their midst, a peculiar people, a chosen generation, to shew forth the praises of Him who had called them out of darkness into light (1 Peter ii. 10).

There is no other access to God but through Christ; no medium of intercourse but by the Holy Ghost. Wherever two or three are gathered together in His Name, the Lord is there. His Spirit remaineth with us always. Nothing more monstrous than in the face of such direct testimony to introduce man’s will into the scene; no greater delusion than human arrangements.

To restrain the outbreaks of the flesh by order in the flesh, is but to restrain one sin by setting up another. And strange it is that man dare to “intrude into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.” The efficacy of ordinances does not consist in themselves, but in that they are given of God. The virtue of them arises from their being His. He meets His people in His own appointed way; and faith apprehends His presence.

When saints are gathered together in the Name of Jesus, and in dependence upon the Holy Ghost, they are in the way of God’s appointment and consequently of blessing. To the eye of the carnal reasoner, such an assembly, without ostensible bonds of union or

outward guarantees for order and decorum, is held together by a rope of sand. Their work is regarded as fugitive and ephemeral. The most favourable opinion is, that it may continue for a generation, but die out with it. But such arguments surely avail nothing. It is our duty to serve God to-day. The generation to come is safe in His hands. But we find it easier to effect care for the future than to do right in the present, and to satisfy conscience by trusting God *afar off* than when He is *nigh*.

Now, ostensibly, the position we are called to occupy answers to the kingdom given to Jeroboam—the title to it similar—chosen of God, and called and exhorted to have faith in Him. The danger we have to guard against answers also to the one Jeroboam fell into—looking into circumstances apart from God, and striving by our own devices to maintain our standing. We say ostensibly: for the object of God in having a people in the world was to show forth His praise “that hath called us to glory and virtue.” The weakness of man and the subtlety of Satan might hinder the manifestation of this; but the gifts and calling of God being without repentance, nothing can separate *us* from His love in Christ. But this very security brings corresponding responsibilities. We are saved to glorify God. The knowledge of our salvation is given to us, that whilst here we may act to His glory and testify to His grace; we own doctrinally it is of Him, and by Him, and through Him are all things, yet practically we engage to do much for ourselves. We are in danger also of confining the sense of our privileges to individual blessing, instead of seeing them also in their corporate character. The safety of the individual believer is based on God’s covenant with Christ, upon which he relies: but the blessing of the saints assembled together is equally so. Believers “are builded together for a habitation of God, through the Spirit;” “one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all,

and in you all." No promises are more secure for the individual believer, than those for the blessing of saints assembled together in the Name of Jesus. As in the individual there are many changes, so also in the gatherings of the saints. There needs daily purging of heart, and application of the promises to the soul of the individual: there may be more difficulty, but there is equal occasion for soul-discipline in the assembly. We are not wearied so readily in looking to ourselves, we break down in the care of others; and unless our souls are fortified by the word of God and prayer, we sink from the pressure of trial into indifference; or, wearied with combating the wills of others, determine on the unrestrained exercise of our own. But God has written confusion on man's efforts. And even men of God have wandered furthest from His thoughts when they have sought to provide for emergencies in the Church before they have appeared, or to obviate their manifestation by discipline of their own. The chaos around us in the religious world, the very vanity and vexation of all things, are God's warnings to us to "cease from man;" man would not trust God for His Church, and has sought to restrain disorder by bonds of his own. How utterly has this exercise of will proved abortive, and brought in confusion which nothing can remedy, the end of which is revealed to be judgment.

"Separation from evil is God's principle of unity." Such a step taken necessarily isolates from systems around, and throws the soul upon God. The subtlety of Satan has acted upon man, to develop arrangements prohibiting blessing to the saints. The eyes of His people are opening to this, and the question is forced upon us, Whither shall we go for aid? Blessed be God for His grace! His Spirit remaineth with us always. Jesus is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Wherever two or three are gathered together unto His name, His presence is vouchsafed. Manifest blessing has resulted from restored confidence in the

basis of the Church, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner-stone. Believers have been blessed, and made a blessing to others—the realised presence of God giving fulness of joy. The inheritance is discovered—the position taken—Almighty God pledged to sustain us in the blessing He Himself has provided. The times are at hand when the elect shall scarcely be saved. That they may be secured, God, by His Spirit, is opening their eyes to the danger; and conscious of weakness, they are thrown necessarily upon Him. Blessed necessity! The abounding evil around giving occasion for the superabounding grace of God. Let us beware that the *thoughts of our heart* do not take the place of the *testimony* of God.

Appearances may be against us—circumstances daily arise to embarrass us—but they are permitted of God for the development of faith in Himself to the praise of His glory. “No weapon formed against thee shall prosper.” Our manifold failures are so palpable that our enemies already rejoice in our discomfiture, and account that the revival of truth which has blessed us was but a delusion: yet even this shall but serve to increase our dependence upon God. We have the elements of destruction in ourselves, but the energy of life in God. He identifies Himself with His people. He has raised the desire in our hearts to be identified with Him. When Pharaoh purposed the destruction of the children of Israel, God ordered them to encamp between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon. The enemy found them—God’s eye was there too, and their deliverance is accomplished. So now the enemy is triumphing in our weakness, and purposing the injury of the body of Christ. But God orders us into the citadel; “the Name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and are safe.” There is danger! let us flee unto God to hide us. Let us not lean on devices of our own, nor write in our folly the sentence of death on our *position* and *privilege* instead of upon *ourselves*. “For we have

the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God that raiseth the dead." What may we not expect from His mercy?—  
*Present Testimony*, 1849.

---

---

## THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD.

---

I'm going o'er the border  
To the golden land ahead ;  
*There* is the hidden manna  
And *there* the heavenly bread !  
I have fed upon them here,  
For faith is not denied,  
But great is my desire  
In His presence to abide !  
Yea, to leave earth's din and discord  
For *this*, the presence of the Lord !

Here present in the body  
I'm absent from the Lord,  
Though cheered with heavenly comfort  
And nourished by His word.  
But there with Him my Saviour,  
Is day without a night,  
A day of glorious promise,  
The Lamb itself its light !  
Who would not change life's toilsome road  
For *this*, the presence of the Lord ?

I'm crossing o'er the border  
To the land of sunny smiles ;  
Behind me sin and sorrow,  
" Behind me Satan's wiles ;  
Before me God's own country,  
The land of radiant bliss,  
Oh ! bright, O happy journey  
Far from this wilderness !  
I long to hear His welcome word,  
Come share the presence of the Lord !

---

---

STEPHEN.—*Acts vi.-vii.*

THE necessity arising out of the "murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration," brings into prominence this honoured vessel of the Holy Ghost.

His character, as given in the first of these chapters by the Spirit of God, calls for consideration. We know not his earthly parentage, but we read that men of "honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom," were wanted to look after the temporal needs of the disciples, and such were found in the assembly at Jerusalem.

Stephen is the one first named. He is described as a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. One so characterised would not long be in the rear of the conflict. He would, no doubt, faithfully attend with the other brethren to the duties just laid on them. But we read that "full of faith and power, he did great wonders and miracles among the people."

He is soon seen in close quarters with the foe, and the wisdom and spirit by which he spake was irresistible.

Now we find his enemies enlisting in their opposition to the truth which he spake to them those who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God." This course had been pursued to the full against the Master. Now it is the servant that is feeling the force of the enmity that Satan was inspiring men with. It is suffering *for* Christ's sake. He hears all their lies; he sees how the people are being roused against him. But he is in peace; the *peace of God* which passeth all understanding is garrisoning his heart in the presence of the people who would in a little embroil their hands in his blood.

Look at the picture portrayed for our gaze by the Holy Ghost of this man! It is written that all that

sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. He was not an angel. If he had been an angel, one of those beings "that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word" (Ps. cii. 20), beings who had never fallen from their first estate, no wonder would have been produced by beholding such a sight as faced these would-be judges of right that day. It was a man of their own race, but under the full control of God the Holy Ghost. He knew they charged him with what was wholly untrue. He knew the One he belonged to, and whom he served, was in perfect knowledge of all they were doing and saying against him. And thus the *peace of God within* gave him in their eyes the appearance of one who was entirely of a different race.

Stephen's first utterance, as he begins his wonderful epitome of Israel's course up to the moment then present, was "The God of glory." It suited him to speak of glory. He was full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost, who had come down to earth consequent on the session of the Son of Man at the right hand of God, filled him; therefore to speak of the God of glory, and the words and ways of that God, would tell home on their conscience sharper than a two-edged sword.

But it is not my purpose, in penning these lines, to dwell on the *address* to the Jewish council, but to call attention to the faithful course of one of like passions with ourselves, and who in the short history we have of him is mentioned as *full of faith and the Holy Ghost*.

We are prepared for a sharp and short conflict. He is a skilled warrior. Every word finds out the foe. No answer is forthcoming; but they try to drown the sound of his words, and "running upon him with one accord, they stone him, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." He had nothing

to put right in that quarter. All was right there. He had just to go home when his work of suffering was done, when his Master would release him ; and, beautifully in keeping with the closing words of chap. vi., "he falls asleep" (vii. 60).

We have asked a friend who has passed through a night of suffering, "Did you sleep?" The answer may have been, "No ; who could in such circumstances?" But here was one who, with the stones falling heavily upon him, "falls on sleep." By weakness and defeat he won the victory. He went to be with Him who from the right hand was watching His servant, and ministering to him all he required to be a partaker of His sufferings.

How suited are his words to such persistent rejecters of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost. "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." This filled up their cup. But mark well how that for his own heart it is *Jesus* he sees. He looks up and sees the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. Thus he won the prize.

It is not only the great boldness that is manifested in Stephen, but the inner quiet which he was seen to possess, which we need to notice. He is more than a conqueror, we may surely say. He reckons himself to be dead unto sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord. The life of Jesus is made manifest in his mortal flesh. His enemies do their worst. They stone him amid his prayers, which reach the ear of Him who sits on the throne. He is like his Master. He cries, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." The Lord help us to ponder over the words, "Full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," as the secret of daily victory over sin in us and around us.

"Full of faith and of the Holy Ghost" are great words. If we judge ourselves to be short of this attainment, but have the desire to reach unto it, there is hope. But, alas ! the satisfaction that reigns is so



great that, instead of being conquerors through Him that loved us, we are vanquished on every hand—in the world, and in the Church. Stephen resisted unto blood (Heb. xii. 4).

Two spheres are mentioned in Scripture in which we are called to be overcomers—the world in the epistle of John, and the Church in Revelation ii., iii.

May God show His people what His thoughts are about the world—a system which began in Genesis iv. and culminated in the murder of the Son of God—and likewise give the understanding as to His word which makes known what the Church is as His dwelling-place upon earth. Its first appearance on earth we have in Acts ii., but ere the apostles left the scene it had left its “first love,” and gradually the decline increased. Now the Word of God will not be endured by His professing people, and individual interest in Christ as a Saviour is considered to be everything. This is not *overcoming*. Christ the Lord desires to see us refusing man’s thoughts and ways in His assembly, and accepting His thoughts and ways as our rule and guide in all things connected with its presence here on earth. May He grant a *revival* among His beloved people to this end, ere He calls us away from a world we have all failed in so badly. D. S.

---

THE FUTURE.—The Christian man may well shudder at the thought of the future which awaits impenitent men. In the parable of the “rich man and Lazarus” we read the rich man died and was buried—and what then? “In hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments.” The beggar’s life on earth had been a painful one; but he had Christ for his portion, and instead of the rich man’s fate, angels were near him at his death to take his redeemed soul safe to heaven, for ever to be with the Lord Jesus, free from all pain and sorrow. Death is not the end of man’s being; the death of the body is not the destruction of the soul; but it effectually closes the day of grace. Salvation is offered to sinners now, freely without money and without price. To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts! One second of hell’s torments will open eyes which have been kept blind, and will fill lost souls with remorse. Fellow sinners, pause in your mad career; “Awake thou that sleepest, and Christ shall give thee light!” Like Mary, choose the good part even now which can never be taken from you.

## 184 INCIDENTS, ILLUSTRATIONS, ETC.

TO THE ancient Greeks and Romans a cross was the most loathly and abhorrent of all objects ; it was the torture implement for the worst of criminals, and the gibbet for the vilest of slaves. It summoned up pictures so intolerable that Cicero said it should be kept from the sight, and even from the *thoughts*, of all good citizens. No wonder that the cross was "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness."

I ONCE asked a little blind boy the question, "Do you love Jesus?" Turning his sightless eyes to heaven, he answered, "Ye dinna ken how I love Him! *The right word* ha'na been made yet to tell o' half my love ; but I'm just waitin'—waitin' till I ha'e the 'new song' put into my mouth, and then I'll gang awa' *and tell it to Himself*."

RIGHTEOUS SELF HARD TO SLAY.—The writer had occasion lately to visit an old sailor in a protracted illness. Taking his large but not much-used Bible, I read to him, and marked with my pencil the words (Hosea xiii. 9)—"Thou hast destroyed thyself," assuring him they were for *him* as certainly as if his name were there. and adding emphatically, "Do you believe them?" "No," said he, "I havn't destroyed myself ; I have been honest and upright, and what more would you have?" Day after day, for several weeks, I read to him the same condemning words, telling him, to his great chagrin, I could advance no further with him until he believed that saying of God. At last, one day, when I put to him the old question, he said it *must* be true because *I* told him so. "But it is GOD who says it not I," was my rejoinder, pointing him to the plain words of Scripture. At the next visit he was another man—broken down, and stripped of his poor "rags" of self-righteousness. And *now* he took refuge thankfully in Christ Jesus, his *only* righteousness."—*Rev. John Baillie, D.D.*

"BLESSED are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted." Here I do not think that it is a question of personal sin. Christ was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," and necessarily, as the Son of God in a world astray from Him. "For the zeal of Thy house hath eaten Me up," He says, "and the reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon Me" (Ps. lxxix. 9). His tears fell over Jerusalem. The cross He bore for men was fullest witness to the intensity of His anguish upon their account, while justifying the holiness of God in all He suffered for them. The mourning that He blesses here is, we may be sure, like His own, love's judgment of the ruin that is everywhere around ; little need to dwell upon the causes for mourning in the world, such as we know it. Its open sores are revealed enough day by day, in a time when the most hidden things are revealed as a matter of course before the public gaze, as having unquestioned right to know everything. And yet, after all, the mass of evil is too great even to be so gauged and realised. What must have been the opposition of it to Him whose eye saw through it all, and whose heart had none of the callousness with which we can throw off, or the weakness which makes us faint under, so great a burden. But "they shall be comforted." There is a rest of God to come, a rest into which we shall enter ; a sabbath-rest, where rest shall not only be allowed but sanctified. How sweet the thought of a rest of God, where *He* shall rest!—rest, as alone He can do, "in His love." And this shall be.

WHAT is bearing a temporal cross, to wearing an eternal crown? Henry Martyn, after a severe contest with many distinguished competitors for the prize of senior wrangler (the highest mathematical honour at Cambridge), observed, after receiving it, "I was astonished to find what a shadow I had grasped."

CHRISTIAN, thou art under many great troubles, many sore trials, but tell me, doth not God give unto thy soul such cordials, such supports, comforts and refreshments, that the world knows not of? Oh! then certainly thy affliction is in love.

THINGS UPSIDE DOWN.—Why do Ritualists tell us the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper must be taken fasting—*before breakfast?*—*Because* Christ instituted it *after supper*. Why do they use wafers instead of bread, and wine and water instead of wine?—*Because* Christ "took bread and brake it," and likewise after supper he took the cup (containing "the fruit of the vine") and said, "This do in remembrance of Me," therefore they do *something else*. Why do they assert Christ's real bodily presence in the elements?—*Because* Christ said, "Do this in remembrance of Me," and we evidently cannot do anything in remembrance of a person unless he is *absent* from us. The apostle also, when he said, "As oft as ye do this, ye do show the Lord's death *till He come*," equally implies His "real absence." Why do they imply, by their masses for the dead, a purgatory to cleanse the remains of sin?—*Because* we are told "that the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from *all sin*." Why do they offer the "unbloody sacrifice" for the remission of sins?—*Because* "Cain, who was of that wicked one," offered such a sacrifice, and because "without shedding of blood," the apostle tells us, "is no remission."—*From Hely Smith's "Real Ritual Reason Why."*

SADNESS OF HEATHENISM.—How many people really understand the dark and utter hopelessness which settles down upon the hearts of those who know not the Bible and the God of the Bible? In our bereavement we have sorrows and heartaches and lonely hours, but yet we look forward to meeting in the glad Beyond, where partings never come; but heathen hearts, perhaps as full of love as ours, bleed and quiver and break, and have no light or joy or rest or hope beyond this world. A story comes from India, from the Amritsar Medical Mission, of an old woman eighty years of age, tall and erect, and with hair like driven snow, but who was totally blind. She came to the dispensary of the mission, and said to the missionary: "Son, I will give thee all I have, bear all pain, do anything, if thou wilt give me *my sight for a single moment*." "Grandmother," said the missionary, "why undertake all this pain and weariness for a fleeting good?" "Son," she replied, "since I became blind, a little grandson has been born to me. He is the only one I have, and I have never seen his face. I must die, and then I shall become a cat or a dog or a frog. We must be born 84,000,000 times, and the lad will become a cow or a hen or a crow. After this life, he is mine and I am his no more. If I don't see him now, I *shall never see him again*, for through all eternity our lives will never again touch. And oh! *I do want to see the laddie's face before I die*."—*Christian Age*.

"BEFORE LEAVING PARIS," writes Joseph G. Alexander, a member of the Society of Friends, "I learned some interesting particulars respecting the movement that has been going on lately amongst a considerable portion of the Catholic clergy of France. Within the last few years some fifty French priests and monks have left the Church of Rome, of whom about thirty have entered the Protestant ministry, and the remainder have entered civil life. But it appears from the *Chretien Francais*, the newly established monthly organ of the "Evangelical Reform in Catholicism," edited by "a group of priests," that this by no means represents the extent of the movement. They say, "We reckon adherents in almost all the Dioceses of the Church of France, in all ranks of the clergy, in several monasteries and communities. We have even received sympathetic assurances from a highly placed member of the hierarchy. More than twenty priests and monks—this refers to a more recent period than the figure above given—have burst the bonds that retained them in the Roman Church, in order to preach the Gospel freely. Others, more numerous, think they can still remain within its communion, and that the reform will come from the bosom of Catholicism."

O HEAVENLY heights that front the rosy dawn,  
 And hold the evening splendour on each crest,  
 God made you glorious in creation's morn,  
 And looked on you with gladness in His rest.  
 He bade you stand as pillars of the sky,  
 Softening your strength with gentleness of snow,  
 That men, who in the valley toil and sigh,  
 Gazing upon your whiteness from below,  
 Might dream of that pure heaven whither the righteous go,  
 Might seek that heaven of God where love in light doth glow.

---

### EDITORIAL NOTICE.

---

*After more than twelve years of this character of service, the Editor of "Words in Season" and "Whosoever Will" has been compelled by broken health to bring them to an end with this issue. In doing so, he desires to thank those gifted writers who have assisted him in making these magazines a store-house of divine truth and faithful testimony, in spite of imperfections fully admitted. He would also express his gratitude to so many dear brethren as have cheered him in his labours by their invariable encouragement. For himself and for them there remain the apostle's words, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace" (Acts xx. 32).*

---

EDITOR: W. RICKARD, WESTERN MOUNT, DERBY.