

“WORDS OF FAITH,”

(1 Tim. iv. 6,)

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

INTENDED FOR

THE HELP AND COMFORT OF BELIEVERS IN
THE LORD JESUS,

“ But ye beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith,
praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking
for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

JUDE 20, 21.

LONDON :
G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.
NEW YORK: LOIZEAUX BROS., 63, FOURTH AVENUE.

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“Words of Faith.”

“FOR ME AND THEE.”

MATT. XVII. 25-27.

THIS chapter, when the connection is clearly seen, is of profound and touching interest. The transfiguration spoken of in the earlier part of the chapter was a turning point in the life and ministry of the blessed Lord.

After the character of those who were suited to the kingdom had been unfolded, the divinity of His Person and character of His ministry are brought before us. His disciples are then sent out with the ministry of the kingdom to the Jews, at least the poor of His flock, in His lifetime, and then till He came as Son of man. Then we have the record of the rejection of John the Baptist's ministry, and that of His own, as come in grace and standing on the edge, so to speak, of the world.

He is witness that no dealings of God could reach where His grace found, like Noah's dove, no place there for the sole of her foot; and declares that the world has been tried, and He could find no entrance for divine goodness, and they must come to Him if they would know the Father, and have rest (for the Son revealed Him in grace), and learn of Him as the man meek and lowly of heart, and find rest to their souls in a world where evil ruled, and no rest could be found, as He knew.

In chapter xii. the Jews, as a nation, are finally rejected, under Satan's power as a people in the last days, and the Lord disowns association with them according to

the flesh; relationship with Him was by the word He preached. He leaves the house, goes to the seaside, not any longer seeking fruit in His vineyard, which bore none but bad, sowing that from which fruit was to come. The kingdom of heaven in its mystery, with an absent king, takes the place of Messiah upon earth.

In chapter xiv. we have the whole scene ripening historically. John the Baptist is actually put to death, and the sovereign grace of Christ continues while the coming scene is opened. He satisfies, according to Psalm cxxxii., the "poor with bread," but there, I believe, according to the Messiah order. Then He dismisses the mass of Israel, and sends His disciples off, and goes up on high (a priest on high), and the disciples are tossed on the sea. Peter goes on the sea to meet Him, as soon as He is entered into the ship the wind ceases, and He is gladly received where once He had been rejected.

In chapter xv. the hollow and false religion of the Pharisees is rejected, while fully owning Israel's privileges, and sovereign grace goes out to awaken and meet faith in the rejected race of the Gentiles—according to Jewish standing, the accursed race. He was a minister of the circumcision for the faith of God, but God would not be Himself only the God of the Jews, and the Gentiles were to glorify God for His mercy.

We have then the five thousand fed, the same general principle only now, I believe, the sovereign patience of God.

In chapter xvi. the church, as built by Himself, takes the place of Jewish Messiahship, and chapter xvii. the kingdom in glory. Thus we have the kingdom, as it at present is, the church, as built by Christ, and the heavenly glory of the kingdom, taking the place of the earthly Messiah. This is the point I desired to reach, which, indeed, characterises all that follows—the revelation of the heavenly glory on earth, what will be in the world to come, and was now revealed to establish the faith of the disciples; though the Father's house is yet a better portion. It is found in the description of this scene in

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Luke ix., where they* enter into the cloud from which the Father's voice came. For the scene itself see 2 Peter i. 16-19, reading "the word of prophecy confirmed." I have gone through the previous chapters because they lead up to the rejection of the Jews, and the new character in which Christ's Person and work were to be displayed. Here (chap. xvi. 20), they are forbidden to say to any one that He was the Christ. We find the same injunction in Luke xi. 21; that ministry was over. Here He tells them the *Son of man* must suffer and rise again. The Son of man was about to come in the glory of His Father with His angels. So Luke ix. 22-27.

In a word, the suffering Son of man and the glory that should follow, take the place of Messiah on earth, now disowned, there and even forbidden to be any more preached. Thus the beginning of Psalm ii. was now before Him, bringing about in another way the purposes there spoken of, and Psalm viii. in part accomplished as spoken of in Hebrews ii. But the old things of Messiah on earth were over, redemption was about to be accomplished, and the new things of a glorified man introduced. In Matthew xvii. 22, 23 this rejection is pressed on the disciples, and then comes the blessed and touching way in which He shews them their association with Himself, as Son of God, in the *new* place into which He is introducing His people.

The tribute here spoken of is not tribute to the civil power, but the didrachma which every grown-up Jew paid for the temple service, and which they had voluntarily imposed upon themselves in Ezra's time—a tribute to Jehovah. The question which the collectors put to Peter was really whether his master was a good Jew according to the earthly system now passing away; Peter, with the zeal so often there, yet in ignorance, at once answers "Yes." The Lord then shews divine knowledge of what had been passing by anticipating Peter, to introduce in touching grace the new place He was giving

* I suppose Moses and Elias, but the truth expressed remains the same. The cloud was the dwelling-place of God in Israel.

to Peter and those with him. “Of whom,” says the Lord, “do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute, of their own children, or of strangers?” Peter replies, “of strangers.” “Then,” says the Lord, “are the children free.” We are the children, you and I, of the great king of the temple, and as such, free from the tribute. “Nevertheless that we offend not,” bringing in Peter, as one of the children of the great king with Himself free, but not willing to offend, and then shews, not divine knowledge, but divine power over creation. “Go thou to the sea, and take up the fish that first cometh up, and when thou hast opened his mouth thou shalt find a stater [two didrachmas], that take, and give unto them for me and thee;” shewing how His divine power over creation, making the fish bring just what was wanted. And then again He puts Peter with Himself in the place of sonship by the overwhelming, but unspeakably gracious words, “Give unto them for me and thee.”

Do our hearts echo these words, moved to their foundations? If Christ said “me and thee” to us, how should we feel it? Yet He does say it. It is when a rejected Messiah, His Person and the effect of His work too, but the expression of His boundless grace in it, come forth to give us our place in the purposes of God, but as His heart delights to see it and make us to see it too. Oh! for the Son of God to say to such an one as me, “Me and thee.” I know it is the effect of redemption, but of a redemption He has accomplished, and a redemption which gives us a place where He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied—in seeing us in a blessing which only His heart, which answers to the Father’s counsels, could have thought of for us. But what a comment of Christ’s heart on the ways of God unfolded in the foregoing chapter! Thinking *first* of us to apply it.

J. N. DARBY.

Ventnor.

“HE WAS MOVED WITH COMPASSION.”

“And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.”
MARK VI. 34.

IN a world of misery and want, how blessed to know One whose heart feels it all, as it were makes it His own, and whose emotions of pitying love are so expressed that we can know and see them: “He was *moved* with compassion.” That blessed face plainly *told* of the throbbing of divine mercy that worked within. The *heart* expressed itself ere the hand moved to relieve what the eye looked upon. Nor was it a transient feeling, a passing emotion. Human misery has found a home in the heart of Jesus, and He, who is “the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,” albeit now on the throne of God in glory, is still “moved with compassion,” as He looks out upon, and takes in, all the misery and want that plead incessantly, in accents of ever deepening intensity, at the throne of mercy.

If the Shepherd of Israel was moved with compassion as He looked upon the children of Abraham, “as sheep not having a shepherd,” how deep must be the emotion with which the Lord Jesus now views the children of God *again* “scattered abroad”! What terrible havoc the “grievous wolves” have made in “the flock of God”! How the speakers of perverse things have led away “disciples after themselves”! What widespread division and offence have they wrought who “serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly”! Surely all this appeals with touching force to Him who “loved the church and gave himself for it.”

But was it only that Jehovah’s people were “as sheep not having a shepherd”? Had they not sinned *themselves*? Had their hearts been “right with him”? Had they been “stedfast in his covenant”? Full well He knew it was far otherwise; the long, sad history of that perverse and stiff-necked people was all before Him, “but

He, being *full of compassion*, forgave their iniquity."
(Psalm lxxviii.)

And has the church of the living God suffered only from false teachers and bad guides? Have the children of God a better history than the children of Israel? Have they been less perverse and stiff-necked? Have they altogether kept His word? And have their hearts been right with Him who redeemed them with His own blood? How well He knows that higher privileges and better promises have but brought out deeper sin, and, relatively, less response to His love! Surely every heart knows this. How sweet, then, in our day, to turn to Him whose "compassions fail not," and who "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end"!

We do well to be at home with that deeply moved heart of pitying, forgiving love, as it "began to teach them many things." True enough, He now speaks from heaven, but that heaven is open to us, and distance there is none to faith.

Failure and ignorance are around us on every hand. Only rightly can we feel the one, and minister to the other, as we are really with Him who, above all evil, sees it all, only to find in it the occasion for the ministry of love.

They who would, in any little degree, serve the sheep of Christ in these last and closing days, need much to ponder these words, spoken to one of old, "execute true judgment, and shew *mercy* and *compassion* every man to his brother;" while, above all, much should they be in spirit with that "faithful and merciful high priest," who, Himself unencompassed by infirmity, yet touched with the feeling of ours, is "able to have *compassion* on the ignorant and out of the way."

"Most merciful High Priest,
Our Saviour, Shepherd, Friend,
'Tis in Thy love alone we trust
Until the end."

C. W.

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EMMAUS:

A FEW THOUGHTS ON LUKE XXIV.

WE were hearing, on a previous night, the state of Christendom; then the state of a believer; and last evening, the special kind of blessing attaching to those gathered in the name of Jesus. There is another side of *this* truth pressed upon me; and it is, as to how far we are morally in the condition of the truth of Matthew xviii. 20. The solemn question is, Am *I* in such a condition? Not simply going to a meeting, and having intercourse with "His own." There is more still, a deeper, more important thing yet. Am I really gathered to the *Person* of the Lord Jesus? so that as I leave the meeting I may be like the disciples in John, who said, "We have seen the Lord." If we are occupied with the detail of what this and that one has done, we are incapable of knowing *His* mind. He *will have* the moral state and walk to be that of truth. He cannot allow the condition of saints to be different from His doctrine. What is the truth He is calling us back to? Himself—around His Person. As we go through this passage in Luke we shall see the hindrances of the soul, and the Lord's remedy for them. In Luke ix. the two men in the glory were *with* the Lord. They were talking of His decease and *were happy*. It is not merely coming to the breaking of bread, but a living state of connection with Christ, like Moses and Elias, that must characterise us. Now in Luke xxiv. there is not a word of any one seeing Christ, but there were two souls leaving Jerusalem, and these two *were sad*, although they, too, were talking of His decease. Something drew them away from Jerusalem, although with sorrow, and the Lord comes and talks to them: "Why are ye sad?" He says. There never had been a more wonderful day for the earth than this, for He who had been crucified and buried, had *risen*, and although angels were adoring at the resurrection, yet the

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souls of these two were *sad*. We learn from this the state often of our own souls. Why was there this slowness of heart? Their reply is given in verse 21. It was what the natural man looked for—a kingdom on earth. They say, "The one whom we looked for is crucified, is dead, and we have no hope."

It is when the soul is *out* of communion that we seek temporal deliverances. How does the Lord deal with them? As far as these two go away from Jerusalem He goes with them. What grace! There was no communion nor intelligence with them, but He goes with them to the end, and then He shews them that *He* has no business at Emmaus. He reveals Himself. Depend upon it, if we are looking for some outside temporal removal of difficulties, we have got outside of our *right* place. Was it the Spirit that was leading these two toward Emmaus? No, for the Spirit had been leading others to gather together in Jerusalem. The two had gone to Emmaus, little as they thought of it, to know Himself, and so when He had revealed Himself to them, they feel that they, like Him, have no place there. So they return to Jerusalem, in spite of the distance and their fatigue, and find the disciples *gathered together*! Was it a matter of indifference to Him whether or not these two were going to Emmaus? Was He careful *only* of the number gathered in the little room? Oh, no; not till these two were brought back to Jerusalem, to those who were already gathered there, does He reveal Himself among them. How precious to know the Lord is just like this!

And we all have our Emmauses. What a comfort to know that if we do wander there, He will never rest, but go after us, reveal Himself, as He did to these two, and bring us back! It is the wandering ones the Shepherd's heart is ever longing after, and nothing satisfies *that* heart but the taking of the sheep on His shoulder, and bringing it *home* rejoicing.

Croydon.

W. J. L.

OUR PATH AND OUR ASSOCIATIONS.

2 TIM. II. 20-22.

It is a very simple, and yet a very important thing, to realise that the path for each of us must be an individual one. Many may, in fact, be in company with us, but to be right it must be the *identity* of the path that brings us together, not in any wise the desire of companionship, save with One alone. If others walk with Him, then we shall be together; but this is not, and must not be, ever what makes the path for us; this must be before God, and with God alone.

It should be needless to insist upon it, but doctrine and practice, alas! may be widely asunder; and conscience may be at a much lower level than the *theory* (for it is then really that) of which we have got hold.

And there will be a great many delicate points to consider, which nothing but real nearness to God will enable us to have settled; for are we not members of Christ's body together, and not mere individuals? and does not this impose limits on the individuality of the path? Here we must answer, No; in no wise. It is by the careful preservation of our individuality alone that the church's welfare can be realised and maintained.

But our dissociations and associations are both prescribed for us in the text which heads this paper; and that in full view of the disorder which so soon came in and disfigured, and has never ceased to disfigure, the church of God on earth, while it has made the path of the true saint only more manifestly individual, as this scripture speaks it. For if "in a great house" (such as Christendom has now become) "there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour;" it results that only "if a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." Thus our *associations*, of which it is the fashion of the day to

think so lightly, are put in the forefront here, as affecting our own spiritual condition and fitness for being used of God. There may be, and are, vessels to honour, which are mixed up with the vessels to dishonour, as we know, but you cannot say, according to this scripture, (and "scripture cannot be broken") that they are "sanctified and meet for the Master's use" while in such a condition. Sovereignly He may of course use them, as He can use a vessel to dishonour even, if He will; but that is a totally different thing.

Who can say, then, that a man's own condition may be godly, while in open-eyed association with ungodliness around? The second Epistle of John is no plainer than the second Epistle to Timothy is here. Both say we are responsible for, and partakers of, the sins of others, with whom we knowingly associate ourselves. Concord between Christ and Belial there cannot be—this will be granted. Then for half-hearted following, which would in effect unite them, toleration there cannot be. The *fiftieth* link with evil is as real an one as the first; and to maintain our link of fellowship with Christ, we must refuse the fiftieth as we would refuse the first. Dissociation is the first thing here enjoined, that we may be free to walk in that individual path with God to which the apostle is here exhorting.

Now as to association on the other side, "Follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." How are we to find these? How are we to test the heart? Why, by the *ways*. And I find my companions as I walk myself in the path of righteousness, and faith, and love, and peace, to which I am called. Suppose I wanted to find the people going by a certain train to the next town, what more simple than to put myself *in* the train? Ourselves upon the road, we find the people that are upon the road, and it is the only practical way. The individuality of my path is preserved with distinctness, and that path it is which governs my associations, not my associations the path.

Now what am I to follow, if I may not follow people?

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I am to "follow righteousness, faith, love, peace." *Leaders* I may own, and rightly if, and only as, they can shew me that the path they lead on has these marks. But I must be shewn the marks or refuse the path, no matter what else may commend it to me. Nor will it do to take counsel with humility, and walk by the judgment of others, when God is bidding us hearken to His word.

Now for the marks: the first is "righteousness." Here, as it is our own path that is in question, we cannot be too rigorously exact. We are under grace, blessed be God, as to our relationship with Him, and to be witnesses of that grace *to others*, but wherever our own path is in question it is no matter of grace at all; the first and peremptory demand we must make upon ourselves is, is it righteous? This will be as far as possible from leading to hardness as to others; for even from this side of righteousness we must take them into account. Exaction is not this, but its opposite. On the other hand, no real love to others will ever lead me to put my foot down there where I cannot be sure it is of God, or according to Him. "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and *keep his commandments*." It must not even be doubtful if we are keeping His commandments; to doubt and do is to make light at least of disobedience; and if we should thus stumble, even in the right path, we should not ourselves be rightly on it.

We are to judge our own ways. If in this the judgment of others becomes necessary, the necessity is its sufficient justification. "Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth; wherefore put away from *among yourselves* that wicked person." He was among themselves, and being among them their association with him gave sanction to his wickedness. Toleration was thus unrighteousness in them, and even to eat a common meal with such was this.

Righteousness is then the first requisite here, and the severity we have to exercise is upon ourselves rather than others. If it be really upon others we are sitting in

judgment, we are not really righteous according to the standard of the kingdom of heaven: "I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee?"

Righteousness being secured, there is still further question. Not every righteous way is a way of "*faith*." Here then the path becomes still further narrowed. "Faith" supposes a having to do with God as a living God; with Christ the Shepherd of the sheep as a living Guide. It supposes, not a "king's highway," such as Israel might have had in passing through the land of Edom (Num. xx.), but that trackless desert path which was God's choice rather for them; there where the pillar led, fire by night and cloud by day, that they might go, independent of nature, by day or by night.

A *righteous* path merely may, after all, be of the nature of the "fold," a hemming in between certain limits, outside of which I may not be, but within which I may do my own will. A path of *faith* is a path which I recognise as God's for me, not my will any longer, save as following His. This makes it, looking from one point of view, as narrow as it can be. For as there can be but one step at any time, which He really has for me to take,—one and no other,—there is no permission for self-acting for a single moment. This for the legalist would be intolerable legality. Only grace can make it as broad a way as it is safe; for it is always broad enough for another to walk with us, whose presence is all for strength, for comfort, for satisfaction; and our own will means sorrow, defilement, and the ditch. Think of a way which eternal Wisdom has taken counsel of, eternal Love to mark out for us! Think of the eye of love never withdrawing its tender interest in the path we take! Would we desire it? Are we wiser, better, or more careful for ourselves, than He who counts every hair of our heads?

Yet a path of faith is just the one for plenty of exercise and searching of heart. It is one as to which more

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seldom than we think can one pronounce for another, and when the need of spirituality is absolute and necessary. "The spiritual man discerneth all things." He "*discerns*." It is not internal feeling or blind impulse which controls, but the knowledge of one whose mind and ways of thought are formed by the word, and who is in the presence of God, so as to be guided by His eye. This guidance infers present nearness and knowledge of Himself—the instruction of the word; but where the soul waits upon God, and occupies itself with Him, so as to see and interpret every look of His.

Faith then requires God's word to justify it, in a path whence self-will is absolutely excluded. It thus guards the "love," of which the apostle next speaks, from being taken for the "liberality," so miscalled such on every hand. True love finds within the sphere which the word thus marks out for it, its amply sufficient field of exercise. "Seeking not its own," it teaches no soul to do its own will, or to shew large-heartedness by setting aside, even for a moment, its Master's constant claim. It supposes no possible accomplishment of good to others by swerving from the good and the right way oneself; and this whether it be in one line of things or in another: "faith" having taught it, there is, and can be, no matter of "ecclesiastical policy," if you will, or anything else which affects His people in any way which He, who has thought of the covering of a woman's head, has not thought of and provided for. To swerve from His mind by way of accommodation to others, or for whatever purpose, would be but the unseemly "liberality" of a servant in things that appertain to his master,—not liberality, but carelessness or worse.

Righteousness and faith however being maintained as to our course personally, "love" is next surely to be followed,—safely under these conditions. Our hearts are to embrace not only the brethren, still less only those whom we find walking on the path with ourselves, but, as in "fellowship with the gospel," all men. There is nothing however in which we are so apt to make mistake

as we are with regard to "love:" there are so many and subtle imitations. We *like* people who please us,—who minister to our selfish gratification, and we call *that* "love." And if these are the people of God, this may help still more effectually to deceive us. How often does this kind of feeling betray itself by fermenting, on occasion given, into the most thorough animosity! True love, seeking not its own, holds fast its objects with a pertinacity of grasp which never fails: "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." We may be forced to separation, forced to walk alone, forced to judge and condemn the ways of those whom nevertheless we cling to before God with desire which will not admit of giving them up even for a moment. Thus if judgment be passed, it will be expressed as the apostle, "even weeping:" truest and most solemn judgment, where it is not that of an enemy but of a friend; and blessed they who in the spirit of mourners find themselves thus in company with the "Man of sorrows."

We must be content here to point out the order, and the meaning of the order, in which "love" occurs in connection with our path. It does not *form* this (*divine* love has formed it for us, not our own): it is the spirit which is to animate us rather in the path—not the rails, but the motive power—and here, of course, love to God first, as that from which all other springs.

"Peace" closes the catalogue. It is the necessary issue to which all this tends. "The fruit of righteousness is peace." Faith walking in wisdom's ways finds that "all her ways are peace." While love seeks the peace of the objects of it, and satisfies itself with what it finds in blessing for them. Every way peace is reached; and only here as the end of the rest—guarded and defined by what precedes it—can it be true or safe as an object to be sought after. Here it comes in seemly order and due place. May God grant us more attainment of it, such as it is here presented.

F. W. G.

ALONE WITH JESUS.

JOHN IX.

A POOR man, blind from his birth, gets his eyes anointed by the Lord and is sent to wash at Siloam. He goes—he washes—he sees.

The moment he sees, the neighbours are aroused. They speak of him as the one who “sat and begged,” for he now sits and begs no longer. “Some said, He is like him.” Such was the change wrought by getting his eyes opened, that they could scarcely recognise the same person. He, though more conscious than all else of this change, says, “I am he.”

But now they must know how all this has come about. It has created a stir among them, and for some cause or other, it has made them all feel uncomfortable. He is questioned, and, in a simple, artless manner, bears witness to what he knows: “A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went, and washed, and I received sight.”

Troubles now multiply. The case is referred to the Pharisees. Questioned by them, he has but one answer: “He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.” These were the facts; it was the truth; what else *could* he say?

Strange that simple truth, and truth, too, which ought to have made them all rejoice, should cause so much trouble. But so it did, and so it does, and so it will do to the end. The Pharisees divide, the Jews believe not, and so they all go to the parents of the man. Unbelief and self-righteousness will leave no stone unturned to prove the truth is not the truth.

As to their son, the parents can testify, and they do so unhesitatingly: “This is our son, and he was born blind.” Further than this, however, they refuse to commit themselves, “He is of age, ask him.” They deny knowing how, and by whom, their son had passed from darkness to

light. "They feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue."

No doubt they had at the first been more or less partakers of their son's joy, for joy such as his must have been, must have carried others along with it in a measure at least, but the root of the matter was not in them, and now that the offence connected with the name of their son's Benefactor comes out on all sides—now that it is a question of losing their place in the synagogue—they cannot stand, they flinch, they are "offended in him."

Not so with their son. A seat in the synagogue had not given him eyes, the Pharisees had never sent him to Siloam, and though one of the Jews, he only "sat and begged." Now he was free, and it was Jesus who had set him free. Was he going to give up to them, though they come with such a pious saying as, "Give God the praise," to cover a blasphemy? Nay, verily. He is in the light; Jesus has put him there, and he will be true to what he has, though it put him in the same place as He whom they have *agreed* to reject. Come what may, he must testify to what he knows to be true, "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see;" and again, "since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind." The beggar has actually turned into a preacher.

Oh, the blessedness, and the moral grandeur, of being true to what we know!

And now for the cost: They revile him; he is a heretic because he has gone from Moses to Moses' Lord; they close their ears to his unanswerable words, and finally "they cast him out." They have done all that they can do.

Reader, do you know what all this means? Have you been brought to the light? I do not mean the light simply as to the question of your salvation, but of any and every matter of truth—the church, the Holy Ghost, the coming again of the Lord, any part of God's revealed

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will? And have you been true to it? *Have you been true to every ray of light which has reached your soul?* Then I venture to say, you know what I am speaking about. You know what it is to have left behind father, mother, friends, religious connections, and religious position. You know what it is to be alone in this world. Once in your life you have been solitary indeed. You had not chosen it nor sought it, but there you found yourself. You had found blessing which your soul appreciated, but blessing is no company in itself. It meets the need, but it does not satisfy the heart. Mere need must have *something*; the heart must have *somebody*.

Jesus finds the blessed man whom faithfulness had brought into this solitude, and He is going to take him out of it. "Believest thou on the Son of God?" is the question He puts to him. The man is ready to step on, as is always any one who is true to the light he has, and accordingly he replies, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" "Thou hast both seen him and it is he that talketh with thee."

This is enough. The Sun that gave him light has now become the centre of the universe newly spread before his vision. What are father, mother, synagogue, and all the rest now? He has found a gain which sinks all his losses into insignificance. He has found Him who, for all eternity, as well as for all time, is enough to satisfy his heart. He falls at His feet; He worships Him. Henceforth to serve Him and care for His interests will be the thing next only to Himself. To get the smile of His approval day by day in his conscience, and by-and-by from His own lips, is sweeter than life. He has found Him from whom every good thing radiates—the Lord *Himself*. He has not passed from one synagogue into another, perhaps more godly one, or with more correct doctrine; he has not "changed his views," nor found "a better religion;" no, he has *lost all he had*, and he has found all he wants, and ever will want—the Son of God, Christ Himself, *Himself*, HIMSELF.

Suppose there was none other with Christ when he thus met Him? What of it? Is not Christ *all by Himself* enough? Is there need of a great company with Him? No! my soul delights to repeat it, He, and He *only*, is seen by the man in such circumstances.

Suppose he had found ten thousand already gathered to the Son of God when he met Him, He would have been at once *with* them, but gathered to Christ Himself, not to these ten thousand.

Suppose ten thousand more were gathered after him. It would make him happy indeed for their sakes, and for the honour of Him whom he loves, but tens of thousands cannot add to the delight of his soul in Christ's company.

Suppose trouble arise in the company. Suppose many be offended and leave. What of it? To whom can he go? There is no other.

Depend upon it, dear reader, you cannot stand in the hour of the storm unless you have been "*alone with Jesus*," unless it is HIMSELF who fills your eye and your heart. If it is to the company which is about Him that you have come, instead of Himself, you have something more to learn, something more to lose. You have yet found no centre for your heart, and you are yet but a wandering star. And be sure of this, that Satan will leave none untested who connect themselves with the name of Christ.

But if such be the portion of him who has found in Christ his "all" already here, what will it be, oh! *what will it be* up there? where, nothing more to mar the glory of His face, we shall see how worthy He is for whom we have lost all through faithfulness to Him.

P. J. L.

When Christ is everything to the soul, we get the light of all Christ is in our hearts as our place before God and the Father.

THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.

THAT the Holy Spirit has formed the church in its double character as the house of God (1 Cor. iii. 9-17), and the body of Christ (1 Cor. xii. 13-27), no intelligent reader of the word of God can refuse to acknowledge. It is not left for inference, nor is it one of those nice shades of truth which are to be gathered only by the spiritual mind, but it is a direct and explicit revelation from God, and stated in so many words in the passages referred to, and many others in the Epistles of Paul.

The Lord Jesus having accomplished the work of atonement upon the cross, and having glorified God fully as to the question of sin, by bearing its judgment on His own blessed Person, the Holy Spirit was free to come, and make that which was thus sanctified by blood, the habitation of God in Spirit.

The body of Christ and the house of God were at first co-extensive, but soon the latter, under the care of man as a builder, became enlarged beyond its proper dimensions, by the building in of wood, hay and stubble, as in 1 Corinthians iii. Now, it has become like a great house as in 2 Timothy ii. 20 (compare 1 Tim. iii. 14, 15), and embraces all the parties of Christendom that in profession have not absolutely denied the foundations of Christianity, and each and all are *responsible* to search out in the word, the order of that house, and maintain it in the fear of God. Faith ever gets at the mind of God, and the discord and confusion that exist in the house is no excuse for the neglect of divine order. Jude, who pictures to us the corruption of Christendom and traces the beginning of the evil to the end, does not speak in any terms of discouragement, but the reverse, and whilst assuring of God's care, unfailingly watching over and keeping those who are jealous for His honour and His authority, exhorts us to be *building up* ourselves on our *most holy faith*, even if all is in appearance, going from bad to worse, without remedy as to the thing

in general. For faith, not the restoration of divine order and holiness is looked for, but the coming of the Lord, whilst if there is faith it will shew itself not by extravagant expressions of love to Christ, but by seeking out the path in which He leads, and for which the Holy Ghost is the power, of obedience to the word and will of God.

Although the house of God on earth has thus become enlarged and corrupted by bad building, and is a different thought to the body of Christ, which can never become greater or less than it ought to be, for it is His work and not man's, yet if I would maintain the order of the house, or walk in a way answerable to His mind, I must apprehend the teaching of the word as to the body, as it is *that* which gives more or less character to the whole.

That "there is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling," is the inspired statement of Ephesians iv. 4. Jew or Gentile made alive together with Christ, out of death, have become *one new man* in Him, in the bond which the Spirit forms, and of which He is the power, as of everything else that is Christian. Thus the church is spoken of in scripture as the mystical Christ (1 Cor. xii. 12), and is presented to us constantly as a body, of which the risen and glorified man Christ Jesus is the Head, and all true believers are the members, and therefore members one of another. As the unity of a man is essentially due to his having one spirit, so the oneness of the head and the members of the body by the Holy Ghost. This is "the Christ" of the verse quoted above.

Participating in a nearness to Him, which no other company of redeemed ones can share, in a relationship as fixed and unalterable as the counsels of God on which all is based, and the perfect work of Christ which gives effect to those counsels, the church is now that to which God has been pleased to reveal the whole of His purposes as to the future for His own glory, and that of His well-beloved Son, in which, as His Eve, the church is called eternally to share. How infinite the present grace which

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has bestowed such a relationship, on those least deserving of it, and the future joy and glory which in its fulness in the new creation awaits us! Surely we should cherish in our souls a sense of these things, and make the better understanding of our portion and hopes our constant desire and prayer; and this is what the apostle prays for in Ephesians i. as a faithful servant and apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, and his request there is, that the eyes of the heart might be enlightened in the knowledge of *Him*. Only as we learn Him do we gain anything truly. If the objects presented to faith are not before the soul, no occupation with one's state will avail, except as discerning that which needs to be judged, which is of all-importance in its place undoubtedly. But take away Christ from before the heart, and the most perfect system of doctrine and order is like a watch without a mainspring; however perfect its mechanism and finish and embellishment, it will not go.

The exhortation founded upon the truth taught in the previous part of the epistle which is given us in Ephesians iv. comes from the prisoner of the Lord—one who is in all the circumstances of rejection and hatred by the world, which his peculiar and faithful testimony involved. And who is the only one who so fully answered to the mind of his Master that he could say "follow me," whilst others in their small degree and measure have been and are the exponents of the truth, but all stand put to shame by this faithful servant's path and spirit.

His exhortation to us is to "give diligence to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." In connection with this there are two or three points of importance for us to notice. First in importance is the question, Am I holding the head? (See Col. ii. 19.) It is of little importance to say, I am holding the truth of the "one body," if I am not "holding the head;" and there is a *danger* of making the maintenance of ecclesiastical *order* of more importance than Christ. Whilst he who holds the head will not be negligent of church order and responsibilities; the member, be it hand

or foot, or what it may, cannot act in harmony with the rest of the body if its connection with the head is *interfered* with. Thus are we incapacitated for acting truly according to His mind. Let that be our first aim then, and constant prayer, that *He* may not be lost sight of in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in whom we are complete—filled full.

Secondly, If I am truly holding the Head, I shall not forget there is that without which, in this aspect at least, the Head would be incomplete—the body. I find then that I am related to all the members of Christ on earth, that they with myself are the objects of His unalterable love and care. For them—for His church, He gave Himself, and upon it He bestows unceasing care, nourishing and cherishing it as His own body. Not despising the lowest member, nor wounding it, but nourishing and cherishing it as Himself, sanctifying and cleansing it with the washing of water by the word, and finally presenting it to Himself without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

This does not argue any indifference to the ways of those who are thus loved. His is a holy love, as His cross and present care and discipline make manifest, and if I turn to the church in another aspect, as the house, I see responsibility maintained to the fullest extent, and His judgment expressed as to all that is unsuited to Him. And whilst it is our privilege to walk with Him, and discern, as having His mind as to what He would have refused, as well as what He approves, yet, because the present exercise is so imperfect, we are taught that we all must give account of ourselves to Him in that day which shall declare every man's work of what sort it is; and then shall each have his praise from God. The pretentious claims of many will be exposed, and the lowly in heart approved, and not great gifts, but the measure in which grace has been the spring of each one's service and activities, will be the thing that He will reward. The lowliest place is open to the humblest of His saints, though they may pass unnoticed and despised among

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men. Love and holiness, then, are the two things that are to be what characterise us, answering to the character of the One who has brought us into the place of privilege and responsibility. His love, the spring; the holiness of that love, the character. Anything that is contrary to holiness, or love, will be a hindrance to maintaining the unity of the Spirit.

How suitable then the apostle's words! Not alone the recognition of the one body as a doctrine, as a rallying-point, as a party-cry will suffice. I may not say, "I am of Paul," &c. ; but if I say "I am of Christ," it may be in the spirit of the worst sectarianism. If we deny in our hearts to others the privileges of the whole body, by appropriating them exclusively to ourselves, it is the worst spirit of sect. How beautifully the apostle to the Corinthians meets the conflict that grew out of the rival parties they were forming! How he shames them in the faithful love of one who, though an apostle, was not their Lord, but their servant, and who, though as a steward of the mysteries of God, was found faithful, and who "was gentle among them, even as a nurse cherisheth her children." How, accepting no leadership of a party, he shames them with the loving yet faithful words, "Therefore let no man glory in men, for all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's;" and he waited patiently for the *word of God*, which he brought to bear upon them to take effect, before he came with a rod, as he could do, ready to avenge all disobedience, *when* "your obedience" is come to the full.

This was what the power of God in the apostle brought in for their edification, and not for their destruction.

We are to maintain at all cost the holiness that suits His presence in His house, but we are to do it in love, otherwise no maintenance of the truth of "one body," as we are exhorted here to remember, will save from the spirit of party and sect; "with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love,

giving diligence to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." In other words, practical grace in our ways, a heart that is kept in the sense of divine love can afford to forbear and forgive all personal wrongs, and seek to overcome thus evil with good, whilst all that concerns the honour of Christ is fully and constantly maintained.

We must remember that the unity of the body is not in our keeping, we neither formed it nor can it be broken by man. The unity of the Spirit can only be maintained by walking in the recognition of the unity so formed, and so conducting ourselves that in us lies no hindrance to its practical maintenance and exhibition. The heart taking in, however feebly, nothing less than the whole church of God, the maintenance of the truth in grace, with patience and forbearance towards those who differ from us, and forgiveness of all personal wrongs, whilst surely the avowal of that forgiveness may await the evidence of repentance. But it is in this unity the Spirit has formed we are to act as integral parts of a great whole, each seeking to fill the place as a member of the body of Christ in which He has set us. For this we surely need much grace and exercise of heart, that we put no stumbling-block in the way of others, nor help to turn over into the enemy's hands those who are the objects of His love; and where we may have done so, the way is open for self-judgment and confession to Him and those, whoever they may be, we have wronged.

R. T. G.

The Holy Ghost can reveal nothing to me that is not mine, because it all belongs to me in Christ. We might always walk through the world in the present consciousness that we are the Father's children, loved as Christ is loved.

One of the greatest living sorrows of Jesus was, that there was not a single thing that He said to the disciples that they understood.

“HOLD FAST TILL I COME.”

REV. II. 25.

THERE is a great difference between a ship steaming along on a peaceful sea, or even bearing up against an adverse wind, and a ship at anchor in a storm, where all depends upon good anchorage ground and strength of cable. In the one case, *headway* is being made, and a distant port is in view. In the other case *safety* is *alone* in question, and all depends upon the “holdfast” until the storm is passed. In the former, all is energy to propel forward; intelligence and strength combine to make advances. In the latter, all is passive endurance and tenacity. The strain is *entirely* on the cable, on that which holds the ship in position in spite of rolling waves and raging winds.

To apply our simile: It is the difference between the earlier and later day of the church’s history, and it is to the principle of passive *endurance* in the church that the Lord appeals, when in Thyatira, in immediate connection with His coming, He says, “Hold fast till I come.” It is no longer “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,” and, “be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.” The period for the extension of His kingdom in the world, in its present character, was over, and even the time for the exhortation, “That thou mayest know how to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the *pillar and ground* of the truth,” was gone by.

The candlestick has been removed, and the church’s history has closed in complete failure. Recovery is out of the question; rebuilding the church, not to be thought of even. All is hopeless, irremediable ruin. Not merely had there been failure in first love, but spiritual adultery, and children born of it, characterised that which had been “espoused as a chaste virgin to Christ.”

In the midst of this wide-spread scene of desolation, where the power of evil was paramount, and “Satan’s

depths," though "not known," were carrying all before them, "the Son of God" appears, and, to the sorely pressed remnant of "His own," exposed to Satan's pitiless malice and opposition, like a ship at anchor in a stormy sea, says, "I will put upon you none other burden; but that which ye have, Hold fast till I come." They had *something* to "hold fast" to—something of *His* on earth to keep for Him until He came. Amid all the surging of the angry waves around, in spite of all the coldness and insincerity of others, the word was "Hold fast till I come." As to all their own interests, "An anchor of the soul sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil," made all secure above, but the "hold-fast" was down here, for *His* interests on the earth.

As they bent all their energies to "hold fast," *His coming* was to be the one and only outlook of their faith. The storm and the difficulties would only increase till He came; but the trial and the sorrow would all end *then*, and He Himself, as "the Morning Star," with a share in the kingdom He was coming to establish, should be their reward.

Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea are not *successive* phases of the church, but *collateral* ones, flowing out of Thyatira, and running down with her to the end. From Thyatira on, the coming of the Lord, in view of the kingdom about to be established on earth in the church's place, with this principle of "holdfast," or "*patience* of hope," characterise true christian position.

In Sardis it is "strengthen the things that remain," and "hold fast;" with His coming brought in as a warning, rather than an encouragement. Completely worldly, save a "few names," He would judge her like the world, coming "as a thief"—when least expected.

In Philadelphia, though words of approval take the place of those of warning and rebuke, the word still is, "Behold I come quickly: hold fast that thou hast, that no man take thy crown;" with His coming, so to speak, brought *nearer*, as more encouragement was required, and even, in some sense, deserved. It is as if He would

say to His people's strained and yearning hearts, "Hold fast just a *little* bit longer, I am coming in a minute; I see the strain is almost more than you can bear. You have 'kept my word, and not denied my name.' I know it all. I see your 'little strength,' and that you are keeping 'the word of my patience,' enduring much while you 'hold fast.' Yes, the storm is increasing, but do not be downhearted, I will take you away to be with Myself before its last and final blasts break over the 'dwellers upon the earth,' and sweep all before it. 'Behold I come quickly:' look up, look up; see the crown I have in My hand; do not lose it, just 'hold fast till I come.'"

In Laodicea there is nothing to "hold fast" to—nothing of His He cares to have retained. Even the knowledge of Himself, as poor sinners needing salvation and a righteousness better than their own, is not possessed. No sense of need that He alone can meet. "Wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," as they really are, and possessing nothing for eternity, they feel it not. Interests of His they have none, and hence no need of comfort and encouragement; nothing to which His word "hold fast" *could* have an application. For what *they* possessed Satan would leave them in the undisturbed possession of. No opposition, from a hostile world, that had crucified their Lord, knew they, for no faith to be tried had they, and worst of all, *no heart*.

His coming is not alluded to, save by implication; as it were, He says, "I am coming, but rich and increased with goods, *you* know nothing about it, or, at least, if you know, you *care* nothing about it. You have no need of Me, and 'I am about to spue you out of My mouth;' already am I outside you, though in grace I do, for the moment, 'stand at the door and knock,' to see if any will hear My voice, let Me in, and *thus* be saved to have part with Me in My kingdom."

Such is the closing phase of the professing church—a scene without one redeeming feature, or one bright spot in it, save the grace that bears with it up to the last moment. Gladly the heart turns away from it even to

Thyatira to hear again those soul-stirring, soul-sustaining words, "Hold fast till I come."

If, while waiting for God's Son from heaven, we at all *realise* what it is to be in a world of which Satan is the god and prince; if we are awake, in any measure, to the apostasy that is setting in on every hand, and that we are living at the *very* end of the dispensation, amid the *ruin* of the church; if, by grace, we are in any little degree standing for Christ's name, truth, and interests on the earth, in spite of opposition and misinterpretation, not to speak of coldness and indifference; if, in lowliness of soul, and *according to God*, we feel the pressure of evil and Satanic working that would corrupt God's house, rob Christ of His glory, and souls of their blessing; and if while following "righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart," we are seeking, at the same time, to care for *all* the "poor of the flock," we shall surely feel the need of all the help and comfort that can be supplied by these blessed words, that come from Him who sits at the right hand of God, "Behold I come *quickly*!" "HOLD FAST till I come!"

C. W.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Q. Why does the Lord use the figure of the fig-tree in Luke xiii. 6, in speaking of Israel, instead of that of the vine, according to Isaiah v. 1 and Luke xx. 9?—*A. B.*

A. The vine as a figure stood for the nation in their original standing as the people of God. This at Babylon was exchanged for the Lo-Ammi (not my people) of the prophet. The remnant brought out of Babylon are the "fig-tree planted *in* the vineyard," to which the Lord came, finding it covered with the leaves of profession, looking for the fruit which should have been their accompaniment. Luke xx. 9 speaks of the nation from the beginning; yet, as bringing on their history to the Lord's own time, it speaks only of the *vineyard*, not of the vine itself.

F. W. G.

THE 'POOR MAN' OF PSALM XLI.

THE application of Psalm xli. to Christ is one that has been naturally shrunk from. Yet I would venture here to recall attention to it, as what alone gives proper meaning to this close of the wonderful first book of the "Pentateuch of David."

It is by their connection with one another that the Psalms find for the most part their full significance. The forty-first is in the closest possible relation with the fortieth; the two together forming a kind of moral to the book,* in strictest keeping with its character throughout. It is the book in which Christ is seen in the midst of the people, in that humiliation into which grace brought Him on our behalf; and thus in the fortieth psalm—a number, too, which speaks of perfect testing—the full perfection of His obedience is seen: "Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God." This is tested by the cross itself of which Psalm xl. gives as much the burnt-offering aspect, as Psalm xxii. does the sin, or Psalm lxix. the trespass-offering. Psalm xl. exhibits to us in its "poor man," without any doubt whatever, the One who, "though he was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich."

But this being so, who is the "poor man" of Psalm xli., which comes in such necessary connection with the preceding one? Here is One, who assures the happiness of all who attentively "consider" Him; Jehovah will deliver such in the time of trial. Is this any other than the same voluntarily humbled One? or what brings this blessing anything beside the faith which under all appearance of humiliation discerns the glory of the only-begotten?

* 'Two' is the number which speaks of testimony, and thus two psalms by themselves form a *nota bene*, as it were, to call attention to some significant lesson. Such are Psalms l., li.; lxxxviii., lxxxix.; cxviii., cxix.

For Israel too—and to Israel assuredly, though none the less ours, these psalms belong,—how necessary a warning as to the character of that suffering which has been their stumbling-block! Come to His own, no intimacy of divine goodness could win their faith. Alas, "mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." This reference to Judas is another indication of who is here.

The "poor man" of Psalm xli. is thus far different however from the one of the fortieth, that whereas the latter is the one "afflicted" or "in humiliation," the One of whom we are now thinking is (literally) the "weak" or "exhausted" one. The word is an ambiguous one in this respect, that the "weakness" may be the result of *affliction* from without or of *disease from within*. This ambiguity is in fact that upon which the point of the psalm largely depends. Was the cause of this state external or internal? Was there more than "the *likeness* of sinful flesh"? Faith would say one thing; unbelief another. So again with the words which follow in the fourth verse, where the full difficulty presses. Who is it that says: "Jehovah, be merciful to me! Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee"? Is this one with sin *in* him or *on* him only? Is this a soul that needs healing for its *wound* or for its *disease*? Even so that awful cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" might have seemed to justify the taunts flung upon the holy Sufferer. For when had the righteous been forsaken? And here His own lips proclaimed Him this.

So with the psalm before us: "All they that hate me whisper together against me. . . . An *evil disease* (say they) cleaveth fast unto him; and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more."

Thus as to this poor man, faith and unbelief are in conflict, as still and ever they are. He has come down so low that that humiliation may be taken up against Him; aye, the heel of one of His own creatures lifted

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up! Faith, attentively considering, not stopping at the outside, sees with the centurion that this lowly sufferer is the Son of God. "The Son of man is glorified, and God is glorified in him." Happy assuredly is he who thus "considereth the poor."

May we not apply this now even to those who have believed in the Son of God? When the "three men" stood before Abraham, that wondrous day of Mamre, had he not had faith to realise who was indeed there, would it have been aught to him but a visit of "three men"? Faith knew this lowly appearance to be indeed divine intimacy, and we have been given to learn fully that lesson since Godhead has taken—never to give it up—a human form. But are we always, as we ought to be, ready to see this same God in the lowly and the little—the petty circumstances of life into which He delights to come to fill them with His presence, and to keep us ever in mind of the intimacy that He seeks with us? Alas, how much we lose of this, that would be of untold happiness for us if we enjoyed it! How it would redeem the meanest life from littleness to realise this, and how it would put restraint upon our wills to find the actings of divine power and love thus about us day by day!

Meanwhile, still Christ is the test everywhere. Still the stumbling-stone is stumbled over. The written word, too, as is the living Word. And men have their day and their vaunt, and perish, alas! as wise men taken in their own wisdom. The moral of the psalm abides, not only for unbelieving Israel, but for unbelief everywhere. God has been manifested in flesh—the heart of God in a perfect man: but the heart of man also has been thus manifested. Happy he who, accepting the sentence which the cross has written upon him, finds thus the meaning of the cross itself.

F. W. G.

Christ is the "second man" as tested in the wilderness; and the "last Adam" as manifested in resurrection.

“GIVE YE THEM TO EAT”

MARK VI.

THE Saviour's voice was hushed. Jesus had ceased teaching the “many things,” and the rays of the setting sun were falling athwart the faces of that awed and softened multitude. A strange thrill subdued those eager, restless hearts. Time had sped by unnoticed, and nature's wants were all unfelt, when the still silence was broken by words strangely in contrast with the sweet scene where divine love was making poor, weary hearts feel its potent sway. “This is a desert place and now the time is far spent, send them away,” the disciples urge, “that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat.”

Little thought they that the One they thus addressed, whose lowly grace made such intrusion possible, was He who long before, in His own divine fulness, had said. “I will satisfy her poor with bread.” (Ps. cxxxii. 15.) “Give *ye* them to eat,” was His gracious rejoinder.

Uncongenial servants as they were, He could associate them with Himself in the service of His love. True enough *they* were little up to the privilege conferred on them. Small heart had *they* for the weary, hungry multitude around them. Less knowledge had they of His heart, who gave them this command. Completely taken aback, they look at the hungry crowd; they scan the desert; they think of themselves, and the difficulties appear insurmountable. His *glory* they see not, and their faith falls entirely short of the task imposed upon them. The old evil heart of unbelief that long before had questioned, “Can the Lord provide a table in the *wilderness*?” was still there; and to the “Give ye them to eat,” they oppose, “Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?”

It is very wonderful to see the Lord thus communicating to His disciples His own power, all unwilling and un-

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worthy as they were to share it. More touching still to watch the grace that, rising above their ignorance and unbelief, presses them into a service they were so slow to enter upon. But "the poor" *must* be fed, and *they* should feed them.

"How many loaves have ye? go and see," He says. Quickly returning, they reply, "Five, and two fishes," adding, as we learn elsewhere, "but what are they among so many?" The helplessness of unbelief could go no further, nor does the Lord parley longer with it; so, without reply, "He commanded" them to make the multitude sit down, on the green grass be it noted, in "ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties." Then blessing the loaves and fishes, He breaks them and gives them to the disciples to distribute.

One can imagine the feelings of wonder and doubt with which the disciples began their distribution of those, but just now despised, "five loaves and two fishes." What, say, must the eager, impulsive Peter have felt as, in silent awe, he took from the Saviour's hands that small portion of bread that was to feed those waiting companies of a hundred hungry mouths fifty times told, "besides women and children." How doubt must have given place to amazement, and awe to adoration, as he broke and gave a piece to this one and that one, here to the strong man, now to a timid woman, then to a lighthearted child, till every mouth was satisfied, and yet the store was undiminished, and more remained after "all had eaten and were filled," than there had been at the beginning!

What an acquaintance with *Himself*, and what an education for a *future* ministry was the Lord here giving to His disciples! True the impression *then* was not deep, and not long after, when again called upon to feed the multitude, they were as unequal to the occasion as before. But when the Holy Ghost had "endued them with power from on high," with what force and encouragement did these scenes recur to their memories, as they went forth to minister for Him, who "the same yesterday, and to-

day, and for ever," assured them that not only was "all power given unto Him in heaven and on earth," but that He would be *with* them "alway even unto the end of the world." Matthew xxviii. 20.

And, surely, they are left on record for our encouragement and instruction, too. As servants we have to draw upon the resources of that same Jesus, now at the right hand of God, "head over all things to the church, which is his body;" who, having led captivity captive, "has given gifts to men" for the blessing of souls, and the edifying of the body.

Nearness to Christ, in His present place of exaltation, alone can make these lessons good in our souls, so as to enable us practically to meet the need of sinners, and feed the church of God; while it is as those who have *tasted* mercy for ourselves, we alone shall "faint not" under the ministry committed to us. Above all we must look away from ourselves entirely to Him who still says, "Lo, I am *with* you alway even unto the end of the world." All grace and power are *in* Him, and the greater the need, and the more difficult the circumstances, only so much the more is the opportunity *His* to meet the wants of His own in spite of everything. As servants, simply subject to Him, we require to be in living and abiding association with that heart ever "moved with compassion" towards the needy, and that hand whose power and resource know no limit.

It is not enlarged and deep acquaintance with truth, all valuable as that is in its place, that will do. Knowledge, of itself, "puffeth up," but "love edifieth." It *alone* never fails. Our apparent resources may be small; our knowledge of the scriptures relatively slight, not even equal to "five loaves and two fishes," but ever so small a portion of them, with the *love* that simply seeks to edify, and the *faith* that counts alone on Christ will meet any and every need that comes in our way, while acting under the guidance of Him whose command still is, "Give ye them to eat."

Oh! to be more alive to the marvellous grace of such a

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command, to the wondrous privilege of serving His people, and of magnifying His blessed name, by drawing manifestly on *His* strength in such a way, that it shall be *seen* that He, and He alone, is the spring and power of our ministry.

The scene we have been considering, simply makes Him manifest. Christ Himself fills the vision of the soul whilst contemplating it. The desert place; the absence of resource; the slowness and hardness of heart of the disciples; as it were, form the background that throws Him into relief. It “manifested forth *his* glory,” and so should *all* our service while *waiting* for Himself.

C. W.

FRANKINCENSE.

LEVITICUS II. 2.

THE perfectness of Christ in all His path was that He *never* did anything to be seen of men: it all went entirely up to God. The savour of it was sweet to the priests, but it *all* was addressed to God. Serving man, the Holy Ghost was in all His ways, but all the effect of the grace thus was in Him, was in *His own mind*, always towards God; even if for man, it was to God. And so with us; nothing should come in, as motive, except what is to God.

We see in Ephesians iv. 32; v. 1, 2, the grace towards man, and the perfectness of man towards God as the object. “Be ye imitators of God as dear children.” In all our service as following Christ here, we get these two principles: our affections towards God and our Father, and the operation of His love in our hearts towards those in need. The more wretched the object of service in the latter case, the truer the love, and the more simply the motive is to God. We may love down and love up; and the more wretched and unworthy the persons are for whom I lay myself out for blessing, the more grace there

is in it. "God commendeth *his* love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." But while that is true, yet as to the state of my heart, the higher the object, the more elevated the affection. With Christ it was perfect. How can a poor creature like me be an imitator of God? Was not Christ an example, God, seen in a man? And we are to "walk in love, as Christ also loved us, and gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God." He gave Himself for us, but *to* God; it was God's grace towards poor wretched sinners.

If we look at ourselves, we shall soon see how motives get mixed up, and things come in, even where there is right true-hearted purpose; and that is where we have to watch. In Christ all was perfect; all, every bit of it, as to spring and motive, was for God's glory in this world—no thought of men, as to pleasing them, but that singleness of eye which looked to God alone, though full of kindness to man—loving down in that sense, but ever looking up, with His God and Father before His eye, which made Him perfect in everything. He was of course, perfect, could not be anything else.

Now, it is not that the priests could not smell the sweet savour, but it was not offered to them, it was all burned to God. As regards His own path, not a feeling that was not entirely to God; for us, but to God. It was *that* which was perfectly acceptable to God.

J. N. D.

In life, Christ was God before man to win man's confidence. Christ on the cross was man before God bearing the judgment of man's sin that He might bless him righteously with Himself in heaven.

For believers, sin is put away by a work done *once* for all; the conscience is made perfect; and, in Christ, we are *ever* before God in His presence.

DECLENSION, AND ITS COURSE.

1 CORINTHIANS X.

IN a day of widespread declension, such as this, it may be useful to trace the steps by which a low point is reached, as the discovery of our real state and its exposure by the word is one of the means God uses in order to extricate from it.

No one sets out on a downward path with the idea of its being that, though God may allow many warnings to come, and even the discipline of His hand to be felt, to awaken from its lethargy the soul that is indifferent. Neither can any one who is pursuing that way tell how far he will go, though of course his own purpose is to keep within certain bounds. But the power of the enemy is such that we have no ability to stand against him, unless we are going on with God, in the strength He gives to those who are dependent on Him.

In 1 Corinthians x. 1-13, we have the steps in the course of declension very fully pictured, and they present a striking contrast to the apostle's own way, as given at the end of the previous chapter. Some have difficulty in understanding Paul's words, because they have in some degree disconnected the life—eternal life, from the path in which those who have it should, and more or less *do*, walk. For some, alas! the deliverance from judgment because of failure in responsibility as children of Adam, by the cross of Christ, is, it is to be feared, deliverance also from responsibility itself. But this is surely not God's way. Nay, He puts us by redemption upon higher ground than we had left, and with, as a consequence, higher responsibilities. If we are saved by grace—"not of works lest any man should boast,"—yet we are "created in Christ Jesus *unto good works* which God hath afore prepared that we should walk in them," and he who does not more or less walk in that path disproves his title to eternal life. It is still true that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," and one part of scripture is not

in conflict with another, but all is in harmony. Compare also 2 Timothy ii. 19.

The *outward* participation in the things of Christianity was no guarantee of attaining to the rest of God, and it is this that is insisted on in the first verses of chapter x. They all stood on new ground, and partook of what was God's provision for their need, the bread from heaven and the water out of the rock, yet with many of them God was not well pleased, and they fell in the wilderness—they did not reach Canaan. These things are expressly said to have "happened to them for examples [types] and are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come."

The first step in the downward course is lust. If God had been retained in their thoughts they could not have doubted that He would give all that was needful. To desire something different from what God sees good to give, shews that the heart has turned from Him and lost its confidence in His love. To desire what is according to His will is not lust, and He has not limited us as to what is really for our good: "No *good* thing will he withhold from them which walk uprightly." The restless craving of desire is itself a witness that we have turned away from the only One who can satisfy. "He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

What follows next is idolatry, a god that suits the low state—with Israel, of course, the golden calf is referred to. It may be only a limitation of the God of revelation, an ideal which suits the fancy or tastes, but which is therefore only a reflex picture of the one who forms it—of myself. Hence men deified human passion, which was a large part of heathenism. But it is only a human sentiment or idea, for God can only be known through revelation, and is far from being what man's imagination would paint Him: "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." Unrestrainedness of ways is the result: "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." "Aaron had made them *naked*," should

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probably be "let them loose." See 2 Chron. xxviii. 19. If God is turned from, how soon the heart is turned to folly! How like the prodigal going off into the far country to indulge himself in every evil! If piety towards God is neglected, then no amount of truth can keep us, or be a check upon the flesh.

Next worldly alliances are formed. If we are down upon the world's level, it will soon be glad of our company, and little by little will take away all from us that savours of the fear of God. It is easy to acquire a liking for what conscience at first refused as evil. If it is not judged but tolerated, however spurious the plea, it will soon be accepted and delighted in. And it is striking that from *Peor* Balaam was forced to speak the highest blessing of the people, when he took up his parable the third time; and it was there the people fell into alliances with the Midianites. God's best thoughts, and grace towards them are seen in contrast with their own low state and acts. How seductive is the world! How few of us have grace to refuse it, especially in the shape in which it *pleases* us! For each of us it has a different aspect exactly adapted to our tastes, and what would be an attractive bait to one would not be to another. But "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, are not of the Father but of the world," and "who-soever will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God."

We then have Christ despised, the manna esteemed as light food. If I share the world's tastes, I shall not see much in the lowliness of Christ to attract me, and the connection between despising the manna and the fiery serpents is important. If He is rejected, the work of death goes on unhindered. It is sin become exceedingly sinful, manifestly by the rejection of Him, who came to relieve from it, and death working unhindered in those that despised Him who came in lowly grace to seek and save the lost.

Finally, the dissatisfaction of the heart is openly expressed in their murmuring, which brought the judgment

of God; no doubt a reference to Numbers xiii., xiv., their refusal of the pleasant land, and in heart turning back to Egypt. It was this that brought the full sentence upon them of exclusion from the land which they had openly refused. How solemn the warning! How it should stimulate us to diligence and carefulness to watch against the coming in of what would, if its results were fully known, end in entire separation from God. And "let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." Self-confidence is a very different thing to confidence in God, though it may carry one on a good way without the discovery being made of what it really is. "We are kept by the power of God *through faith* unto salvation." But this is the confidence of one who, knowing his own weakness, has learned to trust Him, and everything else must fail and break down. How beautiful the encouragement given to one beset with the very wilderness trials which the enemy would use to discourage and drive from God into the meshes of his own net.

Do not think your trials are greater than others', true as it is that "the heart knoweth its own bitterness." "No temptation hath taken you but such as is common to man, but God is faithful." What a word! "God is faithful." Yea, think of Him who is still interested in your welfare, and who, though He may try your faith for your good, will never forsake. Only wait on Him as One who is entitled to the confidence of your heart, and He will make a way to escape that you may be able to bear it, and will give you that for which to praise Him, when His delivering hand is seen. To have these exercises is true gain, as to be without them would indeed be loss, and those who seek to fortify themselves against the trials by their own inventions will find how much they have lost in the weakening of their faith, and the consequent obscurity of all that is most precious. To leave the path of faith because of its exercises, to seek one that seems smoother, is to ensure one's own downfall and the missing of even that we aimed at.

R. T. G.

THE ADVOCATE.

THE Advocate does two things: He pleads with the Father for us; He applies the word to us. The one maintains our cause if we sin, before the Father, against the accuser; the other brings up our practical state to our standing, which is always maintained without sin by the righteous Advocate, who has made propitiation. The failure in our practical state, is from the fact of our having two natures in one person. "With the mind I myself serve the law of God, with the flesh the law of sin." (Rom. vii. 25.) And though by faith, and in spirit, we are no longer in the flesh, yet actually it is in us (though by faith we reckon it dead), hence the failure. There is no excuse, but the fact is, we fail. Our standing as children ever remains the same, even though we sin, owing to the righteous Advocate who has made propitiation.

"If any man sin, we have an advocate." But we have failed in our practical state—we are defiled. Our bodies are washed with pure water, that is true (Heb. x. 22); we have had once the washing of resurrection (Titus iii. 5); we are born again (John iii. 3); we need not then be put into the bath over again.*

But we have sinned, we have got our feet defiled, as it were, in passing through this sin-defiling world. This will not do for the Father's presence. What does the Advocate do? He applies the word to us, washes our feet, and leads us to confession and self-judgment. The remembrance of our Advocate, who made propitiation, leads us back on our knees to our Father, who forgives us, and cleanses us from all our unrighteousness. We are cleansed according to what He is as the righteous One in the Father's presence. This is cleansing by the water of the word, not by blood, which is never repeated. It is the application of the death of Christ, through the

* John xiii. 10. Literally, "He that is put into the bath needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all."

word, to moral defilement, from the root of sin. Thus the blessed work of the Advocate is, on the one hand, to plead for the children before the Father if they sin; on the other hand, to wash their feet with the word, to bring their practical walk and state up to their standing before Him.

How happy for us to be associated with the blessed Advocate! On the one hand pleading for our brethren if they sin; on the other hand carrying the word to them and washing their feet. May the Lord grant increased *this* grace, so that the saints may see their blessed privilege of love to cover sins (Prov. x. 12), plead for their brethren if they sin, and act in faithfulness to them, in carrying the word to them, washing their feet, so that they may be cleansed from the defilement; these last, overcoming the accuser by the blood of the Lamb, on the one hand, if they sin, and on the other hand, openly resisting him by the word of their testimony, like the blessed Lord Jesus Himself. He answered the devil when tempting Him to sin, by, "It is written." So should we. If we sin, thank God we can always answer Him by the blood of the Lamb, which is the balm for every wound.

The blood of the Lamb and the word, the sword of the Spirit, are our instruments against the devil down here, whilst the Advocate maintains our cause before the Father up in heaven. Thus in every case we are maintained, and are overcomers, "more than conquerors through him that loved us."

A. P. C.

The principle of law is that God's thoughts and dealings depend upon what I am and have done. In grace my thoughts and actings flow from God's thoughts and dealings towards me.

A FEW THOUGHTS ON

1 TIMOTHY III. 15, AND 2 TIMOTHY II. 20.

BOTH these passages present to us the church in the same *aspect*, though in very different conditions. We have "the house," and the "great house." The foundations of "the house" is laid in pure grace. Paul was a minister, and himself personally a witness of this great and blessed truth. "Christ Jesus," he says, "came into the world to save sinners." (1 Tim. i. 15.) When we remember that the church is "the pillar and ground of the truth," and consider the materials out of which it is formed, it is the more marvellous, and makes it plain that grace, and grace only, is in action as to those who "by one Spirit are baptized into one body."

The church's presence on earth, as the responsible witness for God, is what we have before us in these scriptures, and this is proved and enforced by the way in which Timothy is instructed as to how he ought to behave himself in it. We are the living stones of which the house is composed, but we are also *in* the house, having, like Timothy, to behave ourselves in a manner suited to Him who dwells there.

In Hebrews iii. 6, we also read of the "house," and again, in 1 Corinthians iii. 16, where it is termed the "temple." Both are based on redemption, though conduct is in question too. It is important to see that it is only consequent on redemption that God *dwells* with man. Exodus xv. plainly shews this, where the habitation of God is anticipated by Israel as consequent on their redemption out of Egypt. "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation," sang Moses and the children of Israel.

We, too, have been redeemed and led forth by Him, "Who gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us from this present evil world." (Gal. i. 4.) We, who once were "blasphemers and injurious" (1 Tim. i. 13), are now

by grace, transformed into vessels and living stones of that which is growing "into an holy temple in the Lord," and hence the exhortation, "Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." He is holy, so must we be.

Then remark, it is the house of "the living God." Do we know Him thus? Are we journeying on through the wilderness in the consciousness that He is with us as He was with the children of Israel, meeting our *daily* need, as He did theirs, with manna fresh every morning, and making the flinty rock gush streams of refreshment *all* the way along. It is a great thing to walk *with* "the living God," and while having Him to turn to in every trouble and necessity, to remember that He is the *holy* Lord God.

The Lord Jesus was, and is, essentially the "holy One of God"—in all His words and acts absolutely such. We have to follow Him, the great mystery of godliness—God manifest in flesh—the One in whom all His nature and ways are brought to light so that we can know and delight in them. Justified in the Spirit—in all He did and said acting only by and approved by the Holy Ghost. Seen of angels—they marvelled, and adored at the wondrous spectacle of the One who had created them, and at whose bidding they moved, walking in lowliness as man on earth. Thus He is, too, the transforming power of the soul that seeks true godliness—the only divine rule and standard of our walk and ways.

We all know how this transforming power has failed to work its proper effect on those who dwell in the house, and how defiled the house has become (1 Tim. iv. 1; 2 Tim. iii. 1); but this introduces us to our second portion (2 Tim. ii. 20, &c.), where we find the house has become "a great house"—an ominous change. Here we have vessels of divers kinds, but not all alike suitable for the Master's service. Some are of gold and silver, but some others of wood and earth; some to honour and some to dishonour.

Timothy is not now instructed how to behave himself in the house, but exhorted to purge himself from the

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vessels to dishonour that are there. How much rather would the apostle's heart have rejoiced to dwell upon the order of the house of his first epistle, than on the disorder referred to as characterising the house of his second. How painful for him to have to exhort his beloved son to purge himself from corrupters lodged within. Yet there is comfort : vessels to honour still remain, and are subjects for exhortation. Such are those who follow "righteousness."—which it is important to see comes *first*, and leads on to the others—"faith, charity, and peace," calling "on the Lord out of a pure heart."

We cannot get out of this "great house," but the Holy Ghost has provided a remedy *in* it, in separation from all the evil that is around us. Still it should affect our hearts greatly, and humble us in the dust as those who are connected with, and bearing its shame, that the "house of God"—"the pillar and ground of the truth"—of 1 Timothy iii. 15, has enlarged in the "great house" of disorder and corruption, of 2 Timothy ii. 20.

Thus are we taught as to what the church was at the beginning : what it has become through human weakness ; and what the Holy Spirit of God would have us to do as now being in it. We cannot root up the tares, they will continue to grow to the end, but we *are* bound to dissociate ourselves from all unsuited to His holy habitation, and to remember the word that says, "Thy testimonies are very sure : holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever." Psalm xcii. 5.

Croydon.

C. MCA.

 "CONTINUE THOU."

2 TIMOTHY III. 14, AND IV. 1-5.

How wonderful is the word of the Lord, when we hear Him speaking to us ! In these verses He speaks, then, two things. Let us hearken to Him. They are His words by the Spirit in the midst of the circumstances of these last days. The evil is fully described, then the

word is, "But *continue* thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." Yes, the Lord says, "Continue thou." Satan would say continuance is all over now, evil so abounds there is nothing left, and thus fill our hearts with gloom and unbelief. The Lord speaks at such a time, at *this time*, "Continue thou."

If Timothy had learned the things in which he was to continue by the Spirit's teaching from Paul, have we not learned the same truths by the same Spirit in the word? Are they the theories of men, or have we not been gathered to the Person of the Lord Jesus, by the Holy Ghost? Have we not been separated from every organisation of men to own the authority and presence of the Lord Jesus in the assembly? Have we not been assured of this? Do we not know who has taught us what the church, His body, is to Him?

Well do I remember the morning when the Lord opened my eyes to see by faith, and own HIMSELF in the midst of the few gathered to His name. And as so many years have passed on, years of failure on my part, since that day, yet I can say His presence in the midst of His saints has been more and more precious to my soul. And are we to give all this up, all the precious things we have learned and enjoyed for forty or fifty years? No! No! Sweet to our souls are the words, "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned." Yes, the word from our Lord is, "Continue." And that word is spoken to us in the midst of all the evil of these last days. That word from the Lord is enough for us. Nothing must be given up that we have learned from Him. He says, "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

Let us remember that long after these last days evils had been described, and told in these two Epistles of Timothy, the Holy Ghost left on record that wonderful chapter, John xvii. Words spoken before He departed, but how they do reveal the desires of the Lord for those the Father hath given to Him! Surely the tender desires of Christ for us repeat the word "Continue." Yes, the

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more we know the changeless love of His dear heart, the more shall we also desire to "continue in the things which thou hast learned." Do these desires of Christ give us the thought, now that evil and failure have come in, that we should sink into individuality, and cease to manifest to the world even our oneness with Him, and with each other? Individual faithfulness there must be: and also individual responsibility there is in the very midst of the evil to "continue in the things which we have learned."

Now let us mark the beautiful order of these verses in 2 Timothy. First, the instruction to "continue," and then, secondly, the charge to do the work of the evangelist—to preach the word, &c. We must not reverse this order. Poor and feeble though we be, the Lord has given us a great responsibility to the whole church of God. What a time for faith. Oh, to rise above all the present efforts of Satan! Yes, to rise up to the gulf-stream of the love of Christ to the whole church. And the love of God to flow through us also in the gospel to the whole world.

Continuance in the things that we have learned: not a jot of the precious testimony given up; and then, dear brethren, a wider range of preaching the word, and the work of an evangelist. Should we not in principle go into a town or village as Timothy? What is there in that town for us? The church of God, and the world. How little we rise up to this. We have seen in John xvii. how the Lord's heart takes in all the Father hath given to Him! And this after all the evil had come in to the professing church. Should not we also then in the love of Christ take in all that are His? He will shew us how, whilst purging ourselves from vessels of dishonour, at the same time to serve all in love that are His. But the one word I heard the Lord as it were speaking to us all, in the midst of the present confusion and effort of the enemy, is "Continue." May that word long—yea, ever—abide in our hearts.

C. S.

THE LESSONS OF THE AGES.

INTRODUCTORY.

IT has become a fact more familiar to many through certain recent discussions of momentous importance, that scripture is full of a doctrine of the "ages." The phrase is in our common version, more often obscured than not by being translated "world," or "worlds," or hidden under the stereotyped form, "for ever," or "for ever and ever." This last expression is always in the New Testament, if literally rendered, "for the ages of ages." It never implies less than full eternity, as it is the measure of God's own life: "He that liveth for the ages of ages" is His title. (Rev. iv. 9.) Christ, too, presents Himself as "alive for the ages of ages" (chap. i. 18); and there are ascribed "blessing, and honour, and glory, and power unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for the ages of ages." (Chap. v. 13.) These same "ages of ages" measure also the duration of the punishment—which is no less, then, than eternal—whether of the devil and his angels in the lake of fire (chap. xx. 10), or of the beast-worshippers who drink of the wine of the wrath of God. (Chap. xiv. 11.) There is no hope of finding an escape from eternity under an admitted phraseology of this kind in scripture.

The term "for ever" is again sometimes "for the ages," while much more often the singular of this word is used, which some would render, in a way very equivocal to our habits of thought, "for the age," but where "age" must refer to the "age of ages" (the expression used in Eph. i. 21), inasmuch as it also stands for true eternity, for which it is the common word; while (save in three passages) the adjective derived from it is rendered "everlasting," or "eternal," everywhere in the New Testament; and rightly and necessarily so.

There may be thus *an* "age" (a period rounded off from the rest of time, and having distinctive characters

of its own), as well as in scripture language, "*the age*," sum of all ages, which knows no limit and no end. In the adjective also, may be found these different significations, for while in its ordinary use, as I have already said, it means eternal, there are just three passages, with which we have now more to do, in which it refers to an age, or ages, rather than *the age*.

The Revised Version, even in Romans xvi. 25 ; 2 Timothy i. 9 ; and Titus i. 2, keeps to the word "eternal ;" but it is hard to realise what "eternal *times*" can be. The Authorised Version has "before," or "since the world began ;" but this is again a paraphrase rather than a translation. The true force is "in," or "before the *age-times*"—times marked out as "ages," distinctive, rounded off periods. In Timothy and Titus it is God's grace, or the promise of eternal life which is said to have been given us (in the divine counsels) before these age-times were ; in Romans it is that *in* certain ages God had kept secret a mystery, now in Christianity revealed.

Thus there are ages past as well as ages to come—ages which lose themselves to our sight in that eternity which stretches in measureless infinity before us. The ages that are past, moreover, are distinguished from those to come as a series which, in a certain sense at least, has come to an end, and which is characterised as a series of steps toward the fulfilment of a purpose now accomplished, and from the accomplishment of which important results accrue to us. So, speaking of the things that are recorded as happening of old to Israel, the apostle says (1 Cor. x. 11), "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples [or, as in the margin, "types"] and are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the *ages* [not "world"] are come." Since these ages have ended then, the types of a past dispensation have begun to speak as never before. Which corresponds to what, in another place, the apostle says (2 Cor. iii.), that the veil which was over the Old Testament is now "done away in Christ."

Again, in Hebrews ix. 26, we are told precisely that it

was "at the end of the ages" (as we should read it) Christ "appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." That sacrifice closed, then, if not in every sense, the ages; and thus the New Testament, written on this side of the dividing-line, gives the true key to the Old. In Christ come, all that the past pointed to was fulfilled; the substance was reached of all its shadows, the heart of God was opened out to man, and in free and unrestrained speech declared itself.

But why not before? it is natural to ask. If, as now seen, this grace was in Him from the beginning, why was it so long before He openly manifested it? Was it necessary that through so many centuries of deferred hope, or of darkness without true hope, the coming of the Deliverer and the gospel of deliverance should be delayed? The New Testament affirms this absolutely when it speaks of a "due time" in which Christ died. (Rom. v. 7.) How, then, was this "due time" marked? First, "when we were *yet without strength*, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." And again, "when in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (1 Cor. i. 21.)

The wisdom of the world had thus to be proved at fault, and the world itself helpless and hopeless in its moral ruin, before the due time of man's deliverance could come. He must get the blessing on true ground: as grace, not something that man's hand had wrought at. "When we were *yet without strength*"—"yet," after repeated trial. Again, "when *in the wisdom of God*, the world by wisdom knew not God;" it must be granted time and opportunity to prove this, therefore. The delay in the coming of the Deliverer was the result of time required to certify the need of the deliverance: the ages previous to Christ's death were ages of a special trial of man, which the cross ended, for, indeed, there was his heart fully proved to be at "enmity to God," while, as to true and divine wisdom, it was what "none of the princes of this world knew; for, had they known it, they

would not have crucified the Lord of glory." (1 Cor. ii. 8.)

But if, then, it was so necessary that these probationary ages should have their course—if the coming of Christ on this very account waited 4000* years—how important must it be for us to get hold of the meaning of these age-times! As the world is but the multiple of the individual man, so it will be found that we pass in general, in order to find our blessing in Christ's death, through the stages of these different dispensations. Certainly it is when yet ungodly and without strength, we find what that death has wrought. And what law is, though God never put the Gentile under it, we know as putting *ourselves* under it, as indeed the Gentile Christians have done in a body.

Scripture, too, will be cleared for us as we consider these ages past; our own portion in it will be freed from admixture and appraised more truly. God's ways will speak more distinctly their perfect character, and many a precious lesson as to these shall we learn or be confirmed in. The history of the world itself will have a new significance, if perchance it thus may fill fewer pages. In short, every way we may find most real profit, if only the blessed Spirit of God lead us Himself down the track of a past—gone indeed, but not yet done with—a past which is the seed of the present and the future, and of which the judgment-seat at last will give us, for eternity, the full moral. For now "we know in part and we prophesy in part;" and yet this partial knowledge may be most helpful.

Let us glance at the course over which, if the Lord will, we hope to travel. We have—

* I believe, as I have elsewhere stated, that this number is itself significant, and confirms for the believer the common scripture chronology; for it is well known to Bible students that 'forty' is the number which speaks of perfect probation, while a 'century' was the period when Abraham's probation ended, his body being now dead, and Isaac was born by the power of God, beyond nature. At the end of the fortieth century of the world's probation was the true Isaac born.

1. The trial of innocent man in Eden; brief indeed—the history of a day rather than an age—yet all-important in its results for every step of the journey afterward.

2. The trial of natural conscience simply, in the time before the flood.

3. The trial of human government (the political trial, as we may call it) from Noah's time, virtually over at Babel, although, of course, as a divine institution, it remains to the present time.

4. After an important interval, which has its own significance with reference to these age-times, and in which Abraham and his seed appear upon the scene, we have next the great trial of man under the law. This had two parts of very unequal duration.

The trial of pure law lasted at the most forty days, ending under the Mount itself with the breaking of the tables of the covenant, and judgment executed on the people for their breach of it, in the worship of the golden calf. Then followed, for nine hundred years, a system of mingled love and mercy, the tables of law being now written by the hand of the mediator; and here man was as much convicted of his impotence for self-recovery as he was of his ungodliness before. This ended when Hosea's "Lo-Ammi" was recorded against the people, and the kingdom of Judah came to an end by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

5. From this time onward the question was not, Could they keep the law? but would they submit to the sentence, and receive the Deliverer? The remnant returned from the Babylonish captivity, with their temple empty, and under the heel of the Gentile, were witnesses of a ruin which John's baptism of repentance called to (and should have sealed) their confession of. Thus, and thus only, could they have been prepared for the Saviour, and found remission. Here, alas! Satan's wit had combined with human pride to build up Pharisaism, and the cross proved not merely that man could not keep the law, but that the mind of the flesh was "enmity against

God." This was the "end of the ages" of Hebrews ix. 26.

Yet in fact the ages go on after this, nay, the *Jewish* "age" does. We learn this from Daniel, whose seventieth prophetic "week" is detached from the sixty-nine at the end of which Messiah the prince comes, and is cast off by an interval of desolation for the city and sanctuary, whose final blessing he announces. From the New Testament alone we learn what fills this interval, and that the "harvest" of judgment upon *Christian* profession coincides with the "end" of this *Jewish* "age."*

The gap is thus a very large one, of more than 1800 years, and in this Christianity comes in, not properly as an age, but as a break in the ages, in which a wholly different thing is presented to such probationary trial as the "ages" present. God's revelation of Himself is what characterises Christianity. Man remains the same as ever, indeed, and shews himself as incompetent to hold the blessings of the gospel, as he was to stand the probation of law; still these are essentially different; and Christianity is but an interruption of the course of the world-ages, the end of which (for us) is come, and which yet go on after Christianity, to their full consummation in Messiah's kingdom—the "age to come."

Christianity past, the true saints, living or dead, being taken up to heaven, the "end of the age" is marked on the one hand by a new work of grace in a remnant of Israel and of the Gentiles; and on the other hand by the apostasy of professing Christendom and the mass of the Jews, who, having rejected Christ, receive Antichrist. The full ripe result of iniquity is reached and judged by the Lord at His personal appearing.

6. Then follows the "world to come"—a day in which, Satan being bound and evil kept down with a strong hand, man is brought face to face with eternal realities. It is a dispensation of sight rather than of faith, under

* See Matthew xiii. 39, 49, when "world" should be "age" and where the second parable shews the end of Christendom, as the last does what immediately follows it.

which, alas! man, as ever, shews what he is, in once more (Satan being again let loose) rising up against God in open insurrection. The judgment of the dead follows: the wicked cast into hell, the earth and heavens fleeing away before the face of Him who sits upon the great white throne.

7. All enemies are now subdued; the kingdom of the rod of iron is given up; new heavens and new earth succeed the old; God is all in all; and the ages of ages (probationary ages no more) commence their eternal course.

The Lord give us ability to gather up in some measure the lessons of these wondrous ages—lessons not for time alone, but for all eternity.

F. W. G.

A WORD IN SEASON;

AN EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

THE Lord has been giving blessing in the young little gathering here, so that two have been added since I went away, and they seem to be nice earnest souls, now feeding on the word. I do think that the Lord has given us an open door here, and I trust there may yet be much larger blessing through the word. There is evidently inquiry, and desire after the truth, while there is also bitter opposition on the part of those who are afraid of having their ranks broken into. But one need not mind this, as it only shews the truth is taking effect. And it is a good thing not to allow ourselves to meet those who oppose on their own ground.

I believe we need to keep the body of Christ before us, and seek to build up the saints simply as belonging to *that*, wherever they may be found. Alas! we know how the saints are scattered, but love seeks them out, and seeks to minister to them, because they are Christ's. I find it very easy to sink down into a kind of sectarian spirit, while the ground may be held intellectually clear enough. It is easy to be seeking to build up something that is for man's eye. May the Lord keep us from

having our hearts set on anything but *that* which He loves—the church for which He gave Himself.

How true it is that apart from Him we can do nothing. And have we not much lacked the sense of dependence on Him? And instead of pursuing the lowly path of Him who could say, “I am a worm and no man,” we have thought ourselves to be something, and exalted ourselves—alas! only to be abased. But how much greater mercy that He should abase us now, than allow us to go on in pride of heart! He brings us low that He may lift us up in the sense of His own wonderful grace. I have thought that perhaps many of us have not sufficiently realised the *utter ruin* of all that has been committed to man’s responsibility. We have spoken and written of the ruin of the church, while secretly in our own hearts we are priding ourselves that at least there was one little circle where all was right, and we are in that. It is a kind of Brethrenism.

Of course, God’s word and truth change not, and it ever remains true that where two or three are gathered to Christ’s name there He is “in the midst” of them. The truth is as simple, and the path as plain as ever it was, and thus there is ever a resource for faith. But if pride is lurking in our hearts, thinking we have got all right, and that Brethren are a kind of asylum into which the people of God are to be gathered, where they can be in safe keeping, and cared for till the Lord comes, surely that is not learning well the truth of the church’s ruin. And has there not been more of this than perhaps we are aware of? And therefore God is allowing us to learn the ruin of the church among ourselves, as well as our folly in setting up to be anything. Oh! may we learn the lesson well, that Christ may become everything to us, not only an object to our hearts individually, but the centre to which we gather, and the One who can never fail, but who, spite of the church’s failure, and even of apostasy which threatens everything, “is able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.”

The way we have to learn these things, because of our pride and foolishness is indeed humbling, and we might well take up the lamentation of David, "How are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph." (2 Sam. i. 19, 20.) But it is better to learn the lesson at whatever cost, and however great the humiliation may be; it is our blessing surely to learn it, and we can have confidence, too, in Him whose grace can never fail, and who loves all His people with an imperishable love.

May we be kept waiting for Him, yet keeping the word of His patience.

Iowa.

A. H. R.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Q.—What is the meaning of "administrative forgiveness," and is there any difference between it and "governmental forgiveness"?
M. S.

A.—Administrative forgiveness we may find in John xx. 23; Acts ii. 38, xxii. 16; 2 Corinthians ii. 10: it is simply forgiveness administered by disciples according to the authority given them by the Lord, and therefore in His name. It is necessarily also 'governmental,' that is, dependent upon conditions which the principles of divine government impose. As a sample of it, Matthew xviii. 23-35, which is a parable of the kingdom, may be referred to, and baptism for the remission of sins clearly is such a hypothetical conditional forgiveness, based upon the assumption that the supposed disciple shall turn out to be a "disciple indeed." Absolute remission is in God's hands alone.

Yet because 'administrative' is always 'governmental' forgiveness, it does not follow that the converse of this is true. The latter is, in fact, much wider in application than the former: see Matthew vi. 14, 15; Luke vi. 37, 38.

F. W. G.

THE "IFS" OF SCRIPTURE.

THE word of God always maintains the responsibility of man; indeed it must, for no morally intelligent creature can be other than responsible. Grace and redemption may introduce principles and facts which modify the operation of the principle, but the principle remains true. But I think that the word casts a more definite light on the place responsibility holds in connection with the grace that is revealed in Christ, than many are aware of.

I would lay down a principle evident to every one, and incontestable in human relationships, but forgotten in divine ones, and (with one only exception) not based on relationship, which I will state in its place, that, as a general principle, responsibility is based on, and measured by, the relationships in which we are. Parent and child, husband and wife, master and servant—evidently in all these the responsibility is based on, and measured by, the relationship.

The one exception is where God, or one having competent authority in the case, claims the recognition of another in any given position or authority. Thus, if Christ, Moses, or a prophet be sent, adequate testimony being given, we are bound to receive them. The mission is, in fact, an instituted relationship. Now our original responsibility is no longer a question for those who know the truth. It is no longer, "if thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?"—always abstractedly true; we have sinned, and on that ground are guilty and lost. But the great truth of Christ and redemption has come in. If I call myself a Christian, I place myself on this ground—the ground of redemption. The question is, to put responsibility in its place, where this is owned.

Now redemption is a work of God, and not responsibility on our part. Yet they are constantly mixed up together, and uncertainty introduced where all is perfect,

and confusion where all is clear. But there are two things generally in the position of the Christian—redemption wrought by grace for him, and his actual attainment of glory. Now "if"—that is a *condition*, is never connected with redemption. It is always connected with our course towards the glory, and here it is of continual occurrence.

In the purpose of God there is no variation or uncertainty. In His government He may set conditions, and in fact does so. It is connected with our conduct, but in purpose not so; and in redemption even, taken in its application to us, there is no uncertainty. In Ephesians you have no "if:" "We have redemption through his blood." In Titus, it is, "Not according to works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us." "By grace ye are saved." The value of Christ's work admits of no "if," nor its application even to every believer. "He hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, according to his own purpose and grace, given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

So in type Israel stands still, and sees the salvation of Jehovah, who led forth the people He had redeemed, and guided them by His strength to His holy habitation. And again, "Thou hast seen how I have borne you upon eagles' wings, and brought you to myself." The whole was absolute and complete redemption. So we have no more conscience of sin, but are accepted in the Beloved. He hath by one offering perfected for ever those that are sanctified. Here it is the application to conscience. But not only is a full title made in righteousness, not only are the sins blotted out, and we are justified from all things, accepted in the Beloved, and our consciences purged, but we are made meet [fit] to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Nothing lacks in completeness. Hence the thief could go straight to paradise, fit, through the travail of His soul, to be Christ's companion there. Yet ordinarily we are left to tread longer or shorter time our pilgrimage here.

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Now this, as in Deuteronomy viii., is to humble us, and prove us, and know what is in our hearts. We enter on it on the ground of redemption. All Christendom stands on *this* ground, may little realise its value, but it is Christendom because redemption is accomplished. The first thing tested is—is it realised? Are we really so? If not, we perish in the wilderness in unbelief. On this point I do not enter. But the question remains then—Shall I arrive safe in Canaan? for we are not yet there. And here come in all the "ifs." If I hold fast the beginning of my confidence firm to the end; if ye continue in the faith, and the like.

I believe there is a full answer given to what is in question, practically realised in Philippians ii., iii.; in others it is doctrinally set forth. But the answer is not redemption—a finished work. This is the basis of all, and if one imbued with the mind of God had seen one drop of blood sprinkled on a door-post, he might have been certain on to Solomon's, and yet far better, Christ's millennial glory, but it was not accomplished, and God teaches us by what is revealed, whether historically, as to His ways, or prophetically in His word, as to things to come, and all His counsels given us in the New Testament.

But the wilderness was not redemption, and God would have us to look at redemption as complete. He suffered, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God. We are complete in Him (Christ), but, as I said, whatever exercise of conscience we may have had before knowing the value of the blood of Christ, or what the lingerings of unbelief, cradled by self to make out our own righteousness, it is usual in God's ways to have a practical wilderness course after redemption, when the knowledge of ourselves, and of God and His ways in grace and government, are developed, to humble us, and to prove us, and to do us good in our latter end.

When we come to see what we have to lean on at the end, we are brought back to the beginning, though one who has walked faithfully with Christ will surely

have a sweeter and deeper knowledge of Him who began and finished all. All Balaam can say is, when the question was, Could Israel enter into Canaan, I can do nothing. There is no enchantment against Jacob, no divination against Israel, as at this time it shall be said of Israel and Jacob, *What hath God wrought?* But meanwhile, between the two we are in weakness, and in temptation, and real perils. The flesh is in us, and what pleases it is there. Shall I arrive safe in Canaan? is *the* question. If I mix up this with redemption, all is confusion, all is uncertainty; for while it was said to be finished, and our sins remembered no more, here all is in question again, and, imputed or not imputed, I lose heaven by sins which have been borne; if they have not been borne, then redemption is unfinished and incomplete.

Now the government of God, though in perfect love and grace—"whom the Lord loves he chastens"—yet has always a legal principle in it, that is, the ways of God depend on what we are, not in the perfectness of His love, but in His ways with us. Besides, the heart craves holiness, and knows God can bear with nothing else. We would not that He should. He makes us partakers—blessed truth!—of His holiness.

Now the mass of Christendom are really unbelievers, and, like Israel, perish in the wilderness, never do get into Canaan. Those fear who are true of heart, and, if there is no distrust of grace, it is a salutary fear, lest any of them should seem to come short.

There will be found in Numbers two great principles (found again in Hebrews) which characterise the position; the red heifer, practically answering to John xiii., 1 John ii. 1, 2, but here known to believers for restoring communion after they have practically failed; and the priesthood; the former meeting a failure in the wilderness, the latter the sustaining power for weakness—"grace to help in time of need." In Numbers xix. we have the red heifer out of its place, say the wise rationalists, whereas the essence of its meaning depends on where it is. Then (chap. xx.) Aaron dies, and after Sihon

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(Balaam, as we have seen), comes God's *judicial* estimate of His people. In Deuteronomy ix. we find His moral estimate—*this*, What has Israel done? *that*, "What hath God wrought?" and the comparison is full of instruction.

The statement, "What hath God wrought?" is an accomplished thing—it is wrought. Now in the wilderness, though redemption was the basis of all, an accomplished work was not what was wanting for the wilderness itself, but living care, guidance, ministry, and constant need to be met; and this was what was found, and what we find in that of which this was only the type. They had to reach Canaan, as we have glory, and that where there are spiritual wickednesses on the way, in a wilderness where there is no way, nor bread, nor wine, and we ourselves without strength. And the dangers are real and present. It is not a full and finished salvation—which, thank God, there is—but daily dependence, and a living One who can sustain, guide, and protect us. God, that we may know ourselves and Him, puts us in this place of danger, real danger and difficulty, where by ourselves we could not get through, and gives us to find it out, but with the testing and trial, with the question, "If you hold fast the beginning of your confidence steadfast unto the end;" all these are most real, and forgiveness itself leaves all vague, but there is the infallible promise for faith to lean on, and divine support—"We are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto the salvation ready to be revealed."

The well-known passage (John x.) assures everything: "They shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand." No perishing either; Christ is our life (no greater power to pluck us out), and that according to the divine power of the Father and the Son. So, in 1 Corinthians i. 8: "who shall confirm you to the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus;" so "God is faithful by whom ye were called." There is no uncertainty or doubt, then, in the wilderness, but the kind of certainty is different, and the difference practically important. Redemption is accomplished, and

ished, perfect, and accepted of God. But in general the race is to be run, that we may win Christ, be found in Him; we have to hold fast to the end, that He may present us blameless, as in Jude.

This is a never-ceasing work, but as certain as if all is done. "He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous." It is constant dependence, in order to get to the end, but dependence on what is sure, as God is sure. We work out our salvation with fear and trembling, but God works in us to will and to do. The wolf seizes and scatters the sheep, but he cannot seize them (the one word) out of Christ's hand; the faithfulness and strength are alike, and both divine. The "if" is here, and dependence constant, and diligence in it called for; but God, with whom is no "if," is there to meet it.

There are uncertainties and questioning experiences of this kind, when all our christian life and happiness are mixed together, and which are confounded where redemption is not known, but the soul has really to say to God. It will say, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" but this is an abuse of terms. The soul is looking for a certain state as ground of acceptance. Now this is really a question of righteousness. What is said is surely true, but holiness is what is holy—yea, God himself loved for His own sake. It is not holiness when it is desired with a view to acceptance. That soul does not know redemption, Christ as its righteousness, and is looking at its own state as its ground of acceptance. It is to learn that it is guilty and lost, not something to be desired—right and essential as the desire is—but to learn that it is not what, nor has *done* what, God desires, and has to be saved, must cross the Red Sea, and that its business is not to wait for what is desirable but to

A FEW WORDS ON MATTHEW XVIII. 20.

WITH regard to our behaviour in the house of God, which was brought before us last evening, it is surely of all importance that we know what it is to be truly gathered to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: for, of such, He said, “in the midst.” Few passages of scripture are more frequently quoted, or misquoted, throughout Christendom than the words which we have just read; and yet little understood! Now, observe, it does not say, as is often stated, “when two or three are *met*,” but it does say, “*gathered* together;” for there is no room left for the activity of man’s will, because it is evidently the action of the Holy Ghost thus to gather. Observe also, He said, “in my name,” for it is only to His name that any are gathered together according to His mind, and this is certainly a root principle as to our behaviour “in the house of God, which is the assembly of the living God.”

And oh! how precious is the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is “in the midst” of us when so gathered! What untold blessedness are we thus brought! What fathomable resources we have in Him! What a centre! What a reality we prove it to be! What unutterable peace and comfort, what savour, what sweetness we enjoy, when occupied with Him who is “in the midst.” It is Himself that then engages us, it is Himself that fills the vision of our souls that our whole heart becomes filled with thanksgiving and praise!

But we must distinguish between His being “in the midst,” and the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost; we are gathered to the name of Him who died for us. Moreover, ever since the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit has been dwelling in the hearts of His people.

"in the midst." What wondrous grace! But does it not shew how dear we must be to His heart? I have said "gathered together in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," because that is His name since He ascended—"God hath made that same Jesus . . . both Lord, and Christ;" and also because it was so used by the apostle. If we speak merely of the name of Jesus it usually connects our thoughts with Him in the days of His flesh, but we are gathered together to the name of Him who is at God's right hand, "our Lord Jesus Christ." Thus we know Him now. Blessed be His holy name!

And when so gathered in the consciousness of His blessed presence, can we fail to think of Him as the One "in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace"? Were not His first words when He appeared "in the midst" of His disciples, after He rose from among the dead, "Peace unto you," and "He shewed unto them his hands and his side"? Is it any wonder it was added "Then were the disciples *glad* when they saw the Lord"? What joy, beloved brethren, it gives, when we are taken up with Him "in the midst" of us, as the One who loved us and gave Himself for us!

But we also know Him who is "in the midst" as the Sender of the Holy Ghost. Before His death on the cross, He said, "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send;" after His resurrection, He said unto His disciples, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence;" after He was ascended into the heavens, it was said of Him, "Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." (See John xv. 26; Acts i. 5, ii. 33.) Can we then, if truly gathered together in His name, fail to remember Him as the One who sent down the Holy Ghost to be with us on earth as the power for all godly edifying, testimony, and ministry of every kind during the whole time of His absence, yea, to abide with us for ever?

Nor should we ever forget that He who is "in the midst" is the Head of the body, the church. In *His death* on the cross, He gave Himself for us. In *Him risen* we have life—a life the other side of death—risen life; but *in Christ ascended*, we have union with Him by the Holy Ghost sent down. "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." (1 Cor. xii. 13.) It was also *in ascension*, as we read at the end of the first chapter of Ephesians, that Christ was given to be "Head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." After Christ was given to be Head in heaven, the body was formed on earth when the Holy Ghost came down at Pentecost. This being so, and the work going on ever since, how can we be truly gathered together in His name, and occupied with Him who is "in the midst," without entering into this endearing relationship of Head and members, One body—"one new man"? How true it is that

"The Father's smile of love
Rests ever on *the members* here,
As on *the Head* above."

And while thus occupied, can we ever fail to remember His sweet promise, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also"? Will not the hope of the Lord's coming be bright and clear on our hearts, if we are really taken up with Him who is "in the midst"? How can it be otherwise? Is it not the most cheering prospect of our hearts that we "shall see his face"? And we know how lovingly He desires to have us with Himself; for He said, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory. What a "gathering together with him" that will be when we are "caught up" to meet him in the air!

What present blessing, what joy and comfort then are associated with being gathered together in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; yet how few in Christendom seem to enjoy this sweet privilege! It does not need

much spiritual discernment to perceive how far the church at large has drifted away from it.

But there is a very solemn thought in connection with this precious subject. It is that He who is in the midst has eyes as a flame of fire, and His feet are as fine brass, thus judging and disciplining as well as instructing and cheering His people, for He is the "holy" and the "true." Everything is noticed by Him. He can truly say of all, "I know thy works." The One who threatened to remove the candlestick from Ephesus except there was repentance, and said of others at Corinth, "For this cause many are weak, and sickly among you, and many sleep," is the same still. We are not our own, but His. He has redeemed us, He has bought us with a price; yes, and at what a price! We are therefore not to live to ourselves, but to Him who died for us, and rose again.

Beloved brethren, the days are evil. Many are being deeply exercised; but it is for our profit. Let us cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart, and He will assuredly guide and bless us. Without this, let none expect blessing. But as to being gathered together in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, can we truly and intelligently do so without knowing Him who is in the midst as the One who has accomplished redemption, as the Giver of eternal life, as the Head in heaven over His members on earth---one body; as the sender of the Holy Ghost to abide with us for ever; as the One who is soon coming to take us to glory and be for ever with Him, and like Him; and who now looks for a life and walk in us suited to His holy name. May we know then, dear brethren, how we ought to behave ourselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

Croydon.

H. H. S.

"For as yet they knew not the scriptures that he must rise from the dead;"—there was faith by sight, but not with the word, and hence there was no gathering; Mary was ignorant, but she had personal attachment to Christ,—the sure way to knowledge as to the church.

THE REST, THE WELL, AND THE RIVER.

IN connection with what our brother has said on Matthew xviii. 20, I would like to ask you to turn for a moment to the words of Jesus in Matthew xi.: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." We thus hear Him speaking, first to the Father, and then to us. His tender heart was grieved by the unbelief of the privileged cities of Galilee. And does He not feel now the unbelief and rejection all around—yea, and all that we are called to pass through at this very time?

How true it is that the unspeakable privilege of being gathered to His name, to Himself, is hid from the wise and prudent, and the Father hath revealed it unto babes! "No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." Now, is it not blessed to see how the Son thanks the Father for having revealed these things to babes? Having done this, He now speaks to us.

I know these loving words of Jesus are much used in the Gospel to weary sinners. Are they not equally true to weary saints? You say, I am so weary with all the strife, and division, and contention—so many speaking such perverse things! Does not our Jesus know it all? Yes, He knows all that Satan has done, and can do, to scatter those whom the Father hath gathered to His name; and He knows the weariness and perplexity of many so dear to Him.

What does He say to them—to us? He says, "Come unto me." He knows the labour and burden of spirit, and He says, "I will give you rest." He who gathered us at first from every sect still says, "Come unto me." We have heard Him giving thanks to the Father; now He says to us, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of

me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." What words are these even to us at this time, in the midst of an unbelieving and distracted Christendom! Very separating, as well as comforting, are those words of Jesus, "Come unto me."

There are three things the Lord presses upon me connected with His present thoughts and testimony—the *Rest*, the *Well*, and the *River*. We have looked a little at the first. We cannot be of service in the testimony of Christ, unless we are at perfect rest in His own dear presence. There we ever give thanks. The greater the efforts of Satan to disturb and destroy, the more we discover the ever-loving care of Jesus, and enjoy His presence. As a dear afflicted sister told me a few weeks ago, she would not have been without all her afflictions and tears, because of the tenderness of that heart, and the softness of His hand, that had wiped them all away. Oh, what a contrast to the wise and prudent, even of the professing church, is the happy peace of the babes who know and rest in His unchanging love! This is just what we need at this time, in meekness and lowliness to learn of Him. He who gathered us long ago still says, "Come unto me." Talk of all being over! beloved brethren, this path shines brighter and brighter to the perfect day. Have we not found it so? Is not the presence of the Lord in the midst of those gathered unto Him as deep a reality as at the first? There we still find rest to our souls. Surely, if this suits His heart and the Father's, it suits ours.

We will now come to the well. Turn to John iv. 14: "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." How is it that there is often so little blessing amongst us when we come together? Is it not that we ignore this scripture, and come as empty vessels to be filled? Does the Lord teach us that, having the Holy Ghost in us, we are still empty, thirsty vessels?

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Is it not a wonderful thing for our bodies to be the temples of the Holy Ghost? What a contrast is an empty vessel and a springing well—"springing up into everlasting life"! Can there be lack of blessing where this is known and believed? There is nothing like it on earth. The Holy Ghost so satisfying the heart with Christ, that we never thirst for aught beside—joy and blessing, ever fresh, never stagnant—"a well of water springing up." Is not this the same as fifty years ago, or in Acts iv.? Whilst ever valuing ministry, let us not come as leaky vessels, needing a man to fill us up. Oh, let us remember the lesson of the well—ever fresh, ever springing up into everlasting life.

Now let us come to the river. If we have learnt of Him, and are in that lowly state of soul to enjoy the unspeakable rest of His own presence; and if we know the Holy Ghost abides in us, a well of living water; if we have thus come to Jesus, as saints gathered to Him, having found that nothing that is of man can long satisfy; if we have drunk in His presence, He now says a wonderful thing: "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (John vii. 38.) If a well is ever springing up, it must flow over somewhere. Jesus says, "SHALL FLOW rivers of living water." How little have we awoke to this! Have we not almost forgotten it? He knows the state of this barren, thirsty land around us, and He says to each one who has found rest, and has the Holy Ghost dwelling in him, that he shall be a river; yea, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

May each beloved brother be a river. Remember, it is not ourselves, but the Holy Ghost, of which He spake—all mere human ministry, however polished and exact, is only like ice. These scriptures have a special voice to us now. Have we not been too much limited, occupied with ourselves, and that as *empty*, rather than entering into the wondrous truths of the rest, the well, and the river? Rest to those gathered to Him is as real now, in the midst of the raging tempest of Satan's hatred, as it

was in the beginning. The Holy Ghost abides to the end, and the rivers of blessing of living water still flow to a lost and guilty world.

But from all we see, and hear, and learn from the word, would not the Lord have those rivers of blessing flow out to the whole church of God? Having learnt rest in Jesus, and the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, may He be graciously pleased to use us to others, and to Him be all praise. It is a matter of immense importance, when sent to any given place, to seek to be a river to every child of God in that town or village. And then, in the boundless love of God, to seek to reach every sin-burdened soul in the district. Too often we think merely of ourselves.

Croydon.

C. S.

A FRAGMENT.

My confidence is in the certainty of God's blessing, and maintaining us, if we take the place we are *really* in. That place is one of the general ruin of the dispensation.

Where God is trusted in the place, and for the place we are in, and we are content to find Him infallibly present with us, there I am sure He is sufficient and faithful to meet our wants.

There is no remedy for want of grace, but the sovereign goodness that leads to *confession*. If we set up our altar, it will serve for walls. (Ezra iii. 3.) The visibility God will take care of, as He always did; the faith of the body will be spoken of, and the unity in love manifest the power of the Holy Ghost in the body.

I have no doubt of God's raising up for need, all that need requires in the place where He has set us in understanding. If we think to set up the church again, I would say, God forbid. I had rather be near the end, to live and to die for it in service where it is as dear to God; *that* is my desire and life.

J. N. D.

THE LESSONS OF THE AGES.

THE TIME OF INNOCENCE.

A TIME so different from anything we ourselves have known as is the primitive time of innocence in Eden, there is necessarily difficulty in realising or interpreting aright. Innocence we have lost, and can never regain. Nor is there anything really like it to be found in such a state as that of childhood, which, speaking comparatively only, we call the age of innocence. Much of what we deem this is, in fact, but *immaturity*; and Adam was not immature, but a man with all the faculties of manhood fresh and vigorous in him, as come, in a perfection nowhere now seen, out of the hand of his Creator.

Indeed theologians, realising this, have imagined a moral, or spiritual perfection in him for which scripture gives no warrant. It is the "*new man*, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." On the other hand, it is said, that "God made man *upright*," which is in contrast with the craft implied in the "many inventions" they have since "sought out."

Let us look briefly at the whole scripture account (confined as it is to little more than one chapter of the book of Genesis) of man's creation, and of the condition in which he was placed in Eden, the "garden of delight."

The first words are:

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

"So God created man"—and here the words fall into a rhythmic measure, the first poetry of scripture, as if God were rejoicing over the creature He had made—"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them."

The second and briefer, yet more detailed, account, is in chapter ii.

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the

ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul."

We must not expect to have man's inner nature, however, fully revealed in this initial revelation as to him. The language is pictorial and figurative largely, according to the usual character of the Old Testament. More is hidden than is openly declared. Plainly "of the earth, earthy," as the first man is, "the dust of the earth" is not all he is. Formed, as to his bodily frame, of this, God "breathes into his nostrils," communicating thus something from Himself, by virtue of which he becomes a living soul. Not even does this expression, "a living soul," give the full reality of what he is. The beast also is, and has, a living soul—"everything wherein there is a living soul" is the description in chapter i. 30 of "every beast of the earth, and every fowl of the air, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." "Likeness" to God cannot be affirmed of such an one as this, for God is not 'soul,' but 'spirit,' and the "Father of *spirits*." Man is thus alone in relationship to God, as possessing not only soul, but also spirit; that "spirit of man" which "knoweth the things of a man," and is his real distinction from the beasts that, as having no link with God or God's eternity, are "beasts that perish."

'Spirit,' thus, in man is linked with 'soul.' An intelligent and moral nature, which is implied in this, furnishes the affections of the heart (or soul) with objects suited to its own proper character, and lifts it thus, as it were, into its own sphere of being. Man is not a more developed beast, although he has an animal nature which resembles the beast's. He belongs to another and higher order of life, and to this the language of chapter i. will be found to correspond in a manner all the more significant that it is not interpreted to us there, but left for the general voice of scripture to interpret.

It has been made a question of late whether the word used for 'creation' necessarily means that. Yet in the first verse of the chapter where we are told that "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," the bringing

out of nothing must be certainly intended. After this (with the exceptions to be just now noticed) the word 'created' is exchanged for 'made:' and the whole six days' work is characteristically a 'making,' as in the words of the fourth commandment; a making which is of such importance in the sight of God, that it is said in chapter ii. 3, that He "created *to make*" it. Thus it stands rightly in the margin of our Bibles, and in the Latin Vulgate, although few ancient or modern interpreters seem to have understood it; 'creation,' or the bringing out of nothing, being thus distinguished from the 'making' out of existing materials. We find that there are but two distinct acts of creation in the six days' work: the first where the 'living creature,' or 'soul,' is introduced; the second, where man is. Thus soul and spirit are distinguished from all modifications of previous existences. They are 'creations,' the calling into being of that which before had none: creations, successively of higher character, until in man at last we find "the offspring of God."

But in man spirit has its links with lower and preceding forms. He is a living soul, as the beast is; and this soul is the seat, not only of those affections in which it corresponds to what we call ordinarily the 'heart,' but also of the instincts, senses, and appetites. The *adjective* of soul (for which in English we have no corresponding term) is in the New Testament, in our Authorised Version, translated twice 'sensual.' The same word also, both in Hebrew and Greek, stands for 'soul' and 'life,' thus marking the soul, in distinction from the spirit, as the source of this to the body. In man thus, as a 'living soul,' spirit, or mind, is made dependent upon the soul, or senses, for its proper furnishing; and thus the body also becomes, in this present condition of things, a necessity to the spirit, and, if it be not in a fit state, a drag upon it—at the best a limit beyond which it cannot pass. Men "out of the body" are called 'spirits,' and not souls; and the body in resurrection is a *spiritual* body, henceforth imposing no limit.

But this link with the body is a matter of great in-

terest in another connection. Before man was in being, a class of spiritual existences had been created—purely such; and of these many had already fallen away from God. Pride, too, is said to have been "the condemnation of the devil." Hence the tender care and wisdom of God are seen in this hedging about the new spiritual creature with restrictions which manifestly tend to "hide pride from man" in this his probationary state. Probation seems to be the rule, and so (as we may infer) the necessity, for moral beings; but the goodness of God is shewn in thus fencing man round, as far as possible, with witnesses to him of creature imperfection, perpetual preachers of humility and self-distrust.

The necessities of this mysteriously compounded nature were another argument in the same direction. In Eden man had his wants, as out of it. Hunger was his, and thirst, although no distress could result from these, but rather new sources of enjoyment—all the trees of the garden ministering to his need. Sleep he needed for the recruiting of a frame which would otherwise have been exhausted by the putting forth of its own energies; nay, the immortal life, which was his conditionally, another tree was made to minister. He was not taught that it was his by the mere fact of what he was. He had it not as what was essential in his being, but rather the opposite, a thing foreign to him naturally, communicated by the virtues of that wondrous tree which was perpetually to sustain the wasting bodily frame.

All this was thus to him constant witness of his creature condition; on the other hand, the constant witness of divine goodness which met all this need with superabundant resources, so that appetite should be but the occasion of enjoyment, and no want be for a moment known. This was Eden, man's garden of delight—for us type of a greater—where all, as God pronounced Himself, was 'good,' and no evil at all existed, nor could exist, save as man introduced it; no hand but his own could mar this beauteous picture. To all but himself it was a citadel impregably guarded from assault.

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But this leads us on to consider what was the prohibition, and what the nature of the temptation to which man yielded.

One thing alone was prohibited to man, lord of all else—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. As to this the command was precise, and the penalty assured “In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.” One prohibition thus served, or should have served, to keep in the mind of one who, as the image of God, was otherwise uncontrolled master of this fair domain, that he too had a Master. ‘Duty,’ as it is the thought of which man alone, and not the beast, is capable, must be necessary to his proper development as man. The moral faculties must have a field provided for their exercise, for man assuredly was from the first a moral being—that is, a being *capable* of discerning good and evil. I say *capable*; for the actual discernment plainly came afterwards, when, and when alone, evil was there to be discerned. As yet there was none, and therefore while good was present everywhere, and its enjoyment not denied, the knowledge of even good was not as yet discriminative—was not *discernment*—when as yet that from which it had to be discerned was not within the field of vision. We are not to suppose a moral incapacity in innocent man which would have put him outside the pale of morality, and rendered a fall impossible, by leaving nothing from which to fall. Neither must we suppose a mind into which the thought of evil had ever yet entered. When solicited by the fruit in the hand of his already fallen companion, “Adam was *not* deceived; but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression.” He, at least, with his eyes open thus far—although not yet having eaten of the tree of that fatal “knowledge”—became a transgressor. In whatever sense the eating of the forbidden fruit opened the eyes of both of them, it created no moral capacity which was not there before, implied in the very nature of a spiritual being, such as was Adam by the gift of his Creator.

Righteousness and holiness are another matter. Scrip-

ture does not affirm these of the first man. These, in the creature, represent a character which could only be the outcome of spontaneous rejection of the evil, when in sight. This character was not, and could not, yet be found in Adam; when evil there was none in that garden of delight, planted by the hand of God Himself for the object of His care and goodness. And herein the meaning of all that we call 'probation' lies. Probation was permitted, nay, necessitated, not alone by the tree forbidden, or the tempter's assault, but by the very constitution of a moral being—a being who apprehends, and deliberates, and wills.

F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

"ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED."

It is very wonderful to contemplate the way of the grace of God to a poor sinner; the depths from which it rescues him, and the heights in which it sets him. If we look only at ourselves, even after the knowledge of this grace has filled our hearts with peace and joy, we can never understand why a holy God should take up such as we are; we can do nothing but wonder, while we praise. But the moment the eye is fixed on Christ we cease to wonder. For there in God's presence, is a Man ("the man Christ Jesus"), the object of His infinite delight, the joy of His heart. In the face of that Man the glory of God, the token of His perfect satisfaction, unceasingly shines. And that Man was my substitute upon the cross, the place of judgment and death. Well may I cease to wonder when I see Him where He is.

There are two extremes, if I may so say, to the gospel, and they are, Christ, the beloved Son, forsaken on the cross, and poor sinners accepted "in the Beloved." Extremes indeed, unknown and unintelligible to the natural man, but very wonderful and very precious to those who have, through grace, been enabled to look away from the things that are seen, to those unseen and eternal things

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of which that glorified Christ is now the centre. And there it is that these extremes meet, in the Person of the One once forsaken as the sin-bearer, because that was the only way in which a holy God could be perfectly glorified about sin; now glorified by the very God who then hid His face from Him, and the radiancy of that glory shining in the face of the One who once cried out in the agony of being forsaken by the God whose heart He knew, and whose glory He vindicated, as none other did or could,—“obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

As I look back for a moment at that cross of shame, with its unfathomable depths of light and love, and then look up by faith and see Him, who was on it for me, the perfect delight of the God who, for the moment, had in righteousness to forsake Him; now, too, the Head of that *new* creation which shall never be stained with sin, or saddened with death; I may well lose sight of myself, and cease to wonder that I am “accepted in the Beloved.”

P. G.

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THIS chapter furnishes us with some important warnings against man's interference with so wonderful a revelation as God has given. It is well for the heart to have firm hold of the grand truth that all is from God, and therefore not to be reasoned about but received in faith; and the more unquestioning that faith, the more apprehension there will be of the mind of God. For this we need, as in the prayer of the apostle in Ephesians i., that God would give the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of the heart being enlightened, &c.

Here, too, Paul expresses the desire of his heart that there might be in the saints everywhere this knowledge of the mystery of God, which would so satisfy the soul that its search after other things would be stopped.

The common participation in these things by saints would knit their hearts together in love. It was not alone for those at Colosse the apostle desired these things, but for as many as had not seen his face in the flesh. His ministry was in the whole church, and what he desired for one he desired for all, longing after them in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

To him a special dispensation or stewardship of the mystery of God was committed, and this was not alone taken up as responsibility, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel," but his heart's affections had been won to Christ as the One who had died and risen for him, and whose love, thus shewn towards him when in sin, now constrained Paul to live to Christ.

In the mystery of God are hid *all* the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. If this be apprehended, man's enticing words will not beguile one. He may offer what to the unwary and uninstructed may appear fascinating, but it is only at best a poor substitute, and is introduced by the enemy in order to divert from Christ.

A little word of commendation is graciously added, words of encouragement in the path of right for those already in danger of being warped from it. This, in the wisdom of the Spirit, was the true way to gain access to their hearts; not by blaming them for their failings, but commending their order, and the steadfastness of their faith in Christ.

But there was not lacking the exhortation to *walk* in Christ and not to be satisfied with present progress, but to be gaining firmer hold of the one that they had already known. Rooted and built up speaks of growth in every way, a firmer hold of the One already known through grace; such as the picture given in Philippians iii., Christ at the right hand of God as the source of all grace and blessing, and as an object for the heart in heaven, and Christ in His lowly path down here as the One whose mind we shall thus have.

Only as we get the object right will the path be right, all else is but fleshly effort; and however sincere the soul

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in its desires, it must surely succumb to the pressure from outside and within; and what is produced becomes the piety of nature, sanctified flesh, and not the manifestation of the life of Jesus in our mortal bodies. How fruitless the attempt to be any way walking as approved unto God save as we take in, in faith, this blessed object—living by faith—"the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me"! Self-judgment may clear the eye from the mists which have obscured it, and in this we need constantly to be exercised, but only as we see Him in the unclouded light of the glory of God can there be energy communicated to maintain our ground against the enemy, or go on to perfection.

But human philosophy, the mere working of mind and imagination about moral principles, which to the pride of the heart might seem an easier or, at least, a needful way of settling many points, the faithful needed to be warned against. Traditions, law-keeping, and such-like things, would approve themselves to the mind or conscience, but they were after the rudiments of the world, and when God had given up dealing with man upon that ground they were but "beggarly elements."

By the law, God had taken up man in the flesh and educated him in certain moral principles. If he heartily adopted these principles, and accepted them as a proper definition of human righteousness, they led to the discovery of his own incapacity to keep them, and guilty and without strength was in consequence man's proved condition by them. They became the ministry of death and condemnation. But this was not now God's way with man, still less were mere human traditions, however sanctified by the appearance of antiquity. Christ, a heavenly Christ, was now revealed—the revelation of God's perfect love to man in all his proved need, and the remedy for all the sin in which he was found through His atoning death and sufferings, as well as now risen and glorified, was the measure of man's place and acceptance in the heavenlies. In view of Christ how all man's traditions, and even the law, holy as it was,

and God's purpose in giving it, sink into nothing in comparison.

How wonderful the statement that follows! "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in him which is the head of all principality and power." How suitable to the condition of those who were in danger of looking another way, to remind them of this. Divine fulness, the fulness of Godhead dwelling in a man. As to the cross itself, how striking the way in which it is presented. "For in him all the fulness was pleased to dwell, and having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto itself." How well and completely must that work be done which had thus been taken up.

From verses 10-15 is a statement of some aspects of that completeness, and it seems as if the Spirit of God anticipates all the ways in which need could be felt, and shews how fully they are met. Thus are the avenues guarded by which these human devices would gain access. The divine remedy being known, the human is not needed.

A Jew would come with his circumcision and press it as a divine institution, and how early this was done, and how successful the snare, Galatians and other portions of the word prove. But in Christ I have the true circumcision, the body of the flesh put off, all that to which the law applied gone, through the death of Christ. But I have more, I have been buried with Him in baptism; yet not left in the grave either, though I, as a poor corrupt and corrupting creature, needed to be put out of sight. But faith in the working of God, who raised Christ from the dead, has linked me, identified with Him, in this new place with God.

My history closed, as to the ruin I was connected with, and a new beginning made for me a risen man in Christ. Next, as to my condition in nature as dead in sins, I am made alive together with Him, and as to all the sins which were the expression of that state, they are all forgiven. How thorough the deliverance His love has

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wrought that the conscience, free from all guilt, the heart might delight itself in God, and now no longer dead to Him, "alienated from the life of God," but alive with Christ, my privilege is to live to Him who has thus rescued and redeemed me.

But there remain two other things which though they are not my personal condition, which has thus been so blessedly met, were yet opposed to me and operated to shut me out from blessing. The first is the law, not now looked at in its rule over me and the consequent results, but as that which given to the Jew as his distinctive privilege, if it shut him into the place of privilege, shut me, the Gentile, out. This then is taken out of the way, nailing it to His cross, as now fully entered into in Ephesians ii., the barrier has been removed and no longer withstands the entrance of the Gentile into the full favour of God and place of nearness such as was never known to a Jew or could be for a man in the flesh.

Lastly, principalities and powers, under whose dominion I was, have been triumphed over through the cross. We are delivered from the authority of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love. Thus every aspect of need is met, but not alone that, every blessing conferred which the blessing of God, working according to the perfection of His wisdom, could plan to give us. How wonderful His ways! Well may we say, "What has God wrought!"

Such being our established place of blessing, the exhortations that follow are simple. I am to refuse man's ordinances, and the things whereby he would infringe my liberty, and to accept them is to deny Christianity. What have meats and drinks and holy days to do with risen heavenly life? Yet such is ours. Eternal life begun is not so limited or marked, and the body is of Christ, and belongs to a different scene from this in which that life is now for a season displayed. Yet holy days *are* shadows of things to come, but for the earth, and will be kept and enjoyed by those whose calling connects them with the earth in a scene of millennial blessedness.

Neither is the intrusion of some other being, under the plea of a humility which is false, to be allowed. Those who would put angels, or saints, or priests, between me and Him, have interposed a fatal hindrance to my growth and even secured my downfall. True humility is an accompaniment of the faith which puts God in His true place as the Giver and myself as the receiver of His benefits. And if God, acting from Himself, is pleased to bestow the highest blessings freely on the least deserving, what becomes us is to take with thankful and rejoicing hearts what He gives. When, too, we know that all comes to us as the fruit of God having been glorified by Christ, we find ourselves in happy liberty before Him as identified, through grace, with all the sweet savour of that precious offering. But the thickness of a gold-leaf between the head and the members is as fatal, though not as manifest, as a great chasm.

May we be kept sensible that all the fulness is in Him, and open to us continually to draw upon with the faith which honours and gives Him His true glory. Dead and risen with Him we are cut off on the one hand from all the evil in which man in the flesh, religious or otherwise, is found, and on the other brought into that new scene where "old things have passed away and all are become new and all of God." Our privilege is to live to God, and seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God; living in the scene which rejected Him as strangers and pilgrims and unknown, but waiting for Him, who is our life, to be manifested when we shall share His joy and glory and its unending bliss for ever.

R. T. G.

When man occupies himself philosophically with all things, the insufficiency of his own resources always throws him into the hands of an intellectual leader, and into traditions, and, when religion is the subject, into tradition which develop the flesh, and are suited to its powers and its tendency.

"THE APOSTLE AND HIGH PRIEST OF OUR PROFESSION."

OUR God, who spake in sundry ways,
As ages past did run,
Hath in these last and closing days,
Address'd us in the Son.

The One who spake the worlds to be—
The earth, the stars, the sun,—
Who set a limit to the sea,
Who spake, and it was done.

The brightness of the glory He,
Who stoop'd in grace to die,
Then by God's just and right decree,
He took His seat on high.

'Tis His, the highest place in light,
As the eternal Son ;
'Tis His, the highest place by right
As Son of man, He won.

His kingdom shall for ever stand,
His sceptre wide extend
O'er every people, nation, land,
Each knee to Him shall bend.

Our great Apostle, come from God,
Who came "to do his will"—
His "grace, and truth," to shed abroad,
His purpose to fulfil.

Our "great High Priest" to bear us in,
He pass'd within the veil ;
With His own blood, which purged our sin,
For us He doth prevail.

His voice, which said, "Let there be light,"
Now speaks from heaven above,
It sounds amid this world's dark night,
In rich abounding love.

His God and Father, He declares—
The song of praise He leads,
Of those who with Him are co-heirs,
Whose cause He ever pleads.

Eternal counsels all unfold,
In Him the living Word ;
Divine perfections we behold,
And own Him Christ the Lord !

Dec. 1881.

G. W. F.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

3.—Q. What is the meaning of “the valley of the shadow of death” ?

R. T. C.

A.—Your inquiry raises an interesting and oft mooted question:—Does it mean death itself, or the world, as that over which the shadow of death is cast ? We incline to believe it is the latter. Did it mean death itself, “the valley of death” would have been, it seems to us, the expression used, but “the *shadow*” of death presents to the mind the idea of danger of death, or of what leads into it, and brings the anticipation or dread of it upon the soul. A comparison of other places in the Psalms where the term is used, makes this clear. In Psalm xlv. 19, the remnant of Israel speak of themselves, under the government of God, as “sore broken in the place of dragons, and covered with the shadow of death.” So again in Psalm cvii. 10, 14, when “redeemed from the land of the enemy,” they recall the mercy that reached those that “sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound with affliction and iron,” and, that when they had cried to Jehovah, “He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death.”

From these scriptures it would appear that “the valley of the shadow of death” was, to the psalmist, the path where the gloom and danger of death was specially in question, but where the protection and support of Jehovah were his comfort, so that he feared no evil, as one who would be preserved from death itself. What follows in the Psalm supports this thought.

For the believer *now*, the world, or rather his pathway through it, is “the valley of *the shadow* of death.” How truly was this so to the blessed Lord ! Death’s dark shadow ever rested on the path He trod. Especially in Gethsemane, where He says, “my soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death ;” but death itself He tasted in all its bitterness, unprotected and unsupported, on the cross. The *shadow* of death, where His rod and staff *comfort* us, is all we *can* know, for the rest we await His coming, and not death itself.

C. W.

THE LIGHT OF THE SANCTUARY.

NOTES OF A LECTURE ON EXODUS XXV. 31-40 AND NUMBERS VIII. 1-4.

I TRUST, beloved brethren, most of us are somewhat familiar with what we have here. It is the light provided for the inside of the tabernacle where the priests served, where no exterior light entered: I am not talking of the holiest of holies. It is as heavenly people that this speaks to us. If we are not that, we are not Christians—we cannot pretend to it. There is no room for humility, as to how far, or how near, we shall be to God. We are either “accepted in the Beloved,” or nothing—in Him who has passed into the heavens, and hence we belong there; “As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.” We are *now* heavenly people, but “the image of the heavenly” is future for us. As He is then, as we read in the church of Laodicea, “the beginning of the creation of God,” so are we of His creation; hence it is no question of attainment—there is no ladder for us to go up or down. This is the way, therefore, scripture speaks to us.

Here, then, you find the candlestick, which is Christ, and we shall find that the light is intimately connected with the candlestick; indeed, the light was to fall upon the candlestick as we see in verse 37. So the light which belongs to us is from Him, and is thrown to Him, to display His glory. Let us see also that the candlestick is not merely Christ, but Christ ascended. As to its material, it was of “beaten gold”—a beautiful combination. Beaten gold may appear a contradiction. I think gold typifies divine glory, or, as some say, divine righteousness. You have the expression in Hebrews ix., “the cherubims of glory.”

Surely the apostle was not referring to the brightness merely. They are the attributes of God, in which He displays Himself. Christ is the manifestation of God in

the fullest way, not merely to us, but to all His creatures. No angel could ever have known the heart of God by any outward display, but Christ came down to the dust of death therein to shew it, and only there could it have been shewn. It is like a bird that naturally flies in the heavens coming down to die, choosing an earthly place in which to die (see Lev. xiv. 6); so Christ could not die in heaven. Christ dying full of the Holy Ghost is the meaning of being "killed over running water." It was not God acting as a patron, nor merely God shewing us power, but God displayed in sacrifice. That is why you have the beautiful connection we have here in the "beaten" gold. The moment you think of glory beaten, it seems like a contradiction, but when one thinks of Christ in His painful acts, we can understand it. Here we see One in suffering, and in pains and labour working out the display of God.

We will now look at "the bowls made like unto almonds." Everywhere in the candlestick is the knop and flower found, three times over, and the bowls, or almonds, come together in the centre; so that, if you go across with the eye, you will find there are seven almonds. The branches are the attributes of Christ. I only mention it to shew how the whole thing is made up of almonds, for almonds are everywhere; hence God has something very important to tell us in it. Now, who was it that could carry such a people as Israel, after the sin of Korah, through the wilderness? We read of Aaron's rod—a mere dead thing—it used to live once, but is dead now, and it starts into life again in the sanctuary, and the form of the fruit it takes is that of the almond. It is a wonderful plant. The word almond, in Hebrew, means "wakeful," for it is the first tree to bud after the winter. You will see how strikingly this applies to Christ as once dead, but now risen, and who Himself is the pledge of all that will come hereafter.

We have in Revelation the seven lamps, in connection with "the seven spirits that are before the throne," and "the first-begotten of the dead." This is just the almond.

The first-born from the dead, and "the beginning of the creation of God." He comes up from death, but not alone. We find our life by coming up with Him. Coming up out of death, Christ has taken the place of the first one of the new creation—"the beginning of the creation of God."

As man in glory, He has received the promise of the Holy Ghost. He had it for Himself down here, but in order to give it to us, it must be by getting it from above. Although the Holy Ghost is on earth, it is still here the lamps upon Christ in glory. Therefore all the light of the sanctuary is for us. The apostle will have it that Christianity is a mystery, but it is not mysterious to those who know it, and in Colossians ii. the apostle speaks of "the mystery of God, in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." There is nothing outside of that heavenly sanctuary into which Christ is gone, or apart from the light of the candlestick.

"In his light," beloved, shall we see light, and "as ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." Clearly this shews us the whole thing; and let me say here, what scripture calls the "old leaven" in Corinthians is the introduction of the old things into the new. It was a piece of the old dough that was to be put into the new, and the two did not agree. This is the "old leaven." We are to keep to the new things. We read, "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." Why not? Because He is not in it to know. Where is He, then? In heaven, and we are associated with Him *there*. We have got Christ in glory, not on earth after the flesh. The light is a new light, and a heavenly one.

Now let us put it to ourselves. How far do we find it true? We find Christians dropping down to the ordinary light of men. See how many have not a bad conscience, perhaps in their daily work, just because they have not broken the moral law, which is all very nice, of course; but, beloved, this is no new measure whatever, no rightful

measure by which to judge ourselves; and yet, if we were to look at ourselves in the heavenly light, we should see that we were not in Christ's light all through the day, very often. Are we all free of the desire of getting on in the world? When we go to our houses of business, is our desire to make money? The moment we do this, we have brought the level of Christ down.

You say, "This is hard." But if we are in the heavenlies, we need not be anxious to make money to meet our need, we can leave all this in our Father's hands, for Him to give us what is best. Are we not here to display to all the light of Christ, and to preach how sufficient He is to us? Everything depends upon the light, and where it comes from. The light of day will not do for us. Could you imagine (and I say so reverently) it an object for the Lord Jesus to make money, and yet, could you, alas! imagine yourselves having it? We are shocked at the thought of it for Christ—why not for ourselves?

But let us look a little more at what we have here in this wonderful gold candlestick. There are six branches, and one in the centre. The branches are in pairs, but they come from the central stem. Compare this with the description given of Christ in Isaiah xi. 1-3. This, of course, is Christ on earth, but the same Christ is in heaven. Notice, you get the Spirit in the plural—"seven spirits" in Revelation, but here it is the Spirit of Jehovah, mark, by itself, but acting according to the figure, given in the candlestick, of pairs. "The Spirit of wisdom and understanding" is one pair; then "the Spirit of counsel and might" is another pair; and, finally, "the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah" is the last pair; but note that the stem of these three pairs is "the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him." This one is single.

Now, the light of the sanctuary was reflected and displayed on the breast-plate of the high priest, in which were the Urim and Thummim. If you see God *displayed*, it is always in connection with His people, maintaining them and blessing them. The cross is the perfect and un-

changeable display of God in grace—in it He was completely glorified, and it was for us. Notice that the branches all proceed from the central stem. It is God in relation to His people, through Christ, that the candlestick presents to us, and thus He is “the true and faithful Witness.” A priest could only get an answer through the Urim and Thummim. For us this answers to 1 John ii. 1, 2: “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

We will now look a little at our chapter in Numbers. Numbers is the practical book. We find there directions for our walk. Constantly in this book you find, if your eyes are on a thing, God tells you how He looks at it—lets you see it from His point of view. Notice how strikingly Christ is put before us here, too, in the “beaten gold”—Christ in the world glorifying God in pain and sorrow. Do we want our path pointed out for us? The word says, “Walk ye in him.” Instead of having to look down to see the path for our feet, we have to look up; and as surely as we look up, and see Christ at God’s right hand, so surely will our steps be led right. Christ is not only the pattern of our path, but our object, and that by which we may find it. Ours is a path which travels direct to a fixed point beyond; we are not “wanderers,” but we are “pilgrims.”

The Lord keep us walking by *the light of the sanctuary*, and may we never forget that “He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk even as he walked.”

F. W. G.

Croydon.

The object in the glory forms the life which answers to it here below. Were a light at the end of a long straight alley, I never have the light itself till I am arrived there; but I have ever-increasing light in proportion as I go forward; I know it better, I am more in the light myself. Thus it is with a glorified Christ, and such is Christian life.

“CHOSEN IN CHRIST.”

EPHESIANS I. 3-7.

IF we look back in the depths of eternity, before the foundations of the world; God was occupied with the very thought that the Holy Ghost is speaking to our souls to-night. Yes, here we go back before our conversion; before the death of the Lord Jesus; before His incarnation; before all God's dealings with men for four thousand years; before Satan stepped into paradise; before Eve sinned. We were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. What can alter the purposes of God? Before all time began, God chose us in Him, that we should be holy, and without blame before Him in love.

Yes, He purposed to bring us into this wondrous place of acceptance. “before him in love.” Such was the love of the Father to us, in, and from, eternity. “To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.” What a place to be before Him according to the love of His heart, “In love”—“accepted in the beloved.” Then “holy and without blame.” And so certain, that nothing can set aside the eternal purpose of God. Nay, it is even now accomplished, “He hath made us accepted in the beloved.” He hath thus blessed us in Christ. It is as true that we are accepted, that He hath made us so, as that He chose us in Christ in Him, before the foundations of the world.

And now let us dwell a moment on the relationship He predestined to have us in, “Unto the adoption of CHILDREN by Jesus Christ.” Oh! how far nearer to Him, than the creature place that Adam stood in, even in paradise. Far nearer than Israel stood in, as a nation. Nearer than Abraham as the friend of God. Nearer far than angels now enjoy—they *stand* around His throne; but Jesus is gone to prepare a place for us, where we shall *sit* on thrones in the unclouded light of the glory of God, so near that the angelic myriads shall stand around that place of nearness. Yes, we are predestined to enjoy that wondrous place of oneness with the Son of

His love, as children—"to the praise of the glory of his grace."

And, now, if we pass on from this to 1 John iii., what joy to our hearts that nothing could satisfy the Father's love, nothing less perfect than our being like the holy One for whom we wait. Presented to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. God could have no pleasure in those sacrifices which never took away sins. But now the eternal purpose, the dearest desire of His heart, is attained in our perfect acceptance in Christ, and likeness to Him.

If we turn to Daniel vii. 9, we there see the Ancient of Days, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool. So in Revelation i., we behold the Lord Jesus, and "His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow." The same emblem of spotless purity may be observed on the mount of transfiguration." "His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." But you may say, Can we, who have been such sinners, become like that: like Him, as He is? Yes, the same figures are used by the Spirit when He brings us to Christ. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

It is well for our hearts to rest in the absolute purpose of God. The redemption we have is the result of those purposes. The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin. As He is, so are we in this world. Let us then look down from on high, and see the church as God sees it, as He beholds it without spot accepted in the beloved. Our hearts cannot enter into the thought of being like Him, unless they now understand how He looks upon us. In the same whiteness, and likeness. Satan may rage. Men may arise speaking perverse things. Unbelief may say all is going to pieces. Billows may swell mountains high. Let us never forget in spite of these things, that we were chosen in Christ before them all. May we be kept waiting for Him.

Croydon.

C. S.

4-2

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST.

SCRIPTURE gives us various lines of instruction concerning the blood. They are largely referred to in the types given in the books of Moses, as well as in the apostles' ministry in their epistles. We now propose to look briefly at three aspects of the blood of Christ which speak to us of peace, communion, and consecration. They are all to be known for present comfort and blessing.

1. *Remission of sins* is the general thought of Christians when considering the blood. It is necessitated, for, knowing ourselves to have been sinners against God, how could we have a moment's peace, unless we knew that our sins had been judged, and were assured of His forgiveness? The testimony of our Lord Himself that His blood was shed for many for the remission of sins, gives unutterable relief to the troubled conscience, and the word of an apostle that the universal witness of prophets is that whoever believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall receive remission of sins, settles the soul in rest and peace before God. Thus the intolerable load of sins is gone, and by the testimony of the Holy Spirit, such know that they are cleansed from all sin, and that God will remember their sins and iniquities no more. Precious cleansing, and oh, how comforting the truth that Jesus made peace through the blood of His cross!

2. *Communion* with God inside the rent veil is however another thing, and it is this also into which we are introduced by the precious blood of Christ. Besides the blood being shed for the remission of sins, we are sweetly taught that He, "by his own blood entered in once into the holy place" (Heb. ix. 12); that is, into the holy of holies, or "into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." So that we see that blessed Saviour, who loved us and gave Himself for us, now in heaven: the veil being rent, or heaven opened, and He

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gone in by His own blood. Thus there is everything to encourage us to be in spirit inside the veil by faith.

It is no marvel that it is said, "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near." (Heb. x. 19-22.) This is where God in His grace has brought us. This is where the blood of Christ gives us title to be now by faith, and in glorified bodies when Jesus comes. This is where we have access with confidence. Communion with God by the Spirit, as well as worship and thanksgiving, are founded upon the blood. We are therefore enjoined to "offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually." It is our highest and happiest occupation; and when we lose it we soon become unhappy. Directly we cease to have personal intercourse and communion with the Lord we should be alarmed. Everything should give way for it, so that whatever we do we might do it in the name of the Lord Jesus. All our business should be transacted inside the veil.

Communion with the Lord is very easily broken, but not always soon restored. When we have lost it, what are we to do? Many a soul struggles, re-doubles his efforts, prays, groans, fasts, and is troubled night and day, because he has lost the comfort of being in the Lord's presence, and this may go on for days, and months, or even years, and after all he learns that it cannot be regained in this way. All these exercises no doubt are useful in breaking down self-confidence, and in teaching that there is no good thing in the flesh, but communion is only restored by the simple way of approaching God, through the rent veil, and Him who is gone in there by His own blood. Then the soul is at home again, where He can pour out His heart, judge himself, and, through wondrous grace, even confess his sins; for there he finds the One who died for his sins, there he knows Him as his priest, and there the blood of sprinkling ever speaks on behalf of all who come unto God by Him!

What a blessing to the troubled soul who, first yielded to the flesh, the world, or Satan, and got away from the true ground of fellowship, and then, with all the struggling to get back, had to learn that all his ways of doing so were wrong, that it is only by the rent veil and the precious blood of Christ, who is gone into heaven itself for us, that we can "draw near." It is an immense thing to have really learnt from God that there is no other way of approaching Him, when we have wandered from Him, than by the blood of Jesus. This souls who are abiding in the grace of God know. It is because Christ is gone into heaven itself by His own blood, that we have access with confidence to God. On no other ground could we have title to be there.

It is one thing after all to know these things doctrinally, but it is another to know them in our own experience; to be consciously inside the veil, in all the perfectness of that peace and love which is there realised. All believers are entitled to it, but a careless walk, and the practice of evil unjudged, or not abstaining from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, will hinder our enjoyment of the Lord and every privilege He has graciously given us; to be there, however, where Jesus now is, with worshipping and thankful hearts, is what should characterise the saints of God. Happy indeed are those who know the sweetness and blessedness of having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

3. There is another aspect of the blood which we may profitably connect with those which we have already noticed. It is *consecration*, or the blood of Christ *on* us. We read of "*having our hearts sprinkled* from an evil conscience." This is the blood applied to us, brought to bear on the conscience to purge it, and also to mark us off for God. Thus we are sanctified, or set apart to God. "Jesus also that he might sanctify the people with his own blood suffered without the gate." (Heb. xiii. 12.) The priests of old having been first washed with water, were afterwards sprinkled with blood. The blood of the sacrifice was not only shed *for* them, and carried into

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the holiest of all and sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat, but it was sprinkled *on* them, and on such parts of their bodies, too, as to set forth with remarkable significance how they were thus (and with the oil too) set apart for God. They were to hearken to God, to receive communications from Him, to hear *His* voice, and not the voice of a stranger—hence the tips of their right ears were sprinkled with blood. They were to minister obediently to His word, and do His will; therefore we read that the thumbs of their right hands were also sprinkled with blood. They were also to walk in His ways, and not in evil ways, all these steps being ordered by Him; they were thus to be detached from every unclean path, and walk in paths suited to His holy name; and this, no doubt, is why the great toes of their right feet were also sprinkled with blood. (Lev. viii.)

Alas! how little we really know of the power of the precious blood of Christ thus *practically* setting us apart for God! Many who thank God with their whole hearts for the blood of Jesus giving remission of sins, have no idea of the liberty they have of being now in the presence of God inside the veil, because Jesus our forerunner has gone into heaven itself by His own blood; but there may be comparatively few of God's saints who live and walk day by day as those who consciously have the blood *on* them, and the Holy Spirit of God *in* them. When these wondrous truths are realised as facts, what practical separation and devotedness to the Lord there must be. Then who can do otherwise than wait for God's Son from heaven?

H. H. S.

We are *always* in the presence of God without a veil. Happen what may, He *always* sees us. We are there now, *by virtue of a sacrifice which has put sin away*; which has accomplished the purification of our sins.

CAN A CHRISTIAN CONSISTENTLY BE A SOLDIER ?

It is clear to me that a Christian, free in the matter, could never be a soldier, unless he were on the very lowest round of the ladder, and ignorant of the christian position. It is another thing when one is forced to it. In such case the question is this : is the conscience so strongly implicated on the negative side of the question, that one could not be a soldier without violating that which is the rule of conscience—the word of God ? In that case we endure the consequences ; we must be faithful.

What pains me is the manner in which the idea of “country” has taken possession of the hearts of some brothers. I well understand that the sentiment of patriotism may be strong in the heart of a man. I do not think that the heart is capable of *affection* towards the whole of the world. At the bottom, human affection must have a centre, which is “I.” I can say, “My country,” if it is not that of a stranger ; I say, “My children :” “My friend,” and that is not a purely selfish “I.” One would sacrifice one’s life—everything (yet not oneself, or one’s honour) for one’s country, one’s friend. I cannot say, “My world ;” there is no appropriation. We appropriate something to ourselves that it may not be ourselves.

But God delivers us from the “I ;” He makes of God, and of God in Christ, the centre of all ; and the Christian, if consistent, declares plainly that he seeks a country, a better, that is a heavenly country. His affections, his links, his citizenship, are above. He withdraws into shadow in *this* world, as outside the whirlpool which surges there, overflowing all, carrying all away. The Lord is a sanctuary.

That a Christian should hesitate whether he ought to obey or not, I understand—I respect his conscience ; but that he should allow himself to be carried away by what

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is called patriotism that is what is not of heaven. My kingdom, said Jesus, is not of this world, else would my servants fight.

This is the spirit of the world under an honourable and attractive form, but wars come from our lusts which war in our members. As a man, I would have fought obstinately for my country, and would never have given in, God knows; but as a Christian I believe and feel myself to be outside of all that, these things move me no more. The hand of God is there—I recognise it—He has ordered all beforehand. I bow my head before that will. If England were to be invaded to-morrow I would trust in Him. It would be a chastisement upon the people who had never seen war, but I would bend myself to His will.

Many Christians labour on the scene of the war; large sums of money have been sent to them. All this does not attract me. God be praised that so many poor creatures have been relieved; but I would rather see the brethren go through the lanes of the city, and seek the poor where they are found every day. There is far more self-abnegation, more hidden service, in such a work. We are not of the world, but we are the representatives of Christ in the midst of the world.

May God graciously keep His own.

1870.

J. N. D.

THE time to come is the time of glory and perfection of church; the present, the time of faithfulness and faith, but of a faith which counts upon God, that the church by His power may manifest His glory, even in this world, by its entire superiority to all that governs the world and exerts an influence upon it. *The church is the seat of the power of God in the world.* What have we made of it? (See Eph. iii. 20, 21.) The Epistle to the Ephesians presents the perfection of the church's portion before God; that to the Thessalonians gives us, in the most interesting manner, the perfection of the Christian's portion individually

J. N. D.

CORRESPONDENCE ON THE PRESENCE AND ACTINGS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN THE ASSEMBLY.

1.—THE question of the “leading of the Spirit in the assembly,” has been raised here, and it seems to me there is a deal of semi-quakerism amongst us, and that the presence of the Spirit, as a semi-distinct person, corporally present, as the Leader of the assembly, is confounded with the presence of the Lord, whether, as anointing the assembly with the authority of His presence (Matt. xviii.), or to lead the praise of His gathered saints. (Ps. xxii., Heb. ii.)

I understand the leading of the Spirit as characteristic of the Christian at all times, whether in or out of the assembly. (Rom. xiii. 14; Gal. v. 18.) But any other leading in the assembly, as from a Spirit separately distinct from us and in our midst, I do not see, as though I should wait upon Him *as outside* of me till He impels me to act. That I conceive would be inspiration (2 Pet. i. 2), and would hinder any action I took under such impulse from being judged in the assembly according to 1 Corinthians xiv. 29; while also the waiting for such an impulse would hinder self-judgment in one as to my own spiritual state, which was all the time perhaps the cause of my faulty ways in the assembly, and not that the Spirit had either passed me by, or that it had not yet come to my turn, as if it were a Quakers’ meeting. The Spirit *in me*, if not grieved or otherwise hindered by me, would produce in me a state coincident with His presence in me, in which state I should be alike capable (1 Cor. ii.) and free (2 Cor. iii.) to answer to the leadings of the Lord according to my relative place in the body, (1 Cor. xii.) as He took His place as Leader of the assembly.

“He is with you and shall be in you” (John xiv.); that is, when Jesus was there all the fulness of the Spirit was with them, in Him who had received the Spirit from heaven, by-and-by He would be too *in them*, the fruit of

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Christ's accomplished work; they too would receive the Spirit from heaven, as they actually did at Pentecost, and the Gentiles afterwards. And He is in us now—the Comforter instead of Jesus—the testifier of Him, the Teacher who leads into all truth, the former of the Body in the unity of its members, the dispenser and energy too of every gift He gives according to His will. (1 Cor. xii.) He dwells in the church, but it is He who dwells in us who for that reason is there, and not separately, as though there were two Spirits or that I have to look out of myself to find Him in the assembly, save as much as He is in every other Christian; nor that I am to wait upon His acting *on* me, but rather to know, and that, too, by the state which His presence in me produces, that He dwells in me, to act by me—if the flesh in me be not allowed to control me instead. In a word, I am “not in the flesh but in the Spirit if so be the Spirit of God dwell” in me; and it is my business therefore to hold myself as the vessel of the Spirit to be led by Him, and not of the flesh, whether in or out of the assembly; and if the Spirit be not grieved in me I shall be led of Him in the footsteps and imitation of Christ and of God. (Eph. v. 1 and 1 Cor. xi. 1.) Quench not the Spirit (1 Thess. v.), I understand applies to gifts. The clerical system is the quenching of the Spirit; quite different from “grieving.”

But now come Acts xiii. 2 and xv. 28. And here it seems to some that the Spirit had a distinct, separate place from them in the midst. That in these cases it was a distinct action of the Spirit is evident; but as I understand it, not as being separate from them, a distinct person corporally present with them, but rather as being *in them*, and acting *through them*, distinct in His own person, but a Spirit and in them—so that I would say in that sense not distinct *from them*. Thus Acts xiii. 2, “The Holy Ghost said,” doubtless through the mouth of some one present. He acted in him and by him, but it was the Spirit acted, for there was no hindrance to His action, only it was not a Spirit corporately and separately present with them, but the Spirit who was *in* them.

Again Acts xv., "It seemeth good to the Holy Ghost and to us." The decree was thus stamped with the authority of the Spirit, and carried in the council at Jerusalem, and subscribed by the apostles and elders and brethren. Not that the Spirit sat as president at the board, and dictated the terms of the decree, to which the rest subscribed; the Spirit acted in them, and through them, and they acted in the Spirit. And such it seems to me ought to be the conditions of every decree that goes forth to-day. If it does not seem good to the Holy Spirit, of what good is it? And if it does, but does not to the elders and brethren, of what profit if we are not willing to be led by the Spirit? But in every case the Spirit, who dwells in the church, dwells there because He dwells in us, so that the two things are at once true—"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. iii.), and "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you which ye have of God?" (1 Cor. vi.) He is in them individually, and because He is a divine person and Spirit, by that very fact He is in them collectively also. X.

2.—The thing I do not think clear in your letter is that you seem to give no place to the personal, not "corporeal," *presence* of the Holy Ghost in *the House*, as apart from His presence in the individual saint. You say, "He is in them individually, and because He is a divine person and Spirit, by that very fact He is in them collectively also." I quite think His actings are through the individual in ministry and direction, and only *intelligible* and recognisable in this way; still, I think He comes *on* persons now, as He did in king Saul's days, and uses persons instrumentally where He does not dwell in them. "Partakers of the Holy Ghost" in Hebrews vi. is of this character, and thus Acts iv.—He shook the place where they were assembled, an action distinct from His individual power for ministry. Y.

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3.—You say my letter is not clear because I “seem to give no place to the personal (not corporeal) *presence* of the Holy Ghost in *the House*, as apart from His presence in the individual saint.” And then you quote my words, which prove that I do, at least, believe in the presence of the Spirit *as well as in the individual*, for I say, “because He is a divine person and Spirit, by that very fact He is in them collectively also.” The “how” of it I do not pretend to explain, because I cannot explain the nature of a divine person (compare for a similar thing in the Lord’s case John iii. 13, and such-like expressions), only to your expression I entirely object, when you say, “*He is present apart from His presence in the individual.*” That to me would make two Holy Ghosts. Did scripture use such an expression I would bow, but I object to such an expression being used to explain what scripture says.

It has been long taught, at least I have been told so, and received here, that there is more Holy Ghost on Lord’s day morning, when the assembly is gathered, than on other occasions. It is like a company, every one bringing his lamp, and a great chandelier let down from the ceiling. Every man brings the Holy Ghost, and there is a big Holy Ghost in the middle. The figure I give of the chandelier and the lamps is the figure used.

To that I demur. I do not believe that there is more of the Person of the Holy Ghost present on Lord’s day morning than at other times. The Holy Spirit is as much in two as in two thousand, though not as much manifestation, for that is “given to every man,” &c. Every fresh member has a fresh gift of the Spirit; “but it is the same Spirit” (1 Cor. xii. 11) in contrast to the thought of men with their many spirits. There is as *much*, that is to say as *really* present the HOLY SPIRIT in one as in two, only that in the “two or three” there is a company, and His workings would be different. He is in the individuals, and when they are together in the assembly He is in them collectively. “He shall be in you:” only that while the Lord takes His place *in the midst* of the assembly, in a corporeal, though

invisible, manner, to lead their praises, that could not be so said of the Spirit. Christ is the leader, as I understand it, of the *assembly*; the Spirit is the leader or conductor of the soul set in christian liberty, as in contrast with its being under law (Rom. viii.; Gal. v.); but that is no more in the assembly than out of it, and He is the power of action in ministry, in or out of the assembly. All that is there done should be done *τῷ πνεύματι καὶ τῷ νοί*, not *ὑπὸ πνεύματος* (2 Pet. i. 21), as if He were there *apart from* His being *in* us; for then no one could judge the ministry as we are now told to do. (1 Cor. xiv. 29.)

You say "He comes *on* persons, as on King Saul (and you might have added Balaam) and uses them instrumentally where He does not dwell in them."—"Partakers of the Holy Spirit," as in Hebrews vi. But these examples are Old Testament, and only speak of the *operation* of the Spirit, not of His presence, or the manner of it in the church.

I do not at all deny the presence of the Spirit in the assembly, as well as in the individual saints, only it seems to me to be a *spiritual* presence, in contrast with that of Christ (Luke xxiv. 39), who takes His place amongst the assembled disciples corporeally and invisibly. (See Luke xxiv. 31.) He ceased to be seen of them (*ἄφαντος ἐγένετο*), but it does not say He left the room, and He is found among the gathered ones further on in the chapter; but the presence of the Spirit is spiritual, and *FILLS* the house, at least by the *effect* of His presence.

Looking at Acts ii. to-day, I remarked three things at the coming of the Spirit. First, the effect of His coming was a sound as a mighty blowing, and this *sound filled* the house. I do not say the Spirit did not fill the house, only this passage speaks in respect of the house, of the sound filling it, as in Isaiah vi. 1, "His train filled the temple," and (ver. 4) "the posts of the door moved at the voice . . . and the house was filled with smoke." This, it seems to me answers to Acts iv. 31. Secondly, there appeared unto

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them cloven tongues, &c. Thirdly, *they were all filled with the Holy Spirit*. First, the place was filled with the EFFECT of His presence—the sound, and those present were so far partakers of the Holy Spirit. (Heb. vi.) Secondly, the manifestations of His presence were to every member of the community. (1 Cor. xii.) Thirdly, they were all (each individually and all collectively) filled with the Spirit; but I cannot see that common or collective was *apart from* His being in each of them, nor that He took up His abode in the house, or in them in any way separate from, or distinct from, His being in them individually. By the fact of His being in them individually and being Spirit, He was of necessity in them collectively, and in no other way that I can see.

In Acts viii. 39, the Spirit caught away Philip. This is believed to be a sort of balloon action, by which Philip was taken off his feet and carried off. I said, I thought it was the action of the Spirit *in* Philip, not *on* him, by which he left his fish with the Master of the fisheries, and retired himself to fish elsewhere.

“He is with you and shall be in you;” on this verse is founded the whole thought of the presence of the Spirit with us, apart from His being in us, as the leader of the assembly. I understand the Lord to mean that He Himself, having received the Spirit, He, the Spirit, was with them, because Jesus Himself was with them, and He was in Jesus; but that by-and-by the Spirit would be in them in like manner as He was in Jesus; that at Pentecost they should themselves receive the Spirit, and that now the Spirit is *not with us* in the sense in which that verse speaks of His having been with the disciples.

X.

4.—I have not the least doubt that the interpretation of John xiv. 17, though very common, is a mere blunder. “Dwells” is the same word as “abide” in verse 16. Christ the Comforter would not “abide” with them as He then was, nor was He “with” them. The other Comforter would abide “with” them, and be in them.

The "will abide" in Greek is the same as "abide," save an accent, and there were none originally. μένει, he abides; μένει, will abide.

Next, Acts xiii. 2, two was not the assembly. The prophets were fasting and praying together and the Holy Ghost spoke with authority by one of them, "Separate me." The state of the individuals sent had nothing to do with it. God in His government may employ a fitting vessel, but no state of fitness can separate by divine authority a person for a specific apostolic work. And this is the great point. The "free" action, and divine authority of the Holy Ghost; that is of God. I have no doubt, as a general rule for edification, usefulness in service depends on the state of the servant, but to use this as a plea for denying the direct action of the Spirit is ruinous. It is not a chandelier of light, though each should be filled with the Spirit, but the personal free action of the Spirit.

Scripture recognises the diligent use of the word. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, &c., but to use this to deny the sovereign freedom of the Spirit is also ruinous and destroys our dependence on and guidance by Him.

In Acts viii. we have first "the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip." Now, I do not doubt that the Lord chose a fit person in Philip, but the angel's speaking to him, was not the state of Philip's soul. Then we find the Spirit telling him to go to the chariot. Then the Spirit "caught away,"—a word in Greek or English leaving no pretext for the interpretation given to it—"and the eunuch saw him no more." In Paul's journey the Spirit of Jesus did not allow him to go into Mysia, and they were forbidden to preach in Asia or in Bithynia.

It is alleged that this independent action of the Spirit belongs only to the Old Testament, as Saul, Balaam, &c. This is a mistake; Caiaphas prophesied. It will be said this was in Judaism. But Paul teaches it doctrinally (1 Cor. xiii.), "If I speak with the tongues of men, and have not love I am nothing." The very fact of tongues

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is an independent action of the Spirit, for they did not understand what they said, and if there was not an interpreter were to remain silent. Tell me that this is lost, I understand you, but then do not deny that the Holy Ghost so acted. But there is a difference to be made between 1 Corinthians xii. and Ephesians iv. In the former the Holy Ghost down here acts with divine authority and power, but it is simply giving power (in gifts) to whom He will; but the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets, not more than two or at the most three were to speak. The word of God, the authority of Christ in the church, ordered the exercise of the power. If a man spake with tongues, and it was so completely the Holy Ghost that He did not understand what He said, a case supposed, he was to be silent, unless he or another could interpret. The apostle preferred to speak with his understanding, and edify the assembly, to which end all was to be directed. In the latter case (Eph. iv.), it is Christ ascended on high, having received the Holy Ghost from the Father, gives for the spiritual need of the church (and here there are no gifts which are miraculous, in the ordinary sense, but) "apostles and prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers," and the promise that *these* will continue to the end, and then what every joint supplies in the measure of every part. But the Holy Ghost has been given, and come down, and all goodness and wisdom in exercise is from Him. He formed the Body, He also makes us members. Even Christ by the Spirit of God cast out devils. We are to be led by the Spirit, and surely in the most solemn part of our lives here, our spiritual activity in the church of God, this is not to be given up, and we do without it.

This is not giving up, or acting without our understanding. The apostle preferred action with understanding, but that did not exclude the direct action of the Spirit. Men speak of impulse, so that the notion of the Spirit's action is lost, and it is of man. But if it is not of the Spirit, it is merely of man. The apostle would have the Spirit and the understanding. The saying we

could not then judge is a strange blunder of human reasoning, for it was when there was direct revelation they were called on so to judge.

Faith, direct looking to God and His power, is identical with the action of the Spirit in its source and results, and what is called faith in Hebrews xi. is constantly referred to the Spirit in the Old Testament. All direct action of God as to the creature, and finally in divine things, from creation on, is by the Spirit in scripture. No good thought in us but from the Spirit, no wisdom. It is the Spirit that lusts against the flesh. Waiting humbly on the Lord, that He may lead us to act, or not to act, and lead us in acting, and that habitually and in all things, is not acting from impulse, but the contrary, and the leading will not fail. If we are to judge, what are we to judge—whether what is said or done is of the Spirit, or not? If it is not of the Spirit, it is of the flesh, only the paramount authority and order of the word, which is certainly by the Spirit, is maintained.

Further, the Holy Ghost being individually in our bodies, as temples, is not all. He forms the Body, or rather formed it on the day of Pentecost—not by spiritual progress, but by coming personally down, and baptising into one body. Nor is that all. The Holy Ghost is not in *an* assembly as God's house or dwelling, but in *the* assembly. In 1 Corinthians iii. they are collectively God's temple, Christendom (see 1 Cor. i. 2) only realised especially at Corinth. Some will say it is doctrine. It is so, but realised in men; as the seed is the word, the good seed are the children of the kingdom. So, in Ephesians ii., “Ye are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.” That is not individual; and if the Holy Ghost dwells in the habitation, is He to do nothing there, or direct *everything*? The assembly is as much the house, or temple of God, as it is the Body, only all the members of this last are personally dwelt in by the Spirit and members of Christ. As to two Spirits, it has no ground at all. It would be much more applicable to dwelling in individuals, but this is carefully guarded

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against (1 Cor. xii.), in contrast with demoniacal inspiration. Whatever is not of the Spirit is of the flesh.

J.N.D. [S. 1.]

5.—I was thankful to get your critique of my letter. I quite see I might easily make a great mistake in this matter, though, whatever might have been at the top, at the bottom I had no idea of denying the personal presence of the Spirit in the house. I most fully believe He is present there; but I would have much liked you to have added something on the presence of the Lord, as distinct from the presence of the Spirit, and whatever connected with His presence, as leading the praises of the assembly. He is Head of the assembly, and Son over the house, and personally present in the midst of the two or three gathered in His name. In this sense I understand Him to be the leader of the assembly (president, it is sometimes said, though I think the word inapt, only that whatever truth the word conveys, it is the Lord that is in it, and not the Spirit). The Spirit, as I understand it, leads after Him, but He is the leader—that is, if I am in the Spirit, I am looking by the Spirit to the leadings of the Lord in the assembly, and not looking within one myself, or on the Spirit's acting in me. "In the midst of the assembly I will praise thee." X.

6.—It is not only the presence of the Spirit in the house, but His acting in the service of the saints, which I look for. As to the other point, though I believe that often there is no harm meant, and that by presidency is merely meant that His leading should be followed, that where it is substituted—a rare case, but which I have known—for the presence of Christ, it is an evil. He is in the midst spiritually, no doubt, but still Himself. I cannot have the same affections towards the Holy Ghost as towards Christ. He was not humbled, did not die for me, and so on. The ministrations are under the Lord, too, as such, but the active power is the Spirit. I do not think, "leads after Him" is right, because the Father and Christ are objects. In ministry the Spirit is active, but

He brings the word from on high : "whatever he shall hear, that shall he speak."

The Spirit does act in us (Luke xii. 12), and I do look to the Spirit acting in me. I do not say, pray that He may act; I pray to the Father, or to the Lord, but I wait for the Spirit to act. Christ is Head, but it is the Spirit acting in us which gives what He would have said. Z.

"BEHOLD I COME QUICKLY."

Oh ! Lord, our hearts are list'ning,
That joyous shout to hear,
Which wakes the saints now sleeping,
(That shout so very near)—
When we, with them, ascending,
Shall meet Thee in the air,
To gaze upon Thy glory,
And all Thy likeness bear.

Oh ! hour, for which, in patience,
Thou'st longed through all the night,
Whilst we Thy saints, being gathered,
Were brought into the light;
And now, the church completed,
Thou canst no more delay—
Oh ! Lord, with shouts of triumph,
We pass into the day.

Oh ! hour, of richest blessing—
We brought to Thee so nigh,
To be Thy joy for ever,
And share Thy throne on high;
To rest, in all that brightness,
And ever there abide;
To find Thy heart delighting,
In us, Thy chosen bride.

Oh ! blessed, coming, Saviour,
Then speak the joyous word,
To which our hearts responding,
"For ever with the Lord"—
For ever with Thee, Saviour—
For evermore to be,
In deepest, fullest, blessing—
For ever, one with Thee.

November, 1881.

G. W. F.

THE LOVE OF GOD, AND ITS OBJECTS.

A DISCOVERY and a belief of God's love to us, when sinners, rebels, and traitors, only can produce love in our hearts to Him. But the belief in this love of God to us in all its freeness, fulness, immensity, and eternity, worketh by love to Him with invincible strength, and with unwearied diligence in God's service. And as the effect is always proportioned to its cause, so the clearer our apprehension of, and the more firm our belief is in, God's love towards us, the more ardent will be our love to Him, and the more active our diligence in His service. Here is the mystery as well as the difficulty of the faith that worketh by love; for mysterious indeed it is to all but those who thus live, and even they know but little of it.

Nothing can conduce more to strengthen our faith in the free love of God, than an enlarged knowledge of the dignity and the glory of the person of Christ; for by this we know the love of God, in that He gave His Son to die for us. The greatness of the gift which love hath bestowed, proves the greatness of the love itself; and as we increase in the knowledge of the gift, so also shall we grow in the knowledge of the love that bestowed it. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." If you would know His love, consider His gift; for His love is as great as His gift, and it will heighten both, if we consider the objects of this love, on whom this gift was bestowed—a world of sinners—yet in their sin and in the very height of their enmity against God.

Oh! the height and depth of that love which comprehends two such extremes! What can be conceived more distant from or more unsuitable to each other! But behold, divine love brings them both together, and gives the Son of God to man in the extreme of his guilt and misery.

T. C.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

4. Q.—In the second and third Epistles of John, does John mean himself when he writes, “the elder;” and what is the lesson saints to-day should learn from what John says as to Diotrephes? It would seem as if those in the assembly were afraid of him, but yet kept together and continued in fellowship with him in a spirit of forbearance.

H. B.

A.—By “the elder” John certainly means himself. In the third Epistle, John encourages Gaius, and thus believers, at any time, to exercise hospitality to all who come in Christ’s name with the truth, whether they were known or unknown previously. It has here special reference to those who go forth in Christ’s name to minister the truth *without any formal commission, or visible means of subsistence*.

Diotrephes, who had the chief authority in the assembly—gained in what way we are not told—would have nothing to do with these itinerant, unordained, and unsalaried preachers of the gospel, and even cast out of the assembly those who received them into their houses. Gaius evidently received and helped them, in spite of Diotrephes, and John encourages him to continue to do so. It would appear as if the assembly, at least a large portion of it, while bearing with his assumed place of authority, were not with Diotrephes in refusing hospitality to these “strangers” and rejecting the apostle’s letters, but they do not seem to have had any resource against him, save in continuing in the practice of the good ways that the apostle encourages Gaius in. The Lord alone could deliver them from him, and He might do it through the spiritual power of one like the apostle John coming into their midst.

Paul had the resource of a positive commission for dealing with this kind of thing, but John does not seem to have possessed this, at least he does not take this

ground here, and, of course, no one could now, but the power of God by the Spirit, through the word, is sufficient now, as then, to deal with a Diotrephes. "Patient continuance in well-doing," while looking to the Lord for deliverance, would seem to be the path of saints thus tried.

5. Q.—I have read that the first eight verses of Revelation xxi. have reference to the eternal state, and the remainder of the chapter to the millennial, and it does seem like it, but the last few verses rather puzzle me. "No night there;" will be there no night in the millennium; and does the last verse mean that all will be saved?

H. B.

A.—The first eight verses of Revelation xxi. are a continuation of the subject taken up in the latter part of the previous chapter, that is, the eternal state of the lost and saved that succeeds the millennium. Then, in verse 9 the Spirit of God reverts to the millennium for the special purpose of shewing the place the church, as the bride the Lamb's wife, holds during that period, and a description of it is given, ■ previously that of Babylon had been given. One of the seven angels shews the prophet this scene as in the previous case. "No night there" has reference to the city, and not, we apprehend, to the earth, as it seems from other scriptures there will be night and day on earth during the millennium. (Compare Isa. lxvi. 23 and Ezek. xlv. 1.)

In the last verse the inhabitants of the city are in question, and their title to be there is that their "names are written in the Lamb's book of life." As to the inhabitants of the earth, we are only told that they "walk in the light of it," and "the kings bring their honour and glory unto it," as owning the heavens and the heavenly kingdom the source of it all. "The nations of them that are saved" refers to salvation from the *temporal* judgments on earth, not that they are *individually* saved from *eternal* judgment; on the contrary the masses of these very nations, thus saved, apostatise at the end of the millennium. (See chap. xx. 8.)

6. Q.—Is there any difference in meaning between the expression "our body" and "our mortal flesh"? (2 Cor. iv. 10, 11.) C. E. S.

A.—The connection of ideas in the two verses is very different, and gives the special force that attaches to the different expressions used. In the former the body is looked at as the vessel in which "the life of Jesus" should display itself in the walk and service of the believer in this world. In the latter, where it is called "mortal flesh," it is looked at in connection with actual death for "Jesus' sake," as that in which the "life of Jesus" would manifest itself in the resurrection of the believer; so the apostle adds further down, "knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus."

7. Q.—Philip preached "Christ" to the Samaritans; "Jesus" to the Ethiopian eunuch. (Acts viii. 5, 35.) Why did he present the Lord as the Anointed One to the former, and as the Saviour to the latter? C. E. S.

A.—The preaching of "Christ" is the general form of presentation, and not necessarily in contrast with that of "Jesus." Still it is probable that in the case of the Samaritans, who, though Gentiles and not children of Israel, had Jewish hopes, and were standing by profession on Jewish ground, the presentation of Jesus to them, as the Messiah anointed on high, was special and suitable, the more so as they had known Him in His humiliation as Jesus of Nazareth. In the case of the eunuch, a poor Gentile sinner, quickened by divine grace, and seeking peace, the preaching of Jesus, the Saviour, was in every way as suitable as it was touching.

8. Q.—In February "Words of Faith," page 29, the "Pentateuch of David" is mentioned. Supposing the writer means that the Psalms are divided into five books, will he kindly say where the divisions occur? J. H.

A.—The first book ends with Psalm xli.; the second with Psalm lxxii.; the third, with Psalm lxxxix.; the fourth, with Psalm cvi.; and the fifth, with Psalm cl. A special subject characterises each book.

C. W.

THE LESSONS OF THE AGES.

THE TRIAL OF INNOCENCE.

(Continued.)

AMONG all creation beside, there was found no help meet for Adam. God makes all the creatures pass before him that he may see this for himself,—a fact which we shall see has its significance for the after-history. Adam gives names to all, as their superior, and in the full intelligence of what they are; but for Adam himself there is found no help meet.

Yet, that “it is not good for the man to be alone,” is the word of His Creator as to him. Looking at the circumstances of the fall, he who has learnt to suspect God everywhere may suspect Him here. He provides in the woman one whom scripture itself pronounces inferior naturally in wisdom to the man, but on the other hand supplementing him otherwise. The rib out of which she is made is taken from the breast; and if man be the head of humanity, woman is its heart. Even spite of the fall, this still is clear and unmistakable; and man’s heart is correspondingly drawn out and developed by her. The awful perversion of this now shows but the fact the more: and the perversion of the best thing commonly produces the worst. For Adam, where all was yet right, here was not only a spiritual being with whom was possible that interchange of thought and feeling which our whole being craves, but also an object for the heart. Pledge of his Creator’s love was this fair gift, in whom love sensibly ministered to him, and drew out his own, redeeming him from self-occupation as from isolation: surely it was not,—“is not good for the man to be alone,” and the help provided was a “help meet for him.”

If unbelief still object that by the woman sin came in, and that inferiority of wisdom exposed her to the enemy: she was “beguiled” and ate,—Adam too ate,

though he was *not* beguiled. The woman's strength did not, and does not, lie in wisdom, but in *heart*: and the instincts of the true heart are as divine a safeguard as the highest wisdom. It was here—as it is easy to see by the record itself—the woman failed, not where she was weakest but where she was strongest. And with her, as still and ever, the failing heart deceived the head. There is an immense assumption, growing more and more every day, of the power of the mind to keep and even to set right the man morally. It is a mistake most easy of exposure. For are the keenest intellects necessarily the most upright and trustworthy of men? Or is there any ascertained proportion between the development of mind and heart? The scepticism that scoffs at divine things revealed to babes is but the pride of intellect, not knowledge. It is itself the fruit and evidence of the fall.

Enough of this for the present, then. Along with all other provision for his blessing we must rank this—too little thought of—that Adam was to be taught *mastery* also, even in a scene where moral evil was not. He was to "replenish the earth and *subdue* it;" to "dress and keep" even the "garden of delight." The dominion over the lower creatures he was also evidently to maintain, making them to recognise habitually the place of lordship over them which was his. All this implies much in the way of moral education for one in whose perfect manhood the moral and mental faculties acted in harmony yet, with no breach or dislocation.

Surely we can see in all this a kindly and fruitful training of Adam himself, as in a scene where evil threatened, though it had not come. The full and harmonious play of every spiritual and bodily faculty was provided for, that the man himself, to use language antiquated now, might "play the man;" language truer in its application to him than to any of his natural issue since the fall.

But to that fall itself we must now go on. Its brief but imperishable record is full of the deepest instruction

for us, for every day of our life here ; nay, who shall forbid to say for our life hereafter also ? The lessons of time, we may be assured, will be the possession of eternity ; of all that we gather here, no fragment will be lost for ever. In this history we shall find, too, I doubt not, what we have been considering as to Adam abundantly confirmed.

First, then, as to the instrument in the temptation. Scripture leaves us in no possible doubt that the one who used in this case the actual serpent, was the one whom we too familiarly recognise as the leader in a previous irremediable fall, the fall of the angels. Thus he is called "a liar from the beginning," and "a murderer ;" "that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan."

The use of the serpent here is noteworthy in another way from that in which it is generally taken. No doubt in the fact that it was "more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made" lay the secret of his selection of it. But why appear under such a form at all ? For myself I cannot but connect it with the fact that Adam had before named every creature and found no help meet for him among them all. If evil, then, would approach, it was not permitted to do so save only under the form of one of these essentially inferior creatures, refused already as having help for man. It was a divine limit to the temptation itself. Man listening to the voice of a creature over whom he was to have dominion, and in whom there was recognised to be no help for him, was in fact man resigning his place of supremacy to the beast itself. In all this, not merely the coming of the enemy, but the mercy of God also may be surely seen.

Again, as to the form of the temptation itself. It was a question simply—apparently an innocent one—which, entertained in the woman's mind, wrought all the ruin. Here again, surely the mercy of God was limiting the needful trial. Evil was here also not permitted to shew itself openly. The tempter is allowed to use neither force nor allurement, nor to put positive evil before the

woman at all until she has first encouraged it. "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"

Here was affected surprise, a suggestion of strangeness, no doubt, but no positive charge of wrong. Such an insinuation, if it were even that, a heart true to God need scarcely find much difficulty in repelling. This was in *paradise*, where all the wealth of blessing which the munificent hand of God had spread around her filled every sense with testimony of His love. Was reason demanded, or did intellect need to find the way through any difficult problem here? Assuredly not. A heart filled with divine goodness would be armour of proof in such a conflict as this. The effort of the enemy was just to make a question for the reason what ought to have been one of those clear perceptions not to be reasoned about, because the basis of all true reason. As a question for the mind the woman entertained it, and thus admitted a suspicion of the divine goodness which has been the key-note of man's condition ever since.

She thus, in fact, entered upon that forbidden path of discriminating between good and evil, which has resulted in a conscience of evil within, in the very heart of the fallen creature. Around was nought but goodness—goodness which they were not forbidden, but welcomed to enjoy. Everything here had but to be accepted; no question raised, no suspicion to be entertained. To raise the question was to fall. And this was the meaning of the forbidden tree, as it was the point to which Satan's question led. In the midst of a scene where was nought but goodness, there could be no question entertained where there was no suspicion. By entertaining the question, the woman shewed that she had allowed the suspicion. Thus she fell.

How differently now we are situated is most plain. In a mingled scene where indeed divine goodness is not lacking, but where also the fruit of the fall, and Satan's work is everywhere, suspicion becomes continually a duty, and conscience a divine preservative. The know-

ledge of good and evil is no longer forbidden, but we have our "senses exercised to discern" these. Innocence is gone; but, thank God, who is supreme to make all things serve His holy purposes, righteousness and holiness are things possible, and, in the new creature, things attained.

If we look at the woman's answer to the serpent we shall easily find these workings of her soul. "And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is *in the midst* of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, *neither shall ye touch it, lest you die.*"

Here is the wavering unsteadiness of a soul that has lost its balance, and flounders more in its endeavours to regain it. What tree had God put into 'the midst' of the garden? According to the inspired account it was the tree of *life*. Prohibition—was that at the very heart of paradise? Did everything there radiate, so to speak, from the threatening of death? Alas, slight as the matter may seem, it tells where the woman's soul is. The first words we hear from her are words very intelligible to us, far gone as we are from innocency. For how easily with us does one prohibited thing blot out of our view a thousand blessings! Alas, we understand her but too well.

And her next words are even plainer. When had God said, "neither shall ye touch it"? The prohibition has got possession of her mind, and to justify herself as to her conception of it, she adds words of her own to God's words. A mere 'touch,' she represents to the devil, might be fatal to them. They might perchance be the innocent victims of misfortune, as it would seem according to her. Who can doubt how dark a shadow is now veiling God from her soul? All the more that her next words make doubtful the penalty, and as if it were the mere result of natural laws, as man now speak, rather than direct divine infliction: "*lest ye die.*"

God's love is here suspected; God's truth is tampered with; God's authority is out of sight: so far on the swift

road to ruin has the woman descended. The devil can be bolder now. Not "ye shall not surely die" is what he says, but "certainly ye shall not die;" and closes with one of those sayings of his in which a half truth becomes a total lie: "for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods," (or perhaps, 'as God') "knowing good and evil."

And there is no more tarrying as to the woman: her ear and her heart are gained completely. She sees with the devil's eyes, and is in full accord and fellowship with him, and the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life come in at once. "And when the woman *saw* that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wiser, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat."

Thus was the fall consummated. Conscience at once awoke when the sin of the heart had been perfected in act. "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons." But we are now in another scene from that with which we started, and a new age now begins even before Genesis iii. is closed. We shall therefore look at this in its place separately when we consider, if the Lord will, the dealings of God with man under the next economy.

F. W. G.

Christ came from the Father to make Him known to us as He knew Him; we come from Christ to make Him known as we know Him. This is true ministry, a happy and blessed thing, but serious in its character. "Peace unto you," said the Lord; "as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." What a mission! If even we are not apostles.

J. N. D.

MAN'S SO-CALLED FREEWILL.

THIS re-appearance of the doctrine of freewill serves to support that of the pretension of the natural man to be not irremediably fallen, for this is what such doctrine tends to. All who have never been deeply convicted of sin, all persons in whom this conviction is based on gross external sins, believe more or less in freewill. You know it is the dogma of the Wesleyans, of all reasoners, and of all philosophers; but it completely changes, nay, entirely perverts, the very idea of Christianity.

If Christ came to save that which is lost, freewill has no place. Not that God prevents men from receiving Christ—far from it. But even when God uses all possible inducements, all that is capable of exerting influence in the heart of man, it only serves to shew that man will have none of it, that so corrupt is his heart, and so decided his will not to submit to God (however much it may be the devil who encourages him to sin) that nothing can induce him to receive the Lord, and to give up sin. If by the words, “freedom of man,” they mean that no one forces him to reject the Lord, this liberty fully exists. But if it is said that, on account of the dominion of sin, of which he is the slave, and that voluntarily, he cannot escape from his condition, and make choice of the good—even while acknowledging it to be good, and approving of it—then he has no liberty whatever. He is not subject to the law, neither indeed can be; hence, they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

And this is where we touch most closely upon the foundation of the question. Is it the old man who is changed, taught, and sanctified, or do we, in order to be saved, receive a new nature? The universal character of unbelief in the present day is this: not formally to deny Christianity, as in other times; or openly to reject Christ, but to receive Him as a person (they will even say divine, inspired, but as a question of degree) who restores man to his position as a child of God.

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The Wesleyans, as far as they are taught of God, do not say that; faith makes them feel that without Christ they are lost, and that it is a question of salvation. Only their terror with regard to pure grace, their desire to gain men, a mixture of charity and of the human mind; in one word, their confidence in their own strength gives confusion in their teaching, and causes them not to recognise the total ruin of man. As for me, I see in the word, and I recognise in myself, the total ruin of man. I see that the cross is the end of all the means that God had employed to gain the heart of man, and that it therefore shews the thing to be impossible. God has exhausted all His resources; man has shewn that he was wicked, irreclaimable. The cross of Christ condemns man—sin in the flesh. But this condemnation having been expressed, in that another has suffered it, it is the absolute salvation of those who believe, for the condemnation, the judgment of sin is behind us; life comes out of it in resurrection. We are dead to sin and alive to God, by Jesus Christ our Lord. Redemption! the very word loses its force when we entertain these ideas of the old man. It becomes amelioration, a practical deliverance from a moral state, and not a redemption by the finished work of another.

Christianity teaches the death of the old man and his just condemnation, then the redemption accomplished by Christ, and new life, life eternal, *come down from heaven* in His Person, and communicated to us when Christ enters into us by the word. Arminianism, or rather Pelagianism, pretends that man can choose, and that thus the old man is ameliorated by the thing which it has accepted. The first step is made without grace, and it is the first step which really costs in this case.

I think we ought to restrict ourselves to the word; but, philosophically and morally speaking, freewill is a false and absurd theory. Freewill is a state of sin. Man ought not to have to choose, as being outside of good. Why is he in that state? He ought not to have a will, any choice to make; he ought to obey, and enjoy in peace. If he has to choose good, he has not got it yet.

MAN'S SO-CALLED FREEWILL.

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He is without that which is good in himself, in any case, since he is not decided. But in fact man is disposed to follow what is bad. What cruelty to propose a duty to man who is already turned to evil! Moreover, philosophically speaking, to choose he must be indifferent, otherwise he has already chosen as regards his will—he ought therefore to be absolutely indifferent. If he is absolutely indifferent, what is to decide his choice? A creature ought to have a motive, but he has none, since he is indifferent; if he is not so, he has chosen.

But it is not so; man has a conscience, but he has a will and lusts, and these lead him. Man was free in paradise, but then he was in the enjoyment of good. He made use of his freewill, and thenceforth he is a sinner. To leave him to his freewill now, when he is disposed to do evil, would be a cruelty. God has presented him with a choice, but it was to convince his conscience of the fact that in any case, man would love neither good nor God.

For people to believe that God loves the world is quite right; but not to believe that man is in himself wicked beyond remedy (and notwithstanding the remedy) is very bad. They know not themselves, and they know not God.

The Lord is coming; the time for the world is passing away. What joy! May God find us watching, and thinking of One alone—Him of whom God thinks—Jesus, our precious Saviour.

1861.

J. N. D.

A LETTER FROM THE HOUSE OF AFFLICTION.

WITH pleasure I write thanking you for your publication, WORDS OF FAITH, for the help and comfort of believers, so much needed in this day of evil. But I am especially pleased with your invitation to any servants of the Lord Jesus, because I believe this is precious to Himself. Him who should be the delight of our heart, and the object of our life—yea, our only life. And who is more worthy

than He? How blessed if believers, disciples, and brethren (who are saved by grace, through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and called unto His fellowship) would always, and in everything, make room for Him; let Him take His proper place—the lead—particularly in the gatherings. What glory for Himself, and what joy and blessing to His disciples, would be the result!

Beloved, I feel it a great pleasure to write in answer to your invitation; and I do indeed sympathise with you, and wish that all who minister through your magazine, may have Him before them, and be at His disposal to lead them; that it may be abundantly blessed, not only to the help and comfort of believers, in this day of evil and difficulty; but also to the establishing in the path of faith of the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father.

Although in very humble and peculiar circumstances, I write to you as a brother and disciple, and am confident in obedience to Him you write so well of in your magazine. Not that I am in a position, or consider myself able, as far as human ability is required, to administer anything; but because I am interested in the welfare of the Lord's people. And although alone, as far as they, my brethren, are concerned (a stranger unto my brethren, forgotten as a dead man out of mind, like the slain that lie in the grave; esteemed stricken, smitten of God and afflicted), yet I am not alone: not only the Son, but the Father is with me. And therefore, being with Him in peace and joy myself, I am deeply concerned in the condition and character of God's people in the world.

Because I am associated with Him, who was delivered for their offences, and raised again for their justification, and who is "the resurrection and the life," I am interested in them because of what they are to Himself, and what they are to God His Father and our Father; what they are in righteousness, and what they are as the church—the bride of Christ.

March, 1882.

“FORTY DAYS.”

THERE are hardly any who have read the scriptures, with even a small measure of intelligence, who will not have remarked how constantly the period of “Forty days” occurs. Various interpretations have been suggested as to the typical meaning of the number “forty”—composed as it is of the multiple of “four” with “ten.”* However, without dogmatising on it, it is happy to be able to draw some real spiritual lessons from the places where the “Forty days” occur in the word of God, remembering that our God has deigned to use these periods Himself, with profound wisdom, and for the blessing and instruction of His people, in that book which contains the revelation of Himself, and His ways for the glory of His Son.

The number “Forty,” then, is, I judge, intimately connected with the probation or testing of man; as also with the penalty, or confession, or punishment of sin under the government of God. We read of the “forty days and forty nights” of the temptations of Christ; of the “forty days and forty nights” that the waters of the flood prevailed on the earth (Gen. vii.); of the “forty years” that Israel was condemned to wander in the desert for their sin (Num. xiv.); of the “forty stripes” an offender against the law of Moses, in certain matters, was to receive. (Deut. xxv.; cf. 2 Cor. xi. 24.) Egypt was to be desolate for “forty years.” (Ezek. xxix.) Moses, too, intercedes for Israel for “forty days.” (Deut. ix.) The Ninevites proclaim a fast for “forty days.” (Jonah iii.) Ezekiel must bear the transgression of Judah “forty days.” (Ezek. iv.)

* “Four” signifies typically, finite perfection; “Four winds;” “Four empires;” “Four beasts;” “The city lieth four square,” &c. &c. “Ten” seems to me to imply the outward expression of inward perfection, whether in good or evil; “seven” being spiritual completeness; and “ten” is that which is administered from such perfection. Thus we have “*seven* heads and *ten* horns” upon the beast. It is not “twelve,” which would be earthly perfection.

Many other cases might be cited, leading to the conclusion that this typical number is always connected with the probation or testing of man; and having reference to sin, and the condition into which sin had brought man, with the confession of it; its penalty or its punishment.

There is one very remarkable feature, however, in this interesting study; we find these instances of "Forty days" *begin* at a certain moment in the history of man in scripture, and *end* at another of remarkable significance.

The first time "Forty days" is spoken of is at the waters of the flood. "Forty days and forty nights" the rain was upon the earth; a moment which was marked by this awful judgment of God.

The last time we find these "Forty days" in scripture was after the resurrection of Christ, and is bright with hopes of better things; when He remained on earth amongst His disciples, "being seen of them forty days." (Acts i.) Within, and comprising these two cases, the sevenfold series of "forty days" is found, presenting a picture of the whole moral relations of God with man, and man with God. A well-ordered and comprehensive picture, which cannot fail to strike us as designed and planned by the Author of scripture Himself, in His infinite wisdom and grace.

Let us enumerate the instances where they are found:

1st. We have the "Forty days" of the flood, which are characterised by SIN AND ITS JUDGMENT.

2nd. Next we have the "Forty days" of Moses on Mount Sinai, at the giving of the law (with the second "Forty days" of his intercession for Israel). This may be characterised by LAW AND MERCY.

3rd. We have after this the "Forty days'" searching of Canaan (Num. xiii., xiv.), which speak to us of FAITH AND UNBELIEF.

4th. In the "Forty days'" journey of Elijah from Beersheba to Horeb (1 Kings xix. 1-8) we see HUMAN WEAKNESS AND DIVINE STRENGTH.

5th. In the "Forty days" of Nineveh (Jonah iii.), REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS.

6th. The "Forty days" of the Lord's temptation present most blessedly CONFLICT AND VICTORY.

7th. And the "Forty days" after the resurrection, REDEMPTION AND GLORY.

Thus the picture is complete: the utter corruption of the world opens the sequence of these "Forty days;" they run their course through scripture, presenting the varied claims of God, His ways of mercy and forgiveness, and the exercises of heart of His people; until, fittingly, the blessed Lord's own conflicts and sufferings close them, when, as Man, He takes His place at God's right hand in glory.

THE "FORTY DAYS" OF THE FLOOD.

The subject before us now is the moment when God for the first time judged the world for sin. An awful, resistless, overwhelming judgment fell upon the earth, washing away every trace of the violence and corruption which filled the scene, by the waters of the flood.

This scene is alluded to nine times in scripture, by patriarchs, prophets, evangelists, and apostles, and by the Son of God Himself, more than once. It is used as a type also, though only a type, a faint shadow, of that awful moment of judgment which must overtake the world—a greater judgment than that of water, of the fierceness of the wrath of the Almighty. It is not the judgment of the dead that is here before us, but of the living, those who are taken in the avocations of life—eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage; pursuing the ordinary course of things, but sinning, sinning, sinning, till that awful moment comes, when resistless judgment falls on the world that God, in long-suffering, has borne with for six thousand years.

What, then, was it that caused God to judge the world in this way in Noah's time? The answer is, "SIN." Sin caused God to resolve on judgment the most awful that ever yet came from the hands of perfect love. And yet how faint is it the shadow of that eternal judgment which must come, when mercy is past, when the day of

grace is over, when no cry for mercy will receive an answer of peace.

I think it is a common human expression—which is not to be found in the word of God—that "in the midst of judgment He remembers mercy." There is nothing in the word of God, that I have discovered, which would carry out such a thought. When judgment falls, it falls with resistless power, and mercy then has ceased. Mercy and judgment cannot go together. No doubt "mercy glorieth against judgment" (Jas. ii. 13)—that is blessedly true now; and the cry of faith is, "In wrath remember mercy" (Hab. iii. 2); but the moment that judgment—God's strange act—begins, then mercy, in which God delights, has closed; judgment will then accomplish its solemn mission?

How awful is the delusion under which men lie as to this! They think that God is too merciful to damn them. Oh, do not so delude yourselves—do not suppose you can cry for mercy in that day, and be heard. Mercy waits in long-suffering now; but that solemn day will not come till mercy's day is past for ever.

A flood of "SIN" filled the earth; violence and corruption characterised that fair world that God had made "very good." It began in individual hearts, it spread in families, it corrupted homes and communities with its leavening power. God describes the state of things by these well-chosen, weighty words (Gen. vi. 5): "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that *every* imagination of the thoughts of his heart was *only* evil *continually*." How comprehensive are those words!—"every," "only," "continually." "Every" means without exception. One would have thought, perhaps, that that conscience which God took care man should receive when he fell (Gen. iii. 5, 22) might have retained some trace of longing after "good," even though powerless to "perform" it. Nay, "*every*" imagination of his heart was "evil." But this might not have been *always* so: surely there were some traces of God's handy-work left, and some mixture of good. Nay, we read again,

these imaginations were "*only* evil"—that is, evil without admixture or trace of good. And they were "*continually*;" morning, noon, and night the aggregate of his heart's thoughts were only evil, without exception, without admixture, without intermission! Sin, without restraint, thus came forth in its hideous deformity.

Is the world better now? It is just the same. We have moral, social, religious, political restraints on man; sin cannot break forth unhindered, nor do in broad day what it can when the world's eye cannot gaze upon it. But remove these restraints, let them stand in abeyance for an hour, put the world on its trial, and see how it would behave itself. The result would be, that every peaceful home in the land would be filled with bloodshed and abomination.

Man's heart is man's heart, and there it is. Much more responsible, I grant you, now than in the days of the flood; and that tide of evil is swelling, till it breaks forth again, and is met once more by the resistless judgment of God.

"The world of the ungodly" was once judged by the waters of the flood, and "*as it was in the days that were before the flood, so shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until!*"—no warning for aught but faith—"the flood came, and took them all away."

No wonder, then, that "it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth," and it "grieved him to his heart." We should not like our handy-work corrupted; nor does *He*; He resolves, therefore, to destroy it. But before He strikes the blow, He will give time, and a testimony to man's heart, "whether he will hear, or whether he will forbear."

Thrice forty years, then, were the days of respite. "Mercy rejoiceth against judgment." Yet when judgment is resolved upon, God says, I will give them time! The "long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah." It "is salvation." But more: He will send them a preacher. Noah was a preacher of righteousness to the

world of the ungodly. I do not think that God told Noah the length of time He had accorded to the world to repent: this one hundred and twenty years. To have done so would have been to break the threefold cord of faith, hope, and love. All three were in exercise in the patriarch's heart while he preached and testified, and the ark was a-preparing. God knew Himself the allotted time, as He knows all. During that strange one hundred and twenty years there were four testimonies going on, side by side, to man's conscience.

1st. *God's Spirit was striving* with man. He would not always strive. Where, in many a heart, are the strivings of God's Spirit which found a voice there, time after time, in years gone by? "My Spirit shall not always strive with man" tells its solemn tale.

2nd. *Noah was preaching.* Christ's blessed Spirit was in him, as we read of the Spirit of Christ being in the prophets. (1 Pet. i. 11.) By that Spirit of Christ Noah testified to the spirits of the lost now in prison, while once the

3rd. *Long-suffering of God waited*; and we learn in another place that that "long-suffering is salvation." Has it been so with my readers, or have they forgotten that every day or hour of that blessed trait of God's character adds to their condemnation? Are *you* an unbeliever still?—a man with whom God has been striving—one on whom His long-suffering waits?

4th. There was a silent, eloquent appeal, too, going on for that one hundred and twenty years. Noah's *ark was a-preparing*; its strange superstructure rearing itself daily before their eyes. It appealed to his inmost soul. It proved the reality of the preacher's faith—he was governed by the word he announced—it formed himself. To others it was, perhaps, a jest, something to be laughed at by the old-world wits in their humour. Perhaps science, too, would pronounce that it could not float, could not bear its burden, or weather the storm. The construction was faulty, the "lines" were not laid down according to the world's then best skill.

These four testimonies spake, day by day, in the ears of men, with the results of which now we have to do. How many heard and believed them? I am bold enough to say, *Not one!* The blessed Lord's own words, which said, "*They knew not*, until the flood came, and took them *all* away," decide me in believing this; nevertheless they perished not without God's testimony, but they believed not after all.

At last the one hundred and twenty years ran to their close. The seasons had gone on as before. The sun had shone as brightly, and the earth had yielded her increase, and corruption ripened for judgment in the sight of Him who cannot look upon sin, and coalesce with it. The one hundred and twentieth year drew to its close, and no sign was seen. Unbelief grew bold in its wickedness. But "because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." (Eccles. viii. 11.)

And now the blow of judgment is about to fall, when God (none but He is worthy of such a deed) stayed the blow! How we read and recall such a word as this—He is "not willing that any should perish." And the voice of mercy is again heard: "*Yet seven days!*"—seven days more of the long-suffering of God—seven days of the strivings of God's Spirit—seven days for the preacher to preach—seven days for one last sermon, one last appeal—an appeal that none ever heard the like before; seven days for the beasts that perish to preach their sermon to unbelieving man—more obedient to a Creator's voice than he! They trooped in by twos and twos, and by sevens, into the ark!

The seven days became six—five—four—three—two—one; and still no sign of impending wrath; unbelief could triumph its short triumph still. The ox knew his owner, and the ass his master's crib, better than man his Creator's voice. The stupor of death is over men's souls! There are times when the frenzy of despair is seen; and even, at times, when hope is gone, and the soul has settled into dark despair; and dull sense of ruin falls on

men's hearts in a shipwreck at sea, and men anticipate the judgment, and plunge into the seething waters. Worse stupor here on men's souls, for no sign of a relenting heart or a troubled conscience is to be found. The stupor of death has fallen on man, and God's long-suffering is past. "The Lord shut him [Noah] in," we read, and then went back to heaven.

Now came a strange sight—unknown in "the world that then was." From paradise, and onwards, we read of no rain—"a mist came up, and watered the earth," before the flood. Now the rain began to descend, and the waters began to rise, and rise, and rise. Then the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were unstopped: God's controversy waxes fiercer and fiercer, and it rained upon the earth forty days and forty nights. The ark was lifted up above the earth: and the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered: the mountains too were covered, and all flesh died. Every living substance was destroyed, man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowls of heaven. In these few short days the world's life was gone! Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. The pall of mighty waters shrouded the scene, wrapping all living in its folds of death and judgment. One man remained, and they who were with him, saved by that which was death and judgment to all the rest.

God has drawn a veil over the scene; the cries for mercy are not recorded: the sense in men's souls, in which despair now filled, and the details of all that passed, are not told us. We may well believe the terrors of despair which filled their hearts, as one by one dropped down into the flood of waters; but this has not been recorded. Enough for Him to say that they were "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, *until the day* that Noah entered into the ark, and *knew not* till the flood came, and took them all away."

Of Noah we read that he possessed two things, which made him to differ from all the world around: reverent

faith in God's way of escape; and holy *fear* of that mighty judgment of which he had heard. "By *faith* Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with *fear*, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by *faith*." The fear of God—who, if He be God, must vindicate His outraged name by judgment, the faith of Him who, before that day comes, has sent the Judge first to be the Saviour. To know Him as a Saviour is never to know Him as a Judge; to know Him as a Judge is never to know Him as a Saviour. He has already been at the cross, where, in holy and righteous judgment against sin, in Him who was made sin for us, He has fully dealt with the whole question, and settled it for ever! There He bore the wrath—there He drank the cup—there He bore our sins—and there He died, accomplishing redemption for all who come unto God by Him.

But He is not there now. Mark the crucifix that is presented religiously to man—Christ *is* there. Man's thought gets no further than Christ upon the cross, and unaccomplished redemption! Christ is *not* there. He *was* there—He is not there now. God's thought is not a crucifix with Christ upon it, but off it, and in the *glory*! He did not carry the sins He bore there; they were purged before He left the cross, and blotted out for ever for those who are His. He settled that question before ever there was a Christian on the earth. All the sins of every Christian were future when He bore them. Then, having purged them, He went on high, and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. The *conscience* is purged when we believe; the *sins* were purged at the cross. Faith knows this; God knows this. "The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise" (that of which Noah became heir): "Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven?"—God wants no great thing of you—"or who shall descend into the deep?" Nay, "The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart. That is the word of faith which we preach: that

if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." And again: "Whosoever believeth in him shall not be ashamed."

Does your heart, my reader, rejoice that He is long-suffering, and waits upon sinners? Well, have you bowed to this, and believed? That His Spirit still strives with man? Yes, but He has also said, He "shall not always strive." Say, then, have His strivings found an answer in your soul? If so, how blessed is your lot!

But you may still be uncertain—still a doubting one. How often has it been preached that that is a healthful state of soul! How often have souls doubted, and doubted their lives through, until they found themselves in heaven, and then they could doubt no more! Faith *was* mingled with fear too long, but now is passed away. Faith has changed to sight, and fear is cast out by His perfect love for ever!

F. G. P.

In *all its operations* faith is mysterious and glorious. It acts something like God Himself. It acts in opposition to difficulties with the same ease as when there are none. God's word removes everything. It is delightfully and familiarly conversant with things above reason, infinities and incomprehensibilities. It wants *nothing* but God and His word,—passes by everything else, and deals with them alone. And being of such a nature, so divine and supernatural, it cannot but overcome all things in the end. With infinite ease, the Lord at the beginning by His mere word, produced everything from nothing. But faith engages the same God and the same word in all its operations, and therefore it must prevail and overcome: yea, be more than conqueror. "All things are possible to him that believeth."

THE GROUND AND NATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

THERE are two points in connection with the believer's standing and relationship with God. One, as to the cause and ground of it; the other, as to the character of it.

First, the whole cause and ground of it are the free and sovereign *grace* of God. This comes out most strikingly in Ephesians ii. In the first three verses I get, in the strongest possible light, the character of my natural condition. There are two sides to it: first, all the activity of my life was in direct opposition to God—it was all offences against God, and sins, pleasing myself, and following the course of this world, which, being energised by the devil, is in direct antagonism to God. Secondly, looked at Godward, there was not a spark of spiritual life, all was death, so that by nature I was a child of wrath. What could be worse? What more intolerable to God? What more helpless and hopeless as to myself? In the verses which follow, I see, not only how I am delivered out of this condition, but the greatness and height of the standing in which I am now set before God, in Christ. First, I am quickened, that is deliverance from my former condition; therefore, at once it adds, “By grace ye *are saved*.” But this is not all. I am raised up, and seated *in Christ* in heavenly places; complete identity and union with Christ, the Son of God's love. Could anything be greater or more exalted? Could God Himself do more? He has raised me up out of the lowest, most degraded condition, and put me in the highest, the most blessed, in His own Son. I do not yet fully realise it, but there I am, and thus I am before God.

And what is the one and only cause to which I can trace all this? and what is the sole ground on which I thus stand before God? *Grace, grace, grace*. Verse 4 is the turning-point. It all hinges on what *God is to me*, “But God who is rich in mercy, because of his great love wherewith he loved us.” Why did He move towards

me at the first? Why has He so wrought for me? Why does He always and for ever so regard me, and act for me? I see that the whole cause is IN HIMSELF, in what HE is to me, irrespective, or in spite, of what I am to Him. This is what determines the perfection, the stability, the eternal unchangeableness of my relationship with Him, and of my blessedness.

But how slow I am to learn this, and how readily do I forget it! Surely it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace. All this is so contrary to my natural thoughts and ways; it is beyond my natural comprehension. The natural way is to reason from myself up to God, instead of the opposite, which is the way of faith, to reason from God down to myself.

There is another truth, namely, that as a Father, He is a righteous and holy Father, and exercises a righteous discipline over His children. But this in no wise calls in question, or alters for one moment, the character of my relationship, but on the contrary, it is the proof that I am in this relationship. (Heb. xii. 7, 8.) The relationship is the ground on which it is exercised. But I have to take care, lest, when under the discipline of the Father, unbelief should come in and lead to questions as to the unchangeable character of my acceptance, I stand by faith.

The second point in connection with my standing, as to the nature and character of it, is, that it is *in Christ*. It is entirely outside of all that I am in myself, it is solely what I am in Christ, as having put off the old man and having put on the new. (Col. ii. 10; iii. 10, 11.) It is not the mere suppression of what I recognise to be morally evil in myself, nor is it a change or development of anything which I am in myself naturally. I see and feel that in myself there is nothing but evil, I am a *sinful* man. I am simply and wholly vile, in me, that is in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing. Therefore when I make this discovery I realise that my condition is *irremediable* and as to myself entirely hopeless. But then I see that all this evil in my flesh has been judged by God, in Him, who, knowing no sin, was made sin for me.

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The old "I," the natural "I," the irremediably bad "I," has been crucified with Christ; there is the end of it for God, He has no more to do with it, and sees it no longer. And I, by faith accepting this, as to my standing before God, have put off the body of the flesh in toto, I have in that sense done with it for ever. It is not improved, not developed, not the bad of it merely held in check by the iron hand of the law, but it is *PUT OFF* altogether.

In baptism the fact is expressed in figure, that the old man is entirely removed out of God's sight. I (the old I) am buried with Christ. What then remains if the old "I" is judged and totally removed out of God's sight? Only that which has come out of death, the new man, the perfect man. Nothing but Christ, and the believer as risen with Him in His life—Christ in me and I in Him.

The last Adam, the life-giving Spirit, has breathed upon me, and imparted His life to me. This is the new I, this is what alone God recognises in the believer. Nothing but Christ, Christ is all; I am in Him, and in Him I have righteousness, sanctification, and everything which God sees in Him. My acceptance is simply *His acceptance*, I have not a bit of acceptance apart from Him; but in Him my acceptance is as perfect as His, the One whom God raised from the dead and set at His own right hand in glory. "Christ is all, and in all." This is to-day, and every day, and for ever. F. H. B.

A FEW THOUGHTS ON REVELATION II., III.

IF, as we believe, the Spirit of God has given us in the epistles to the seven churches, a picture of the moral phases of the church's history from the time of its departure in heart from Christ, until its utter rejection by Him, must we not look for a less limited application of the last than some would seem to hold? The last four are clearly found at the end, and are the result of the first three, which, in brief, seem to be: first, at Ephesus,

leaving the first love, the heart having gone from Christ, no activities in judging evil could compensate in His estimation for that, and that whilst it exposed the church to His judgment, left also an open door for other evils which soon followed.

At Smyrna there were two divisions in the church, those who held to the truth and suffered at the hands of the world for it, and those who set up an earthly legal system to oppose. The clearly marked division within into two parts existed, those who maintained the true, and therefore heavenly calling, and those who set up Judaism, an earthly calling, with christian names for things. It is remarkable that we only get "those who say they are Jews," &c., again mentioned in Philadelphia, where, after a long period of forgetfulness of these truths, the Lord has revived the heavenly side of Christianity. Smyrna is followed by Pergamos, and the church now has openly accepted the patronage of the world, and its downfall is complete. What the enemy cannot successfully oppose, he will change his attitude towards, and under his patronage, more deadly than the shade of the fabled Upas tree, it is sure to wither. When Balaam accused to God it was of no avail, when he got at the people and allied them with the Midianites his ends were accomplished.

One need not dwell on popery, with its dark history of idolatry, blood, and crime, which Thyatira presents. The eyes must be blind that do not see its character depicted here. Yet it has its remnant, who are discerned amidst the corrupt mass by the searching yet gracious eye of the Master—those who have not known the depths of Satan, and who are counselled to hold fast till He comes.

Sardis, well recognised as giving us a picture of Protestantism; the state religions of the Reformation, when God raised up deliverers for His people, in faithful love, from the yoke of their oppressors, and gave back to the church an open Bible, and the precious foundation-truth of justification by faith, through chosen and honoured vessels. But how soon to sink down, as Israel under the

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Judges, into forgetfulness of the God who had wrought for their deliverance! State churches are necessarily but the stereotyping of the truth as far as it has been known, with a gross admixture of worldliness and politics; whilst one gladly owns the faith and faithfulness of the many honoured servants of the Lord who have been used of Him to maintain something of life towards God amidst it all. So here, too, is a remnant of faithful ones who will be fully owned of Him in that day; whilst the dead and formal part will meet the world's judgment at His coming, as it is only that really, with the heightened guilt of the christian name attached to what openly dishonours Him.

Philadelphia is the revival of the truth of the heavenly calling, and the knowledge of the Person of Christ, and a care for His name and glory. Its condition of "a little strength" is answered by the pledge on His part who has "all power in heaven and earth" of an "open door which no man can shut." Nothing can hinder the testimony save the unfaithfulness of those who should maintain it. But it will be a testimony to Him, and not to our own knowledge or zeal, if it is to meet His approval. A warning is here given to "hold fast," lest the crown be taken by another, and the encouragement, "Behold I come quickly." To limit it in its application to any select company savours of the narrowness of man's heart and mind. Doubtless it points to the revival of God's truth, which manifestly is found amongst His people to-day (as the wise virgins wake up to trim their lamps), and to seek to define its limits would be to forget the widespread dissemination, and let us hope love of Christ and truth; though many sad blemishes are found in the ways of those who are content with a wider path than many are assured is the one the Lord delights to have His people found in. But all will get their share of praise or blame when He who silently is taking account of His people's ways shall manifest everything in the penetrating light of His presence.

What, then, of Laodicea? It seems hardly a gracious

thing for saints to brand each other with this mark. Yet few, if truthful, cannot find a measure of it not far distant to be judged and confessed, unless sufficiently blinded by a good opinion of themselves to have forgotten the measure of the Christian's responsibility and path—the obligation or the call to walk as He walked. How much room for confession this leaves! How little for boastful pretension! Yet if it humbles, how it also cheers to look at Him and His blessed pathway through a world of sin and sorrow—ministering, not ministered to, save by the hands and hearts of those who out of His fulness were receiving "grace upon grace."

If I look around in Christendom, I need not be at a loss to discover what is really Laodicea. Popery, state churches, and those who can claim to have the character marked in Philadelphia, may be clearly discerned, as well as the opposers of the latter, marked by a spirit which finds its fullest expression in Britain in Puseyism and Anglo-Israel, and in America in *Materialist* Adventism.

But here is another thing which has outward pretensions of no mean extent, and which, because of good mixed with it, one fears to wound the hearts of some by speaking too plainly about.

But lukewarm is a mixture of hot and cold, and modern revivalism is just that. The alabaster box of ointment has been forgotten, and man is the object of many an earnest worker who creates a stir amidst what otherwise would soon be seen to be dead enough towards God. But wealthy churches, where the poor have no place, popular and eloquent preachers, sensuous music, and religious songs which the world can adopt; all this, whilst, save in a remnant, life to God is wanting, it is to be feared, we see growing rapidly to-day. Laodicea is to Philadelphia, I believe, what Pergamos was to Smyrna. *Popularise* truth and you have spoiled it effectually. Adapt the gospel to man's tastes and you most effectually take away the offence of the cross; and if the whole counsel of God is not declared, the world will thank you for so yielding the cross as to make it attractive.

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The sensuous in religion is eagerly sought to-day, and all that appeals to the natural man; and this in its broad features, is Laodicea. The Lord recognises those mixed up with it who are really not of it, and whose hearts can only be kept awake by the rebukes and chastening which love inflicts. But for them Christ knocks at the door. He proffers the most intimate fellowship with those who care for His company. "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

The mass, however, know Him not at all. Like the foolish virgins, they have no oil. The Lord counsels them to buy of Him what they lack. Gold tried in the fire, is divine nature and righteousness, or perhaps faith more precious than gold, and white raiment which is clearly human righteousness—the practical side, as the gold seems to point to the nature as born of God, and its accompaniments. The Holy Spirit too, which is His gift to those who believe, to give sight of things otherwise unseen. All this they need.

We may not yet have seen the full development of these things. He only knows how far they may be allowed to go; but enough is plainly discernible to make one look with fear upon the certain result.

If we look at these four pictures as thus developed one from another, and then each continuing as a distinct thing with those that preceded it until the end, we must not forget that instead of closely defined edges they are found to overlap, and interlace at their edges; whilst the nearer we get to the distinctly pronounced character of each, the more marked the lines will be and separate.

May the Lord give us discernment as to these things that we may avoid what is offensive to Him, and be content with His approval and His company, until He calls us up through that open door in heaven, to share His throne and glory and to view from thence the execution of this well-earned wrath upon those who in a day of grace have refused to own Him Lord.

R. T. G.

THE MIDNIGHT CRY.

"BEHOLD, the Bridegroom cometh,"
 Oh! hear the midnight cry,
 Awake! awake! why slumber?
 The coming Lord is nigh.
 Go forth *again* to meet Him,
 And trim your lamps anew,
 Oh! let your lights be burning,
 He comes to call for you.

"Behold the Bridegroom cometh,"
 The *midnight* watch is past,
 In grace, He long has tarried,
 But now He comes at last;
 Awake! awake! behold Him!
 "The bright and morning Star;"
 He comes His saints to gather
 From east, and west, afar.

"Behold the Bridegroom cometh,"
 And *darkest* hours give place
 To one long day of glory—
 There to behold His face;
 The songs which through the *midnight*,
 Your hearts did often raise,
 Shall find their full expression
 In ceaseless bursts of praise.

"Behold the Bridegroom cometh,"
 Oh, watch for His return;
 Kept in *His* love and patience,
 Each heart for Him doth burn;
 "Behold I'm coming quickly,"
 Finds thus an echoing chord,
 (With longing, deep desire)
 "E'en so, come Jesus, Lord."

"Behold the Bridegroom cometh,"
 The morning streaks the sky,
 Oh, haste thee to be ready,
 The "*shout*" and "*trump*" are nigh;
 Oh trim your lamps, ye virgins,
 Your joys shall soon begin:
 "Behold the Bridegroom cometh,"
 The "*wise*" shall enter in.

April, 1882.

G. W. F.

DIVINE LOVE AND CARE.

WHAT characterised the life of Jesus (I speak not of what He was as God and for God, and thus for man) was the sense of divine love and care. What He lived in, as His own personal blessedness, as man, was what God His Father was to Himself. It was the entire loss of this that gave its awful bitterness and unmingled woe to what He endured on the cross.

All that man could suffer in mind, soul and body from Satan and man combined was there to fill that bitter cup, but all this was as nothing in comparison with what He endured as *forsaken* of God. "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" gives us the heart of Jesus poured out in all its unfathomable agony. This was when made sin, and only then. What had enabled Him to bear every other kind of suffering, however deep, was then withdrawn, and He was left, as man, unsupported and without God, under sin with all its fearful consequences. What *this* was is known only to Himself, though we poor sinners reap its blessed results.

This forsaking, and His sense of it, characterised the death of Christ, just as the enjoyment of divine love and care characterised His life. Of the former we can know nothing, whilst as to the latter we might, and ought to, know nothing else. We have the life of Christ, or, as the apostle puts it for himself, "Christ liveth in me." We cannot, as believers, insist too strongly on this blessed fact, that Christ, not Adam, is our life.

To know what the life *in* us really is we must look at that life *outside* ourselves; see it in Him who is it; in Jesus as He lived and walked on earth; see it as it unfolds itself before us in the Gospels, those lovely portraits of Jesus, the blessed Son of God, in the path of His humiliation. The peculiar charm of the Gospels is that they give us *Jesus Himself* in the daily circumstances of life in this world where we now are.

It has been well and truly observed that we go first, as poor sinners, to the Gospels to find a Saviour; and

then, as saints, to the epistles to learn all the blessedness He has brought us into ; but we return to the Gospels to feed on Himself. Unspeakably blessed as it is to find a Saviour, with all that sweet name comprehends ; more blessed still, as it is, to enter into the enjoyment of our portion in Christ before God in heaven, *that* does not give *satisfaction* ; for this we must turn back, so to speak, to Himself, and we get it by the knowledge of Himself, not so much in what He is for us, as in that which He Himself lived in, as the satisfying portion of His own soul—that divine love and care in which, as man and Son of the Father, He lived. He abode in His Father's love, He was ever "the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father," and it was as dwelling in the bosom He manifested God. Every word and way of Jesus was a revelation of the Father.

It is this revelation of God known in relationship as the Father, a revelation hidden from the wise and prudent, but revealed to babes, that Jesus has in mind when, in Matthew xi., as rejected by Israel, He says : "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me ; for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Though all our blessing, and especially our place as children of the Father, be founded on the cross, on His death, it is not peace of conscience, as flowing from His work for us, that He speaks of here, but of that rest and satisfaction of heart, which was the enjoyed portion of His own soul as a living man on earth, the object of the Father's love and care. It is in immediate connection with His previous statement "that no man knoweth the Son but the Father ; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him," that He makes this precious offer of rest to any who would learn of Him, in a scene where sin had not only entailed all its bitter present and eternal consequences on the children of Adam, but shut God out morally from His own creatures.

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In these days of materialism and bold atheism, we more than ever need to have to do experimentally with the living God—the One in whom, whatever man's will may say, “we live, and move, and have our being.” But this is only possible to us as we know, in living power, the Son, and learn of Him who said, “As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me shall live by me.”

Men of science may try to live without God, and leave no place for Him in creation; may see in all His handiwork merely the working of unintelligent natural laws, and even in themselves merely “evolutions,” “natural selection,” and “the survival of the fittest;” we *know* we are “fearfully and wonderfully made” by the hand of the living God, and this God our Father, without whose hand not a sparrow falls to the ground, and who, in living action, clothes the lily and feeds the raven. We know a care more touching and detailed than a mother's, a care that numbers the very hairs of our head, and *all* this we have learned from the lips of Jesus.

There are two spheres, so to speak, in which faith works. In the one it has to say to what is visible, and in the other to what is invisible. It is remarkable that it is in connection with the former that it is so difficult to keep faith in lively exercise. The fact that what is seen appeals powerfully to sense, gives flesh a vantage ground, and the mind of the flesh, which is enmity to God, takes the lead and shuts faith back, or at least keeps it in abeyance. It is here, under the name of science, “falsely so called,” that unbelief finds its field, and the enmity to God proper to the flesh declares itself in open and avowed infidelity. Into what is invisible the flesh, the natural man, cannot enter, and therefore ignores it altogether.

In Christ the exercise of faith in both these spheres was perfect. He never was affected or guided by sense. To Him nature, with all its visible objects, was simply His Father's hand, and He drew his life, as man,

consciously from God, not as a product of natural laws, but as the direct and living operation of God. This is deeply and touchingly expressed when on the cross, where the support of that Hand was withdrawn, and where it was His perfectness to feel its absence in all its bitterness, He says: "But thou art he that took me out of the womb; thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breast. I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God from my mother's belly." (Ps. xxii.) Nowhere does the faith of Jesus shine out with such intensity as on the cross. "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" is His answer to that forsaking. Himself forsaken of God, He forsakes not His God, but the more tenaciously clings to Him in spite of all. His faith was perfect as His obedience was absolute. The forsaking on the cross tested and gave the measure to both in the way in which, as under divine judgment bearing our sins, and thus making atonement, He owns God as His God, and vindicates His character in holiness as to His forsaking Him. Unheard in the hour of His deepest distress (a distress into which His *obedience* to God had brought Him) He says: "But thou art holy, Oh thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel."

No question in the mind of Jesus ever arose as to the righteousness of God's dealings with Him, though He knew there was no *cause* for them in *Himself*. His *faith* gave God His proper place in all that on the cross He *passed through*, and God's answer to that faith was given Him in resurrection. He went through suffering and death, when it was divine judgment on man because of sins, in the perfect confidence of faith. A faith that, when every evidence of divine love and care would be withdrawn, could say: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell: neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life."

For the joy that was set before Him He "endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God," and it is in the character of living only by faith up to and through the cross into resurrection that

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He is called "the author and finisher of faith." His present position of heavenly and eternal blessedness, as man, was thus reached through faith.

The divine glory of His Person is manifest all along this life of faith, but it never overlaps or clouds for a moment the reality of His humanity. "God manifest in flesh" is ever present to the divinely opened eye, but it is "the man Christ Jesus" that we see living and walking, and dying in faith. His divine glory was always itself, and there for man's blessing, but it never interfered with the reality of His manhood or enfeebled the faith by which He rested in the divine care and love of which He was the object.

These two things are beautifully set before our eyes in the scene on the lake of Gennesaret. Jesus "in the hinder part of the ship asleep on a pillow" is the sweetest and simplest expression of that faith by which *He rested* in His Father's love and care—His own precious portion; while His inquiry "where is *your* faith?" rebuked the absence of it in His disciples, as that which was the cause of all their disquietude and distress. Then His divine glory bursts forth in all its brightness, and yet touching grace for those whose faith was wanting, in those words of power to the angry winds and waves around, "Peace be still"—and "the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." "What manner of man is this?" reveals the ignorance, born of unbelief, that saw not "Emmanuel" in the lowly dependent Man in whose company they found themselves. The "manner of man" was Jesus, "asleep on the pillow," resting on divine love and care. It was the "manner" of God that spake a word, and "there was a great calm."

In His divine glory we can have no part, save to hide ourselves in it and find there all our blessedness, but the life of Jesus is *our* life, and the expression of it is simply a question of the faith that lives, as He lived, in the abiding enjoyment of divine love and care.

C. W.

(To be continued.)

ACCESS TO GOD, AND SOUL RESTORATION.

It is blessedly true that the believer's position is always inside the veil, where Jesus has gone by His own blood, and it is his sweet privilege to have access with confidence at all times. It is where divine grace has set him. Other scriptures shew that he is made nigh in Christ, and through His blood.

It is, moreover, true that, as a matter of *experience*, many souls, unestablished in these precious truths, have no apprehension or enjoyment of this unchanging position of nearness; so that when trouble, failure, entanglement with Jewish things, or defilement come between them and God, they lose the sense of His presence, become greatly distressed, and groan and struggle to get near. Such surely are not excluded from "the holiest of all;" neither have they lost their position there (how could they? for they have no other place before God), but through ignorance, or unbelief, their souls have no consciousness of it. Like the Hebrew believers, they have to learn by divine teaching what "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" has done for them, and where they have always title to be, because Christ has gone into heaven itself by His own blood, and now appears before the face of God for them. It is well when they apprehend these precious realities, and are moved by the encouraging words, "Let us draw near." It is a time of wonderful blessing when such learn the true way of approach to God; and surely there is no other way of access to God for any of His people at any time.

We must look, however, to other scriptures for instruction as to the way of soul-restoration from sin, because that opens the question, not of our position before God, nor of our everlasting security, nor of liberty to be inside the veil, but of communion with *the Father*. It is another line of divine truth to what we have in Hebrews. Strictly speaking we do not have restoration from sin in Hebrews, but from the danger of going back to Judaism.

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We find this in John's first epistle, where the precious subjects of our relationship, and fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, are taken up. There advocacy comes in, not priesthood, and "the Father," because it is the sin of His child having interrupted communion, which is the question: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John ii. 1.) This precious advocacy is founded on "propitiation" having been made for our sins; the Advocate is "the righteous" One, it is "the Father" *with* whom He is the Advocate, and the "children" of God *for* whom He is the Advocate. Blessed be His name, He is our Advocate whether we know it or not, and He faithfully maintains His own gracious office according as our state requires. The effect on us is, no doubt, to produce self-judgment and confession.

It is not a fresh application of the blood, as some say, which is needed to restore the soul to communion, for it has already perfected the conscience and put him in the light as God is in the light, but the washing of water by the word, as set forth in Christ's washing the disciples' feet with water; and by the ashes of the Red Heifer mixed with water and sprinkled upon the unclean. "The word" is brought home to the heart and conscience by the Holy Ghost with such personal application, as to make us feel the sin before God, and assure those who have humbled themselves and confessed their sins, that He is faithful and just to forgive them their sins, and to cleanse them from all unrighteousness. Thus the washing of water by the word exposes and removes the defilement, and so ministers Christ to the soul that it finds fellowship restored, and (it may be) its joy deepened.

In Hebrews we have God, the High Priest, the holiest and worshippers; in John we have the Father, the Advocate, children, and communion. In Hebrews access to God, and "believers" enjoined to "draw near;" in John we have the way of soul restoration for "children" who have sinned. But whether the question for our

souls be as to worship or communion, both are founded on the death of the cross, and secured for us by Him who went into heaven itself by His own blood. The blood of Jesus is our abiding title to be in the presence of God. We have no other, and want no other. It is where the righteousness of God has set us. To Him be everlasting praise! Amen.

H. H. S.

"THE LAW OF LIBERTY."

IF I tell my child to remain in the house when he wishes to go out, he may obey; but it is not a law of liberty to him—he restrains his will. But if I afterwards say, Now go where you wish to go, he obeys, and it is a law of liberty, because his will and the command are the same, they run together.

The will of God was for Jesus a law of liberty; He came to do His Father's will, He desired nothing else. Blessed state! It was perfection in Him, a blessed example for us. The law is a law of liberty when the will, the heart of man, coincides perfectly in desire with the law imposed upon him—imposed, in our case, by God—the law written in the heart. It is thus with the new man as with the heart of Christ. He loves obedience, and loves the will of God, because it is His will, and as having a nature which answers to what His will expresses, since we partake of the divine nature—in fact it loves that which God wills.

J. N. D.

True religion is shewn by love in the heart, and by purity—keeping himself unspotted from the world. It thinks of others, of those who are in distress, in need of protection, and the help and support of love—as widows and orphans. The truly religious heart, full of the love of God, and moved by Him, thinks, as God does, upon sorrow, weakness, and need. It is the true christian character.

NOTES OF A LECTURE ON JOHN XI. 1-14.

THIS account presents a magnificent picture of the way of the Lord Jesus, when down here, and gives us an insight into the path of the Man Christ Jesus. And, let me here say, that the study of the path of the Son of God, is not only that which the mind may dwell upon with pleasure and admiration, but it is something on which the heart may feed for strength and blessing. There are three precious facts which I want us to consider for a short time this evening.

1. The blessed Lord Jesus was at all times actuated by a true and real desire to glorify His Father in heaven. It was this that moved Him moment by moment. Ah! He is the only One who has ever lived in this scene, having this one thing governing the whole course of life—the glory of God. Personal affection never for a moment swayed Him, nor did personal fear hold Him back, when this was concerned: but, along His entire pathway, the glory of God shone out most brightly through Him.

And in this case, Had Jesus no love for those sorrowing sisters? Did He know their case, and yet stay two days “in the same place where he was”? Yes; He knew all about their need—He had love for them. Then why not at once hasten to their side? This is how you and I act, beloved friends; we hear of the illness of some loved one, and take the next train in order to be with that one as soon as possible. But to bring glory to the Father, was that which was ever dearest to the heart of the Son. Was it that Jesus had forgotten their distress? or that His love for them had changed? No; there was no coldness in His affection for these tried ones (as they prove by-and-by), but the right moment for Him to act had not come then.

Yes, Jesus pitied them, loved them, felt for them, as He alone was able, and yet things got to the very worst in that little home, and the Master came not. What would those loving hearts feel? Would they question,

like the disciples in the boat, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" Did they dare to say that to the Master?—"Carest thou not?" Oh, how little they understood Him to speak thus! And perish, with Jesus on board? Impossible!

Beloved, do we know anything of this, "Carest thou not?" When circumstances look dark, our hearts begin to question the love of the One who permits such to befall us. Oh, let me press upon you this important truth, The dealings of the Father's hand must ever be looked at in the light of the love of that Father's heart. Grasp this. Never try to interpret love by its manifestations. How often our Father sends chastisement, sorrow, bereavement, pressure! How well He could take me out of it all—in a moment—He has the power, but He leaves me there. Oh, may He help us to rest patiently in Himself at such times, not trying to read His love by the circumstances, but them, whatever they may be, through the love of that heart. This gives wondrous strength—knowing that loving heart, and not questioning the dealings of His hand.

Beloved friends, I feel that I am addressing a little company of those who are saved. Oh! the inexpressible joy of this! and I love to speak to those who desire to drink in all that concerns Him—the blessed One who is your object—the object of heaven's adoration and worship too. The study of Himself in His ways amongst men, bows the heart in worship and fills the soul with wonder and praise.

In their bitter sorrow the sisters flee at once to the Master. No one like Him for them now. Do we know anything of this?—telling Him the trouble of the heart, the sorrow of the way? They send word, but He sets not out to their help. But all is right; they are not forgotten, nor left without His caring for them, or concerning Himself about them.

Oh, no; and if we tell Jesus, we may rest satisfied that He will undertake for us. Have you taken your needy case to Him? Then leave it with Him—that is

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all—how simple! Have we not sometimes seen the little child take some treasures to the mother for her to keep, and then, in the restlessness of its mind, turn back to take them into its own hands again? And do we not too often, in the restlessness of our unbelief, carry away the need and care we have been telling out to Him? Sickness, sorrow, want, bereavement come upon us; perhaps some domestic trouble burdens us; a wife bound to a godless husband, a husband to an unconverted wife, the thing has gone on so long, it seems as though the Master heeded not. Have you “told Jesus”? Then leave it with Him, in happy confidence that it will be all right. This Martha and Mary found, and truly our God is worthy of the unwavering trust of the heart. He doeth all things well.

In the Father’s dealings, He may see fit to suffer trial and pressure to remain for years, because that He, in His wisdom, knows that it is exactly what His child needs. Do you ask for an illustration? I give one that occurs to the mind at this moment. The “thorn in the flesh” to Paul. “What!” you say; “the apostle Paul need something to keep him balanced!” Yes; he who had been up in the third heaven, and had heard things which it was impossible for human speech to utter, needed a counterpoise—something to keep the flesh in check. Perhaps you think, that one who had been up there, and had listened to such glorious words, might have kept straight down here ever afterwards. No, Satan would make use of those wondrous revelations to puff up the flesh; so God allowed the messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he “should be exalted above measure.” And the beloved apostle “besought the Lord thrice” that it might depart from him.

“What!” you say; “could he have been in communion with the Lord, when he asked a thing which it was not the will of the Lord to grant?” That is not the point for us; let us make our requests known to Him, and, if it be right, we shall get deliverance; if not, like the apostle, we shall get what will be infinitely better, the

Lord's grace in the pressure, enabling us to bear it all for His glory. This will give moral elevation—bearing the trial, supported by the condescending grace of God, knowing that what His hand dispenses is good, and so giving glory and honour to His name. Ah! and in everything from morning to night we may glorify Him, and so follow in the steps of Jesus, our beloved Master.

"But," you say, "that is too lofty a height for me ever to attain to; how can I glorify Him in my commonplace duties which seem like domestic drudgery from Monday morning to Saturday night"? Better than that, beloved, if you are where He has placed you; and not too commonplace either for glorifying His name. What says the Holy Ghost? "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. x. 31.) Can anything be more commonplace than eating and drinking? Surely not. And can I do this to His glory? Yes. Two persons may be sitting at the same table, one eating merely to gratify the appetite and passion, the other to keep his body in working order for the Master to use down here. So in the home circle, behind the counter, or elsewhere, His name may be honoured and glorified. How would nineteen out of every twenty of us live for Him, if the only way of so doing were public service? No; service is what the Master gives one to do, whether it be to evangelise a continent, to stand behind a counter, or to sweep a crossing; only let each one of us be where He wills, and there shining for Him.

Then saith He, "Let us go into Judæa again. His disciples say unto Him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?" Yes; He will not allow fear of personal safety to keep Him back now, any more than He suffered personal affection to take Him to Bethany, when it is a question as to what is for the glory of God. No thought of personal danger kept Him from being about His "Father's business." And now the moment is come, God's glory will shine through the One who "pleased not himself."

2. The profound sympathy of the heart of Jesus with

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us in all the sorrows and trials through which we pass. Had those sisters for a moment questioned the love of Jesus for them, and His sympathy with them in their sorrow, how they would be rebuked by those groans and tears! "Jesus wept." I suppose this is the shortest verse in the Bible, when one talks of verses, but oh, what it opens out to us! He is going to the grave of His friend as "the resurrection and the life," and as He goes He weeps! What tender sympathy and grace! And He is the same to-day. It is true the surroundings are different, but the heart is the same "yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

He "wept!" How we see the reality of His human nature! Yes; it was a perfectly human heart. He wept for the sorrow and desolation which sin had brought into the world; and He entered into it as no other could. Oh! those groans and tears! How they tell out the love and tenderness of the heart of our precious Lord Jesus! Yes; He truly loved those tried ones, and they proved it. So shall we, if we rest in the same tender, gracious, sympathising Lord. How sad for Him to have to say to Martha, "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe thou shouldst see the glory of God?" Unbelieving heart, listen, doubt not, and thou shalt see that glory too. Hinder not the Master by unbelief.

3. His gracious condescension in linking us with Himself in the work which He is now carrying on in this world. He only does that which they are unable to perform. He allows them to roll away the stone; it is His work to raise the dead, so He speaks, "Lazarus, come forth." He stands at that open grave, the expression of God, and surely God's glory shines forth most brightly through His beloved Son. Then "Jesus saith unto them, Loose him and let him go." Here, again, they can help in the work, and can free Lazarus from the graveclothes that bind him, hand and foot. So now, Jesus graciously permits us to help Him in His work with dead souls. It is true He alone can speak the word that quickens the dead unsaved one; but He, blessed be His holy name,

allows us poor, feeble things, saved by His grace, to speak a word here and there to the unsaved, and to endeavour to bring them under the power of His word, so that they may be blessed, and in our measure to assist Him in the wondrous work which He is at present carrying on.

May He enable us to enter into these marvellously blessed facts, and teach us to make them truly practical, so that we may, whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, do all, even the most commonplace things of our daily life, to the glory of God: and also help us to understand and to realise the sympathy of Jesus for us, in all we go through; and may He help us too so that we may be "workers together with him," whilst He leaves us here.

"When the pangs of sorrow seize us,
When the waves of trouble roll,
I would lay my head on Jesus—
Pillow of the troubled soul:
Surely none can feel like Thee,
Weeping One of Bethany?
'Jesus wept!'—that tear of sorrow
Is a legacy of love:
Yesterday, to-day, to-morrow,
He the same doth ever prove.
Be Thou all in all to me,
Living One of Bethany."

C. H. M.

"I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

There is an index to what is found in the heart which, more than any other, betrays what is within. This index is the tongue. He who knows how to govern his tongue is a perfect man, and able to bridle the whole body. The appearance of religion is vain, if the tongue be not bridled; such a man deceives his own heart.

“FORTY DAYS.”

No. II.

THE FORTY DAYS OF MOSES ON MOUNT SINAI. LAW AND MERCY.

THE second of those remarkable “Forty Days” of scripture we find in the case of Moses on Mount Sinai, when he received the law for the first time from Jehovah. In his case there were two periods of forty days, as afterwards in the Lord Jesus’ ministry: the first, before He entered upon it, when in the temptations in the wilderness; and the second, after His resurrection.

In Moses’ case these two periods are spoken of distinctly in Deuteronomy ix., x., where we find two givings of the law connected with these two “Forty Days:” first, the law, pure and simple; and, second, the revelation of mercy and long-suffering added to the law.

We read, “When I was gone up into the mount, to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the Lord made for you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights: I neither did eat bread, nor drink water: and the Lord delivered me two tables of stone, written with the finger of God; and on them was written according to all the words which the Lord spake with you in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, in the day of the assembly. And it came to pass, at the end of forty days and forty nights, that the Lord gave me the two tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant. And the Lord said unto me, Arise, get thee down quickly from hence; for thy people which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt have corrupted themselves: they are quickly turned aside out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten image. . . . So I turned, and came down from the mount. . . . And I looked, and, behold, ye had sinned against the Lord your God, and had made you a molten calf. . . . And I took the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands, and brake them before your eyes.”

“And I fell down before the Lord, as at the first, forty

days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread, nor drink water; because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger. . . . Then I fell down before the Lord forty days and forty nights, as I fell down at the first; because the Lord had said he would destroy you. I prayed therefore unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, destroy not thy people, and thine inheritance." . . .

"At that time the Lord said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto me into the mount, and make thee an ark of wood; and I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest, and thou shalt put them in the ark. . . . And there they be, as the Lord commanded me." (Deut. ix. 9-x. 5.)

There were altogether—as we may see—three givings of the law.

First, by the voice of God out of the midst of the fire (Ex. xix., xx.);

Secondly, by the first tables of the law, written by the finger of God. These Moses broke after he came down from the mount the first time—his face darkened with wrath at the sin of Israel;

And thirdly, by the second tables which Moses brought back after the second forty days' and forty nights' intercession for Israel, at which time the skin of his face shone with the glory of Jehovah's mercy. These tables he placed in the ark (the figure of Christ, by whom, and in whom only, they would be kept fully). There was no breaking of them this second time, and, as we read, "there they be" unto this day.

We have thus Israel dancing round the calf, and the broken tables of the law, figure of their condition, after the first forty days.

And Israel spared in mercy, but with the law still in their midst—within the ark of the covenant—unbroken, at the end of the second forty days.

I do not dwell much on the first announcement of the law, by the voice of God in Exodus xix., xx. It was

given by One who shut Himself up in the "thick darkness," and spake amidst thunderings, and lightnings, and the voice of words. So terrible was the sight, that even Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." God had proposed these terms, and Israel, ignorant of themselves, accepted them, in the words, "All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do." Mark the two things—first, the word of the Lord, expressing His claim; and, secondly, man supposing he is capable to take it up, and do it. No doubt he is responsible to do so, but he has not the power. No man ever heard the law of God, and denied his responsibility to obey it; his conscience accepts it, whether he like, or no. When the "Ten Words" were spoken, the result was the people removed, and stood afar off. Immediately, when man finds there is a claim from God to which his conscience must bow, he desires some one to stand between him and God—he wants a Mediator. (Ex. xx. 18, 19.) "Speak thou with us," they say to Moses, "and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die." At once God answers this desire with directions for an altar, and sacrifices of burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, in all places where He would record His name.

These four things are the result of God's expressing His claim: the desire of a mediator by the people; God's answer in the work of such; an altar, and sacrifices of acceptance and communion; and His presence with them in all places where He would record His name, to be with them, and to bless them. How touchingly does His unvarying grace break out, even in the midst of the solemn scene of law-giving on Mount Sinai!

Now, if we examine Exodus xxiv., where Moses was called up into the mount to receive the law, we find it was prefaced by a seven days of preparation. (Just as, before the blow of judgment of sin at the flood, there were also seven days of respite.) "And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days; and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the

sight of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mount, in the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount; and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights." (Ex. xxiv, 15-18.)

In the *seven* chapters that follow we find the unfolding, in type, of what afterwards shone in the full blessedness of Christ, there given in the "shadows of things to come." Moses could dismiss the history of creation with one chapter, but what spake of Christ, and of God's desire to dwell amongst men, seven chapters are devoted to that theme (chaps. xxv.-xxix.), unfolding the heart of God, afterwards to be fully revealed in His Son.

The order and arrangement of these chapters are very beautiful. First, in the various parts of the tabernacle and its furniture, He reveals how He can approach man—coming out from the light of the glory in the holy of holies, from the ark and its mercy-seat (chap. xxv.), until, step by step, He reaches the brazen altar (chap. xxvii.), type of the cross of Christ. There He meets man as a sinner, and then He returns with the saved one, as each step of His backward path testifies in the furniture of the tabernacle, now needed—such as the laver, which was for him (chap. xxx.), not a display of God in Himself as such—to meet all the saved one's requirements by the way, in returning to God's own presence.

Meanwhile the high priest's garments are introduced—garments of glory and beauty; and the names of the redeemed are graven upon the stones of memorial on His shoulders, and on the breastplate, where all were borne, in the light of God's presence, in Him. Thus, the believer dwells in the light, and is borne upon the strength, and carried in the affections of Christ, in the presence of God for us.

When all this was being transacted in the mount with God, a dark and terrible scene was being enacted below, on the plain, by Israel (chap. xxxii.); their great original and corporate sin was committed, which reaped its bitter fruits to the end, in Babylon and judgment. I refer to

the making of the golden calf. The seed of Abraham, who had been himself called out of idolatry, now turning back from Jehovah, to dance round the similitude of a "calf that eateth hay"—and Aaron the great actor in this revolt against God.

God desires Moses to go down, telling him that the people had revolted, and made them gods of gold, and that He would cut them off, and make of Moses a great nation. Moses uses his place of nearness, not for himself, but for the people he loved; and beseeches the Lord for Israel, and God is entreated of him. Then Moses comes down with the first tables of the law in his hand, and breaks them ere he reaches the guilty camp, thus preserving both the people from judgment, and the honour of Jehovah. They never, therefore, stood under pure law at all.

The tribe of Levi consecrate themselves in the discipline of that moment, and take the Lord's side against their guilty brethren. Moses returns, with the words, "I will go up, peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin." He pleads, "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and made them gods of gold: yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." He asks that *he*, not *they*, should be blotted out of God's book. The answer is, "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book."

Moses then, when the people are convicted, and stripped of their ornaments, takes the tent, and pitches it outside the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation. Every one, therefore, that sought the Lord, went out there.

The most touching scene follows. The most glorious moment in all the history of Moses, and the most blessed revelation of God he ever had, was then made. The cloud came down, and talked with Moses as a man speaks with his friend! He pleads there with God, and God answers the one who never stood under law at all, but had found grace in His sight. Still, he does not feel that all is clear; his spirit has no rest yet, for two things press

on his heart—(1) the people are not relieved, therefore (2) God is not yet fully revealed. He cries, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory." Nay, this would but consume them—it was not the time. He would afterwards be seen in the same glory with Christ in the mount of transfiguration; but another deeper spring was now to be reached. Something was now to be known of God's nature, never before revealed in its true and real depths. This was "*Mercy!*" Never was its true meaning known before. Doubtless the *word* was there, and used too in scripture; but that deep spring in God's own being, so rich, so full, so blessed; that in which He delights—taking pleasure in them that hope in it. The theme ever after for Israel's song was to be made known; the chorus of every divine melody of theirs from that moment would be, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his *mercy* endureth for ever!"

How touching the subsequent words—"And he said, I will make *all* [yes, "*all*"] my goodness pass before thee; and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion upon whom I will have compassion!"*

Who could have seen His face, and lived? Moses might "bow his head, and worship," when that deep spring was reached. When He *passes by* we can see His back parts, but His face, who could know? Who could have *anticipated* the incarnation, the cross, the counsels and ways of God; or this—His mercy? None indeed! We may be placed in the "cleft of the rock," and, covered by His hand, gaze upon Him as He passes by, and see His back parts; but none can see His face—none can anticipate His ways, and live!

The deep spring was reached at that dire extremity. The divine outflow of grace had been abused. The law

* I have given the rendering of the LXX. of the latter part of this verse, as it has been accepted by the apostle Paul in Romans ix., exactly as given there. It is thus shewn to be the more correct meaning of the Spirit of God.

had been broken. All ordered relations had been disrupted by the rebellion and ruin of Israel. Now, mercy—sovereign and absolute—was the resource of Him who retires into Himself, and who chooses to act from Himself—who alone can say, "I will," and who can hinder? It presupposes a condition of things, and the absolute necessity for God to act from Himself in some way, either to vindicate Himself by resistless judgment, or to extricate the people in absolute mercy. It was not now of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

Brethren, do our souls understand that attribute in which God is so rich? Do we not constantly find it confounded with grace (which is the divine outflow of His unconditional favour), to the soul's great loss indeed? Have we never sinned against and outraged His grace, as well as broken His law? What then is left for us—absolute sovereign mercy, which presupposes all this condition of things. Can I explain it to the soul that has never tasted it? Nay: it must be tasted in those moments of deep, deep need, which nothing can meet but the revelation of His character and nature as sovereign and absolute—but who chooses to act in that sovereignty, and absoluteness in mercy, and not in judgment.

From the moment that Moses saw that strange sight—the Bush burning with fire, and which was not consumed, at the back side of the desert; until the waters gushed out of the Rock at Rephidim—all was a pure stream of *grace*. This *grace*-history is taken up, even going back to the Patriarchs, in Psalm cv., and the Psalm recounts what "*He*" did for them: it runs on to the Smitten Rock, and there it stops. But when we turn to Psalm cvi. we find the *mercy*-history—and it recounts what "*They*" had done. What then is the burden of the Psalm? "O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good; for his *mercy* endureth for ever!" "Moses, his chosen, stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them"; and He "repented according to the multitude of his *mercies*."

Do Israel's songs ever recount His *grace*? Ah no; it was too late after the golden calf was made. Too late after grace was abused and thrown back in His face, as it was, and Law was hopelessly broken. What has been the burden of their songs in the past; as well as those for the time to come? Their burden and theme is *mercy* for evermore!

What an absence of this "mercy" do we find in those chapters of Romans (i.-viii.) which unfolds the relations of our souls with God, by *grace* through righteousness! But if we turn to the next three chapters (ix.-xi.) all is mercy, for Israel is in view! Yet the last does not close without shutting up all, Jew and Gentile, in unbelief, that He may have mercy upon all! "O the depth of the riches," says the apostle, in the contemplation of His ways—past finding out, yet how blessed when revealed!

Look again at the fact, that in the church Epistles we find them addressed in grace and peace; but not mercy. Yet, when we come to the Epistles to individuals, mercy is added there. But in that of Jude, which gives the full tide of the corruption of Christendom surging on to judgment, we find "*Mercy*, peace, and love be multiplied:" and the saints are taught to look for the "*mercy* of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life." Why is this? because the grace, in which all were set, has been abused and outraged; and nothing remains but absolute and sovereign mercy for all!

"Who," says Micah, "is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy!"

The soul of David, in singing the praises of the Lord for His lovingkindnesses and His tender mercies (Ps. ciii.), seeks to measure this mercy which so suited his case. "As the heaven," sang he, "is high above the earth, so great is his mercy." Still that does not reach it, for the soul that has tasted its heights and its depths. Again he essays, in the words, "as far as the east is from the west"; but it is infinite, and greater than the finite—

great as it may be. At last he finds its only measure is the *nature* of Him who, "from everlasting to everlasting," is God (Ps. xc.): So His "mercy is . . . from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him"—who grasp His outstretched hand reached down into the abyss of sin, which none have ever grasped in vain.

Hear him again, who so learned its sweetness to his own soul:

"O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever."

"Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy."

"And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south."

"O that men would praise the Lord for his mercy*; and for his wonderful words to the children of men!"

"Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the mercy of the Lord." (Ps. cvii.)

How blessed, too, in Ephesians ii., if "God, who is rich in mercy," would act according to that deep spring in His being, He must do so in a manner becoming that mercy; and as "the angle of incidence is equal to that of refraction," so, if He acts, in forming His church out of the materials we find in Ephesians ii., and from that deep spring, He will place those who have been reached by *mercy*, far above all heavens: above all principality and might and dominion, in Him in whom it is expressed!

Ah yes, beloved brethren, mercy and grace are never mixed up in the thoughts of God, as in ours. We do it to our deep loss indeed. Mercy was first really learned in scripture, when Moses "bowed his head and worshipped," at the suited name and character and attribute of Him, who chose to act—not according to the insolence of sin in Israel; but according to His sovereignty in mercy.

May it, in all the depth and fulness of God, be my own and my readers' portion, in Christ Himself for ever! In Him, whose own blessed lips spake those

* And so in verses 15, 21, 31, 43: see Heb. and LXX.

words to those who hated Him: "But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matt. ix. 13.) Sacrifice was what they could do for God, and failed to do. But mercy was what He could, in spite of all, shew to them. And again, "But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless." (Matt. xii. 7.)

How sweet it is for the soul to rest thus in the Lord: in His known nature and character, learned, too, in measure, through the deep needs of the soul, as a sinner, or as a failing saint. To have found that He delights in mercy, which He has revealed in His Son; and to be able to sing of Him—"O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy endureth for ever"!

The first "forty days," then, of Moses on Mount Sinai, ended with a broken Law and a ruined people: the second with that blessed revelation of God's attribute of mercy,* which can never fail. There our souls can stay themselves in peace: whether as sinners needing and finding salvation in Christ; or as those who have outraged that loving grace of God, and have now no hope but in Him against whom we have sinned. In Him on whom we have no claim, but to count on that character on which we can cast ourselves unreservedly; to whom we may come as saints or sinners, for salvation for eternity; or pardon and deliverance under His righteous government in time, for all in which we have exceeded. We can cast ourselves at His feet, asking nothing; suggesting nothing; but resting on His nature—Himself, which so fully expresses itself in righteous consistency with Himself, through the cross and work of His own beloved Son.

To Him and through Him be praise to God, both now and for evermore.

F. G. P.

* I do not here distinguish between governmental mercy, and mercy for eternal salvation. Nor do I notice the fact of the law being still left, accompanied by mercy, and Israel left under it, in this paper.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

9. Q.—In the correspondence on the presence of the Holy Spirit, &c., in the April number of "Words of Faith," it is stated by X., page 102, that Christ's presence among the disciples, after resurrection and before ascension, is the same that we have now, where the two or three are gathered to His name, and hence a corporeal, and not a spiritual, presence, and in the latter character differing from the presence of the Holy Ghost, which is, of course, spiritual. Is this correct? And does not Christ's ascension, as the glorified Man to His Father's right hand and throne, make it impossible for Him to be present corporeally elsewhere than in the glory; and therefore that His presence among His gathered saints *now* is a spiritual, and not a corporeal, presence?

Further, in page 104, I understand Z. to insist upon the free and independent action of the Holy Spirit in the assembly, quite apart from *the state* of the brother who may be the channel. Would it not, therefore, be wrong to deny that a brother, known to be in a bad state of soul, might nevertheless minister the word, or give out a hymn, in the power of the Spirit? C. E. H. W.

A.—Undoubtedly Christ is *bodily*, or corporeally, in heaven, and only present *spiritually* with His saints when gathered to His name. The ascension to heaven makes the difference *as to the manner* of His presence with His people now, as in contrast with what it was just after His resurrection. Still, He is *personally* present. This is plainly taught in Z.'s letter, page 107.

The action of the Holy Ghost is free and sovereign. He acts by whom He chooses, and the *state* of the vessel has *nothing* to say to this; and therefore it is quite possible, though not usual, that he might use a brother "in a bad state of soul" to act in the assembly. The guard is, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." (See 1 Thess. v. 20, 21.) C. W.

10. Referring to your reply to "C. E. S." in the April No. (query 7) I think some fresh light is thrown on the use of the Lord's official title "Christ," contrasted with His personal title "Jesus," by Philip (Acts viii. 5, 35), by noting the verbs employed.

In the first case it was *κηρύσσω*, "to herald;" in the latter it was *εὐαγγελίζω*, "to evangelize," or "bring good-tidings." The choice of these words is very beautiful and suited in each case.

"To herald Christ" would embrace *all* of Him, which He will do in grace and salvation, or in judgment. "To evangelize Jesus" would only embrace His Person and grace, as the One who was called that name by the angel (Matt. i.); because "he would save his people from their sins"—the One who was before the Ethiopian in a special way from reading Isaiah liii.

This is, to my mind, the reason of the change of the name in the two passages. I think too that the use of the verbs generally, in the New Testament, shews us that when the thought of judgment is connected with the preaching of Christ, *κηρύσσω* is used, as in Acts x. 42, which is a striking example, coupled with verse 36, where *εὐαγγελίζω* is used as "preaching peace" only through Him. Other examples can be adduced. F. G. P.

We a little doubt whether the suggested use of *κηρύσσω*, as in contrast with that of *εὐαγγελίζω* can be borne out by its general use in the New Testament. *κηρύσσω* means "to announce publicly" or "to herald;" while *εὐαγγελίζω* gives in addition the subject matter of what is announced. We find *κηρύσσω* frequently used in connection with "the gospel," when no question of judgment comes in. (Compare, amongst other instances, Matt. xvi. 13; Luke iv. 18, 19, viii. 1; Rom. x. 15; 1 Cor. i. 23, xv. 1; 2 Cor. i. 9; Gal. ii. 2; 1 Thess. ii. 19.) As to the case in point, Acts viii. 5, it could scarcely have been the preaching of Christ in connection with judgment that produced "great joy in that city." We would remark, too, that while in the main *εὐαγγελίζω* is connected with

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grace, and not judgment, still in a few instances it seems to us it is used when judgment is in view. (Compare Luke xvi. 16; Acts xi. 20, xv. 35; Gal. i. 8; 1 Pet. iv. 6, and Rev. x. 17; xiv. 6.) We should be glad to hear what others have to say on the subject. C. W.

11. I do not like the paper in the "Words of Faith" for April by "X., Y., Z." I do not think it is the truth, and some of the expressions are far from reverent or worthy of the things of God. I write to you, beloved brother, because I know I am not alone in this judgment. You will be the best judge of the way to rectify this. E. F.

As several others have written to us with reference to some of the expressions used in X.'s second letter we insert E. F.'s letter in order to say a few words on the subject for the sake of *all* our readers. Though the expressions in question are peculiar and graphic, and perhaps not the happiest that might have been used to convey the thought in the mind, we did not regard them as either "irreverent" or "profane;" while from the knowledge we have of the writer we are quite sure he meant nothing of the kind, and will be grieved to learn that they have had this appearance, or been a cause of stumbling to any. Still, we desire to hear what the Lord's voice to us is in the matter, and to express regret for any want of godly discernment and care in inserting them in our pages. The importance of the subject, and the belief that many needed help on the question raised, led us to publish the correspondence. We firmly believe the true doctrine as to it has been fully and clearly given in "Z.'s" first letter, and we remark, too, that it does not appear to have struck him that the expressions in "X.'s" letter were really improper. As many inquiries have come to us as to who the several writers are, we feel free to say that "Y." is "C. W.," and "Z." (the writer of the fourth and sixth letters) is "J. N. D.," while "X." is not "F. W. G."

C. W.

SOME LAST WORDS.

"I am very, very weak," he remarked; "and, humanly speaking, my life is gone from the earth, but the Lord holds the thread of it."

I said, "Yes, dear Mr. —, you are just in the hands of the Lord Jesus, and all you have loved and laboured for these fifty years and more is in His hands too."

"Yes, yes," he replied; "and I see three things. The Father has given me to His Son; Christ is my righteousness, which settles everything; and then (what is more outside one) Christ is my object."

"Absent from the body, present with the Lord."
APRIL 29TH, 1882.

God and the Lamb—'tis well,
I know that source divine,
Of joy and love no tongue can tell,
Yet know that all is mine.

And see, the Spirit's power
Has oped the heavenly door,
Has brought me to that favour'd hour
When toil shall all be o'er.

There on the hidden bread
Of Christ—once humbled here—
God's measured store—for ever fed,
His love my soul shall cheer.

Called by that sacred name
Of undisclosed delight,
(Blest answer to reproach and shame)
Graved on the stone of white.

There in effulgence bright,
Saviour and Guide, with Thee
I'll walk, and in Thy heavenly light
Whiter my robe shall be.

There in th' unsullied way
Which His own hand hath dress'd,
My feet press on where brightest day
Shines forth on all the rest.

But who that glorious blaze
Of living light shall tell,
Where all His brightness God displays,
And the Lamb's glories dwell? J. N. D.

THE PLACE OF SACRIFICE IN THE WAYS OF GOD.*

IF we take the history of the garden of Eden as a whole, we shall see it is such a whole, and, in brief, a complete picture of the ways of God. Man was placed under responsibility, and even under law failed and broke it, was sinful, and an actual sinner, and was driven out from the place of sojourn, when God visited him for fellowship. But God did not send him out to begin a new world away from Himself, without giving the fullest testimony to the sovereign grace that has met the evil.

Man's nakedness was the expression of innocence being gone. Shame and guilt, and a guilty fear of God's presence, was now man's estate. God, in sovereign grace, met this. He clothed Adam with robes which came from death, and His eye had His own work before Him. That did not say man was not naked in himself, but that God Himself, having taken knowledge of it in grace, had covered his nakedness. The present state perfectly provided for in full, and the power of evil judged in the future. Hereafter the power of the serpent's seed would be destroyed.

But man (thus driven out from God, and innocence gone) began a new world, and the question necessarily arose, Can man have to say to God, and how? Now it is clear that if God wrought in man, He could not for a moment be indifferent to what had happened, and still clearer that God could not be indifferent to the state of evil which had brought man where he now was, and was expressed by what he was in sin and away from God.

* A sad interest attaches to the tract from which the above is an extract. It is the very last from the pen of its beloved author, and was completed by dictation on February 25th, when he was too weak to hold his own pen, and several times, while doing this, he was so faint as to require to take something to revive him. It is sweet to think that his last act of service to the church of God, wrought amid such weakness, was a defence of the cross, written for the help of saints in Sweden; and how in keeping with his own deep and simple utterance of years ago, "There is nothing like the cross." A copy may be obtained *gratis* from either of the publishers of this magazine, by sending them a stamped and directed wrapper.

NOTES OF A MEETING AT BOURNEMOUTH ON THE EVENING OF MAY 2ND, 1882.*

AMID a chastened and subdued sense of God's presence, W. T. P. W. gave out—"Rest of the saints above," which was sung with much feeling.

H. H. S. then prayed, and afterwards read 1 Samuel xvii. 49-58, xviii. 1-4. He said:—"I have read these verses because they strikingly illustrate the different effects the truth of the Gospel has upon souls. They suggest the question, Are we taken up with the blessings that Christ has made ours, or are we rather taken up with the Person of Christ—Christ Himself? The heart must have an object, it will and must be engaged with some object or another.

"Generally the state of souls is to be more engaged with their blessing than the One who, in the depths of His love, has procured it for them. Observe in this scripture how positively we have pictured what I am stating: the mass of the people are taken up with the great blessing David had made theirs. He had wrought a wonderful victory, and achieved a mighty deliverance for them. There are three things mentioned that they did; they arose and shouted (ver. 52), *i.e.*, they were filled with delight; next they pursued the Philistines; and then they spoiled their tents. Thus we have set forth: first, the conscious joy and delight of souls who know deliverance; secondly, their taking sides with Christ against His enemies; and thirdly, spoiling their tents—*i.e.*, settling down and counting the blessings—dwelling upon what has become theirs.

"Now, there is something far beyond all this, which

* As many will like to know what took place during the earlier part of this day, we have put together a pretty full account of it for *private* circulation only. A copy of this can be had by sending a stamped and directed wrapper to either of the editors of this magazine.

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chapter xviii. brings before us. David returns with the head of the mighty giant in his hand: type of our blessed Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who delivered us from him that had the power of death, and puts us in possession of eternal victory. Here we find one whose eye is not on the blessing, but on the blesser. The Victor commands his attention and wonder; he gazes upon Him, and his soul is drawn out to Him. 'And it came to pass when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David: and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.' (Ver. 1.) And surely thus it is that our gaze should be filled with our Victor; thus should our hearts be engaged in adoring wonder. As the object of our affections and delight, how well we might be ever absorbed with Him, who contains in Himself all the excellences that suit the heart of God. That One, who was ever the delight of the Father, in His whole life down here; in His death; and is still His delight in the glory. Jonathan loved David as his own soul. There is our pattern, or, as Peter puts it: '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.'

"Another thing that we have in this history, is in the fourth verse of this chapter: 'And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.' Have there not been times when Christians have stripped themselves for Christ's sake? But ere we can do this, He must be to us what David was to Jonathan; His worth and beauty must have won our hearts; only then, as He becomes the engrossing satisfying object for our souls, shall we be ready to strip ourselves, and yield our all in willing devotedness and consecration to Himself."

C. S. then read Nehemiah xiii. 1-13.

He said: "That word in the thirteenth verse: 'And I made treasurers over the treasuries, Shelemiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe; and of the Levites, Pedaiah: and

next to them was Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah; for they were counted faithful, and their office was to distribute unto their brethren,' is the word especially before me; though the context is very marvellous, too, teaching, as it does, the important lesson, and on which I will say a word or two, that the Moabite and the Ammonite were to be shut out of the Assembly of God for ever. It contains a solemn voice for us in our day. They were the children of Lot, the righteous man, who had linked himself with the world. In the seventh verse we read, 'And I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. And it grieved me sore: therefore I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber. Then I commanded, and they cleaned the chamber: and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat offering and the frankincense.'

"A great chamber had been prepared for the house of the Ammonite; and has not a great chamber been prepared for the children of the world in the house of God in our day? We would lay hold on the fact that this great chamber was prepared for Tobiah, where, aforetime they laid the meat offering, the frankincense, and the vessels, &c., and it was the sight of this that so sorely grieved Nehemiah, that he says, 'I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber. Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chamber, and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat offering and the frankincense.'

"Has not the truth of the presence of Christ in the assembly been restored in these last days? It is indeed a poor thing to be occupied with the stuff of Tobiah: rather, as Jonathan beheld David, would we behold Christ as set forth in the meat offering and the frankincense. How little is Christ ministered in the house of God! How very little is a living and glorified Christ preached through the wide range of Christendom!

"And then note the twelfth verse, 'Then brought all

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Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries.' Have we not through grace arrived at about this point? Have we not been graciously permitted to come together to feed upon the Person of Christ?

"Indeed, how often has the Lord, in His goodness, permitted us to do so! We may never meet again, and certainly not with the same circumstances before us as we have to-day; nor shall we ever here see fully how much God gave us through our beloved and departed brother. I remember, some years ago, when in the north of England, the truths of the coming of Christ for His church, and the presence of the Holy Ghost in the assembly, were not to be heard of. Oh, how much we owe to the beloved one God has been pleased to take away!

"I would now notice verse 13—'And I made treasurers over the treasuries,' &c. Have we realised what God has made many of His servants in this day? Has He not communicated much to us through His treasurers—the precious truths as to the Person of Christ, the presence of the Holy Ghost on the earth, and the coming of the Lord?

"I would turn you, who are the Lord's servants, for a moment, to verse 28 of Acts xx.: 'Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock of God, over the which the Holy Ghost,' &c. Take heed! Are not the Lord's servants, the treasurers, here reminded of their solemn responsibilities? 'Take heed unto yourselves, and to *all the flock*'—not a little part of the flock. The heart of God takes in nothing short of His entire flock. Oh, may our interests and service be with God's thought of the whole church of God before us!

"And in this chapter in the Acts how we are reminded of the circumstances of the church to-day—'I know that after my departure,' &c. But what is the apostle's resource? 'I commend you to God and the word of his grace,' &c. We have not accompanied our dear brother to the ship to-day, but to the grave, and we turn our thoughts to the blessed fact that God has still His trea-

surers to distribute His treasures to His people. Let us not be taken up with Tobiah (that is, the evil around and abroad), but rather let our hearts be occupied with the 'meat-offering and the sweet frankincense,' that we may know how to minister portions to the precious saints of God.

"In Revelation xxi. we have a wonderful description of the church seen in her future glory as the Lamb's wife. 'Her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper-stone, clear as crystal.' But is not the church now, *in His eye*, adorned with this glory and beauty? Does He not see it already 'clear as crystal'? It is, as we apprehend, His thoughts of His church, His present estimate of it—what it is to Him—that our interest will be awakened, and our hearts will fervently desire to be amongst His treasurers, and to minister the unsearchable riches of Christ to the objects of His love. Oh, how truly this was the delight and aim of that beloved servant who is now 'for ever with the Lord'!"

C. McA. now gave out, "Join all the glorious names."

T. R., after this, recalled attention to Acts xx., reading from verse 24 to verse 28.

He remarked, "We have indeed lost a great deal in the one whom God has been pleased to take from us. He was, undoubtedly, His instrument to recover much truth to the church of God. We have his writings left, and the memory of his devoted life, but he is gone. The circumstances of the apostle Paul, as given us in the portion we have read, in many ways resemble those in which we find ourselves to-day; and there was much in our brother's course and ways down here which answered to what we find in Paul's.

"Paul, about to depart, commends his brethren to 'God, and the word of his grace,' foreseeing the evil that was coming upon the church. Here would be the all-sufficient resource of the saints. (Heb. xi. 5.)

"Our dear departed brother much insisted upon the inspiration of the scriptures, and sought to unfold the whole word of God; and it is surely important that we

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should be careful to read all God has given us, as the reading of parts only leads to imperfect views of truth.

"In Deuteronomy vi. 5-9 it is very interesting to notice how the Lord encouraged and exhorted His people in that day to a diligent attention to *all* His words, which were to be in their hearts, taught to their children, and continually spoken of by them.

"How often we all fail, when coming together at each other's houses, or in meeting one another, to speak of Him and His word; how our intercourse often drops down to that which is unprofitable.

"It is blessed to remember the faithfulness of our God, and to know that whatever our failures, our dangers, or our difficulties, we can *always* count upon Him. 1 Corinthians x. 12, 13 is a word we may well ponder. 'God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.' If we were more occupied with the good, we should not be so liable to yield to that which is evil."

C. E. S. then prayed, and in prayer hung much upon Hebrews xiii. 7: "Remember your leaders, who have spoken unto you the word of God, and considering the issue of their conversation, imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

W. T. P. W. then referred to a remark made by J. N. D. to W. Trotter, which he (W. Trotter) said left a lasting effect upon him. It was this: "The secret of peace within and power without is to be occupied with good—ever and always to be occupied with good."

How good is the God we adore,
Our faithful unchangeable Friend;
Whose love is as great as His power,
And knows neither measure nor end.

'Tis Jesus, the First and the Last,
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home;
We'll praise Him for all that is past,
And trust Him for all that's to come.

7-2

THE LESSONS OF THE AGES.

THE TRIAL OF CONSCIENCE IN THE AGE BEFORE
THE FLOOD.

WITH Adam fallen—even from the first moment of his fall—we enter upon a new period. Sin and death, now come into the world, necessitate new dealings of God with man, if, indeed, judgment do not bring all to a sudden close. And this was not in His mind, who from the first had foreseen and provided for the rebellion of the creature. Judgment does indeed follow, such as God had previously announced; but that was no final one, but (as we shall easily see) one anticipative of the mercy to be shewn, and which could be made to take itself the character of mercy. It is in confounding the provisional “death,” threatened to and inflicted on Adam and his posterity, as the result of the primal sin, with the “second” and final “death” of the lake of fire, that much error and heresy of the present day finds apparent countenance, scripture being strained to establish what is a mere foregone conclusion in the minds of its interpreters, and what none can in fact deduce from its straightforward simplicity of statement.

“In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” is defined so clearly, in the Lord’s words to fallen Adam, as to put its meaning, one would think, beyond serious question. “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou *return unto the ground*; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and *unto dust shalt thou return.*”

To read into this eternal judgment is to misread it thoroughly. The death announced, and which we know to be everywhere in the world, through the first man’s sin, is in reality a thing which, in its very nature, necessitates the *suspension* of eternal judgment until it is taken out of the way. Not till the dead are raised will the white throne be set, and the dead—the wicked dead

—be “judged, every man according to his works.” And thus the resurrection of the unsaved dead is as much a “resurrection of *judgment*”—that is what it implies and necessitates—as the resurrection of the saved is similarly a “resurrection of *life*.” The final judgment is thus in nowise the result of Adam’s sin; it is that in which emphatically each suffers for his own. The second death and the first are in nowise to be confounded—they are incompatible and contrary things.*

Nor can spiritual death, or “death in trespasses and sins,” be possibly what God speaks of in His threatening to Adam. This is indeed the spiritual state which is the result of the fall; but the moral state of a criminal is a very different thing from the judgment upon the criminal. Man’s depravity is what he is condemned *for*, not what he is sentenced *to*; and these things cannot be synonymous. “Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return,” is thus the only possible, as it is the divinely-given, interpretation of the announcement, ‘in the day† thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.’

Yet it is quite true, and to be pressed, that this death, coming not only upon the first sinners, but upon all their posterity—and surely by no mere arbitrary decree on God’s part—marks the changed relation to Him of the now fallen creature. Everywhere does scripture recognise this, and in God’s ordinances for His chosen people of old it comes fully out. Death is associated ever with

* “Dying, thou shalt die” (Gen. ii. 17, *margin*), is often appealed to, as if inferring a second death. Any one who will look at the marginal reading of only the verse before, will find that it is but a Hebrew idiom of emphasis. “Thou shalt freely eat” is literally, “eating, thou shalt eat.”

† Some contend that this makes impossible the thought of returning to the dust, because Adam did not actually die on the day that he ate of the tree; and some have more strangely answered that Adam *did* die on that ‘day,’ for a day with the Lord is a thousand years! The truth is, that not only did Adam indeed begin to die from that day, as cut off from the tree of life, but also that “in the day” does not require so rigid a construction, as see Ezekiel xxxiii. 12, &c.

uncleanness and defilement. If a man die in a tent, all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, are unclean seven days. Every one touching a dead body, a bone, or a grave, is similarly defiled. Nor must we look at this as merely symbolic teaching. The psalm of the wilderness is plain enough in its doctrine here: "For all our days are passed away in thy wrath; we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear so is thy wrath." (Ps. xc. 9-11.)

Yes, if God had thus to turn to destruction the being over whom, as first created, He had rejoiced with unfeigned delight, surely the state of the creature it was, that was thus marked out, not a causeless change in God. Death was the stamp upon the creature fallen away from God; and every sign of its approach a standing admonition to him as a being thus under sentence—not final indeed, or there would be no use in the admonition, but still a sentence of condemnation, which cut him off from all pretension to righteousness, or natural claim to favour, and left him but the subject of mercy, and of mercy alone.

True, he may (alas! he does) resist and strive against the sentence graven upon his brow. He may condemn God, that he may himself be righteous. This changes nothing—no, not a hair of his head—from white to black. He may complain of himself as the victim of circumstances, impossible to be 'clean' as "born of a woman." He may plead that he did not give himself the evil nature that he carries with him, but conscience will not be satisfied with this. It will not excuse actual transgressions by any plea as to a fallen nature. We feel and know, every one of us, that we ought nevertheless to be masters of ourselves and of our nature, and that our responsibility has been in nowise destroyed or lessened by the fall. So in the day of judgment also God will

render to every man, not according to his *nature*, but his *deeds*, and upon this ground is the whole world brought in "guilty before God."

Death thus, while introduced by one man's sin, "passes upon all men, for that *all* have sinned." Were there one man, in the full sense, righteous before God, he might successfully plead exemption from the common doom; but "there is none righteous, no, not one;" and death remains universally a sentence gone forth against man as man, the constant witness against self-righteousness on his part, the constant witness of his need of mercy—absolute, sovereign mercy.

The sorrow of all this is thus God's appeal to man; the trouble to which he is born, as sparks fly upward, becomes the discipline of holy but merciful government. It is of this that God speaks to the man and the woman when He first appears to them in the garden; to the woman, of the sorrow of conception, and subjection to the rule of her husband; to the man, of the cursed ground, and of its thorns and thistles, with the toil of labour, till he return to the dust. With them, let us notice, He makes no new terms—no other covenant is proposed to them. As helpless and hopeless otherwise, they are made simply to listen to what God announces He will do—to the message of a deliverance He will raise up to them in the woman's Seed. It is to faith in One to come they are invited, in the midst of the ruin they have brought upon themselves. No new trial is proposed. They are left under the salutary government of God, to realise what and where they are before Him, and to embrace the mercy wrapped up for them in the bud of that first promise.

For promise indeed it is, while it comes in the shape of threatening to the serpent; a promise, whose broken echoes the traditions of the nations have prolonged, even to our own day. Scripture, which cannot be broken, has alone given us the very words, in their original simplicity and grandeur—the "Let there be light" of a new creative period, exceeding the former as antitype, its

typic "shadow." The words are for us to-day, to vindicate their imperishable nature, fresh for our souls as the day when they were uttered: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

It is the character of the new period we are occupied with, and for this have only to do with certain features of this promise. It is plain enough that Another is here given as the Conqueror of the serpent, the enemy of man, but whose "seed" nevertheless (as the near future would painfully reveal) would be found among men. This Conqueror is also the woman's seed, and not the man's. It is no restoration of Adam's forfeited headship, but a new and mysterious beginning, wherein divine power takes up the frailty and mutability of the creature, which has its fullest expression in the woman, to demonstrate divine grace, while not without cost is the victory over the enemy achieved: in bruising the serpent's head the Conqueror has His own heel bruised.

Thus does the divine purpose begin to be disclosed, asking no aid from, and making no condition with, the fallen creature. From the first it is seen that all help is laid upon Another, One in whom, though born of a woman, power from God is found; who suffers, and in suffering overcomes; and manifestly in behalf of those of whom He is the kinsman.

Although, then, the Lord's address to the woman afterward speaks of nothing but pain and humiliation, and to the man himself of toil, and suffering, and death, yet we read immediately upon this that "Adam called his wife's name Eve [or 'Life'], because she was the mother of all living." Life he apprehends, according to the divine announcement, to be in the woman connected by grace with her victorious Seed; weakness and evil in her thus met and triumphed over, while the headship of the first man is set aside. Adam bows, then, to this sentence, while in faith he receives the mercy, and it is upon this that we find God significantly replacing the inadequate

apron of fig-leaves, the first human manufacture, with the coats of skins, the fruit of death itself, now made to minister to their need, and by divine gift, not human acquisition. We may thus very clearly see how God accepts the faith of Adam, and in thus clothing, how the shame of our moral nakedness is put away for ever, clothed, in divine mercy, with Christ Himself, as the fruit of His death for us.

How much of this Adam and his wife might apprehend is another question, and it is one impossible, perhaps, for us to answer. Instead of unsafe speculation, therefore, it will be better to pass on to that in which, according to scripture itself, the faith of one of their children is expressed: for "by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain; and by it he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts." The use of sacrifice thus demands our attention, no solitary example merely of which we have in the case of a few early patriarchs, but a thing which we find, in whatever perverted forms, pervading all religious creeds from the beginning. That—unnatural as it is—it could have rooted itself thus deeply in the minds of men, shews its manifest divine institution, as well as the depth and universality of a common conviction to which it appealed.

Nature could never have dictated it. Cain's way was nature's dictation, but not Abel's. How could it be supposed that, admitting man's sinfulness, and its desert, the death of an innocent victim could atone for the guilty, or that the blood of bulls and goats could put away sin? Looked at as the product of reason merely, such reasoning were utter folly. Connected with the bruised heel of the Seed of the woman, and perhaps with the skins which clothed the first transgressors, a voluntary Sufferer might be seen, whose suffering and death should indeed have efficacy on man's behalf. And thus we gain the assurance of a real view which faith had, and which was offered to faith, of vicarious atonement, as linking itself with the suffering Conqueror of the first prophecy,

even as we are assured of Abel that his "gifts" had in some way a value in them which God could accept on his behalf, pronouncing him righteous on their account. With Cain also it would seem as if we must read God's expostulation, "and if thou doest not well, a sin-offering coucheth at the door;" thus prescribing a way in which faith, on the part of a poor sinner, might approach Him with confidence. The way of sacrifice was thus openly proclaimed as the way of acceptance; repentance and faith as what, on man's part, this implied, if really apprehended; no legal conditions, no covenant of works, were in anywise imposed, God starts with that which He has now, and once for all, returned to: His first thought is His last—His own thought, in fact, all through, though man's necessity might require, as we shall see, apparent departure from it. Man's necessity is indeed his perversity, and nothing else, which, refusing in self-confidence God's simple way of grace, compelled Him to allow them the experiment of their own way. But for sixteen centuries, at least, God abides by what He has said at the beginning. Having made known to man His way of acceptance and approach to Him, He waits to see how man's conscience will respond to the sentence upon him—his heart to the grace which has provided for his need. Alas! His next word has to be a threat of near and approaching judgment. "My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; but his days shall be a hundred and twenty years."

F. W. G.

(To be continued, the Lord willing.)

But, you say, I find that what ought to be dead in me is still alive. Well, did Christ die for the sin that you have not, or for the sin you have? The very sin you are daily finding out in yourself, this is the very sin for which Christ died.

J. N. D.

SALVATION AND ATONEMENT.

REMARKS ON AN ARTICLE IN THE SWEDISH
MAGAZINE "PIETISTEN," FOR SEPTEMBER, 1881.

WE are all learners, if indeed we have a teachable spirit, and any progress in the knowledge of what the word of God contains is only an approximation to a fuller comprehension of the truth, which was taught by the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. More than what was then taught we cannot look to know. All progress in the apprehension of truth since their day is only a recovery in measure, of what was then set forth. For all the truth that we have, we are indebted of course to God's grace; and how has grace been manifested in recovering for the saints truth after truth during the past three hundred years! Bearing then in mind it is wholly of grace that truth forgotten has been in any measure recovered, none of us have anything to boast of. So if one sees any mistake in the teaching of another, or a want of clearness in the apprehension of parts of divine revelation, it becomes us, as we point such out, to remember in what darkness and ignorance we were formerly ourselves. It is in this spirit that we would comment on some statements in the "Pietisten," by Dr. Waldenström, for September, 1881.

To be saved, to be redeemed, to be reconciled (Swedish *försonas*), he writes, all mean the same thing seen from different sides. Salvation actually is man's *försoning* with God. (§ 710.) "Against all such wrong ideas the scripture teaches us that *no change took place in God's disposition towards man* consequent on man's sin; that it was therefore *not* God that needed to be reconciled (*försonas*) to man, *but man that needed to be reconciled to God*, and that as a result thereof the atonement (*försinengen*), or reconciliation is a work that starts from God, and is directed towards man, and has for its object, not to appease Him, but to *cleanse man from sin, and place him again in a right relationship to God.*" (§ 716.)

Now in treating of truth it is important to get a clear understanding of the meaning of scripture terms. To "save," "redeem," "reconcile," all describe acts on the part of God towards, or for man. The "Saviour," the "Redeemer," the "Reconciler" is God, or the Lord Jesus Christ. The "saved," the "redeemed," the "reconciled," are men. But these terms do not convey the same meaning. Lost ones are saved. (Luke xix. 10.) Enemies are reconciled. (Rom. v. 10.) Those needing a ransom by blood are redeemed (Eph. i. 7), whilst awaiting the redemption of their bodies in the future.

Of salvation we read that it is deliverance from God's wrath, which has not yet been poured out. (Rom. v. 9; 1 Thess. i. 10.) It is of grace through faith, and the gift of God. (Eph. ii. 5-8.) It is offered to all who enter in by Christ the door (John x. 9), and by Him only. (Acts iv. 12.) It is for sinners, for the lost who are dead in trespasses and sins (1 Tim. i. 15; Luke xv., xix. 10; Eph. ii.), who receive the word of salvation (Acts xiii. 26; 1 Cor. xv. 2; Acts xi. 14; 1 Thess. ii. 16), believing on the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts xvi. 31; 1 Cor. i. 21), and call on the name of the Lord. (Acts ii. 21; Rom. x. 9-13.) Thus believing they have the salvation now of their souls (1 Pet. i. 9), whilst awaiting full deliverance, which is ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Pet. i. 5.) All, then, having been done which God required for Him righteously to save ungodly ones who believe on His Son, the salvation being ready to be revealed we wait for it. So we are saved in hope (Rom. viii. 24), and shall be saved, that is, be brought through all troubles by the power of Christ's life, ἐν τῇ ζωῇ αὐτοῦ. (Rom. v. 10.) Meanwhile, we are to grow by the word unto salvation. (1 Pet. ii. 2.) God, then, has come out to us in the character of Saviour (1 Tim.; Titus), the Lord Jesus Christ being Himself our Saviour, and what is offered to all who will hear it is the salvation of God. (Acts xxviii. 28.)

Of reconciliation we learn that it had for its object to remove the enmity of man's heart to God. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing

their trespasses unto them. But when men, instead of being reconciled, crucified His Son, God raised up a ministry of reconciliation, and provided the message to draw alienated hearts to Himself. (2 Cor. v. 18-21.) This act on the part of God has not been without effect. Some have been reconciled to Him, and that by the death of His Son. (Rom. v. 10 ; Col. i. 21, 22.)

By redemption, as treated of in the New Testament, we are reminded of a ransom, in virtue of which those who benefit by it have entered on a change of condition, being redeemed by the blood of Christ. A drowning man, pulled out of the water, would be a saved man ; a slave set free from slavery by a ransom would be a redeemed one. Salvation reminds us of a change of *state*, and recalls to us from what we are delivered. Reconciliation speaks of a change of *feeling* in man's heart towards God. Sometime enemies, by wicked works, but now reconciled to and by God in the body of Christ's flesh through death. To be saved, to be reconciled, to be redeemed are then far from meaning the same thing, though equally applying to believers who share in that of which they speak. Nor can it be admitted that salvation is man's *försoning* with God ; for salvation and reconciliation are quite distinct—a change of state and a change of feeling are not at all the same, though man is the subject of both.

But *försoning* is also the Swedish term for atonement, and for propitiation. Now salvation, atonement, and propitiation are to be distinguished. Of salvation man is the subject, his welfare is the object. In atonement, God's holiness and righteousness, as well as the sinner's need, that he may stand in acceptance before the throne, are all fully cared for. This is plainly declared in the Old Testament. Salvation was known by Israel before the question of atonement was brought before them. "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord," was the word of Moses to Israel on the western shore of the Red Sea. (Ex. xiv. 13.) They learned what that salvation was when they stood on the opposite coast. "The

Lord is my strength and my song, and he is become my salvation," were the words of Moses and of the children of Israel on that eventful morning, as they saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. (Ex. xv. 2.) "The Lord," we read, "saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians." (Ex. xiv. 30.) Then, for the first time, was God's salvation to them displayed and known. But atonement was not spoken of till they reached Sinai. (Ex. xxix. 36.) God first told them of salvation (Ex. xiv. 13), as He had of redemption. (Ex. vi. 6.) God, too, first taught them the need of atonement; and He who spoke of these things, in His grace provided them all; and in the way that He spoke of them, and gave His people to participate in the results of them, He made it very plain how different they were.

For atonement by blood an altar is wanted, and a sanctuary, and a high priest to make it. No priesthood was needed, either for salvation or redemption to be enjoyed by the earthly people. For atonement to be made it was otherwise, for that involves both propitiation and substitution, integral parts of atonement, as Leviticus xvi. sets forth. In no sense, then, is salvation man's *försoning* with God. The *försoning* is the result of it. Salvation, too, is widely different from reconciliation. It is clearly distinguished in the word, as we have seen, from atonement, and hence from propitiation. In truth, atonement is needed for us to enjoy salvation.

But what are we to understand by atonement? some may inquire. Let scripture provide us with the answer. In the New Testament the term does not really occur. In the Old it is frequently to be met with; a reason for this it is not difficult to discern. The term is really a complex one, embracing more than one idea, namely, the death of the victim, propitiation by blood, sin-bearing, and the enduring the judgment of God. These, all comprised under the one term *כַּפָּרִים* in the Old Testament, are spoken of as distinct truths in the New Testament. (John iii. 14, 15; 1 John iv. 10, ii. 2; Heb. ii. 17, ix. 28; Rom. iv. 25; 1 Pet. ii. 24, iii. 18.) By salvation deliver-

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ance is effected. By atonement the question of guilt and the dealing with sins is settled with God. Salvation tells us of the love and power exercised towards those who are the subjects of it. Atonement reminds us of propitiation made by blood to meet and maintain the holiness and righteousness of God, that He might be just, and the justifier of ungodly ones who are of the faith of Jesus. Also it tells us of the sins of guilty ones carried away never to come back, and of divine judgment borne by a sinless victim on their behalf and in their stead. In this work the guilty ones who profit by it have no actual part. It has been done by the High Priest for them. And since the Lord Jesus Christ has risen, we can say, it is all settled between God and Him for all those who believe on Him.

Very plain, then, it is that in no sense, we must repeat it, is salvation man's *försoning* with God. It is important to be clear on this; and till the difference between salvation, reconciliation, redemption, and atonement is perceived, the teaching on such subjects cannot be clear. Nor whilst the same term *försonas* is used for reconciliation, propitiation, and atonement, will the truth be made plain.

It is true God did not need to be reconciled to man, but man to God; yet, had there been no atonement provided by God, there would have been no reconciliation by the death of His Son. It is likewise true that no change took place in God's heart towards man consequent on the fall, but God's ways with man did necessarily change. He drove him out of paradise, and man could never afterwards approach Him acceptably except on the ground of sacrifice. Death must take place ere a guilty creature can draw nigh to God to be accepted by Him. But more than death is wanted for that; and this God delineated in type, and made good by the sacrifice of His Son. Hence the institution of sacrifice by God, which witnessed that no change had taken place in His love toward man, though His ways with man had changed, because, though unchangeable in love, He is equally unchangeable in

holiness. It is true, too, that atonement had not for its object to appease God, nevertheless, it was absolutely requisite ere God could receive in righteousness fallen creatures before Him. If atonement, then, was called for, propitiation and substitution, which are integral parts of it, were clearly needed. So whilst salvation, reconciliation, and redemption tell of the activity of God in love to sinners, none of them, nor all of them together, can provide the ground on which He can be manifested as righteous in justifying ungodly ones without compromising one iota of His holiness. Atonement alone provides this. All that He is, as holy and righteous, is fully met by the blood on the mercy-seat, and the sins of His people having been laid on the head of the Substitute and carried away, God can righteously proclaim full forgiveness of them all.

God's wrath rests on the unbeliever. (John iii. 36.) We were all by nature children of wrath (Eph. ii. 3), and God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. i. 18); and it will be poured out in a day that is surely coming—the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. (Rom. ii. 5.) That we all deserved it is true. How, then, can any escape it? How can we escape? Who shall answer that question but God? That a guilty creature needs forgiveness we can all understand. And through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the true sin-offering that is provided, as He Himself declared on the day He rose from the dead. (Luke xxiv. 47.) But that is not all. Cleansing the sinner was not all that was requisite. God's wrath was righteously deserved. How could that be stayed? God's holiness, too, required to be maintained. Let us see what scripture can teach us on these two heads.

And first as to a sacrifice restraining the just outflow of divine wrath. Comparatively early in the world's history did God teach that. Before the law was given He had Himself declared it, when He addressed Eliphaz, Job's

friend, as recorded in Job xlii. 7, 8. We quote the passage, "And it was so that after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right as my servant Job hath. Therefore, take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer for yourselves a burnt-offering, and my servant Job shall pray for you, for him will I accept, lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job." The need and the efficacy of a sacrifice to turn aside the wrath of God is here plainly stated. Death must take place for that to be effected; and the offering was by God's appointment to be a burnt-offering, which, as we learn by the law subsequently given, could not be offered apart from the thought of atonement. (Lev. i. 4.) It is not here the cleansing of a sinner from his sins that is spoken of, but the turning aside of divine wrath from the proper objects of it, wrath already kindled, but which was stayed. For Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar did as the Lord commanded them, and the Lord accepted Job. We know of what those sacrifices were types. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ, then, was really required for God to act in grace and mercy to Job's three friends. In truth none of us can rightly measure the guilt of sin, and really understand, unless taught of God, what is wanted to meet His holiness and to maintain, unsullied, His righteousness. A sacrifice then can shield a person from wrath, and it is requisite for that purpose. It can also arrest the further outflow of divine vengeance, as David learned at the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. The Lord in mercy had arrested the arm of the destroying angel uplifted to smite Jerusalem: but the angel's sword was sheathed only when the offerings had been offered on the altar erected by David that day. (2 Sam. xxiv. 25; 1 Chron. xxi. 26, 27.)

Further, on the ground of sacrifice, God's way of *dealing* with His fallen guilty creatures can righteously

change. The story of Noah's burnt offering illustrates this. The flood had swept away the old world, leaving only those alive who had been preserved through it in the ark. Still man was not changed. He was not improved. So as far as he was concerned, if it was righteous to cut off men by the flood, it would have been equally righteous to have dealt in judgment still. There was nothing in man which could plead for grace, or claim a blessing from the Creator. The Lord tells us, most plainly, what He saw man to be after the flood (Gen. viii. 21)—morally no better than he was before it. How ingrained is the taint of the fall! The flesh is unchanged and unchangeable. Yet God could do, and did by virtue of the burnt offering, what He had never done, that we read of, since the fall; He blessed His fallen creatures, and blessed them as regards earth in one way more fully than He had blessed Adam in innocence, in that He gave them everything on earth for food, which He had never done before.

But more. As in the case of Job's friends, so in that of Eli's house, we are reminded that sacrifice is indispensable for divine judgment to be averted. "I have told him," said the Lord to Samuel, "that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore have I sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever." (1 Sam. iii. 13, 14.) That guilt should not be purged, **לֹא יִתְפָּאֵר** or atoned for, by sacrifice for ever. Nothing else can deal with the question of guilt, and avert the deserved judgment. Job's friends profited by the sacrifice. Eli's sons could not. But in both cases we learn that it is by sacrifice that divine judgment is averted. God's wrath must be averted. For that atonement is requisite. It is love which provides the sacrifice. It is holiness and righteousness which demand it. Atonement is needed.

What then shall we say to such a statement as the following: "There is not a single passage in the Bible

which sets forth the *försoning* as having its ground in this, that God's righteousness needed a vindication." (§ 720.) It is true "we must allow our heavenly Father to be as good as He says He is" (§ 719); but we must also allow that He is holy as He says He is. "I am holy," is His own word. Scripture has plainly taught us that His wrath can be stayed from breaking forth against those who deserve it, if the appointed sacrifice is offered up. We have also seen that the remainder of wrath can be restrained by virtue of sacrifice; and further that God can bless sinful creatures on that same ground. What, too, kept the destroying angel from entering the houses of the Israelites? The blood on the door-posts, the witness that life had been given up. "When I see the blood I will pass over you." God was dealing in judgment, and every house not sheltered by the blood would be visited by the angel of death. Yet those cut off were not really worse than the first-born of the Israelites who were spared. The blood on the door-posts proclaimed that there was no difference morally between them. But being there the angel was kept out. Jehovah passed over that house. It was love surely that provided the way of escape, but only in perfect consistency with God's righteousness. The love was seen in appointing a way of escape, and in telling the Israelites about it. Righteousness was displayed both in visiting each house that was not thus protected, and in shielding each family from the loss of their firstborn, who had, in faith in the divine word, put the blood on the door-post outside. Thus God's righteousness was seen displayed in a somewhat similar manner to that of which Romans iii. speaks. He is righteous in taking vengeance (ver. 5) as He did that night. He is righteous in sheltering from it all who make use of the divinely appointed way of escape. The teaching of scripture is clearly opposed to the statement of Dr. Waldenström, which we have quoted above.

One more instance will suffice. We read in Numbers ix. 13, where the observance of the passover is made incumbent on all the people, that "the man that is clean,

and is not in a journey, and forbeareth to keep the pass-over, even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people: because he brought not the offering of the Lord in his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin." If he duly kept the passover it would be well with him, in that case he would bring the offering of the Lord. If on the other hand he did not keep it, he would be amenable to divine judgment. He did not keep the passover because he had sinned. Yet by keeping it he would be saved from the threatened judgment, a judgment he would undoubtedly deserve, if he brought not the offering of the Lord. Now if cut off, would it have been the activity of divine love which did it, or would it have been an act of God in righteousness? Was it love that demanded the transgressor's death, or righteousness? It was love which warned him of his danger, that righteousness should not have to be vindicated by dealing with him in judgment. God then may have to act in righteousness, and deal with people in judgment.

(To be continued, the Lord willing.) C. E. S.

Nothing but *redemption* can bring to the heart of a poor sinner what God's character is as *love*. God is God. Let Him have His own way; yes, let Him have it! There is nothing like it for His glory—nothing like it for our needs. He knew right well what He did in giving Christ. He came not only to save a people, but to have a saved people with Himself in glory.

We never rightly see the full measure of the blessing wherewith God has blessed us, unless we see that it all sprang up in His own mind, as the God rich in mercy. God always keeps His place of the God rich in mercy. There is no end to what He will give. He has given us His Son, and He will send Him a second time from off the throne to take us up in bodies of glory, to shew out in us the riches of His mercy. God always acts as God. How utterly beyond all the thoughts of man, His having sent down His only-begotten Son to put away sin, because none but He could do it.

G. V. W.

THE WORLD.

THE world is corrupt, it lies in sin, it has rejected the Saviour—God come in grace. It is not only that man has been cast out of Eden because he was a sinner—which is true, and suffices for his condemnation—but there is more. God has done much to reclaim him. He gave the promises to Abraham, He called Israel to be His people, He sent the prophets, and, last of all, His only Son. God Himself came in grace, but man—as far as he could do it—cast out the God who was in the world in grace. Therefore the Lord said, “Now is the judgment of this world.” The last thing God could do was to send His Son, and He has done it. “I have yet,” He said, “one Son, my well-beloved; may be they will reverence him when they see him. And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.” The world is a world which has already rejected the Son of God; and where does it find its joy? In God or in Christ? No; in the pleasures of the flesh, in grandeur, in riches: it seeks to make itself happy without God, that it may not feel its want of Him. It would not need thus to seek happiness in pleasures if it were happy; formed by God with a breath of life for Himself, man cannot be satisfied with anything less than God.

Read the history of Cain. Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod. Then he built a city, and called it after the name of his son, Enoch. Afterwards Jabal was the father of such as have cattle (the riches of that day), and his brother's name was Jubal, the father of all such as handle the harp and organ. And Zillah bare Tubal-Cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron. We have here the world and its civilisation complete; not having God, they must make the world pleasant and beautiful. It will be said, But what is the harm of harps and organs? None, surely; the harm is in the heart of man, who uses these things to make himself happy without God, forgetting Him, flying from Him, seeking to content himself

in a world of sin, and to drown the misery of this condition of alienation from God by hiding himself in the corruption that reigns there. The elegance which man affects makes him only too often slip insensibly into this corruption which he seeks to conceal with mirth.

But the new man, born of God, partaking of the divine nature, cannot find its delight in the world—it shuns that which would separate it from God. Where the flesh finds its happiness and its pleasures, the spiritual life finds none. James speaks of actual corruption, but he does not speak as though one part of the world were corrupt, and another pure; on the contrary, it is defiled and corrupt in its principles, and in every way. He who is conformed to it is corrupt in his walk. The friendship of the world is enmity against God. Whoever will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God. We must keep ourselves pure from the world itself. We have, indeed, to pass through it, and to be, in passing through it, the epistle of Christ, undefiled by the world which surrounds us, as Christ was undefiled in the midst of a world that would not receive Him.

J. N. D.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

12. Q.—Will you please explain the passage (John xvi. 23), "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he shall give it to you." To what time does "that day" refer? M. G. P., Boston.

A.—To the present time. The meaning is that which the Lord further explains in verse 26, that they would not have to come to Him with requests, as if the Father were inaccessible to them, and they needed Him to go to Him for them; but they would be able to go directly to the Father in His name—in the consciousness of the new and blessed place of acceptance in Himself, which by the Spirit they would have. It must be remembered that

this is a question of approach to God as such : not a denial of the fitness of addressing the Lord also in prayer in due time and place, still less of worshipping Him, which, as the Lamb, all heaven does. F. W. G.

13. Q.—What is the difference between the unity spoken of in John xvii., and that of Ephesians iv. ? Was not the Lord's prayer for practical unity to be manifested here ? H. S., Pella.

A.—In the Gospel of John it is always the family of God that is looked at, whereas, in Ephesians it is rather the church. In John xvii. unity is spoken of in three ways: 1. In verse 11, respecting those the Lord was leaving in the world, already His ; 2. The same thing as to all those who should believe afterwards through their word. In both these cases it is one springing from a common life and nature, as the Son's with the Father, and indeed partakers of divine life—children of God. This, of course, is practical unity, and its manifestation here is what is contemplated in “that the world may *believe* that thou hast sent me.” The third unity, however, alone is “perfecting unto one,” in glory.

In Ephesians iv. seven unities are spoken of, connected with three circles, successively widening. The inner circle is that of the church : “One body, one spirit, one hope of your calling.” The next, that of the kingdom : “one Lord, one faith”—that is, one creed, as we say—“one baptism” (water baptism, of course, as always where there is no addition to distinguish from this). The outermost circle is that of creation : “One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all.”

The unity of the Spirit, which we are bidden to endeavour to keep here is easily realised as to its meaning when we consider that the body without the Spirit is dead ; the real practical unity of the body is in that which knits all the members into a living organic whole, giving each its place of service and relationship to the rest for the common welfare, and above all to the governing Head. F. W. G.

14. Q.—In what way was the resurrection of those saints in Matthew xxvii. 52, 53, connected with the purpose of God or the testimony of Christ; and did they die again, or what—if you have light on it? W. W. F.

A.—The resurrection of the saints in question is the testimony of the authority of death annulled for those that are Christ's. The portion of man naturally is death and judgment, this the Lord had taken in body and soul; in body, by dying; in soul, by those sufferings as forsaken of God, which gave that death of His its true character and power. (See Heb. xiii. 11, 12.) The double testimony is given then at His death: 1. By the rent veil, to the face of God no more hidden for those who come to Him; 2. By the resurrection to death in its power and title gone.

I do not apprehend that these risen ones died again: 1. Because it is evident by the language that they did not, as Lazarus, return to a life on earth at all; 2. Because their waiting for the Lord's resurrection seems to bespeak them of that company of which He risen is the firstfruits; 3. Because their death once more would seem to destroy the completeness of their testimony to death being annulled.

F. W. G.

15. Q.—Why is an ephah of fine flour allowed as a sin-offering (Lev. v. 11), being without blood? E. M.

A.—As a concession to man's poverty, not as a proper expression of what was really needed. So, if Christ is trusted as a Saviour, God, who knows the truth and value of what He has done, can accept this faith in Him, spite of much misapprehension as to the real character of His work. But it must be *poverty* that is in question, not *rejection*, but *ignorance* merely of that blessed work..

F. W. G.

16. Q.—Can you throw any light upon how the incense was kindled at the first institution of the tabernacle?

A. B.

A.—The regular way was from the altar of burnt-offering, as Leviticus xvi. 12, Numbers xvi. 46; and I know of no exception.

F. W. G.

THE LESSONS OF THE AGES.

THE TRIAL OF CONSCIENCE IN THE AGE BEFORE THE FLOOD.

(Concluded from page 182.)

WE see that, after the fall, God purposed no new trial to man whatever. He revealed the coming of that Seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's head. He instituted sacrifice, and thus not obscurely intimated the way of blessing and acceptance for man. He declared actually His acceptance of believing Abel, and to Cain the ground of his rejection and the remedy that still remained. But He gave no law; He urged man to no fatal use of his own efforts to work out righteousness. Conscience was to be the teacher of that need which they had as those outside of Eden, whose closed gate was a perpetual witness, as were also the sorrow and death which sin had introduced into the world; while repentance—the truthful acknowledgment of their condition—would be as ever the way out of it, by faith in that which on God's part met it all.

The only test for man was this necessary one, whether conscience would have force to bring him thus to himself and to God. Alas, as to this we know the result. The figure prominent in the antediluvian world is one in whose person the world, at every period, finds its awful representative. "The way of Cain," as Jude may assure us, has survived the flood, and been followed by the mass through the many generations thence to the present time. It is, of course, the exact opposite of God's way; as its first originator stands before us as the first of that seed of the serpent ever in enmity to the woman's Seed. He is thus the incarnation of Satanic opposition to the counsel of God. Abel approaches God by sacrifice, the appointed foreshadowing of Him in whom the conflict between good and evil would find its decisive issue; Cain, rejecting sacrifice, brings as an offering the fruit of his own labour. Here begins, with him, the self-assertion

which required so many ages of trial to beat down,—a "ministration of death" and "condemnation." It is man himself who raises the question of his ability to meet God and merit acceptance at His hands ; and the question being raised must be fully and with long patience entertained, and conclusively settled.

Towards Cain himself, who at once shews how murder can lurk under the specious form of righteousness, this patience is exercised. He abuses it to build a city in defiance of his doom of vagabondage—a city which his sons adorn with arts and appliances, which, like man's first invention, are made to cover from themselves the shame of their nakedness. Adam wove his girdle out of fig-leaves ; Cain's sons weave all nature into a web for the awful purpose of self-deception, forcing it into unwilling revolt against God, and idolatrous usurping of its Maker's place. As with their first father, so with these imitators of his apostasy and not his faith, conscience but drives them to hide from the insupportable presence of God, under the cover of His own handiwork. They are pioneers of progress, which, with all its mighty results in the ages since, has never sufficed to lift off the curse from the earth, or take the sting from death, or satisfy the craving heart of man, or deliver from the corruption that is in the world through lust. It has built up luxury, has added burdens to the already burdened, has kindled wars, which come of the "lusts which war in the members." The last of Cain's family is but Tubal-Cain—"Cain's issue." Its Lamech, "the strong man," with his two wives (first of polygamists) and his argument for impunity because of the long-suffering patience, of which Cain had been the subject—shews us clearly and conclusively the moral result.

But Cain and his seed do not fill the whole scene here. The forefront they do ; and history at the beginning, like all history since, has little to tell of outside their doings. Yet there is a remnant, beginning with one who, by divine appointment, takes the place of martyred Abel. His son's name, Enos (in a day when names still had

meaning), tells us of his acceptance of the humbling reality of man's condition—Enos, "frail man." And "then," we read, "men began to call on the name of Jehovah." God gets His place when man takes his. And so it ever is.

Here, then, a new beginning, as it were, is found; and the divine record, leaving out Cain and his apostate race, gives us now a fresh genealogy, in which we are once more told how "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image, and called his name Seth." Of the men of this generation it is but noted that they lived and died, although now first we find—what is wanting as to Cain's race—every year of their unobtrusive lives noted before God. Divine interest is shewn in what for man has none, and contributes nothing to the world's history.

When, indeed, we come to Enoch, seventh from Adam, God can keep silence no longer: "And Enoch walked with God three hundred years; and Enoch walked with God; and he was not: for God took him." Precious and emphatic commendation of Enoch! Solemn and decisive judgment as to the ruin of all on earth; for the one who walks with God He takes from the earth. How plain an intimation that this pious seed is not as yet to fill the earth! Nay, surely a very clear one that that seed itself begins to fail. This Enoch-walk is rare as it is precious. Indeed we know that but two generations later Noah stands the solitary representative of it upon earth. Even in Noah's father, Lamech, though he speaks piously of God, we can detect deterioration. Is he not, even in his name, sadly linked with Cain's race: another Lamech, a "strong man;" not an Enos, taking his place in self-humiliation before God. It is striking, also, that like his Cainite namesake, he too has his memorable saying. And though at first sight they may seem quite diverse, and in some sense really are, there is yet, spite of

all, a striking similarity. For if the Cainite Lamech prophesies impunity to himself for his wrong doing, from the false argument as to God's long-suffering; the Sethite no less, upon the very eve of judgment, speaks of comfort to a generation soon to be swept away by the flood. "And he called his [son's] name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed."

There was truth in this. It was of Noah's day that we read: "And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake." Lamech's prophecy was true then as to the "comfort" God had in store for man; false only as to the application to a generation, the survivors of whom were cut off by the judgment that preceded the blessing.

If we go on to the next chapter, the marks of fatal declension are yet more manifest. However we may interpret the "sons of God" of the first paragraph there, it is abundantly evident that Seth's line, as a whole, are no longer exempt from the universal corruption. God declares His Spirit shall not always strive with man, and fixes the limit of present patience to a hundred and twenty years.

Yet it is just here that the world's mighty ones are found, and giants appear upon the earth, men whose fame survives their awful judgment. God on His part saw "that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and that every imagination of the thought of his heart was only evil, and that continually. And it repented Jehovah that he had made man upon the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."

When at last all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth, and Noah alone is found walking with God, the flood closed the time of His longsuffering; and the earth emerging from its baptism, bears upon its surface but eight living persons, as the nucleus of a new world.

F. W. G.

“ FORTY DAYS.”

No. III.

THE FORTY DAYS' SEARCHING OF CANAAN. FAITH AND UNBELIEF.

(*Numbers xiii., xiv.*)

THE Book of Numbers has a very peculiar place and significance in the word of God. It is the Book of the Wilderness: of the journeying or itinerary of the children of Israel, after redemption was accomplished, and they had been brought out of Egypt, across the Red Sea, to go onwards and upwards to the Land of Canaan.

The wilderness way never was in the purpose of God for Israel, though it took forty years to accomplish it; just as your pathway here, as a saint, does not enter into the purpose of God for you. It is His place to test and try you, to see what is in your heart; to teach you lessons which could be learned in no other place. But God has not redeemed you for earth, but for heaven; not for this world, but for glory; this is His purpose.

You will notice here a very solemn thing. This journey, which took forty years to accomplish, was really a pathway of only eleven days. This we see from Deuteronomy i.: “There are *eleven days*’ journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir, unto Kadesh Barnea.” Kadesh is on the very borders of the land, at the south-east extremity. But mark the next verse, “And it came to pass in the *fortieth year*, in the *eleventh month*,” &c. It was a short journey if taken direct, right into the land of promise; but through unbelief it took forty long weary years to accomplish it.

How long, may we not ask, would the journey have been, from the day that the Lord had ascended up on high, after He had risen from the dead, and sent the Holy Ghost to form the church of God, until He would return again, had she been faithful to His desire, “that they all may be one; that the world may believe”? (John xvii.) How soon all would have been gathered together, and the Lord have taken her home! But soon

all was ruin—and God's longsuffering waited ever since, in patience, to accomplish His purpose; and we ourselves are the fruit of man's unfaithfulness and His delay.

Let us not be discouraged then because of evil: God is able to turn it all to blessing in His own way.

Now we know from 1 Cor. x. 11, that "all these things happened unto them [Israel] for examples [types], and are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." It is not that the people are the type; but the "things which happened unto them"—a most important distinction.

We will now turn to some passages of scripture to shew that the wilderness never entered into the purpose of God at all.

Let us look at Exodus iii., at "the section on the bush." When God appeared to Moses by that strange sight, "A bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." Israel was in the furnace of Egypt; therefore God will be in the bush burning with fire. He would identify Himself with His people—wherever they are, when about to deliver.

We find this purpose told us in the seventh verse concerning Israel: "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows." How blessed to think that even when no cry was addressed to Him, He could say, "I have seen;" "I have heard;" "I know." These touching words unfold to us three degrees of suffering and sorrow in His own. There is the outward sorrow that can be *seen* by others. This is the easiest to bear, and that in which often most sympathy is known from others. It may be with us a sickness, or some outward thing which may be recognised, and which others can share. Of this God says, "I have seen the affliction of my people." There is a deeper sorrow than this, which may be expressed by a cry out of the depths of the heart to God. "I have heard their cry," saith the Lord. It is a sorrow which can be put in words before Him, or before a sympathising friend, and

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in which the heart often finds that friend's sympathy, and God Himself hears the cry which expressed the agony. But there is a deeper sorrow still; a sorrow in which the kindest friend can have no share—the sorrow that eats away the heart, and could not be expressed in words, which, if it were possible to be expressed, had better be left untold; the unuttered sorrow of the anguished heart, which cannot even be told to God in words—the "groan which cannot be uttered." Such can only be laid before Him in the silence of His presence, while the soul is sustained by those blessed, truly blessed words of His, "I know their sorrows." What rest there is in these words! "I have seen" what could be seen; "I have heard" the cry that others may have heard; but "I know their sorrows" when no words could express them even to Me; how much less even to the friend or companion who might truly sympathise!

And "I am come down to deliver . . . and to bring them out of that land, unto a good land, and a large; a land flowing with milk and honey." This, then, was His purpose. Not one word of the waste deserts which lay between.

When the Lawgiver comes (chap. vi.) to announce this purpose to them, he tells them, in those sevenfold "I wills" of the Lord: "I will bring you out," "I will rid you out of their bondage," "I will redeem you," "I will take you to me," "I will be to you a God," "I will bring you into the land," "I will give it you for an heritage." Here, again, no word of the wilderness is expressed. It was not His purpose.

Thus faith takes up this wondrous purpose in its song—the first we ever find in scripture—(Exod. xv.): "Till the people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over which thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance." Through the wilderness? No; not a word about it in the song of faith; for faith takes up God's thoughts because He has revealed them.

So in Ephesians, we find no time, no earth, no wilder-

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ness there. We are taken out of the depths of ruin, and set in the heavenly places in Christ, without the pathway there at all. Like the robber on the cross beside the Lord: he is taken from the depths of degradation *at once* into the paradise of God with Christ!

Why, then, does the wilderness intervene? Why the pathway of sorrow and distress, unredeemed by a single feature of good in ourselves, as from ourselves? Why bring in that dreary journey where our failures are seen, and our hearts exposed?

The eighth chapter of Deuteronomy is the reply. It is a synopsis of the whole book that is before us.

"And thou shalt remember *all the way* which the Lord thy God led thee, these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart," &c. There are two things God would always have us remember: "The day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt, all the days of thy life" (Deut. xvi. 3), and "all the way" they passed through. Not an incident was to be forgotten; but all was turned to blessing by Him who alone could say it was "To do them good at the latter end." (Ver. 16.)

It was the trying of their faith; and the testing of patience too; disclosing what was in the hearts of His redeemed. He knew it well, before they were tested; but they learned it, as we do, through those testings by the way. Bitter, too, are these lessons; humbling us to the dust, as they should do; but filling the heart with a deeper, fuller knowledge of Him who has redeemed us, and of what was ever in His heart the while.

The people of Israel are now at Kadesh Barnea, (Num. xiii.) They had gone the "eleven days'" journey, and were on the borders of the land of promise. There were its sunny plains, stretching out before their view—the garden of the Lord; that good land, which flowed with milk and honey. Their feet were almost treading upon their possessions; when in one short moment the prospect is clouded through *unbelief*!

These things are written for our admonition, that they

may warn and instruct our souls. I speak to you who are Christians, who profess to believe in Him—the Christ of God. Many of you are true Christians; many, alas, only Christians in name, Christless Christians and lost. Yet all profess His name. This is the state of things that Christendom presents before the Lord. A place of privilege, yet a place of solemn responsibility as well.

They had all come out of Egypt: all seemed to be nearing the land of Canaan; yet thousands fell in the wilderness, and never got there at all. Why was this? The answer is ready: "So we see they could not enter in because of unbelief." (Heb. iii. 19.) "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall, after the same example of unbelief." (Heb. iv. 11.)

The people then were at Kadesh Barnea—just a step from the land—where every hope, and every promise would be fulfilled. Immediately the hitherto secret cloud of unbelief, not larger at first than a man's hand, is seen growing black, and full of sorrow. It seemed so very wise; so like prudence and caution to send up men to spy out the land. It looked well, as it reads in Numbers xiii., and as if all was according to the mind of the Lord. *He* spake to Moses saying, "Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I have given unto the children of Israel." This is most solemn. There is no secret spring seen in the opening of this chapter, which would lead us to suppose anything was wrong.

Do we not find oftentimes the same kind of thing in our own histories? You do a thing; you *seem* fully to have the Lord's mind and word for what you are then carrying out. I may meet you in six months' time, and you will say to me, "It was all unbelief"! How solemn! How sad to discern that the Lord often permits a thing; yea, orders a thing "because of unbelief," as He does here. The thermometer of faith had gone down: the bright first song of faith in Exodus xv., which seized God's purpose, where faith, too, sets its seal to all that He had made known; all was gone now. Prudence

and forethought were now the guiding principles; and all looked well for the moment. God then descended to their evil, and said to Moses, "Send thou men!"

Has God never done this with us, my brethren? Has He never met our desires where we were? and we thought it a good sign, and that all seemed according to His mind. Have we never discovered, after a while, that all was the fruit of unbelief?

See Moses, too, the meekest man that was in all the earth, how he was deceived; the very leader of the people of God. "And I said unto you, ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the Lord our God doth give unto us. Behold the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee; go up and possess it. . . . And ye came near and said unto me . . . we will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, &c. . . . *And the saying pleased me well*"! (Deut. i.)

My brethren, *faith never reasons*. Faith does not trust God for the things that are *difficult*; but for the things that seem *impossible*! Do not say a thing is difficult, and therefore we *must* trust God about it. Say rather it is *impossible*, and therefore we *will* trust Him.

The people's faith, then, had gone down, and the Lord directs them to send the spies. Nay, it seems as if the Lord *desired* it so to be. Nay, alas, He *permits* it. How often have we gone on our knees and pleaded with God for things; and how did it turn out? He gave us our request and sent leanness into our souls. Have not lives been spared at the pleadings of His saints, individually or collectively, which have been the bitter sorrow of after years? Have not ways of life been sought to find our daily bread withal, and have been given to us too; which afterwards broke our hearts with the sorrows they entailed? How fearful we grow as we advance in life, *lest* we should ask anything from Him but the right thing—that which is according to His own will.

F. G. P.

(*To be continued, the Lord willing.*)

SALVATION AND ATONEMENT.

REMARKS ON AN ARTICLE IN THE SWEDISH
MAGAZINE "PIETISTEN," FOR SEPTEMBER, 1881.

(Concluded from page 192.)

BUT, says Dr. W.: God's wrath is not appeased through the death of Christ. (§ 728.) True, as to any outflow of it against the impenitent. Yet by sacrifice God's wrath can be turned from objects of it, as Job's friends proved, and as the godly in Israel will by-and-by declare, "Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me." (Isa. xii. 1.) Deliverance from the wrath to come (1 Thess. i. 10) shews that God's wrath will yet be poured out; the death of Christ has not dried it up. But that wrath is turned away from those who believe on Him. For believing on Him now answers to the bringing the offering of the Lord under the law. The man who brought it when needful was preserved from the threatened visitation of divine judgment. The one who now believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall not come into judgment.

Nor is this all that is effected by sacrifice, for God's holiness is met and maintained by it. Now that had to be cared for, as well as His righteousness to be vindicated. The Lord would purge His camp of old from the presence of every leper, and of every one that had an issue, or who was defiled by the dead, that they should not defile their camps in the midst whereof He dwelt. (Num. v. 3, 4.) Besides this, He provided that by sacrifice the person should be cleansed from the defilement attaching to him. Turning to Leviticus xv. we read of certain defilements, and of the sacrifices to be brought in consequence (vers. 14, 15, 29, 30) to make atonement for the person, God by this providing that death should not be meted out to him. "Thus," we read, "shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, that they die not in their uncleanness, when they defile my tabernacle that is among them." (Ver. 31.) Similarly we read in Numbers xix. 20, "But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off

from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the Lord: the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him, he is unclean." The man or the woman could not help being defiled by the issue. (Lev. xv.) The man, too, might only have been doing his duty in touching a dead body. He clearly was not breaking any law, if he carried out the body of one who had died in the tent; but he would have defiled the sanctuary of the Lord, if he had not made use of the appointed ritual, to which the holiness of God necessitated his conformity on pain of death. Thus the uncleanness was met by sacrifice directly as in Leviticus xv., or indirectly as in Numbers xix. Death had to take place in either case for the defiled one to be made clean, otherwise the defilement could not be put away. And because by his presence, if he availed not himself of God's gracious provision, he defiled the sanctuary, death was the portion to be meted out to him. In these cases it is plainly seen that God's holiness had to be thought of as well as the sinner's forgiveness, and by the death of a sacrificial victim only could divine holiness be fully cared for, and perfectly maintained. For atonement, be it remembered, was required because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, as well as because of their transgressions in all their sins. (Lev. xvi. 16.)

Clearly then there were other issues to be met by atonement than "the cleansing man from sin, and placing him again in a right relationship to God." (§ 716.) To confine the scope of atonement to the sinner's wants as these words of Dr. Waldenström clearly do, is to present a very defective view of what is effected by it. The man who refused to use the water of separation defiled God's sanctuary. The person unclean by an issue, would, if he were disobedient to the divine word, defile God's tabernacle. In God's eye then there was another question raised besides the person's uncleanness, and that question was nothing less than His own holiness. His tabernacle, His sanctuary, was defiled, if the person refused to conform to the ritual appointed for him. Now that ritual

was based on death. The person who was rendered unclean, brought a sin offering and a burnt offering to make atonement for himself in Leviticus xv. The one defiled by the dead, profited by the water of separation, prepared by being mixed with the ashes of the burnt heifer. (Num. xix.) Death, as seen in Leviticus xv., the bearing divine judgment, as well as the dealing with the blood were all requisite for the unclean persons not to defile the sanctuary of Jehovah. Not, be it remembered, that the one unclean defiled the sanctuary by his presence within it, for unless he was one of the tribe of Levi he could never set his foot inside it; yet the sanctuary would be defiled, if one such person was allowed in the camp.

God, then, has provided atonement by which His holiness and righteousness are maintained, and the sins of the guilty can be put away. But what moved Him to do this? He has told us. It was love, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John iv. 10.) Again, "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." (Eph. ii. 4, 5.) He loved because He loved, as He told Israel. (Deut. vii. 7, 8.) His love, it is true, did not need any *försoning* (§ 718), for He is love. But He did not love because it is righteous to love, as Dr. W. states. (§ 720.) "It is righteous," he writes, "both for God and man to love sinners, to have compassion, and to save sinners. It was righteous that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son for its salvation." This is all confusion. It is righteous for a man to love his neighbour as himself, for God commanded it. It is fit that God's children should love their enemies (Matt. v. 44, 45), because they are born of God. But God loves because He is love. Love is the activity of the divine nature. God is seen to be righteous in loving. The blood on the mercy seat proclaims that. But it cannot be said that it is righteous in God to love the wicked. What righteousness would that be to love a child of the devil, or the son of

perdition? "With such a love (John iii. 16) He has loved Cain as well as the Virgin Mary, Judas as well as John." (§ 718.) This is a mistake, arising from the application of a general statement to every individual. The passage itself makes it plain, "God so loved the world that whosoever believeth." It is not said that He loved each one in the world, but that He so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth, &c. Here the individual comes in. Of no one are we authorised to say God loves him, till he has shewn himself to be God's child by believing on His Son. Into whose heart is God's love shed abroad? The covetous, the liar, the blood-thirsty and deceitful man the Lord abhorreth. (Ps. x. 3; v. 6.) Does God love such? Again we read, "I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau." (Mal. i. 2, 3.) Here at any rate is one mentioned whom God did not love. Was it righteous, we ask, for God to send His Son to die? Under what obligation did God lie, that He had to send His beloved Son to die for sinners? Scripture tells us it was love that made Him do it. (1 John iv. 10.)

Atonement being needed, who makes it? Does God (§ 762)? Scripture tells us it is the priest. (Lev. iv. 20, 26; v. 6, 10, 13; vi. 7; xii. 8; xvi. 32-34, and Heb. ii. 17.) God reconciles enemies. The priest made propitiation for the sins of the people. God provided the sacrifice by which atonement could be made, hence the language of the Psalmist (lxxviii. 38; lxxix. 9); and God appointed the priest by whose service in the sanctuary and at the altar it could be accomplished. (Heb. v. 4, 5.) For by the high priest alone, and when alone in the sanctuary, could propitiation be effected, and by him alone could the scape-goat be charged with all the sins of the people.

But first on that day (Lev. xvi.) God was thought of, and His nature, and His throne cared for. Propitiation by blood was made in the sanctuary, ere the high priest sent away the scape-goat, on which were placed all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins. The value of propitiation by blood, and the nature of it, the New Testament teaches

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us. "God sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John iv. 10.) "He is the propitiation for our sins." So the saint who has failed can always turn to God, and know that his standing before the throne remains ever the same. "But not for ours only," adds John, "but also for the whole world." (1 John ii. 2.) For on the ground of the value in God's eyes of that blood God is seen to be perfectly righteous in acting in grace towards any one and every one, who is willing to share in the proffered salvation. The making propitiation was an act Godward, and required the high priest to effect it. (Heb. ii. 17.) Results which flow from it are declared in Romans iii. Of the one then who has made it, of its abiding value, and how far God's grace can reach in consequence, and who provided for it, of all this we read in the writings of John. Of the official position of the one who has made it, and of beneficial results which flow to us from it, Paul has taught us.

Turning to substitution, an integral part of atonement, though the term is not met with in the Bible, the truth expressed by it is plainly declared, nor is the thought of it confined to the Mosaic ritual. Abraham and Isaac both experienced the benefits of it, when the father was able to offer up the ram provided by God instead of Isaac his son. (Gen. xxii. 13.) The Israelites, too, must have understood what is meant by the term, when the Levites were taken by God to keep Aaron's charge and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle instead of all the first-born males of the other tribes. (Num. iii.) Of substitution David spoke in the bitterness of his grief for Absalom, lamenting that he had not been able to die instead of his rebellious son. (2 Sam. xviii. 33.) Of substitution really effected for guilty ones Isaiah prophesied in terms now familiar to so many: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." "And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "He shall bear their iniquities."

"And he bare the sins of many." (Isa. liii. 5, 6, 11, 12.) That, and more than that, which David could not do for Absalom, the remnant of Israel will find has been done for them. Of this the Lord spake in Matthew xx. 28, Mark x. 45. And of it Paul speaks when he writes, "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Heb. ix. 28); and Peter likewise, "who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24); and "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." (1 Pet. iii. 18.)

Now of this the scape-goat was typical. For Aaron was to lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, which he was then to send away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat bore on itself all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited. No plainer type of substitution could we have than this. The sins transferred to the goat, it carried them away, never to return. If the goat did not return, the sins laid on it could not again be brought up against the guilty. They were gone, not as blotted out, but as carried away on the head of the appointed victim.

But substitution is not confined to sin-bearing, though the scape-goat is the plainest type that we have of it, it includes also the bearing divine judgment, which the Lord Jesus Christ has borne in the greatness of His grace (Ps. xxii. 1), that those who believe on Him should not come into judgment. (John v. 24.) Now this was typified on the day of atonement by the burnt offering, which was wholly consumed on the brazen altar, and by the appointed part of the sin offering that was burnt upon it, and unless this part of the day's ritual was carried out, atonement was not completed. (Lev. xvi. 24.) Whatever was consumed on the altar was burnt up by the fire thereon, which came down from heaven on the eighth day of Aaron's consecration, and for the keeping alight of which provision was made under the law. (Lev. vi. 13.)

Thus the bearing divine judgment in the place of God's people was symbolised, as often as any sacrifice or a portion of it was burnt on the brazen altar by the priest—typical of that which the Lord endured that we should never pass through it.

But it is expressly denied that the offerings under the law set forth a bearing of divine judgment in the guilty one's place (§ 756); for unbloody sacrifice, as a flour offering, could at times be brought for a sin. It is, of course, true that every offering put on the altar could not symbolise death, but there was *not one* burnt on it in which the bearing divine judgment was not *directly* typified. Death and judgment are quite distinct, though of course generally connected. We say generally, because the beast and false prophet will pass at once into their final condition of judgment without first dying. (Rev. xix. 20.) Death was not always typified, but the bearing of divine judgment was portrayed in whatever was put on God's altar. So the flour offering of Leviticus v. 12 was not rightly dealt with till part had been burnt on the altar. The endurance by the Lord Jesus Christ of divine judgment for sinners, God had always typified before Him. How precious was that in His eyes! No meat offering could be dealt with at the altar without the endurance of divine judgment being distinctly traced out in type. We cannot make acceptable mention before God of the spotless life of His Son, if we do not own that He suffered for us, bore our judgment. The burning then of the offering wholly or in part on the altar, effectually answers the objections in sections 756, 757 to a substitutionary bearing of divine judgment. What Dr. Waldenström denies was just that which was never omitted in type in any offering that was put on the altar. Nor is his remark of any value that offerings for atonement did not express a substitutionary bearing of judgment, since they could only be offered for such sins as had not the penalty of death attached to them (§ 757); because in cases of defilement, for which a sacrifice was provided to make atonement, thus shewing that death could in

certain cases be averted (but if averted by sacrifice it must in default of it have been inflicted), the Lord distinctly declared He made that provision, that they should not die in their uncleanness, when they defiled His tabernacle. (Lev. xv. 31.) What would have been meted out to the one who refused compliance with the ritual to make atonement for his uncleanness? Again, in Numbers xix., whilst the water of separation, if used, would preserve the defiled one from death, it is distinctly stated that, if such an one neglected to use it, death was the only lot to which he could look forward. The penalty of death was not needful to be inflicted for the uncleanness; but should the person refuse compliance with the divine command, judicial dealing was his desert. Offerings then, as we have pointed out, provided for cases in which the death of the unclean one was not primarily called for, did indicate in type divine judgment borne on his behalf by another—his substitute, which kept him from bearing it. And if uncleanness might necessitate the death of the individual, what shall we say of transgressions or sins? In truth Dr. Waldenström leaves out in his reasoning an important factor in the case, viz., the nature of God, which must be cared for in all its holiness and righteousness, even at the cost of divine judgment being borne either by the substitute or by the individual concerned. Indeed, how little is the nature and the need of the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ understood, even by those who really believe in it!

And what shall we think of a statement, "that scripture never speaks of its being righteous to punish the innocent in the place of the guilty"? (§ 755.) One could scarcely suppose a Christian so preoccupied with his thesis as to forget that the Lord Jesus offered up Himself. (Heb. vii. 27.) He gave Himself for our sins. (Gal. i. 4, ii. 20; Matt. xx. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Heb. ix. 28.) Nor will Dr. W.'s remark on Isaiah liii. 4, 5 help him. The prophet Isaiah, it is true, sets it forth as an error that the Jews counted the Lord to be merely smitten of God. But why? Because the act of smiting was not a substitu-

tionary one, nor has it to do with atonement, though it took place when He made atonement. They viewed Him as smitten for His own sins, whereas in truth, as the prophet shews, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." The prophet distinctly asserts the substitutionary character of His death.

Further as to the laying on of hands (§ 758), it did not express, it is true, the transference of the punishment to the animal, but it did express identification of the offerer with the victim. If it was an offering of sweet savour, the offerer was accepted, being identified with the sweet savour of the sacrifice. If it was for sin, the offering was identified with the sinner, and so could stand in his place, and be treated as he deserved. All this is very simple. But the teaching of scripture will not be understood till it is seen what is really comprised in the term—atonement; and that a great deal more is really comprised in it than simply purging the sinner from his sins. Nor shall we grasp the teaching about it by simply analysing the word. We must see what scripture tells us of all that to which the term atonement is applied. The priest it was who made it, by which propitiation as well as substitution was effected. Not that He did it as God's substitute, as Dr. W. states. (§ 764.) It was part of the duty of his office. (Heb. ii.) Was the Lord as High Priest God's substitute? Yet not to appease God. Here Dr. W. is right, and we cannot too stoutly maintain that. But God, because of what He is, required the blood of atonement to enable Him in righteousness to accept guilty ones before Him. Atonement, then, is much more than cleansing. Propitiation was needful for God to cleanse guilty ones.

It is true atonement is by blood, but that necessitated death—for blood is the life of the flesh. But the dealing with the live goat was also an integral part of atonement, the two goats being but one sin offering; *so all that was done with both, was together what was comprised under the one word atonement.* If the reader seizes this thought, he will see that it is not the derivation of the

word atonement that will teach him its full meaning ; but the application of that term to the different acts of Aaron on that eventful and solemn day. Attention to this will clear up a great deal, and keep each one from being carried away by his own thoughts.

C. E. S.

TWO DESIRES OF CHRIST FOR HIS OWN,

OR,

JOHN XVII. 24, 26.

AT the close of this marvellous chapter, there are two desires of peculiar sweetness, both in themselves and in their connection with each other. The one is in verse 24, and the other in verse 26. In the former the Lord desires for His own, that they may be with Him where He is, but observe for what end—"that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

Now, in looking forward to the blessedness of being with Christ, do we not often think of that only which more directly concerns ourselves? Yet we shall always find that our fullest blessing is linked with the glory of Christ, and this, when apprehended, gives real enlargement to the heart. The Lord had just said, "the glory which thou gavest me I have given them," but He does not stop there. It is not enough for Christ (however great for us) that we should share the glory which He has earned, and the Father has given to Him, as man.

Nor is it enough for the heart that knows Christ. Will it be nothing to see Him acting in all the plenitude of His power in subduing all things, in reigning over all things, in dispensing peace and bringing in everlasting blessing, and receiving in return the glory and honour due to His blessed name? Surely He counts upon the affections of our hearts in this.

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Nay more, the very glory He sets us in will be but the sphere where we may behold His glory given, according to the love of the Father, before the world was, and to find our delight in it. In all things He must have the pre-eminence, and so it will be in the day of glory. We have a sample of it in the transfiguration. It was His glory that was manifested. Moses and Elias "appeared in glory" with Him, but it was His glory that characterised the scene, and arrested the attention of the disciples. "They saw his glory and the two men that stood with him."

In Revelation v. it is the Lamb that is worthy to take the book, and it is the Lamb that receives equal honour with Him that sits upon the throne, according to the purpose of God expressed in John v. 22, 23. The elders, no doubt, enjoy the nearest place in this scene, but it is not their own glory they celebrate, but His.

And again, of the heavenly city in Revelation xxi. we read, "the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light [or lamp] thereof." Thus the city, with its precious stones and "street of pure gold as it were transparent glass," is the suited and glorious vessel for the display of the glory, but the light which gives it all its lustre is not its own. God and the Lamb are in it in the very closest way, yet in a glory distinctly their own.

We see, then, that however near grace may bring us, and however fully we may be blessed with and in Christ, we are never blessed on a level with Him. On the contrary, our very nearness to Him is, as here expressed, that we might behold His glory. Indeed, this itself is an additional blessing, and at the same time a witness to the grace that has fitted such unworthy and feeble creatures for the enjoyment of such a display. Glorified with Christ, and in nearness to Him, it will be our unspeakable delight to behold Him shining out over the new creation, according to the counsels of the Father's love, like the sun in the firmament throughout an endless day. In

short, He will be the object for sight in that day even as now He is the object for faith.

A word in passing as to how the Lord uses the glory. We are familiar with His words "I have glorified thee on the earth," but will it be the same in the glory? Hear His prayer—"Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, *that thy Son also may glorify thee.*" He has no thought for Himself, and no desires apart from the Father. Even as to the objects of His love, He will not put forth His power apart from the Father (ver. 2), and when He delivers up the kingdom at the end, He takes still, as man, the place of subjection, that God may be "all in all." What a lesson for us! How often the day of prosperity proves too much for the saint! Take Hezekiah for an example. No sooner is he relieved of the pressure than he shews his treasures to the messengers of the King of Babylon. But the Lord Jesus fills the throne of glory as perfectly as He trod the path of humiliation, seeking only and always the Father's glory. May we learn of Him!

But we must hasten to notice the remaining desire of the Lord in verse 26. When we speak of the glory we speak of that which is in a sense external and can be displayed. But there is an inner circle of blessing which cannot be displayed. It is the Father's love. We may behold love in its actings, but love itself is not a thing of outward display, though in a very real way known by the one who is in the enjoyment of it. Now the Lord seeks for His own this inner circle of inexpressible joy, and for this end He declares the Father's name. It is not the love of God to sinners that is here made known, but the Father's love—that which the Son ever abode in, and which He desires should be "in" us.

It must, however, be carefully noted that the prayer is on behalf of those "whom thou hast given me out of the world," and who, as to nature and calling, "are not of the world even as I am not of the world." If unfaithful to the place we thus have before the world, we cannot expect to enjoy the love here spoken of, and which is really the solace provided for the heart amidst the

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trial and pressure when the world is outside. Hence, "if any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him."

Surely we may say, if the sufferings abound, so does the consolation, yet, forgetting this, how often is an easier path sought than the one known to be right, or, yet worse, an effort made to find relief in the things of the world. All this is unbelief. The Lord has marked out the path for us, and has given us His own resources in it. If a *separated* people, He means that we should be a *satisfied* people, and who that has, in the smallest measure, tasted the sweetness of this love can doubt the sufficiency of the provision made for this purpose? It must ever be remembered that if we are not a satisfied people we will not long remain separated from the world. The Israelites no sooner turned from the Lord than their thoughts reverted to Egypt, and worldliness in a saint is the sign of an unsatisfied heart, and springs from it.

The glory, then, is before us—that which we are pressing on towards, and the moral power of which is to be displayed in us more brightly day by day as we draw nearer to it. Yet when there, with Him and like Him, His glory will still fill our gaze and delight our hearts. Meanwhile, as the present portion of the heart for its refreshment and sustainment, amidst the difficulties and sorrows of the path of faith, we have the Father's love. In this connection we must ever remember that, if the Father's name is made known that His love may be in us, He adds, "and I in them,"—there will be fruitfulness and testimony.

The Lord give us to answer a little more to the desires of His heart, and to enjoy the resources He has so freely provided for us; not turning aside to hew out cisterns, "broken cisterns that can hold no water." D. D. C.

If we are in Christ before the Father, we must remember that Christ is in us before the world.

SERVANT AND SAVIOUR.

(ISAIAH LII. 13 ; LIII.)

THE Pentateuch—the object of the enemy's attack in the present day—more and more presents itself to me as the basis of all scripture. Even in its very form I do not doubt it to be so. Take, for instance, the New Testament, its twenty-seven books fall naturally into five divisions, which not only correspond in number with the five books of Moses, but also in a much more noteworthy manner, each to each in matter or line of thought. Thus if Genesis gives the origin and beginning of creation in its present state, the Gospels give us that which the apostle John would recal us to as another “beginning,” brighter and better far, of a new creation, in Him who is second Man and last Adam. If Exodus tells the story of redemption from Egyptian bondage, the book of Acts shews us the church brought out from Jewish “bondage, under the elements of the world.” If Leviticus unfolds to priests in the sanctuary the power and value of the various sacrifices with which they come to God, the epistles of Paul establish us before God in all the value of that one Sacrifice which, taking the place of all of these, brings us, as they could not, really to Him. If Numbers gives us the order and provision for the camp in the wilderness, and how God brings through, to the glory of His name, a people continually failing under every proof, the other epistles furnish us for that path through the wilderness of this world, of which Israel's journey is but the figure. While, lastly, if Deuteronomy present those governmental ways of God, according to which a blessing or a curse follows the choice of the way which leads to either, the book of Revelation, as a perfect Deuteronomy, traces those ways by which the church or the world reaches the final consummation,—the end nowhere else in scripture so fully detailed.

This by the way ; I cannot dwell upon it now : though I may say that the whole canon of scripture is, as I believe, a Pentateuch of Pentateuchs, four of which there-

fore belong to the Old Testament: the first consisting of the books of Moses; the second, of the rest of the historical books; the third, of the five psalm-like books, the utterances, under divine inspiration, of the human heart in its exercises, its sorrows, and its joys; the fourth, of the prophetic books, in which God's voice as it were answers man's voice.

I do not dwell upon this further now; and speak of it indeed mainly to emphasise the fact, that here again, in these wonderful words with which we are all familiar, we have still another Pentateuch. The passage begins of course, as I have begun it, with the 13th verse of the 52nd chapter, and goes down to the end of the 53rd, thus embracing fifteen verses, and these divide into five sections of three verses each, stamping the whole of it thus with the significant numbers 3 and 5. All are probably aware (among those who read this) that scripture numbers *have* significance, and that a uniform significance prevails throughout it. Three is the divine number, the number of the divine fulness—of the Trinity. It is the number which speaks of divine manifestation also; for only *as* Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) is God fully manifest indeed. Five, on the other hand, the number significant of *weakness*, as many have well shewn, is on that very account the *human* number, taken it may be from the number of those senses by which man is in relation with the scene in which he is placed. These two numbers then characterise this prophecy as the story of Him in whom bodily all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt, and who in this way alone was fitted to be, what alone HE was,—“God manifest in the flesh.”

Again, it is not merely because of its five divisions that I call this a Pentateuch, it is because each of these divisions takes up in some way the theme of one of the books of Moses, and in the same order also. The full proof of this we shall have as we take them up in detail; nevertheless, it may be glanced at here, since this is no mere curious resemblance, but one which gives us the main features of the picture before us; and this is the use

indeed of all such matters, to be helps to the spiritual apprehension of what might otherwise escape us. I trust we shall find this true in a very marked way here.

Take then the first three verses, and you will easily discern the voice of One who, as in creation at first, is the Moulder and Fashioner of all things; and who can thus speak confidently from the beginning of what the end shall be. It is He who speaks here of His Servant, He who decrees the exaltation of the One self-humbled to that unequalled suffering by which His face is so marred more than any man's, and His form more than the sons of men; He who presides, as we may say, at the blessed work of redemption as at that of creation; though the actual Redeemer, as the actual Creator, is the Word now made flesh.

In the second section (liii. 1-3) the speaker changes. It is now the testimony to Him who is the "power" or "arm of Jehovah," and notice that as "the Almighty" is the characteristic divine title in Genesis, so it is in Exodus that God takes up and redeems His people according to the significance of His name Jehovah. "Jehovah's arm" is thus the power of God in redemption, and this is the prophet's special testimony, rejected as he sees by besotted man.

In the third section (4-6) we come, as in the opening of Leviticus, to the sacrificial character of those sufferings so misreckoned by unbelief. It scarcely needs to insist on the correspondence here.

The fourth section (7-9) exhibits Him under the pressure of evil, tested by all He passed through as none other ever was: the world to Him a wilderness beyond that of which the book of Numbers gives us the history. But Israel's testing brought out with them the innate evil; with Him it brought out nought but the perfection which is His.

Finally, the last verses (10-12) give us in perfect Deuteronomic sequence, the way and the end: the end as blessed as the way was full of unexampled sorrow: "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin . . .

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the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand: He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied."

Let us now look at these sections more in detail.

F. W. G.

(*To be continued, the Lord willing.*)

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

17. Q.—Will you explain Hebrews ii. 14, especially the last clause, giving the force of the word, destroy?

B. F. C.

A.—The teaching of the verse is, that the Son of God became incarnate, in order that by death He might, as meeting the whole power of Satan there, bring him to nothing—annul or destroy him, as to his power over man through the fear of death. The Greek verb, *καταργεω*, means to destroy, in the sense of taking away all power, or bringing to nothing, and is the same word elsewhere translated "make void" (Rom. iii. 31); "bring to nought" (1 Cor. i. 28); "none effect" (Gal. iii. 17); "abolished" (Eph. ii. 15). Satan, through death, as the judgment of God on man on account of sin, had power over man; Christ bore the judgment of sin, on the cross, in death; and thus death, as the judgment of God on man on account of sin, is gone for those who believe on Him—Satan can no longer use this power over them to bring them into bondage through the fear of death. Death has no terrors for the *believer* in Christ, and in this way Satan's power over him is entirely annulled. Satan is, in every sense, a vanquished foe, and that by the death of Christ, where apparently, for unbelief, he was completely victorious. By His personal perfectness in *life*, Christ was able to *bind* Satan, and spoil his goods; but, though delivering man from Satan's *actual* power over his body and mind, He could not *then* deliver him from the power of Satan over his conscience, as to the fear of death—this His death alone could do, by which Satan is not merely bound, but annulled.

C. W.

18. Q.—Do 1 Peter iii. 19 and iv. 6 refer to the same people? If so, when was the gospel preached to them?

J. L.

A.—1 Peter iii. 19 plainly refers exclusively to those who lived before the flood, and the gospel was preached to them by Noah, through whom, as acting by His Spirit in him, Christ Himself is spoken of as having preached to them, when as men they lived on the earth, though now "the spirits in prison."

"The dead," in chapter iv. 6, refers specially to the Jews, though perhaps it may have, too, a general application to all who have died at any time, thus standing in contrast with all those who will be *living* on the earth when Christ appears for judgment. The thought in the apostle's mind—and we must remember he was writing entirely to the Jews of the dispersion—was this: as the centre of God's government upon the earth, the Jews were accustomed to the judgment of the living, but the judgment of the dead they were very imperfectly, if at all, acquainted with; it had not then been revealed to them as it has been now to us. Still, they would be subject to this judgment, as those to whom the promises, or gospel, had been preached, in order that they might stand before God in judgment upon the ground of what they had done as men in the flesh, or be saved out of that condition by the quickening power of the word, received by faith in their souls; they would then "live according to God in the Spirit." The antediluvians had their gospel, the Jews had theirs, and we have ours; and the general truth is, that all are responsible to believe and accept the testimony of God to them and thus be saved, or abide His judgment for their conduct while living in the flesh.

C. W.

19. Q.—Does "the sin" in Hebrews xii. 1 mean some particular sin, or sin in general?

B. F. C.

A.—It is not any particular sin that is referred to here, but sin, the evil principle that works in the flesh, by which man does his own will without reference to God.

C. W.

THE LESSONS OF THE AGES.

THE TRIAL OF HUMAN GOVERNMENT.

JUDGMENT was executed and over, and in Noah and his family the human race began anew the history of the world. There are many features of difference from the former beginnings, whether inside Paradise or without. It was now first that on the fallen earth the trial of man formally began—a trial which, as we have seen, man had forced God (if we may so speak) to make. Already He had indeed pronounced, in answer to the challenge of Cain's altar, that "every imagination of the thought of man's heart was only evil, and that continually," and after such a sentence could never for His own sake—as if *He* were in any doubt—institute a fresh trial of such a creature. So, too, when He brings out Noah upon the restored earth, He is at pains to shew that He is not possessed with any fresh hopes concerning man. "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake," He says, "for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." Thus He could not for His own sake institute trial. But man has need to know himself, and as he will not recognise himself in the subject of God's verdict, he must be permitted to make practical proof. Hence, once more his responsibility is solemnly proclaimed, and with the solemn lessons of the past fresh in his memory, and once more with the fresh tokens of divine mercy on every hand, he is bidden gird up his loins and begin again his course, to triumph now if it may be in the scene of his former disastrous failure.

Before we examine this in its details as they are given in the divine word, let us try to realise the meaning of one very solemn change which the renewed earth presents from that old one which the flood had swept away. *Paradise is no more to be found there.* Euphrates, Hiddekel, Gihon, Pison, may be there; but the garden from which they once issued is gone for ever. Where it was, and *whether* it was, men may now dispute about as they list. The flaming sword has no need to keep any

more the way of the tree of life. The cherubim are also gone. The earth is discrowned and empty.

And must we not connect this displayed glory in Eden, however intimately connected with man's fall and punishment, yet also with the mercy that manifested itself towards him, as we have already seen with other tokens of his condition, in which judgment united itself with and ministered to mercy? Labour and sorrow, and death itself thus ministered, and do minister; and this flaming sword with its cherubim, like Ezekiel's cloud and fire, speak of that presence of God which is not mere judgment only. So even for Cain there was a "face of the Lord" which he evidently identified with Eden, near to, if still outside of Paradise. "Behold, thou hast driven me out from the face of the earth," he says, "and from thy face shall I be hid;" and again we read that "Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden." It is the easier to realise, because after this, as we know, it pleased God to localise His presence thus in Israel, and there also with fire and cherubic emblems. It seems not doubtful that this was but in some respects a reproduction of what had been before at the gate of Paradise, where sacrifice (which had so essential a part in the Mosaic economy) confessedly began.

Paradise passes away, however, with the flood, and the presence of God, as displayed there, is gone also. It is simple in principle that while the fall itself had not done so, man's maintenance of his righteousness compels Him to more reserve. For man's sin He had resources, which in the presence of self-righteousness could not be brought out. This must be met in a way far different from the other; for "the proud he beholdeth afar off." Thus, as Cain before, so man now (and by his road also), "goes out from the presence of the Lord."

Yet He, as consenting to man's trial, does not withdraw simply and leave him to himself. On the contrary, He solemnly inaugurates the trial Himself, making men afresh to know His power and goodness, as by their

recent deliverance from the otherwise universal destruction, so also by the new condition of blessing into which the earth enters, in covenant with Him. Still His goodness was, if it might be, to lead them to repentance. And this goodness of His it is that the apostle refers to as God's perpetual witness in all times and lands.

Nevertheless, if God thus declares His purpose of lovingkindness, He is careful to ground it all upon that sacrifice rejected by Cain, but fully accepted by delivered Noah. "And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings upon the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour, and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth: neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease."

So clear is it that if God take up man now to go on with him again, it is only upon such a ground as sets him altogether aside, that He can do so. Just as afterwards in the giving of the Law, it is only on the ground of redemption—to a redeemed people—He can give this. If He allow man thus the new trial that he claims, He keeps His own ground still, even while allowing it; and proclaims still in man's reluctant ears sacrifice—atone-ment—as the only way of acceptance, and the impossibility of his standing on his own self-chosen ground.

And now, blessing them as He does so, God delivers into the hand of Noah and of his sons, with something of the old sovereignty restored, the lower creatures. Significantly, also, death is to be for them the food of life; while the reservation of the blood, the vehicle of life, maintains the divine claim to what God alone can give. Above all, man's life is sacred; the deed of Cain is to go no more unpunished, and man is directly affirmed to be his "brother's keeper:" he is to exact blood for blood, and that as the instrument and vicegerent of God on

earth. "And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man: at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, *by man* shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."

Here then human government begins, not as an expedient suggested by man, as so many think it, but as a divine institution. From the commencement of it it could be said, "The powers that be are ordained of God." Not any particular powers, as yet indeed, such as we may find afterwards, but "the powers that exist," whatever their form.

There is no need to prove, what every one that has a right thought will at once admit, the blessing that there is for man in civil government. Few would doubt that, if it were removed, corruption and violence would overflow all bounds, as it did before the flood, or as in the French revolution of the 18th century. Better the worst form of government the world has seen than absolute anarchy. Darkening of sun and moon, the falling of the stars, and convulsions of the earth are its symbols in scripture; and these are signs of the near end of the dispensation.

As a moral discipline subjection to government is of the utmost value. It is seen in the family as what has its root in the divine ordinance by which the whole human race is compacted together. The immaturity of infant years has necessarily to submit itself to the superior power and wisdom, by which alone it is able to attain maturity. And this immaturity, so long lasting in the case of man as compared with the lower animals, implies a long discipline of subjection. By the ordinance of civil government the period of this is lengthened to the whole term of man's life. And this subjection is one not merely to the will of others, but in which also *self-mastery* is learned and attained. It is true that man's self-will—the very essence of sin—breaks all bonds that are possible to be devised; and the in-

adequacy of such means is one of the very lessons, nay, a main one, which these dispensations teach us. Yet were not the means themselves such as *should* be efficacious, their failure would not have the same significance. And amid all the failure this is still apparent.

F. W. G.

NOTES OF A READING AT BOURNEMOUTH ON THE MORNING OF MAY 3RD, 1882.

HYMN 186—"Jesus of Thee we ne'er would tire"—was given out by C. S.

C. E. S. then prayed.

C. McA. suggested looking at the scriptures that shewed the truth referred to by Mr. Darby in his last letter to his brethren, *i.e.*, Paul's ministry, as giving "the dispensation in which the display is," and John's ministry, as giving "that which is displayed."

Ephesians iii.; John xx. 30, 31; 1 John i. 1-4 were read.

C. McA. remarked, that Ephesians iii. gives us, perhaps more concisely than any other scripture, the peculiar ministry of Paul, one part being the grace that flowed forth to the Gentiles; the other, the truth of the church. The retirement of the Lord Jesus into heaven opened the way for the grace to flow out, besides opening a way for us to go into heaven. Had the Lord stayed on earth, judgment must have come upon those on it. John's ministry is really seen in the first four verses of his first Epistle, and he gives us the reason why he writes it: i. 4, "These things write I unto you that your joy may be full;" v. 13, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God," &c. In his gospel he also says (xx. 31), "These are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life in his name." John's ministry brings out what is eternal.

R. E.: Does not John speak especially of what is *in*

the believer? He speaks of love in them, hope in them, witness in them, &c. Paul would explain how it was arrived at; John does not say how, but *the fact* that it is in you.

C. S.: John also tells us what God is: "God is light," "God is love." Paul tells us of our being in Christ, John of our abiding in Him.

R. E.: John shews that a Christian "keepeth himself;" each soul has that which is of God.

H. H. S.: In looking at the two ministries, we find each contemplate the last days and the evil coming in; Paul especially in 2 Timothy; and John refers to the Antichrist; and both insist on practical righteousness.

C. McA.: Paul gives us the ways of God displayed in Christ, and John gives us Christ Himself down here. The latter begins in his gospel and epistle with Christ, and we have unfolded the full display of His life in this world, that life that is to be exhibited in the saints on earth. John gives us the manifestation of the divine life, and the joy that Christ had in carrying out the mind of God.

H. H. S.: In Paul we get the counsels of God unfolded, in John what is becoming in those who hold the truth.

R. E.: The first verse of the first chapter of the Epistle gives the Christian's standing from John's point of view.

C. McA.: While the first four verses of the Epistle give us a kind of synopsis of the Epistle itself, in the remaining part he takes up the subject in detail. That eternal life itself which had been manifested, he insists upon being the One he had seen on earth—he had seen, heard, and handled Him—his head had been laid upon *that* breast; then comes his object in writing, namely, "that your joy may be full." What follows is what is consequent upon that; what that eternal life is, possessed by the believer and manifested in him, as it was in the person of the blessed Lord Himself. John does not give God in Christ, as Paul does, but the Father seen in Christ, and the characteristics displayed in Him are truth, light, love and righteousness; and these charac-

teristics are to be displayed in the saints; if we speak of the father, it refers to the affections of a child. If of God, we think of the Creator. The seventh verse brings God before us as light, and in that light is our place. If we have any sense of what we are in ourselves, we say, how can I be there? The blood gives the answer. Then if I am in the light, and others are in the light, we have fellowship.

T. R.: In John xvii. we find the Lord Jesus revealing the Father to His disciples, and shewing how He was outside all dispensations. Then He prays, "Holy Father, keep in [not through] thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are." Here the unity is applied to those then on the earth; then, afterwards, verses 20, 21, the unity is applied not only to those then on the earth, but to those who should believe on Him through their word. We may connect the Epistle with this. In verse 3, John speaks of the apostle, and those associated with him, as in fellowship with the Father and the Son, and he writes that the disciples to whom he addresses himself may be brought into the same fellowship. In the Epistle John shews that fellowship with the Father was not dependent on the dispensational relationship, as taught by Paul. In Romans viii. Paul brings out our relationship, individually, with God. John shews how we are to display that relationship. In Ephesians i. Paul speaks of our being graced in "the beloved," and shews our relationship as children; and in chapter iii. verse 6, he states that the Gentiles should be (with the Jews) joint heirs, and a joint body, and joint partakers of His promise in Christ Jesus by the Gospel.

E. C.: Does not Paul's ministry give our place before God in Christ *in heaven*? In John it is not eternal life in heaven, but the display of eternal life in a man *on earth*, and Christ in us down here. In John vi. 56, we read, "He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood, dwells in me and I in him," *i.e.*, whoso accepts Him as a dead Christ. If I accept this Person I am brought into the

most wonderful relationship, *i.e.*, Christ dwells in me and I in Him. I have often thought, whether in dwelling on what we are in Christ in heaven, we have not omitted to dwell enough on what we should be in our walk, as having Him in us on earth.

C. S.: You must have Paul's ministry first, unfolding what we are in Christ in heaven, before we can be what we should be down here on earth.

R. E.: In Ephesians, Paul says, "Awake, thou that sleepest, arise from the dead," &c. John never speaks in that way, he says, "He that is born of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."

C. McA.: John is always absolute and abstract.

C. E. S.: John speaks of the Object, and how that is to be displayed in us. Paul gives Christ on high, and he describes what God is, as displayed in Christ.

T. R.: John also presents Christ as the object before the believer.

C. McA.: Various things have their life, beasts, birds, fishes, man, and so on; and so the Christian has his life, and is expected to display that life. The point to start with is, Have you that eternal life? Then you are not merely bound by certain rules. In animals, especially the young, how we see the positive enjoyment of life, and the freshness and vigour in which it is displayed; so with us, there is the positive enjoyment of life, and the exposition of it—the carrying out of this divine life, and this brings its testimony and confirms the truth. We should ever ask ourselves, Am I doing this or that in the divine life?

A Brother: Many Christians come to this Epistle to learn whether they *have* eternal life or not.

C. E. S.: 1 John v. 13 makes it plain that we have it. "These things have I written to you that ye may know that ye have eternal life, who believe on the Son of God." It is important to read this verse in this way, as it is the true rendering; John speaks distinctly in the present tense.

H. H. S.: Does not John, in his Epistle, give three

tests as to the possession of this eternal life—love, obedience, and righteousness?

C. E. S.: These were all perfectly displayed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

C. McA.: In Ephesians iii. we have what perhaps trenches closely on John, verses 14–21. In conversation one day with Mr. Darby, during his illness, referring to Christ in heaven, I said, “That is what you are going into.” “Yes,” he answered, “but what I want is, that the brethren should know that Christ is dwelling in them now.”

H. H. S.: “Christ dwelling in the heart by faith,” is not that it?

I. P.: Mr. Darby pressed this on us at the last reading meeting he was able to be present at. The subject before us was this latter part of Ephesians iii.

C. E. S.: “That Christ may dwell,” *i.e.*, as if He were living there, like a person living in a house. “Abiding” has a different sense.

C. McA.: Christ dwelling in the heart by faith; that being so, the apostle’s prayer is that we may spread out into all the fullness of God.

C. E. S.: Yes; Christ being the Centre of all God’s thoughts and counsels, you become instructed in His will and mind.

C. McA.: The coming of the Lord is presented in the ministry of Paul, as well as in that of John. The former treats more largely of it than the latter. John says, “Every man that hath this hope in him (*i.e.*, in Christ) purifieth himself even as he (Christ) is pure.”

R. E.: John, in Revelation, presents Christ as “the Morning Star,” and as the One to rule over the nations; in his Gospel he refers to His universal reign—“As thou hast given him power over all things.”

C. McA.: You don’t get the coming of Christ in Ephesians, because we are already in heavenly places. Paul says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ.”

T. R.

“FORTY DAYS.”

No. III.

THE FORTY DAYS' SEARCHING OF CANAAN. FAITH AND UNBELIEF.

(NUMBERS XIII., XIV.)

(Concluded from page 206.)

MARK the end of this cloud of unbelief—no bigger that day than a man's hand; mark where the fruit of that day placed Israel, and where they still are seen. We read, “Yea, they . . . believed not his word; but murmured in their *tents*, and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord. Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the *wilderness*: to overthrow their seed also among the *nations*, and to scatter them in the *lands*.” (Ps. cvi. 24-27.)

Indeed, we might take a pencil and write across the pages of the Book of Numbers, “According unto your faith, be it unto you.” This is the motto of the book. Each one got according to what faith or unbelief counted on. Moses says, “I am not able to bear all this people alone”—and the unbelieving word had scarcely passed his lips, when God says: “Gather me seventy men of the elders of Israel!” (Chap. xi. 14, 16.) Israel says: “Would God we had died in this wilderness.” In the *same* chapter we read, “As truly as I live, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness.” (Chap. xiv. 2, 28, 29.) “Who shall give us flesh to eat?” was the cry of lusting Israel. (Chap. xi. 18.) “The Lord shall give you flesh to eat,” was the reply of Moses. But what was the result, “He gave them their request, but sent leanness to their souls.” What a comment on that whole chapter (xi.) is the word of James! (Chap. i. 15.) Lust had conceived; it had brought forth sin, and sin when finished had brought forth death, as Kibroth Hataavah solemnly witnessed.

Caleb, in the splendid language of faith, cried out,

"Let us go up at once and possess it [*i.e.*, the land]; for we are well able to overcome it;" and God took him, too, at his word, and said as it were, "You shall have the land!" And Joshua: "If the Lord delight in us then he will bring us into this land, and give it us." Beautiful language of faith—so fully answered in his own words at the end: "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 are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof." (Josh. xxiii. 14.)

The twelve men are then appointed to search the land. They go through it in the length and in the breadth of it. They see its beauty and fertility; its streams and springs; its mountains and its valleys. Full forty days did they journey through it, kept by the hand of God. No son of Anak molested them; no enemy barred their way. They cut down the cluster of grapes at Eshcol, with the pomegranates and the figs; and they returned to their brethren "from searching of the land after forty days!"

Now hear their report. The land is good, say they, and God's word as to it is true; all agree as to this; all agreed, too, as to the difficulties, and the obstacles, and the enemies that were there. Caleb cries, "Let us go up at once, and possess it." To this Joshua agrees in the next chapter: "If the Lord delight in us, he will bring us in." But ten men of the spies now give an evil report of it: "We be not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we!" The horizon was clouded by unbelief and the fear of man, and in one moment God was forgotten. *His* strength was not measured against the sons of Anak, but *their own*; and in very deed they were but grasshoppers in their own sight, as they were also in the sight of Anak's sons—"for they are stronger than we."

Ah, beloved reader, have you never seen this? Have you never seen a soul in a divine position, rejoicing there before the Lord, seeking, too, to bring others into the same blessedness? Perhaps that soul has got away from

the Lord, and you meet it again in a short time, and hear it speaking evil of the place so recently the boast of its lips. Can we not recall the tendency of our own hearts to do so, even without openly avowing it? We are disappointed with the place where God has brought us, when faith has lost sight of Him.

Look at these spies; at one moment delighting in the land of promise, the next, condemning it, from first to last, as the difficulties rose before their eyes. Mark, too, the two witnesses for God—Caleb and Joshua. How lovely is the meaning of Caleb's name—"all heart"—the man who followed the Lord fully. (Of Joshua I do not speak, for he is more the type of a heavenly Christ, who leads His people into the possession of all.) He (Caleb) took the scales of the sanctuary in the hand of faith; and in the one scale he put the children of Anak, and all the power of the enemy, and the cities walled up to heaven; in the other scale he placed the promise of the living God. The scale he held did not hesitate in the beam; the single word of Jehovah outweighed them all. "We shall be," said he, "more than conquerors through him that loved us."

Yes, beloved brethren, Numbers is the testing and total failure of man walking in the wilderness under the government of God; yet God preserving two witnesses for Himself, of that energy which counts on God with undimmed faith, and runs the whole way through, to the very end. All fail but they: Moses fails; Aaron fails; the people fail; yet God brings in the little ones whom they said would be a prey. He takes care of and glorifies Himself in weakness, as that in which His strength is perfected; for His power is made perfect in weakness itself.

We find, then, the first thing Israel does is to speak evil of what God gives them; and next, they speak evil of Himself: "Wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let

us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt." Caleb and Joshua seek to cast the people back on God's heart, but hopeless unbelief had thoroughly set in. The Lord then speaks of smiting and disinheriting them; and Moses pleads that "mercy"—his resource which never failed. The Lord answered, "I have pardoned according to thy word." (Chap. xiv. 20.) Then He sentences the people, and commends Caleb: "Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; surely they shall not see the land which I swore unto their fathers; neither shall any of them that provoked me see it: but my servant, Caleb, because he hath another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it."

Thus, then, runs the sentence of the Lord: "Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me; doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swore to make you dwell therein, save Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua, the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years; and ye shall know my breach of promise."

They had waited for "forty days" for human testimony, and when they had received it, they believed it not; nor had they believed the testimony of God. Fit testimony to the world and its character through which

we pass. Man does not trust God, nor trust his fellow. Ask yourselves—is it not so? We have a lock on our door; a bank in which to put our money; a policeman to guard it. No man naturally trusts his fellow, and the last thing he does is to trust God, and this only when grace had taught him that he had nothing else that will avail.

Forty years' wandering was the result of the unbelief of a moment, and to the sin which flowed from it. How often is a life marred, and a forty years of sorrow prefaced and introduced by one moment of sin and unbelief. It may be a sin had been committed, so secret that no eye had ever seen it but God's alone. Yet it leaves its scar, though His pardon has been known. Does it not so, my reader? Are there any scars left in your own soul? Have you never seen a life marred for every act of service and usefulness for God, which had been prefaced by one act of unbelief, which led to some secret or open sin?

Beware, then, of unbelief. It shut Israel out of Canaan; take care that it shuts not you out of heaven! "The fearful and the unbelieving shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone." How many will turn out, by-and-by, not to be believers at all, though making a good profession now!

The ten spies were judged for their sin. Israel, repentant, say, We will go up, we will obey; we plead His promise; we will confess our sin. What more, we might say, than these, then, could they do? "And they rose up early, and gat them to the top of the mount"—and they do these things. But "Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the Lord? But it shall not prosper. *Go not up*, for the Lord is not among you; that ye be not smitten before your enemies. *For the Amalekites*" (mark it well, beloved, this had been the reason of unbelief *not* to go when the Lord had commanded) "and the Canaanites are there before you; and ye shall fall by the sword; because ye are turned away from the Lord, therefore the Lord will not be with

you. But they *presumed* to go up unto the hill-top: nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and Moses, departed not out of the camp. Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah" [destruction].

We *must* accept and bow to God's government when He has so ordained, and take the consequences of our sin.

We turn now to another man—the man of "another spirit"—Caleb, the man with an undivided heart. These two men (Joshua and he) went right into the land of Canaan, and passed through it for forty days: then they came back, and traversed the desert the whole forty years. Did it not seem hard that such should be to those faithful men? To have to bear the consequences of the sins of others, if they had not shared in them? Nay, they would not have been without the journey; they learned wondrous things of the God of Israel by the way. They saw the rod of Aaron budded, and blossomed, and fruitful. They saw the judgment on Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; the brazen serpent too. And they walked with God all through the way, and at the end they had an "abundant entrance" ministered unto them into the glorious land!

If we turn to Joshua xiv., where Caleb's history is referred to, we read, "Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, the Kenezite, said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the Lord said unto Moses, the man of God, concerning me and thee in Kadesh-Barnea. Forty years old was I when Moses, the servant of the Lord, sent me from Kadesh-Barnea to spy out the land; and I brought word again, as it was in my heart"—this man of an undivided heart; and "I wholly followed the Lord my God." When a man can stand up before his fellows of forty years, and say this, he is entitled to our belief. None could say it without fear of contradiction, were it not true. It is not often a man can testify of himself; when he can, I

believe him! And Moses testifies, too, of him, and said (ver. 9), "Thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God." The Lord, too, had said of him (Num. xiv. 24), "My servant, Caleb . . . hath followed me fully," and now Joshua, at the end: "And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, Hebron for an inheritance . . . because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel." Four precious testimonies of that single-hearted man.

Would you like to be a Caleb, my reader; or to be of that great multitude whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? Can you put yourself with that man in spirit, and say, "From henceforth we will live, not unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us, and rose again"? "From henceforth:" how often have these words been but the purpose of an hour, and then have passed away. We want more of "another spirit," like Caleb. "We have not received the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God," my brethren; and those two spirits are in full opposition, each claiming the allegiance of our souls.

If we turn for a moment to 1 Chronicles ii. 18-55, we find how God carries out the promise that his seed should inherit the land. We may have passed over this chapter as a dry list of names, and never have seen any of the divine principles that even such can teach us. We find here the genealogy of Caleb traced onwards, till we read at the end, "These are the Kenites (cf. Judges i. 16) that came of Hemath, the father of the house of Rechab." We find their descendants still in the possession of their portion, in the words of one of the last prophets of Israel—Jeremiah. If you turn to chapter xxxv., you will find how the Rechabites would not forfeit the vow that their father had put upon them. They were the descendants of this very man, who wholly followed the Lord God of Israel; and in the very end we read, "Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not want a man to stand before me (said the Lord) for ever!" Such is God's reward of faith; and His faithfulness to a faithful, undivided heart.

F. G. P.

ARE WE A REMNANT ?

(An Extract from a Letter.)

"WE" are not a remnant, except in the sense in which the character of a "remnant" *morally* ought to be that of each one of us individually. But it is the truth we are to witness to: and God will allow us to do that in grace until Christ comes. Our place is that of Daniel in Babylon, praying with his window open towards Jerusalem. We can't get out of the ruin, but we have to testify in heart and life to that which is not ruined, and the power for that is being occupied with things above where Christ sitteth. I feel more and more that what Satan has been attacking, is the presence of the Lord Himself, in the midst of "two or three," and the effect which His presence should have upon our souls. It is His presence that makes the gathering to be real. But, then, if *He* is there, every heart who owns Him must be subject, and consequently also subject one to another "in the fear of Christ." It enlarges the affections, and produces an exercise of conscience which nothing else can in the same way, and a respect for the conscience of others, which is inseparable from a walk in the fear of God. That keeps the soul in peace and quiet, too, in the presence of all the troubles that arise, for our trust is in the "living God."

I was very much struck, the other day, with the contrast in 2 Kings vi.—the Prophet and the King, Dothan and Samaria. Externally *who* was the *mourner*? People talk a good deal now about humiliation. But here we see that the man who wore sackcloth was in enmity against God, and shewed the depth of his moral degradation in seeking the prophet's life, that was really to deprive himself of the only existing link between himself and God in grace. For God was acting in grace, through Elisha, and had been doing so all along. But what made the king a mourner was *God's action* towards the people. This is deeply solemn, and explains, I believe, much that we find in these days.

It is not surely a time for exuberant joy, but we are to rejoice in the Lord, and to walk with God in the sense of His grace, and *expecting* to see *good* from His hand. That is what Elisha ever did: and he was not disappointed. God used the occasion of weakness, sorrow, and distress, to shew forth, to His own glory, the resources of His grace, and Elisha was made the blessed instrument of it. What made the king wear sackcloth, only raised the eyes of Elisha to where he knew the chariots of fire and horses of fire were always to be found: "They that be with us are more than they that be with them." It will be found the same in these days. Satan's darkness settles down morally on those who forget to *think* of those things which are above, *where Christ sitteth*. Had the king's mourning been true, he would have thought *first* of getting rid of his false gods, and of turning in heart to the Lord. But he did not believe in God's power or will to help, and was obliged to confess, in despair, his own powerlessness. It is a sad picture of man away from God.

W. J. L.

SERVANT AND SAVIOUR.

(Concluded from page 223.)

I.

(CHAP. LII. 13-15.)

"Behold, my servant shall act wisely: he is exalted, and raised up, and become very high."

The word "servant" is a very characteristic word in this latter part of Isaiah. First it is Israel that is God's servant (chap. xli. 8): "But thou, Israel, art my servant, . . . whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away." But while in the purpose of sovereign grace this thought still abides, it is one which Israel as a nation has not yet fulfilled; and in chapter xlix. we find another in this place, called even by this name of Israel,

who does not fail, and whose work is owned of God. We do not need to dwell upon this substitution, important as it is in its own place; but His work is there defined: "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth."

Thus the Person before us in our present chapter is not introduced here abruptly for the first time. He is the Servant-Saviour, the Servant whose work is salvation; but who is in it above all else Jehovah's Servant,—the only one among men who filled perfectly that blessed place. And with this was connected the wisdom He displayed. His was the perfectly clear eye undimmed by any veil of self-interest; the single eye which made the whole body to be full of light. Wisdom is not an attribute of mere intellect. The eyes are in the *heart*, as Ephesians i. 18 really says.

This characterises His path then: it is the path of true service,—thus of clear-sighted wisdom; a path which ends in exaltation necessarily, because "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." *He* then "is exalted and raised up, and become very high." It is what the second of Philippians speaks of, admonishing *us* to have the mind that was in Christ Jesus. What an effectual rebuke to pride and self-seeking this exaltation of the lowliest! And what an incentive for us to the path of obedience which we had forsaken, this free choice of it by Him who owed none! And what a place that glory that awaits us, where the highest are they who realise best the blessedness of service, and highest of all is He who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many!

"As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred, more than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men."

The unequalled sorrow is revealed here in its effects, the outward signs which only were before the eyes of be-

holders. The depths were open to God alone, indicated to faith indeed in one pregnant word, which unbelief would needs misconstrue. Even in the Gospels, which give us the history of those sufferings, the veil of reserve is maintained; and that cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" recorded without comment. Faith, taking this up reverently, may be led further to where this cry is the opening of a Davidic psalm, and find here and thus a prophecy of the Spirit of God in which all that may be told is told: while unbelief finds David only, and what is more than he is only rhapsody. It is the same Christ, as we find dumb before His enemies, revealing Himself in the circle of His friends. It is the same as when He spake in parables to those who had not ears to hear. We acquiesce fully in this reserve, which nevertheless invites to intimacy those who desire intimacy. In this same way is (more or less) all scripture written, not that formalists may have an indisputable creed, but "that the *man of God* may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

But what sorrow this, that could thus mar the human form of the Man of sorrows! Even as He speaks of the astonishment of the beholders, the divine speaker turns, as His heart turns, towards Him who fills this place of humiliation, and breaks the unity of the sentence with an abrupt address to Him—"As many were astonished at *thee*." Then He returns to announce to men, who are to receive it, the result of this unparalleled suffering:—

"So shall he sprinkle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them they shall see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider."

Strange news, these gospel-news! and with strange power! What all the tomes of philosophers have never done has been accomplished for low and high, for Greek and barbarian, by the simple power of the cross alone. The heart is sprinkled from an evil conscience, the body washed with pure water. That which was lacking in all human wisdom, in Christ, the wisdom of God is found:

“even righteousness and sanctification and redemption.” Man’s need met, his soul satisfied, and satisfied with God, thus in unspeakable love and grace revealed to him in Christ; his heart is cleansed and his life changed. All other greatness bows its head in presence of the cross, and yet shall every tongue confess, as to the Crucified One, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Thus then, in this introductory section, God as sovereign in counsel declares His purpose concerning His elect, that “good pleasure of Jehovah” which was to prosper in the hands to which He could fearlessly commit it, assured of the result. “I have laid help upon one that is mighty,” He says, “I know him; I can answer for him.” Just so, in the presence of the multitudes at John’s baptism, in which He had just pledged Himself to this very work, heaven is opened, and the Father’s voice proclaims His Son, the object of His good pleasure; and the descending Spirit hastens to give Him up, after forty days of fasting in a wilderness, to let the devil sift Him as he may. Yes, God can rest all, whether for man’s salvation or His own glory, with perfect satisfaction and delight, upon Him.

But where is this mighty One? how is this might displayed? He who in heaven looked as he was bidden for the “Lion of the tribe of Judah,” saw in his wonder a “Lamb as it had been slain.” In the conflict of good with evil, not force avails but good; and the cross was such a battle-ground, when one “crucified through weakness” becomes the power of God. At the cross power was upon the side of evil: it was as the Lord told the Jews “their hour and the power of darkness.” On His part there was none: he who used the sword was only rebuked for it; of the legions of angels He might have had, none stirred on His behalf. The forces of evil are free: He is bound, helpless, unresisting. Then as His disjointed frame hangs on the accursed tree, the night which falls over all proclaims God the Source of light to be withdrawn. He is left alone, unsuccoured, in the

awful distress of that abandonment, to meet the full flood of evil at its height.

And if the darkness passed, and He were heard "from the horns of the unicorns," crying "with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him *out of death*," it was, as the apostle says, "*for his piety*." He was heard winning back life and light—eternal blessedness—out of the jaws of death and hades. It was the victory of goodness, greater immeasurably than of power, here with all power arrayed against it.

This, then, is the divine plan, the counsel of God, which the following sections open out in detail. In the next the speaker changes; and henceforth the prophet speaks in his own person, but connecting himself with the "election of grace" in Israel, the believing remnant of a future day.

II.

(CHAP. LIII. 1-3.)

"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is Jehovah's arm revealed? For he groweth up before him as a tender shoot, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and we see him, and there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and forsaken of men; a man of sorrows and well acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

It is now the testimony of God which is rejected—to One who is, nevertheless, "Jehovah's arm." It has been already said that Jehovah is the title under which God reveals Himself in the book of Exodus, when He undertakes to redeem His people out of Egypt. "And God spake unto Moses and said unto him, I am Jehovah; and I appeared unto Abraham, and unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by the name of God Almighty; but by my name Jehovah was I not known unto them. . . . Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am Jehovah: and I will

bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments; and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God, and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians."

Thus this title speaks of God as the God of salvation. It is not of course that the book of Genesis does not give Him this name, or that the patriarchs did not know that it was His. Unbelief has vainly objected these two things. It is that what this name implies God was now bringing out as it had never been brought out before. This title is essentially the same as "I am"—the One who is: the eternally present and unchangeable God. A blessed name indeed this by which to take up a people from amongst the fallen sons of man, and link Himself with them as their God for ever. It is not even yet, alas, that Israel has penetrated the meaning of that name aright. But she shall know it, and be the pillar upon which He will inscribe it for ever. Meanwhile it is our privilege to know, under all these titles, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Only He could be indeed Jehovah,—could link abidingly with Himself a company of redeemed sinners. This to our hearts means nothing short of grace, and therefore nothing short of Christ's work, by which alone He can be righteously with us thus. "Jehovah's arm" is thus Christ a Saviour: unto us who are called, "the power of God."

But of power in weakness and self-humiliation and sacrifice how many think? Who can see Jehovah's arm in the Man of sorrows? So the prophet goes on to describe this humiliation under which He is veiled to carnal eyes—to faith revealed. "For he groweth up before him as a tender shoot, and as a root out of a dry ground." This He is before God; this He is, too, before man: but He is rejected by man for that for which He is approved of God—"He is despised and forsaken of men."

Let us look first, as we are invited, at the Godward

side. He is "a tender shoot, a root out of a dry ground." This carries us back to the eleventh chapter: "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." This points to the cutting down of the royal stock of David which has gone back to what it was in Jesse, or even less. Out of the roots of this felled and prostrate tree comes this tender shoot. It is a new beginning in weakness of what has already suffered defeat and overthrow. Circumstances too, are adverse: the dry ground provides no sustenance to its youth and weakness. But in this also there is more than at first appears. For why is the Davidic monarchy thus overthrown, and why are the circumstances adverse? People may say it is only as it always has been; the law of nature is a law of change; the stamp of death is upon everything. True, but why but because nature is fallen nature? Here was one to whom God had said: "If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, these children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore." This prostrate tree trunk means then God's covenant profaned, His testimony refused; God in His holiness against it because of sin.

And what of the dry ground? It was out of Israel this house of David sprang, out of Israel that had been God's vineyard, which He had fenced and nurtured and cared for, and which has repaid His care with wild grapes instead of the grapes He looked for. He had said therefore He would take away its hedge, and break down its wall, and lay it waste, not to be pruned or digged; also He would command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. The dry ground, then, was the corrupt and hardened generation unwatered of the Spirit, whom they and their fathers had always resisted. Good reason was there for the circumstances being adverse: truly that was a tender shoot, and out of a dry ground.

But what of this in Jehovah's sight? Was He less the "arm of the Lord," who, spite of this weak appearance, spite of all by which He was surrounded, grew up, as mastering it all? Surely in His sight this was power

that overcame weakness, life that mastered death. He was no creature of circumstances, no product of His surroundings. He drew nothing from—was indebted for nothing to—that amidst which He was. There are plants which, by the stores of nourishment they lay up in their own substance, maintain themselves in some measure of independence of the barren soil from which they spring. But these are scarcely more than contrasts to Him who, in the world, not of it, grew up in the sunshine of the divine favour through thirty years of toil and poverty and sorrow, and then to receive the testimony of the Father's voice in perfect unqualified approbation: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

But exactly what made Him the object of divine delight, made Him, and for that reason, the object of man's disfavour. "He hath no form nor comeliness; and we see him, and there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and forsaken of men." He was rejected distinctly and deliberately, as known, not as unknown: "*We see Him*, and there is no beauty." How false is the thought that ignorance has to do with the rejection of Christ! There is abundant ignorance, but the condemnation is, that "Light is come into the world; and men *loved* darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." This is the terrible reality. Men say they desire heaven; but a Christless heaven does not exist, and Christ they have refused.

No wonder then that He is "a Man of sorrows, and well acquainted with grief." What a world for a heart thoroughly one with God to pass through! bearing upon it all the glory of God, all the burdens under which man groaned! Himself ever with God, this was the shadow cast by that eternal sunshine! With God; and passing through a world which had gone out with Cain out of His presence! He that had seen Him now had seen the Father; and "we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

F. W. G.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF J. N. D. ON SUBJECTS OF GENERAL INTEREST.*

A question had been asked as to "the difference between mercy and grace."

"You can hardly compare mercy and grace thus. Grace refers more to the source and character of the sentiment; mercy to the state of the person who is its object. Grace may give me glory; but mercy contemplates some need in me. Mercy is great in the greatness of the need; grace in the thought of the person exercising it."

J. N. D.

The inquiry had been made, "Is the testimony our object."

"A question was communicated to me by . . . 'what would be sufficient to deprive the assembly of the testimony of God?' Now the question is to my mind a profound mistake, that the testimony they bear is the governing object of the mind of saints. It is no new thought to me, but what I have insisted on, I know not how long—some 30 or 40 years—that wherever an assembly, or those in the assembly, are set to bear a testimony, they will be a testimony to their own weakness and inefficiency, because the object of their walk cannot be one which efficiently forms a Christian. When they have a right one, they will be a testimony, but to be one is never the first object.

"To have Christ,—I mean practically to walk with Him and after Him, to have communion with the Father and the Son, to walk in unfeigned obedience and lowliness:

* We have had it on our mind, and others have written to us on the subject, to collect and publish in our pages letters, and extracts of letters from this beloved servant of the Lord, and then, after a time, collect and issue them in one volume. We shall be glad if any of our readers will send us extracts, or copies of letters that will be of general interest, and for edification. If the letters themselves are sent, they shall be carefully preserved and returned in due time.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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to live in realised dependence on Christ and have His secret with us, and realise the Father's love; to have our affections set on things above, to walk in patience and yet confidence through this world, this is what we have to seek, and if we realise it we *shall* be a testimony, whether individually or collectively, but in possessing the things themselves, and they form us through grace, so that we are one (*i.e.*, a testimony), but seeking or setting up to be it does not. Moses did not seek to have his face shine nor *even know* when it did, but when he had been with God it did so.

"Wherever Christians, as far as I have seen, set up to be a testimony they get full of themselves, and lose the sense that they are so (*i.e.*, full of themselves), and fancy it is having much of *Christ*. A shining face never sees itself. The true heart is occupied with Christ, and in a certain sense and measure self is gone. The right thought is not to think of self at all—save as we have to judge it. You cannot think of being a testimony save of *your* being so, and that is thinking of self, and, as I have said before, it is what I have always seen to be the case."

J. N. D.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

20. Q.—I have noticed your answer to C. E. S.'s Question 6, in the April number of "Words of Faith," in which you speak of 2 Corinthians iv. 2 as connected with *actual* death and resurrection; but I have the following difficulties, which I would like to lay before you: If it be so, why does he say "*always*"? Could a person be delivered to *actual* death more than once; could there be a continuance of this? Again, as to the expression which is in question, "mortal flesh," how can you speak of mortal flesh in resurrection? I could understand the life of Jesus being manifested *then* in the body which is *now* mortal, but the text speaks of the life of Jesus being manifested in our mortal flesh. And thirdly, why break

off the text from its evident connection with verse 12, which speaks of the present ("so *then*, death works in us," &c.), to connect it with verse 14?

Mr. Darby, in his Synopsis, says: "But besides this (that contained in verse 10), God made him realise these things by the circumstances through which he had to pass; for, as living in the world, he was always delivered unto death for Jesu's sake, in order that the life of Jesus might be manifested in his mortal flesh. Thus death wrought in the apostle, what was merely of man, of nature and natural life, disappeared, in order that life in Christ, developing itself in him on the part of God and by His power, should work in the Corinthians by this means." In this way all is perfectly simple to my mind, and no violence is done to a single word of the passage.

In this light the expression "mortal flesh" is to my mind full of beauty. We all know, thank God, that we shall be, in glory, perfectly conformed to Christ's image; but to me the thought has been exceedingly precious, that even now, whilst we have bodies subject to the power of death, God should bring this very power to bear upon us, for the smashing of the earthen vessel in which He has deposited the treasure, that the life of Jesus only may be seen.

J. R.

A.—We have no wish to press our interpretation of 2 Corinthians iv. 2, especially in the presence of the authority quoted against us, but it does seem to us that in using the words "mortal flesh," the apostle does not repeat himself, but had in his mind a further thought beyond that of the "body" as the vessel of the life of Jesus in his testimony to others, and that resurrection was before him for himself, as well as for those to whom he wrote. (See verses 13, 14.) The conjunction "and," omitted in our version, should properly come in before the "we." We would like to say in this connection, and it is our reason for inserting this letter that, while we seek, by the Lord's help, to comfort and teach others, we desire to be helped, corrected, and instructed ourselves—Romans i. 11, 12.

C. W.

MY BELOVED BRETHREN,—

I feel, in undertaking to say a few words here, on the one hand a great responsibility, but on the other a real joy of heart, when my mind turns towards that which, I believe, the Spirit of God calls for.

That we have passed through a time of humiliation, pain, and exercise of heart, every one feels, no one denies. The state of the brethren required it, for He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men; but whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. But then He does receive us—a very great mercy and blessing. Think what it is to be received as His testimony and witness on the earth, poor and unworthy as we are. Nor, immense privilege though it be, do I speak of it, as such, as acquired privilege. “Ye are my witnesses,” says Jehovah to Israel. That is the position and responsibility they were placed in. Every Christian is such in his place, “that the life of Jesus may be manifested in their mortal bodies.”

The seven Churches have been so widely introduced into this subject, that it will be well to inquire a little into their true character. There can be no doubt, I think, of their presenting a rapid but most perspicuous sketch of the course of Western Christendom, when through the operation of God it had come into the position of human responsibility. First its full ecclesiastical character till it comes, after time is given it to repent, under God’s judgment; and the kingdom, and the Morning Star—Christ in heavenly character—are substituted for it. Thereupon you have a collateral picture of Protestantism running on coincidentally after the reformation, till it be rejected. That part of Christendom had been cleared of its Paganism, and there was much activity connected with this; but Christ had not His place in the heart of Christendom. It had a name to live, but was dead. It is treated as the world, and the Lord comes on it at an unexpected hour, which is the world’s portion.

Every one will have remarked the condition given in

each assembly, as the ground of special blessing—to him that overcometh. But remark, it applies to the difficulties and dangers that tend to hinder faithfulness in the position in which the particular assembly finds itself. Some special reward may then be the recompense. But there is more in these churches to remark which characterises them. The character: here it is Christ's holiness and truth, however great His love, (as it is infinite and unchangeable,) His active goodness—what characterises our knowledge of Him, is His holiness and truth—what we want of Him and characterises our testimony. This is of all moment. That in spite of the power of evil, He it is who holds the door open or shut as He pleases. This is not operation of gift and grace in the labourer, but that He can open the door of access to souls. But this was not all. In the midst of all that was going on He knew their work, and He *had* set before them an open door, and no man should shut it. His eye was on them for good. The testimony of grace was to be borne, and should not be hindered. Those who set up for traditional religion, would be forced to recognise them, and own that Christ had loved them. Further, the danger is not becoming Laodicean, but apostasy. Laodicea has its own dangers for Laodicea. But, through grace, they had not only kept fast hold of the believer's hope, but of Christ's patience as to its accomplishment, kept the word,—Divine authority, in that book. Christ, to whom all the promises belonged, and to whom it had been said, "Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool," seemed to have sat very long expecting till His enemies were made so. But these saints waited, as He had waited, the accomplishment of the promises. God was not slack, but long-suffering. It is very remarkable to notice that Christ never puts His coming beyond the life of the person He is speaking of or to. The five wise and foolish virgins were the same who slept and wake. So in every case, with one exception, which makes it stronger—that Peter should die. But He is not speaking of His coming. Now, centuries

have passed, generations succeeded each other, are we with present earnest desire waiting for God's Son from heaven? He abides God's time: are we firm in hope and present faith while doing so?

This was a condition—not *to be* fulfilled, but that *was*—by the faithful of Philadelphia; and they would accordingly escape the hour of temptation, which would come on all the world. But the Lord said more, He was coming quickly, they were to hold fast what they had that none took their crown.

What certainly chiefly characterises the saints in Philadelphia is the analogy of their position to that of Christ, at the close of a dispensation; no apparent strength, but the door held open to him by the porter. They keep His word, they do not deny His name, and specially they keep the word of His patience.

The way they are identified in the glory cannot but strike every one—blessed thing too. What characterises Him—most important for us to note—is truth and holiness, truth, and as a girdle of the loins, for it is the truth that sanctifies.

There is no specific Laodicean characteristic in Philadelphia. Each has its own. Nor Philadelphian *faithfulness* in Laodicea. Each belongs to each. The danger we have seen was quite different. And now, what I would beg brethren is, not to be occupied with evil, but if the Lord has set before them an open door—and He graciously has—their part is to profit by it; to hold steadfastly by truth and holiness, by which Christ characterises Himself, and be ever as men that wait for their Lord, keeping the word of His patience. And God will assuredly bless them. It is not merely doctrine, but activity guided by doctrine, and a path formed on that of Christ.

The above was found as it is, without a signature, but in Mr. Darby's own hand-writing, in a drawer in the sitting-room at Lonsdale Square, and was written shortly before he left for Bournemouth.

July, 1882.

9, Ladbroke Road, Notting Hill.

C. McADAM,
F. C. CLOSE.

[The above is a reprint, a few accidental oversights having been corrected.]

DIVINE LOVE AND CARE.

(Concluded from page 145.)

IN his unconverted condition, walking by sense and not by faith, man has no knowledge of this divine love and care. He lives, morally, outside God, "having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in" him. (Eph. iv. 18.) We say, morally outside God, because actually it is "in him we live, and move, and have our being." (Acts xvii. 28.) It is the darkness and ignorance that is *in* man that shuts God out of his thoughts, and this was, in the incarnation of the Son of God, brought fully to light. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not; he came to his own, and his own received him not." (John i. 10, 11.)

Out of this condition of moral death and alienation from God grace quickens us. "Born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 13); we "believe on his name," and receiving Christ personally, He gives us "the right to become the sons of God." We enter into the knowledge and enjoyment of divine love and care as having received Him on whom it abidingly rests.

The righteous ground of our thus coming under divine favour is the cross, but it is as *in* Christ Himself, the Son of God, we possess and enjoy it. On the footing of creation, in the first Adam, we are "children of wrath," and under death and judgment. On the ground of redemption, in the second Adam, we are children of God, and divine love and care is our *only* portion, and our *enjoyment* of it depends upon our walking as "He walked" in faith and obedience. Our *standing* in divine love and care is unchangeable, depending, as it does, solely on the grace of God, but our *enjoyment* varies with our state, and is regulated by the government of God.

One side of the truth is *our receiving Christ*, and thus having the right bestowed on us by Him to take the

place of children. (John i. 12.) The other side is *God receiving us*, and our thus coming under His government as a Father. (Heb. xii. 6.) Whilst standing firmly on salvation, and holding tightly that we are, once and for all, "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." (Gal. iii. 26), we are apt to forget "the exhortation that speaketh unto us as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." (Heb. xii. 5, 6.)

Sovereign grace never sets aside human responsibility, and divine grace but opens the door to divine government. They are parallel lines that run concurrently, but that never coalesce or intercept one another. To be "without chastisement, whereof all are partakers," is to be "bastards and not sons"—it is to be under divine judgment as lost sinners. To be the subjects of chastisement is the proof given to us of God that we are His children, and thus the objects of His love and care; but we should ever remember, that to keep in the *enjoyment* of this divine favour, we must be "in *subjection* unto the Father of spirits."

In Jesus the enjoyment of divine love and care was perfect and uninterrupted, because His walk was perfect, and obedience was the principle upon which this enjoyment was dependent. He says, "As I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." (John xv. 10.) Nor was this obedience without that which put it to the proof, for we read, "though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." (Heb. v. 8.) Consciously to His own soul, His walk, not His Person simply, as being Son of God, formed the ground of His Father's presence with Him, and this He declares to those that watched Him—"He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone: for I do always those things that please him." (John viii. 29.) Nor is the Father's own testimony lacking in proof of the ground on which this approval rested. Twice, once at the beginning, and once near the close of the earthly

ministry of Jesus, does the Father's voice come from heaven saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. iii. 17, and xvii. 5.)

True, as it is, that "the life of Jesus" is our life, and that the expression of it is simply a question of the faith that lives, as He lived, in the abiding enjoyment of divine love and care, unless the *principle* that governed His life, and in connection with which His faith was ever in exercise, is recognised and adopted, our *enjoyment* of the love and care, of which we are always the subjects, is impossible. We may speak of, and aim at, "bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" (2 Cor. iv. 10); but unless the will is broken, and there be in *all* things practical subjection to the word of God, and "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ," that life will not be displayed, nor divine love and care *enjoyed*.

Peter speaks of our being "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto [the] obedience and [the] sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," adding, "Grace unto you and peace be multiplied." (1 Pet. i. 2.) We are sanctified by the Spirit to obey as Christ obeyed, and the multiplication of grace and peace depends upon this obedience. The obedience of Jesus, or as we say, "a humbled Christ," is a sweet and holy thing for our souls to dwell upon. It is the manna of our wilderness life, that nourishes and keeps our souls with God in the simple sense of His favour. It is the fine flower of the meat offering, "a thing most holy of the offerings of the Lord made by fire" (Lev. ii. 3), and of which none but the priests could eat.

The humanity of the Lord Jesus was perfectly natural and simple in its development. He grew up amid the relationships and circumstances of human life in a manner entirely like our own. Still there was a character to it that morally separated Him from those in the midst of whom He lived and moved. His life unfolded itself like

a flower beneath the genial rays of the sun, its beauty and its sweetness, alike, attained without effort and without aim. We read: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him." (Luke ii. 40.) As years went on, He but "increased in wisdom and in favour with God and man."

The secret of the life of Jesus lay within, deep hidden from the eyes of man. God was His Father, and beneath the fostering love and care of that Father He consciously grew, while one only motive gave its character to all He did and said, "In the volume of the book." It had been written of Him, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." (Psa. xl. 7, 8.) "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" He says to His parents, and then passes down to Nazareth, and is "subject to them." His relationship to God, as His Father, and His absolute subjection to His will, did not take Him out of His human relationships and the duties that attached to them, but, on the contrary, it was in those relationships and duties He glorified His Father, and perfectly met His mind and will.

In the life of Jesus the spring of everything was absolutely divine, though the expression of it was perfectly human. It was in the humble home at Nazareth, beneath the parental roof and discipline of His father Joseph, yielding to the wishes and gentle control of His mother Mary, and working at His lowly task as a carpenter, that Jesus, the Son of God's love, and ever mindful of His "Father's business," lived for thirty years. It was here He tasted, in all its sweetness, that divine love and care of which we have been speaking. His subsequent public ministry and prophetic service made no change in the life of Jesus. His Father's will, as before, governed everything in Him, and His Father's love and care remained the same throughout. The storms of public life altered nothing as to this, they did but give occasion for His faith and obedience to display themselves in different ways. Through all He lived by His Father and for His Father.

This He expresses in words, when laying the basis of our blessing through and in Himself, in John vi.: "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." We enter into and enjoy eternal life—the life of God, by feeding on Christ; and living, as He lived, His portion becomes ours. The depth and fulness of that portion, with its present and intelligent enjoyment, is the subject of His prayer and desire for us in John xvii. 25, 26. "Oh, righteous Father," He says, "the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." It is the constant and unceasing aim of the Lord's *present* ministry, by revealing the Father to us, whilst in all the circumstances of trial and sorrow in this world, to give us the knowledge and enjoyment of divine love and care as known to Himself when on earth. C. W.

NOTES OF A LECTURE

ON

CHRIST OUR LIFE. . . . PHILIPPIANS I. 20, 21.
 CHRIST OUR PATTERN. . . PHILIPPIANS II. 5-8.
 CHRIST OUR OBJECT. . . PHILIPPIANS III. 12-14.
 CHRIST OUR STRENGTH. PHILIPPIANS IV. 11-13.

WE are often in the habit of thinking that Paul stood alone—that no other could say what he said, "For me to live is Christ." We think, Ah! yes, it was the apostle Paul who said that; none but he could possibly make such a statement with truth. Why not? The words were uttered by a man, and a man of like passions as we are.

If any were to ask me, "Could you say that?" my reply would be, "I object to the way the question is put." If you were to ask me whether I would be satisfied with being able to say anything short of that, I should at once say, No, I long to be able to say that truthfully, and

nothing short of that. But there is something far better than being able to say it—LIVE IT.

We are living in a day of sham and form. Oh! to be characterised by their opposites—REALITY AND POWER.

Do you think it was necessary for Paul to say, "for to me to live is Christ," for the people about him to become acquainted with the fact? No, indeed, they could all see that it was true in his life.

Why was not Paul taken "to be with Christ, which is far better"? Because Christ was the gainer by his remaining on the earth. And why are you and I poor, weak, stumbling things, left here a day longer? Is it to make us fit for heaven? No, blessed be God, even our Father, who *hath made us fit* to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. (See Col. i. 12-14.) We are as fit to be in heaven as the Lord Jesus Christ is fit to be there—as fit as the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ could possibly make us: "as he is, so are we in this world." (1 John iv. 17.) Is He free from our sins which He had upon Him on the tree? So are we in Him. Is He free from death and judgment? So are we in Him. Is He accepted by God? So are we in Him. Is He near and dear to God? We are equally so in Him. Then why are we left down here in this defiled and defiling world? Because the blessed Lord can get more gain by our being left here than by taking us to heaven. If we went to be with Him, we should be the gainers; He leaves us here that He may be the gainer.

I have met persons who have told me that they had such love to the Person of Christ, and such longings to be with Him, that they could not live down here. But I discovered, in conversation with them, that it was the rest and joy that they would enter upon, their gain, and not His; in short, that it was selfishness—spiritual selfishness, if you please—that made them desire to depart, and be with Christ.

He said, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John xvii. 15); and if we had Christ's glory,

Christ's gain, and His church's blessing at heart, we should pray and desire to be left down here, remembering that if we live, He gains; if we die, we gain.

If we have the earnest desire in our hearts to be satisfied with nothing less than being able to say, "for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain," God will produce it in us. Have we this intense longing?—that is the question—the longing that Christ only shall be the gainer by our being left down here; if we have, God will put us there, and work it through us.

Now let us turn to chapter ii., and look at Christ as our pattern: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Three things are said of the blessed Lord. (1.) He made Himself of no reputation. (2.) He humbled Himself. (3.) He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Do we make ourselves of no reputation? Alas! how tenacious most of us are of our reputation. We talk and write about death and resurrection; we profess to be dead and risen with Christ, but let any one tread on our reputation, and how soon we prove how very little we are living in the power of these blessed truths. If we really believed that our good and bad characters were gone at the cross of Christ; if we had really been to our own funerals, we should never feel what are called "insults," because they simply touch ourselves; if we were really living in the power of death and resurrection, we should only feel what touches Christ's reputation, and never what touches our own.

These are days of high talk and low walk; we say and write the most beautiful things, but our walk shews that, whilst our lips and pens are full of these beautiful things, they have little or no place in, and power over, our hearts and lives. Again I say, Oh! for reality, for all was reality with Christ.

"He humbled himself," the yoke never galled His neck, He never had to be put down, He was always going down, until He reached the dust of death. There never was any resistance in Him to the Father's will. When

He came into the world, He said, "I delight to do thy will." As He passed through this world, He could say, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me;" and when He was passing out of the world, He said, "Thy will be done." His whole course down here was coloured by His Father's will.

I tremble for persons when I hear them asking God to humble them. It is our privilege to look to God so to fill us with the mind that was in Christ, that, by His grace, we should humble ourselves. I have known persons who have been praying for years that God would make them humble, and yet every year they have grown in pride; they are constantly putting on bits of worldliness, instead of giving them up. How is this? Simply because they make humility their object instead of "Christ once humbled here." THERE IS NO GETTING ON WITHOUT GIVING UP. But Christ was obedient unto death, and He is our pattern in this, for we are set apart to the obedience of Christ, to obey as He obeyed, and upon the same principle, and He is surely saying to us, "Learn of me," and make yourselves of no reputation; to humble yourselves, and to be obedient unto death. Oh! for grace to get near to Him, and learn of Him.

In chapter iii. we have Christ as our object: "This one thing I do; forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus."

The heart must have an object, we could not live without it. There are only two objects in this world—Christ and self; and all our thoughts, words, ways, and walk, emanate from, centre in, and revolve around one or the other of these two objects. Which is it?

There is a proneness to live on our laurels, to rest on our oars, instead of "to advance be all my care." There are two striking words in this chapter—"behind" and "before." Are we looking back, or looking ahead? In Colossians iii. are two more significant words—"below" and "above." Are we looking down, or looking up?

If we have not Christ for our object, then it is self; we rise early, sit up late, to advance self, our families, our belongings; everything is looked at in connection with self. If Christ were our only object in this world, what a change it would make in the way we dress ourselves, furnish our houses, conduct our businesses—in short, it would affect everything we eat, drink, say, and do.

The great tendency among us is to improve our positions in this world; what is this but to further self? Surely it is looking "behind" and "below," and not "before" and "above."

What a rare thing it is to find a satisfied heart in this world! Satisfied means much more than being content. Many a one says, "I am like to be content, because I cannot alter or improve my circumstances." But Paul could say, "for as to me, I have learnt in those circumstances in which I am, to be satisfied in myself." The word translated "content," in chapter iv., comes from two Greek words, which mean a country wanting no help of others, that supplies itself, that wants no imports, because it has sufficient. What is a satisfied heart? It is one that has found a perfectly and everlastingly satisfying object, and never looks about for a second one. This is what it will be in glory, we shall never look about for a second there, we shall be supremely and eternally satisfied with Christ, and it would be so now, if He were our absorbing object. Oh! to make Himself and His concerns our life-object, and allow Him to make us and our concerns His affairs; and then what rest and joy of heart we should know in life and service. There would be no panting for change of circumstances, for we should know and believe that those we are in are the best possible, that our Father is always doing the best thing for us, the thing that is most for His own glory, and our present and future, our deepest and truest, blessing; and the result would be, unbounded confidence in unbounded love.

In chapter iv. we have Christ our strength: "Without

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me ye can do nothing." It is well to learn this lesson. Have we learnt it? Paul had, and hence could say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." This is the secret of how Paul, a poor, weak, failing creature like ourselves, could say, "for to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." How is it possible for Christ to be the gainer but by our being left down here, where the Holy Ghost is, and where the Church, the body of Christ, is?

We become correspondingly like what we are occupied with. If we are occupied with Christ, He will strengthen us to be patient in this trying scene, and satisfied in this unsatisfied and unsatisfying world; we shall be "strengthened with all might, according to his power in the glory, unto all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness."

And now we have Christ for our life. Do we want a better life than that? We have Christ for our pattern. Do we want a better pattern? We have Christ for our object. Do we want a better object? We have Christ for our strength. Do we want better strength? Are we satisfied with Christ? May He be the gainer whilst we are left here, until we shall gain by being caught up to be with and like Himself for ever, for His worthy name's sake. Amen.

H. M. H.

Croydon, July 20th, 1882.

LAW AND MERCY:

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO EXODUS XXXIII.,
XXXIV.

A PAPER upon the same subject, in a recent number of "Words of Faith," has suggested, as will easily be seen, the present one, in which any difference of statement that may be found, or any real divergence of thought, may help to bring out the more (for those who will weigh all before God) some not unimportant truth.

First, let us notice, as to the book of Exodus, what is

true of every other book of its class, that it has a double meaning, being at the same time a literal history, and a book of types; and that these latter are not disconnected and fragmentary, but a complete and connected series. The literal and the typical interpretation have, of course, to be kept distinct in our minds, otherwise any clear apprehension of the book is impossible. But everywhere the one underlies the other, the divisions of the book being the same for each. It thus divides into two parts at the end of chapter xviii., the former part giving the complete redemption of the people from the land of bondage; the second, the Lord's own taking His place among them as their Lawgiver and King. It is with the latter part we have now to do, and this has necessarily a very different significance, according as we view it in letter or in spirit, as fact or as type.

As literal history, the giving of the law was the trial of man—a trial which could have but one issue, in the sentence afterwards pronounced, "none righteous," "none that doeth good." As type, it is the expression of that government of God over His redeemed, in subjection to which lies our true freedom—a "law of liberty," as scripture calls it. We thus understand the preface to the ten commandments, in which He who gives them distinctly takes the place of the Redeemer.

Literally taken, the law—twice given in this book—is man's double testing: the first proving him "ungodly;" the second, "without strength." The first is pure law, which, before they receive it out of the mount, is already broken. They are but under the curse, and Moses takes the tabernacle, and pitches it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and calls it 'the tent of meeting;' for all that sought the Lord had now to go outside the camp to meet Him. For the first time the glory of God had gone outside; the second time it did so was when Ezekiel saw it leave the city. They were then indeed Lo-Ammi.

The first trial lasted only forty days—abundantly sufficient time to prove man's present state; the second, on the contrary, about nine hundred years, for now he

had to have ample opportunity to see if he could recover himself out of this already proved condition.

Here, then, the mercy of God is declared, for in mere righteousness all would have been cut off. He takes them up again, in His sovereign good pleasure: "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will shew compassion to whom I will shew compassion." This is expressly connected with that proclamation of the "name of Jehovah" (Ex. xxxiii. 19) which is made in the next chapter: "Jehovah, Jehovah Elohim, compassionate* and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in mercy and truth, keeping mercy for thousands." (Chap. xxxiv. 6, 7.) Yet, sovereign mercy as this is, it is not absolute, or such as involves the salvation of the objects of it; on the contrary, the law is once more given, word for word, as before, and God expressly speaks of Himself at the same time as One "that will by no means clear the guilty."

The scene must be viewed as a whole, in order rightly to interpret the several parts of it. It is all clear and consistent thus, and only thus. The hiding of God's face is seen then as the necessary result of the legal footing upon which the people still are with Him, and with which, as their representative, Moses is identified. It is surely characteristic of the whole dispensation, and what the veil before the holiest bore constant witness to. Let the mercy of God be what it will, by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified—none shall see Him, and live.

It is not here the question of ability to anticipate His ways, nor can I see how this should interpret, "There shall no man see me, *and live*." It is only when we leave the literal, and take up the typical, meaning that we can find something akin to this; and here we have an instance of how important it is to keep these two applications distinct in our thoughts.

The law, in its typical meaning, is, of course, no longer 'law' properly. It is the expression of the authority of

* I alter some words to shew the real accordance between the two passages.

the Redeemer, as already said—a yoke, of which He who imposes it says, "my yoke is easy, and my burden light."

Yet it is none the less the expression of an authority which is absolute—a government of unswerving holiness, and whose ways (to such as we are) will be often strange, and, if not weighed in the sanctuary, severe. In this view of it, of even a throne of grace, we may often find that "clouds and darkness are round about" it. We may still say with the psalmist, on the one hand, "Thy way is in the sanctuary, O God;" on the other, "Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known;" even though yet "Thou leddest thy people like a flock."

Here, indeed, are ways in which we cannot anticipate God, nor meet Him face to face; and here Moses, hid in the cleft of the rock, and covered with the divine hand, and permitted to see the glory of Him who had passed by, has most beautiful typical significance. But still, this is God in government, and we are looking at the typical application of the book, and not the literal.

A few words as to the difference between mercy and grace, before I close.

'Grace' is "free favour:" "if by grace, then it is no more of works; *otherwise grace is no more grace.*"

'Mercy' contemplates the relief of distress, and is linked with 'pity,' or 'compassion,' which is more the subjective feeling in the heart that prompts to this.

That which in view of my misery is 'mercy,' in view of my ill desert is 'grace.'

'Mercy' speaks more of how God has come down to me; 'grace' may go on to tell of how high He has lifted me.

It is 'grace' in the addresses to the churches; 'mercy' also to the individual; because we have a *common* standing and acceptance before God, but *individual* failure, weakness, and necessities.

F. W. G.

“FORTY DAYS.”

No. IV.

HUMAN WEAKNESS AND DIVINE STRENGTH.

(1 Kings *xix.*)

WE have in this scripture an episode in the history of one of God's most remarkable servants. The place, too, where we find him had been the scene of several striking incidents, or at least that mountain range, of which this mount Horeb forms a part, in the history of Israel.

There was the scene of the burning bush, when Moses turned aside to see that great sight. There, too, Israel drank of the water from the rock at Rephidim; and discomfited Amalek and his hosts, with the edge of the sword. There Moses received the Law from Jehovah; and now we find the great prophet of the Lord fleeing in weakness to the same place, at the voice of a woman.

Elijah was a most remarkable man. He played, and will again play, a striking part in the history of Israel. He was one of those who were on the mount of transfiguration with Christ. He and Moses appeared with the Lord there. All had been, at different times and in different conditions, sustained for “forty days” without food. *They*, to be separate from nature and nature's support, to be with the Lord: *He*, to be tempted of the devil. And both of them “spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.” They passed in review, and spake of things, which in their natural life here they had not known. Moses—buried long before by the Lord upon mount Nebo; and Elijah, caught up to heaven without dying at all: yet both in that interval, up to the scene of the transfiguration, do not seem to have lost intelligence as to what had passed on earth, and the interests of Christ. What Moses on Pisgah did not know; and Elijah on Horeb, or on the banks of Jordan, never heard of in their day; Moses and Elias on the “Holy Mount” conversed about familiarly to their Master—namely, “His decease [*ἐξοδος*] which he should

accomplish at Jerusalem." Where was Jerusalem when Moses lived on earth? In the hands of the Canaanites. He never had been there. Perhaps it had not even that name, but was the "Jebus" of the Jebusites. Had God yet told man He would give His Son; or that He should die? Nay: yet all was familiar to them as they discoursed with Him.

In the chapter before us we see a pitiful sight; we find this remarkable servant of God fleeing away at the word of a woman. It was a time of ruin and apostasy in Israel. Solomon's servant had rent the kingdom from Solomon's son, and God had preserved two tribes to David's house, in accordance with His promise to him. And now, under the seventh king of Israel—Ahab—when apostasy and ruin were complete, the Prophet of Fire was raised up; Elijah, the Tishbite, comes on the scene.

What do you suppose made him great? Was it the great deeds that made him famous in the eyes of men? Nay, when we turn to the New Testament we find the answer, in the divine comment on these things. God takes up the spring of everything: He passes by without comment all those actions that made him great in the eyes of the world. He says, "Elias was a man subject to like passion as we are, and he *prayed earnestly* that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again and the heaven gave forth her fruit."

Here was the spring of inward communion with God that He owned. It was not the great outward acts of service; it was the secret exercises of heart in dependence on God, which felt for His honour and for Israel's sin, expressed by his earnest prayers. James would say of this, "He prayed in prayer." *This*, beloved readers, was what made him great in the sight of the Lord.

Let us see somewhat of what this man's service was. We do not find anything of those secret exercises of soul in the seventeenth chapter of first Kings. It is the history of the care of God for His servant, whom He was training in secret for His great outward work in Israel.

"And Elijah, the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." How true it is that perfect exercises of soul before God, lead to perfect calmness before men! What simple power was expressed in those words: yet not a power of man, but of God, in which the complete sense of God's mind and God's power had so absorbed the prophet's thoughts that self, and all the wisdom of man, were absolutely forgotten. His inward springs of life were in communion with the Lord God of Israel; and he could stand forth at this terrible moment of apostasy, braving all the terrors of an apostate age, and speak thus.

Israel was worshipping Baal. Ahab, the son of Omri, had done evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. He had made a grove, and reared up an altar for Baal, in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. In his days Jericho, the city of the curse (Josh. vi. 26), was rebuilt; and all was complete apostasy. In the face of all this, Elijah dares to stand forth for Jehovah, and speak those words to Ahab. Then he retires for fresh lessons for his own soul. The brook Cherith sustains his thirst for a time, and the ravens feed him there morning and evening. After a while the brook dries up, and God sends him to the widow of Zarephath. There he is sustained for a whole year: the widow's cruse failed not; nor did the barrel of meal waste, until the time of judgment was past, and God sent rain upon the earth.

Thus was he trained in secret, and thus did he slowly but surely advance in the school of God, until greater things still were to be shewn in Israel. These we find in chapter eighteen, when the apostasy of Israel is exposed.

Picture to yourselves this scene of solemn grandeur: On the one side Baal's prophets—four hundred and fifty men; on the other side one solitary man standing for the true God of Israel. Elijah waits until all the incanta-

tions of Baal's prophets had failed to bring forth a reply. Satan had beguiled his votaries into their delusions, and then forsook them—mocking them, as it were, in their extremity. Then God's prophet raises his voice: "How long halt ye between two opinions? if Jehovah be God follow him, but if Baal follow him." He had proposed that the God who would answer by fire would prove himself to be the true God. Baal's prophets had cried aloud, and cut themselves with knives until the blood came; but Baal answered not. Elijah lifts up his dependent and prayerful voice to the Lord, and at the time of the evening sacrifice, the answer comes. The Lord sends the fire from heaven and consumes the sacrifice; the people fall on their faces when they behold, and answer, "Jehovah, he is the God; Jehovah, he is the God!" Israel confess Jehovah once more; Baal's power is destroyed (for the time). Final judgment is executed on his worshippers; and three years of judgment have passed away. Again Elijah is on his knees before God. He gets him to the top of Carmel to prayer; while Ahab gets him to eat and to drink. Elijah casts himself to the earth with his face between his knees in prayer. The answer, at first a cloud no bigger than a man's hand, comes; but soon the fruitful rains (type of the "latter rain" when Israel is restored) fall, proving the goodness of the Lord.

This was great outward service—"turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the Just," as it were; yet with all this there was much to be corrected in the heart of Elijah. His outward service of power had taken him away from his inward communion with God. So when Israel returns to his apostasy and Ahab to his sin, he finds all in failure again; and instead of standing before the Lord God of Israel, he flees away from his work, which had exalted him in the eyes of men, at the threat of the wicked Jezebel.

This is what we have constantly to discover in our own history. A man is never nearer failure than when he has done well! This is to be observed much, and guarded

against. We must learn, too, that if we serve outwardly before men, we must preserve the inner life of communion with God, or all will be but failure and shame.

Now, at the very moment when Elijah ought to have been most particularly at his post, and have trusted the same God that had been his strength in times gone by, in the flood of evil, he flees in cowardice from his duty; he murmurs against God, and said, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers!" In his misanthropic spirit and wounded pride, he abandoned even his fellow-men—leaving his servant at Beer-sheba. And in bitterness of soul, more bitter than the juniper tree that overshadowed him, he lays him down, and requested for himself (mark, *for himself!*) to die! Because he cannot be all he wished to be, and retain his importance in the eyes of men; because *self* was uppermost, even in this devoted servant's mind.

Elijah; *God can do without you; but you cannot do without God!* And God must teach you this, as He will teach us all!

Mark his word—"I am not better than my fathers!" Do you believe a man who says this? I do not! When a man stands up and says this, I believe he thinks that he is a great deal better than others, but that he is not appreciated as he should be! Even God does not appreciate him enough is the thought of his heart, though he might not express it in so many words.

Elijah is overpowered by the poor effort of nature in fleeing away: he sleeps under the bitter shrub; and what do we find? A loving God watching over His servant while he sleeps; preparing food for his wearied body; carrying a cruse of water to slake his thirst; and then awaking him by the angel's touch, saying, "Arise and eat!" Still filled with self, he does what he is told, and lies down again. Again, the second time, the angel of the Lord came and touched him, saying tenderly, "Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for *thee*." Surely it was! though it was but "a day's journey" (cf. ver. 4), taken without dependence on God!

Was there ever a moment he deserved this tender care less than now? and yet it was now *God Himself* directly—not even by a raven, or by a widow's cruse—who now cared for him. This is touchingly lovely. Have I, have you, my reader, if you are His servant, ever experienced this? Have you found that at moments when you only deserved to be cast off, as man would do; or even your brethren might do; then God's care, God's ministry both to soul and body were the more conspicuous? Blessed, ever blessed God! He alone is worthy.

But God had his soul in view, and He was about to convince him of his sin, of his human weakness and frailty; but *before* He does this, He will convince him of His own unchanging love.

God never gives a man up! Let him be a successful man, and he will command the respect of others: others will crowd after him. The moment he fails—even in measure, his fellows will give him up; they will search and find, if possible, ten thousand things against him that never would have been questioned before. Not so God. He will rebuke, and chastise, and train His servants, and use them too; but He never gives them up. Aye, He will use them too, sooner or later, to do the very things they assayed to do in their own strength, and in which they failed. But first they must learn that power is of God, and that it only works in their weakness.

Look at this man at another day, on the mount of transfiguration with Christ, and hear the prophet Malachi as to the service he will yet accomplish before the end: "Behold I will send Elijah, the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." (Mal. iv.) He will accomplish yet what he assayed to do in the day of Ahab, but which was but a type of the end!

Elijah was thus in the desert solitude in the bitterness of his soul. One day's journey had been too much for him, as taken in his own strength, and he laid himself down, and wished for death, to end his misery. He awakens to his sorrow, to find a gracious and loving God seeking to break his heart by His perfect goodness. But

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his heart is not yet reached. Like many, he took God's tender care as a matter of course. Alas, how many do this! How many murmur at the least sorrow or cross that comes, and never dream of counting up the ten thousand mercies of each day and hour! Alas! there are others, too, who are spoiled by blessings, or what they deem such; their hearts are taken away from God by the very blessing His hand bestows. Blessings are always a hindrance when they do not lead the heart to the Blessor Himself. How much more frequently a sorrow does this, rather than a blessing! In the sorrow the soul is softened, and turns to God.

At the second time he arose, and "did eat and drink, and went in the strength of *that* meat *forty days and forty nights* unto Horeb, the mount of God." At length, when these "forty days" are over, he is found in the cave, lodged there. God's eye had been on him in his wanderings in the desert for those forty days, and now His eye is on him in the cave at Horeb. His object is to break that proud and petulant spirit, to destroy that *self*, which so hindered His servant—yea, took him away from his work. He is about to send him back to other work, but He must deal with Elijah first; so He sustains him in that "forty days and forty nights" by the meat of His own providing, to bring him to His own true "end," which is "very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

Elijah had but little confidence in the virtues of other people. This is a bad sign; it is a worse sign even when you find people lose confidence, too, in *God* about His people. It has been well said, "Confidence in the virtues of another is no slight proof of your own!" How much more when confidence in God about His own is there! Now Elijah had not a bit of confidence in Israel, and, as a consequence, he had lost confidence in God about His people too. The word of the Lord reaches him in the cave: "What doest thou here, Elijah?" There were two things in that question: first, reproof from God; and, secondly, a recall to his duties which had been forsaken. Elijah answers in what the Spirit of God calls his "inter-

cession against Israel." (Rom. xi. 2.) "I have been very jealous for the *Lord God of Hosts*." Now this is striking indeed. When he was in the flush of faith and nearness to God, at the opening of his career, he could turn to the wicked Ahab, and say, "As the *Lord God of Israel* liveth, before whom I stand." But this was now forgotten. "The Lord God of sabaoth" is substituted in his mind and soul for "the Lord God of Israel." This is most instructive. "I [oh, that selfish "I"] have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."

He is commanded to go forth, and to stand upon the mount before the Lord; and we find those manifestations of power, with which Elijah was so familiar, pass by him: first, the "strong wind;" then the "earthquake;" then the "fire;" but the Lord was in none of these. These manifestations were not *God Himself*. It was this the prophet wanted—to be brought into His presence. His conscience and God needed to be brought together.

At last a "still small voice" is heard by him; his soul is touched; God and his conscience are now face to face, and Elijah wrapped his face in his mantle. At the cave's mouth again, with his face hidden in his robe, the voice came to him the second time: "What doest thou here, Elijah?" This question must be answered ere all is accomplished in his soul's present lesson. He replies, as before, "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets [had it ever crossed his mind that he had just been throwing down altars, and slaying prophets, himself?] with the sword; and I, even I, only am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." Thus far to justify himself at the expense of others.

Now the Lord replies—taking no notice of that self-justifying spirit, but sending him back to his work again—in the words, "Go, return;" he was to anoint Hazael, and

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Jehu, and Elisha, the son of Shaphet, of Abel-meholah. But now come the lovely, upbraiding, instructive, corrective words of the Lord—"Yet have I reserved to myself seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him."

How worthy of God is all this! First, sending him back to do further work in Israel; and then, disclosing, what his heart had never discovered, the true godly ones of that day, who had refrained from evil when all others had been carried away. Yes, even those whom God owned, who had no outward appearance before others, but characterised by the "not" of that solemn day of evil; whom God noticed and valued, when Elijah knew them not.

How sweet is all this! to find that in a day of deep declension God owns and values the abstention of those who, though not outwardly witnesses for Him as Elijah was, had, in separation of soul and heart to Him, *not* done what others had done against His name. They had, so to say, "kept his word, and *not* denied his name;" and God would say of them, "I know their works," though others know them not.

Elijah had never discovered those faithful souls; too much occupied with self and great acts of power, his heart and spirit had got away from the Lord until now. Now self was reached, and, without a rebuking word, he is sent back to his duty, and the blessed news told him that God had His remnant then, and they had loved His name, and not denied it, in a day of total apostasy and ruin: Elijah had never known of them till now.

Broken to pieces, he learned now what human weakness is, and what divine strength can accomplish working in the weakness of man. To this he yielded himself without a faltering spirit, until the day when he was rapt to heaven in the chariot of fire—a suited exit for a servant such as he. From heaven he returned to stand before the gaze of Peter, James, and John, with his Lord and Moses His servant, in the holy mount; and he will return, ere His

people are restored, to "turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers; before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." (Mal. iv. 5, 6.)

John the Baptist came "in the spirit and power of Elias," when the Lord first came to Israel. Israel refused her Messiah, but for faith John was he: "If ye will receive it, this is Elias which was for to come." He was such for the faith of the few who attached themselves to Christ. But Elias himself will come, and do what he could not do before. The Lord will then "take away the names of Baalim out of Israel's mouth, and they shall be no more remembered by their name." (Hos. ii.)

May we learn, then, some lessons of our own weakness, and of the strength of God, from the glance we have taken of the history of that remarkable man, and of his "forty days' journey from Beersheba to Horeb, the mount of God.

F. G. P.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF J. N. D. ON SUBJECTS OF GENERAL INTEREST.*

He had been written to with reference to certain recent papers on the "Sealing of the Spirit," and "Deliverance."

THERE is great general decline on this point, and I have a tract in hand as to it, which I hope to get out as soon as possible. We must not confound manifested salvation and being born of God. We read, "to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the remission of their sins." But before Christ came souls were born of God, but they could not believe that Jesus was the Christ, for He had not come. They might have believed the promises then

* We have had it on our mind, and others have written to us on the subject, to collect and publish in our pages letters, and extracts of letters from this beloved servant of the Lord, and then, after a time, collect and issue them in one volume. We shall be glad if any of our readers will send us extracts, or copies of letters that will be of general interest, and for edification. If the letters themselves are sent, they shall be carefully preserved and returned in due time.

which referred to Him who should come; "but light and incorruptibility have been brought to light by the gospel." I can now say, "Whoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." But this is not exactly saying, Whosoever does not, is not. We can say, He that, when He is presented, rejects Him, is condemned, and is in his sins, and a saving work may be begun in the soul by the Spirit of God, when the soul is not clear as to the Person of Christ, but which assuredly leads to it, and which, now that His name is spread abroad, it is almost impossible to separate from it; nor can we ever say that a man has life till he believes in Christ. Still, this remains always true and fundamental, "He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life;" and repentance and remission of sins were to be preached in His name. Conscience and knowledge may be both there without a quickening work; but there may be a work in conscience, in the living power of the Spirit, before the *mind* is clear as to the truth concerning the Lord. Yet ultimately the testing-point, and the fact of Jesus Christ being the Son of God, and dying for us, being universally known, it is implicitly believed, without the passage to real faith being perceived; we see love to the brethren, love to the word, and we cannot help trusting the work of the Spirit is there; and there is the current faith in Christ, with, as I have said, the change into reality unperceived. But all this refers to our perception of it, not to the reality of the thing in God's sight. But of "his own will begat he us by the word of truth," and that truth is concerning His Son; we may see the fruits, and so judge or trust that life is there, but the root is not in the fruits. It does not follow that a person is clear as to the efficacy of Christ's work because he believes in and loves Christ. The sealing of the Spirit goes, as to the detail of this work, I believe, with faith in the work as well as the person (see Acts ii. 37, 38, x. 43; Eph. i. 13), but in a plain gospel they go together. Being in the flesh is being in the standing of the first Adam before God, and not in Christ, judging from ourselves to

God's judgment, and not from His work to our place before Him.

"According to this time shall it be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought?" So the prodigal. In the flesh (Rom. vii., viii.) is the same. Deliverance and forgiveness are not the same thing—we must learn what we are, as well as what we have done. Deliverance is known by sealing, as being *in* Christ: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." J. N. D.

Questions had been asked him as to the difference between "The kingdom of heaven" and "The kingdom of God;" also as to the typical teaching of "the Red Sea."

The Presbyterians profess to hold new birth by baptism in a worse way than Episcopacy, though they have no formulary to bring it under the eye. It was held by all the Reformers, but where sacramental grace is held, the root of popery and ecclesiastical hostility to the truth is always found. As regards the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven is the kingdom of God, only dispensationally spoken of, and is the kingdom of God when the King is in heaven; but kingdom of God is a more general term, we learn, it "is not meat and drink." Kingdom of heaven is only used in Matthew in contrast with Messiah on earth. John never speaks of dispensation, but of the reality of the things of God being revealed, and it is used here. (John iii.)

The Red Sea I believe to be *Christ's* death and resurrection, and thus redemption, by which we are brought to God, as is thus said. You have not the saints raised in Romans, he is looked at as we are, a man living on the earth, but having Christ as his life, forgiven and justified, and reckoning himself dead, and giving himself up to God, as one alive in Christ from the dead. Red Sea redeems us, but from enemies, but out of flesh, and so sin and Satan's power. Pharaoh was not an enemy, but an oppressor. Jordan is death experimentally—death with Christ. Then, after being risen, fighting begins.

1880.

J. N. D.

REMARKS ON A LETTER WITH REFERENCE TO CHRIST NOT HAVING BORNE THE CURSE OF GOD.

YOUR correspondent (whatever force he may attach to the word "curse"), in denying "that Christ died as a *curse*, *either* for Jew or Gentile," is at direct variance with scripture, for the statement in Galatians iii. 13, relating, at any rate, to the Jew, is this: "Christ hath redeemed us from the *curse* of the law, being made a *curse* for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." The quotation made by the apostle, and applied to Christ, is from Deuteronomy xxi. 23, where it runs thus: "For he that is hanged is accursed of God." The Jew was under the law, with its appended curse, by divine appointment, and from the curse thus entailed on him he could only be delivered by Christ's undergoing the curse for him; and whatever is comprehended under the expression, "he that is hanged is accursed of God," Christ underwent, in order to redeem the believing Jew.

In *a way* your correspondent admits this, for he says, "That He died under the curse *of the law*, I admit, but this was only for the Jews, who had deliberately placed themselves under law as a means of justification, and therein entailed *its* curse upon themselves, the curse which its non-fulfilment carried with it; but then the law was ordained (not of God), but by angels, in the hands of a mediator." But, as will be seen, *his* statement of the case takes away the *true* force of the curse, by making it merely the penalty attached to a law, "ordained (not by God), but by angels," which, therefore, had not the direct authority, and thus the judgment of God appended to it. This is to destroy the integrity of the law itself, and with it the true work of redemption wrought by Christ on the cross, by which the Jew was delivered from its curse, for God *Himself* has no place in it as the Judge whose claims have been satisfied.

Now, "ordained by angels" is merely the statement that God used them as instruments to communicate the law to the mediator, and it would be correctly rendered, "ordained through (*διά*) angels." In Acts vii. 53, Stephen speaks of the Jews as having "received the law by the disposition of angels," but that by no means implies that *they* were its authoritative source. Scripture uniformly speaks of the law as "the law of God," or "the law of the Lord." To connect the law with angels, as if *their* authority was represented in it, is, I repeat, to destroy its integrity and with this its power over the conscience, as being the claim of God on man as His creature, and the measure of his obedience to Him. That it is this, your correspondent surely would not deny.

The Jew was *formally* put by God under this claim, as a test; nor is this touched by his being himself a party to its imposition by accepting it, *his* conscience—as must every conscience—bowed to its just demand. The law was God's law, and the penalty imposed for its breach was God's curse. *This* curse Christ on the cross bore in all its terrible reality.

Now, while in a special way the Jew was under law, and stood ostensibly on this footing before God, the law itself is the expression and measure of God's claim over men generally as His creatures, so that, if not formally under it dispensationally, they are all responsible to meet its requirements, and this is distinctly stated by the apostle Paul, as to Gentiles, in Romans ii. 15: "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, and their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another." Thus, though not under "the law," they have "the work of the law" written in their hearts, and they will be judged according to its requirements, as recognised by their own consciences.

It is of all importance to see clearly that God *has* claims over man as His creature, which neither originate

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with, nor depend upon, "the law" for their authority. These claims the conscience of man, whether with or without law, acknowledges. How to be "just with God" under these claims is another question, and involves the principle that touches Jew and Gentile alike—"The just shall live by faith." Outside *this* ground all perish, though the judgment in each case will vary according to the light and privileges that have been enjoyed, according to God's sovereign pleasure.

In this connection it is important to recognise another thing, and that is, that while Jews are specially and dispensationally under the curse of a broken law, it is stated in Galatians, as a principle of universal application, that "As many as are on the principle of works of law are under curse" (new translation). Now this is not the same thing as saying, that all that are of the works of the law are under the curse of the law, as this would confine it to Jews, who alone are under "the law." It is the statement of the *principle* that underlies "the law," and "the law" is appealed to as the declared proof of the principle, but *the principle* has held good from Adam downwards, and stands in contrast with that of the principle of justification by faith. Abel represents the one; Cain the other. Faith is the principle on which blessing depends, while "works of law" is the principle that entails the curse. The Jews under the first covenant are the dispensational proof of this latter, and thus the apostle uses their condition as a warning to Gentiles, while laying the ground of blessing for Jew and Gentile alike in the cross, where Christ was made a curse for them.

While fully, then, admitting that the Jews are specially under the curse of a broken law, and that Christ bore this curse for them, it is, I believe, going far beyond scripture, and opposed to its teachings, to say, "The thought of sin carrying with it the curse of God is absolutely unscriptural." This would imply that none but Jews are under God's curse, and that nothing but a distinct breach of "the law" involves man in eternal condemnation, which "the curse of God" entails. And further, if "the curse

of God" and "the curse of the law" are not the same in effect, and the curse of the law be only the penalty attached to the breach of "the law ordained (not by God), but by angels," none are under "the curse of God," none will be eternally lost, and all Christ redeemed the Jews from, by being made a curse *for* them, was some penalty short of eternal condemnation, a penalty measured by the mere hanging on the tree, and which the thief that went to paradise with Christ endured for himself; so that, as far as "the curse of the law" was concerned, he was redeemed from nothing by the Saviour who hung by his side.

Is this really what your correspondent means? for he says, "I do not accept the view that Christ died as a curse, either for Jew or Gentile;" adding, "if He died as a curse, or under the curse of God, for mankind generally, Jew or Gentile, you must shew me where man, as such, was ever cursed." The question may fairly come up here, What is involved in being "cursed of God"? If it only means hanging on a tree, a certain mode of death, then none but those who have been hanged have been "cursed of God," and if tied down to a breach of "the law," none but Jews, and only some of them, have been the subjects of it.

But let us see what *scripture* says about the curse. In Genesis iii. 14, where it is first mentioned, we find Satan the subject of it: "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:" a curse as enduring as the existence of the being cursed, and having its unending and full accomplishment in the lake of fire. (Rev. xx. 10.) Then, in Genesis iii. 17, the earth is cursed because of Adam's sin, and a curse, the effects of which are all around us to-day, and which will remain unrelieved until the manifestation of the sons of God. (Rom. viii. 19.) Next, in Genesis iv. 11, man himself, in the person of Cain, is "cursed from the earth" for killing his brother, and he begins the world,

a social and political system of happiness without God, and founded on indifference to the curse resting on himself and the scene around him. After the flood we find God saying, that in consequence of the sacrifice offered by Noah (Christ on the cross typically), He would "not again curse the ground for man's sake," but man himself is again cursed, as we read, "Cursed be Canaan." (Gen. ix. 25.)

Subsequently, again and again, we find man cursed in connection with sin, when no question of "the law," as such, is raised. In Jeremiah xvii. on the general ground of unbelief: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." Then, in Matthew xxv. 41, man is cursed for the rejection of Christ in the person of His brethren, at the close of the dispensation, in these terms: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." In 1 Corinthians xvi. 22 we read, "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema." Very many other instances might be referred to, but enough has been adduced to shew that the curse is not confined to a breach of "the law," and it is plain that man, and the earth with him, are under the "curse attached to *sin*," and also that it is "the curse of God."

The testing of the Jew under law has proved that man cannot get from under the curse by law-keeping, but only brings it distinctly on himself by taking that ground. It is here the work of Christ on the cross, comes in. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on them through Jesus Christ, and that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." (Gal. iii. 13, 14.)

It may be questioned here whether the "being made a curse" has any reference to Gentiles? But one thing is clear, that the *cross* gives the manner of death that answers to "hangeth on a tree," and is the proof given

by the apostle that Christ was made a curse. Have we, then, no part in the cross—the *manner* of our blessed Lord's death? If so, why, then, does Jesus Himself connect God's love to the world, and thus "mankind generally" with *this* mode of death, when He says, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, 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.) And again, later on, when He exclaims, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die." (John xii. 31–33.) Mark, too, *here* it is "the Son of man," not simply "the Christ," that is lifted up.

Your correspondent concludes with *some* remarks that read very strangely. "If you say," he remarks, "the curse you refer to relates not to law at all, but to sin, then, I say, where in scripture do you find a curse attached to sin? (I mean, of course, the curse of God). Had it been so, then redemption itself were impossible. 'The strength of sin is the law,' and *its* penalty *death*, and *this* Christ bore for us." What does he mean by "a curse attached to sin" rendering redemption impossible? and what connection has this with "the strength of sin is the law"? Then, again, is death, pure and simple, without what the "curse of God" implies—His wrath and eternal reprobation, *all* the penalty that sin has attached to it? Is *this* all that Jesus went through to save us from the consequences of our sins? Is there no second death—"the lake of fire"—for man to be saved from?

Let death itself, and that death the death of the cross—the hanging on the tree—be ever so terrible, it is what lies behind it, what death enshrouds—the curse of God—the wrath of God—that gives to death its true character as the judgment of God upon sin. This Christ tasted in all its awfulness when hanging on the tree, and expressed in those words of unfathomable agony, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" That alone can tell us what it is to be "accursed of God."

C. W.

“FORTY DAYS.”

No. V.

REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS.

“THE word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord.

“Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days’ journey.

“And Jonah began to enter into the city a day’s journey; and he cried, and said, Yet *forty days*, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

“So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh, by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed, nor drink water: But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.

“Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

“And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.” (Jonah iii.)

“And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was a sign unto the

Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation."

"The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater than Jonas is here." (Luke xi. 29, 30, 32.)

Before entering on my present subject, I would note how the well-spring of God's living grace rises up, and bursts forth at times, and under circumstances, even when the dispensation is dealing with other things. In the Old Testament, grace was not flowing out dispensationally, as now, to the Gentiles—"to all men everywhere." Yet God was God; and His grace is seen here, in sending a mission to the Gentiles, even in those days of dealing with Israel alone, "of all the nations of the earth." It was a bright foretaste of the overflowings of His heart, to be fully made known when Jesus had accomplished His work on the cross, when God's heart was free to flow forth in grace through righteousness.

Now it would appear that Jonah really understood, in some measure, this truth: God had sent him on a special mission to the Gentile city of Nineveh. He was to go and announce the judgment of God against it. God had said, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me." (Chap. i. 2.) But Jonah feared that if he announced this judgment, and that the people *repented*, God would *forgive* and spare them; and thus his self-importance would be compromised. And so Jonah fled to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

Now let us look for a moment at Nineveh. At this time of the earth's history it was the greatest city in the world. It was "an exceeding great city of three days' journey," that is, it was about twenty miles across: far larger than London. It was one of those enormous cities of ancient days, whose ruins, when discovered, seem almost fabulous to behold. It was the Capital of the Assyrian Empire: surrounded by walls, we are told, one hundred feet in height; with twelve hundred towers.

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All the "*entourage*" of Eastern splendour was there. It stood alone in its greatness—a city that seemed to be unconquerable. But its sins cried aloud to God for judgment.

The striking narrative of Jonah himself unfolds God's preparation of His messenger for this mission; the discipline, too, through which He passes him, until the vessel is prepared according to His mind, and ready to His hand. First, he flees by ship from God, to escape this duty; then the *storm* overtakes him, finding him *asleep* in the ship: the *cry* of the mariners awakes him; the *lot* singles Jonah out as the man for whose sake the storm was sent. *Conscience* now convicts him, owning that he is the man. The *sea* receives him. The *fish* swallows him up: and in the "*Belly of Hell*," as he calls his prison house, he passes through those deep and agonizing exercises of soul, detailed in chapter ii., until he owns that "salvation" was "of the Lord," and then only does he stand on the dry ground—a man prepared for his work.

In all this he was eminently a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. The sign, too, that would be given to the Jews, as the Lord told them. A sign that would be no use for them—as they should have received a living Messiah. A dead and risen Saviour, who would go away to the Gentiles; it would be too late for them to know when they had slain Him. Of course I thus look upon them as the *people* of God. Individuals He would bless at any time.

Jonah then goes his way. He enters Nineveh, a day's journey;" and he proclaims the solemn message, "Yet *forty days*, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." This was the "preaching of Jonas." Doubtless he told them his own strange history: a more striking text could hardly have been chosen. A man just emerging from a living tomb, and standing now on the ground of resurrection in figure, could vouch in himself for the truth of what God had done.

It will not be out of place here to say a word on the

great truth of repentance. I trust it is becoming more generally known in its real meaning and power than hitherto; but still I feel there are many who are quite astray on this all-important subject. I say "all-important," because you will find that it is one of the great leading doctrines of the New Testament.

The disciples when they went forth, being sent by the Lord, "preached that men should repent." (Mark vi. 12.) The Lord Himself, when John was cast into prison, came to Galilee, and preached "the gospel of the kingdom of God," saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."

When He sent His disciples forth, after His resurrection, His commission to them was—"That repentance and remission of sins, should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke xxiv.) Paul, too, announces, amidst the learning and heathenism of Athens, how God "now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." (Acts xvii. 30.)

"Repentance," then, is an integral part of the gospel on man's side, while "forgiveness" belongs to God, and is accorded by Him to every repentant soul.

Some, doubtless finding it such an important element, have lost the balance of the divine meaning of it, and, supposing it to be a prefatory preparation towards the reception of forgiveness, have construed it into a certain amount of meritorious sorrow for sin; which, when sufficient, is met by forgiveness from God. Others have taken different views, but it is not my purpose to enter now upon what it is not; but in some measure to illustrate what it is, the Lord so guiding me.

Jonah's preaching to Nineveh affords a most instructive and striking illustration of its true meaning: for "they repented at the preaching of Jonas."

Now suppose he had gone to Nineveh and said to that great city, "Repent;" as one might suppose a case even now of a man going to the centre of Africa and calling upon the heathen there to "Repent"—what would be

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thought of such ? Nay ; the first thing Jonah presented to the Ninevites was a certain truth from God, well calculated to inspire great searchings of heart amongst them. He announces God's judgment being, as we might say, at the doors. Now what was the effect of this ? The very first initiatory effect was, that the announcement was received in *faith* ; and we read, "*So the men of Nineveh believed God.*" Here faith at once in the testimony was seen. *This* was necessary in order to produce what so eminently shone in these people—true, full, and godly repentance : both as to the past, in the present, and for the time to come. 1st. They put them on sackcloth for the past. 2nd. They amended their ways in the present. 3rd. They purposed a turning from their sins for the future. Here was true repentance, and this even *before* they knew anything of God's forgiving grace. Up to this they only hope in God, with the words, "Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not ?" (Chap. iii. 9.) But let us remember that the first thing was—they "*believed God.*" *Faith* was the initial movement in their souls. And I am bold to say there never was true repentance yet, without this being the case. Get up what frames and feelings you may ; let sorrow for sin be there as deep as you please ; let the soul be prepared for all that is coming as well as possible—*faith* in God, or in something which He has revealed, *must* and ever does go before it. I do not say that the soul may yet have entered on peace ; rather I would say I do not believe it has : nor has it got hold of forgiveness yet, but the tender root of faith in God and His word, has struck deeply into the heart of that man, which never can be eradicated.

Thus it was with Nineveh. The solemn sound of judgment had burst on their astonished ears from the lips of that strange preacher, and had sunk down on hearts, ploughing up the way for that which sprang up at the same moment within—faith in God and His word. True repentance *followed* ; and "God saw their works," and

the golden sceptre of forgiveness was at once extended, and Nineveh was spared! Thus it is always. Let a soul be in the true attitude before God, and at once it is forgiven.

There is a passage in Mark i. 15, already alluded to, which may seem to contradict this, as may others also; but, when rightly seen, it will but confirm all we have said. It would seem, then, as if repentance preceded faith: the words are, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." But if we only cast our eyes on the preceding clause, we read, Jesus came . . . saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." This presentation of *something* from God—no matter what He uses—produced a work in the soul; faith was there in that word, and such would bring repentance most surely, and belief in the glad tidings, as well as the sad tidings that had first moved their souls, that *they* were unfit for that kingdom of God.

What magnificent and soul-stirring results we find here from that "one day's" journey and "preaching of Jonah"! Picture to yourself the king leaving his throne, and, doffing his royal robes, covering himself with sackcloth, and sitting in ashes. His courtiers, too, and his people, with their wives and little children—perhaps six hundred thousand souls (for there were, even of that great number, one hundred and twenty thousand who were not able to discern their right hand from their left), "much cattle," too—all partaking of the soul-humblings of that mighty city.

"One day" was enough for them. What a contrast to the thousands now-a-days who hear, year after year, the message of grace, and never yet have bowed down in true repentance before the Lord!

What does God use now to produce that work in the souls of men? Judgment was what sounded in the ears of Nineveh, and still judgment forms a part of the gospel testimony. It is still the dark background of the picture; while the presentation of Christ, of the "goodness of God" now, "leads" the soul to "repentance." (See Rom. ii. 4.) A loving God beseeches men to be reconciled to Him

(2 Cor. v. 20), while dark and solemn judgment to come looms over the scene as the terrible alternative if men do not hear. "Despisest thou," says the apostle, "the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"—leads them to that blessed spot where forgiveness is found by a truly repentant heart. Like the woman of the city of old, she was drawn to Him "by the cords of a man, by the bands of love." True faith in Him had taken root in her soul (Luke vii.), and led her to His feet, to shed those tears of self-judgment for her ten thousand sins; this was true repentance, ere she was forgiven. When there her soul was ready for all the rest which was so freely bestowed: "Thy sins be forgiven thee;" "Thy faith hath saved thee;" "Go in peace," were the blessed words that greeted her ear. The *root* of repentance and forgiveness was *faith*, while the *fruit* of faith was *love*, and then she learned His whole heart.

Mark how different was the thought in the heart of the king of Nineveh, compared with the certainty of the gospel day, "Who can tell," said he, "if God will turn and repent"? Now-a-days there is no "Who can tell" in the clear trumpet-sound of grace. "Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more" is now the word. We say, "Well, I forgive that man, but I cannot forget." With God it is more than this; He remembers our iniquities no more!

Alas, poor Jonah! he was right about God, but it touched the self-importance of the man. God found them bowed to the earth in true repentance, and at once, as always, His forgiveness is extended to souls in such a state. "But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. And he prayed unto the Lord, and said, O Lord, was not this my saying when I was yet in my own country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish; for *I knew* that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth thee of the evil.

"Therefore now, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life

from me; for it is better for me to die than to live." (Jonah iv. 1-3.) Oh the heart of man, what it is! angry and sore displeased because God would not justify his words, and destroy a repentant city! Nay, the soul that would think thus has much to learn of His infinite and tender mercy. Poor messenger of judgment! *you* could be angry at God sparing the ten thousands of Nineveh, but Jesus can, and does, rejoice over *one* repentant sinner. "Rejoice with me," is the Saviour's word, "for I have found the sheep that I had lost." "It was meet," says the Father, "that we should make merry, and be glad; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found."

Repentance, then, is that solemn judgment which I form of, and consciously pronounce about, myself in hearing a testimony from the Lord. I must believe something ere I could possibly repent. It may be that judgment has aroused my conscience; it may be that His goodness has drawn out my heart towards Him; but one thing is certain—*faith* in that something is there, and by faith the soul lives before God. Faith is the spring of life, the life of Jesus in the soul. That life may express itself in agonising exercises for a time, but it is a proof that the soul is not dead, but lives. It is judging itself in view of the divine requirements; weighing itself in the balances, and finding itself wanting. The work of repentance, or self-judgment, proceeds, and the deeper, the better. This leads to the spot where, hopeless in itself, it turns away, in despair of amendment, and finds its all in Christ. Forgiveness is now known and enjoyed as the result of Christ's work alone, and the work of repentance was only leading the soul to the place and condition where forgiveness is applied—namely, where we have believed somewhat of our own hopeless ruin in our own sight, as hitherto in the sight of God.

F. G. P.

SERVANT AND SAVIOUR.

No. III.

CHAPTER LIII. 4-6.

WE are come now to the central section of the prophecy, and doctrinally, also, the very heart of the whole. We are now to learn the true character of those sufferings once so misconceived. It is Israel's voice that we are listening to, the confession that they will yet make of that fatal unbelief of theirs, when once "He came to his own, and his own received him not." Here, with their old "Priest's Guide-book" in their hands, they are realising the meaning of those sacrifices so constantly kept before their eyes in their so over-prized, because so under-prized, ritual. They are learning how "sacrifice and offering *he* would not," who yet seemed to insist so much upon them—how much it cost Him who stepped forth to take the place of those rejected offerings, to say, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God!"

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

The first clause is quoted and applied for us in the Gospel of Matthew. "And when the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils, and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."

The application here, then, is to what our Lord did in His life on earth—not on the cross, but in His miraculous healing of those that were diseased, and deliverance of the victims of Satan's power. This is plainly not atone-

ment, though some have strangely argued it to be so. It is not vicarious suffering, but sympathy, manifested practically in the relief of the varied forms of distress around. And these He "bare," not vicariously or sacrificially, as He "bare our sins in his own body on the tree," but entering into them in the tender pity of His heart, feeling every sorrow to which He ministered.

It is not atonement, yet it is the path and spirit of Him who made it, who made it because men were what and where all this declared them, and *He* was what His word and works declared—"marked out Son of God, with power according to the Spirit of holiness"—but on man's behalf, "by resurrection of the dead." For of all this that had come in as the fruit and shadow of sin, from the lightest prick of the thorn to death itself, there could be no relief but through His crown of thorns and His cross. He who pitied must make a way for His pity, that it might reach the objects of it.

People have asked, Would nothing else suffice? The Lord Himself answers, "The Son of man *must* be lifted up." And He who gave His Son would not have given Him, had there been any other way to save. Love itself could not have been shewn in giving, where there was no absolute necessity to give. Yet, apart from revelation, who could have fathomed the need, or anticipated the way, of divine love in meeting it? Unbelief could thus take up the depth of His humiliation as an argument against His personal claim. The stone lay low enough for them to stumble over it. "Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." It was His glory which had blinded them, as now they own: "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed."

Here is truly vicarious suffering, and suffering which not only removes wrath, but restores to God those who were afar from Him. The two parts of the verse give these two aspects of the cross. According to the first, *our* transgressions, our iniquities, have received their

punishment in Him. According to the second, His stripes are our moral healing—"the chastisement of our peace."

The last is an expression which needs to be considered. The word for 'chastisement' certainly means that, and nothing else. It is translated also in our version, 'correction,' 'discipline,' and so 'instruction;' and in none of these senses could it be applied to the Lord. *He* certainly never needed, and never could have received, chastening or correction; and a moment's thought as to the verse will shew us that it is not to the Lord that it is here applied. It is "the chastisement of *our* peace." That last word is one which includes in its meaning the whole well-being of those as to whom it is used. *His* stripes are for *us* the restorative discipline which brings us to spiritual health—our healing, as the last clause plainly says. It is as we find our guilt borne by another, our peace made by, our sin condemned in, the sufferings of God's Holy One, that we realise the disciplinary virtue of "his stripes." Surely nowhere else has the lesson been so taught us, nowhere else is the discipline so real.

Not for peace only must the cross be known. It is the judgment of the world, the defeat of the prince of the world, the annulling of the body of sin. It is the supreme display of divine righteousness, truth, love, all the glory of God, in triumphant goodness in Him who was crucified in weakness there — "the Son of man glorified, and God glorified in him." Oh, to know more the reality of this holy discipline—"the chastisement of our peace!"—to eat more the salutary "bitter herbs" at our passover feast, all leaven put away out of our houses! What power for purification for us, as for Israel, looking upon Him whom they have pierced, and saying, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath made to meet on him the iniquity of us all."

Let us observe here—simple fact as it is—that our "own way" is our 'iniquity;' it is our misery also, for when was misery far separate from sin? and who but utter orphans have to choose their own path through this

world's maze? It is true we are outside Eden, but not even so has God left us to this. He who numbers our hairs, numbers our steps no less; and to walk in our own way is to refuse divine wisdom and love, incessantly occupied with us, and to imagine we can do better for ourselves than these.

But how often is our own way disguised for us by some seeming goodness of it, which can never take off the fatal stamp of a will in independency of God's! "Lo, I come to do *thy* will" was, as we well know, the characteristic of the pattern proposed to us; and there, where His own will rightly shrank from the dread cup before Him, there it was yet, "*not* my will, but thine, be done." What a commending of that will to us comes with the knowledge that what was before Him then was, in fact, that "Jehovah" was about to lay "on him the iniquity of us all!" And notice how the covenant name, Jehovah, has here its suited place. "Crucified through weakness," the will-less One was to be "Jehovah's arm" of power.

No. IV.

CHAPTER LIII. 7-9.

We come now, in the fourth section of this prophecy to see this same blessed Person tested in every possible way by all this through which He passed, and every fresh test only bringing out some fresh perfection.

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as to his generation, who considereth that he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken? And they gave him his grave with wicked men, and with a rich man when he was dead: because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth."

These are the two characters of fallen man—deceit and violence. So the Psalmist speaks of the "bloody and deceitful man." And so the Lord: "All that came before

me were thieves and robbers;" the last, the man of violence—the thief, the man of deceit; and yet both one, for he who will take openly if he has the power, will use deception if he be weak. But how had *He* used the power which was undeniably His? The mockers at His cross declared it: "He *saved* others." And when power was used unrighteously against Him, "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

But "if any man offend not in word," says the apostle, "the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." Such, then, was His perfection, from whom no pressure of evil could bring aught but good, that overcame it—who, "when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."

Yet "He was oppressed, and he was *afflicted*." In Him was no callousness whatever. Look at that Psalm xxii., in which, if anywhere, His innermost soul is told out; and mark how every feature of the scene is before Him. With us one sorrow swallows up another; we have not capacity as He, and can little realise even the more outward of His sorrows.

Verse 8 has been variously translated. I do not doubt that, as to the first clause, the margin is the more correct: "He was taken away *by* distress"—better, 'oppression'—"and judgment." The second clause I would read, as others have suggested: "As to his generation, who considereth that he was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken?" These are the ingredients of His cup of sorrow: cut off by 'oppression,' perverting the forms of 'judgment,' amid a careless and unbelieving 'generation,' for whose sin He was 'stricken.'

At the end only is He separated from the malefactors with whom He had been associated, and with whom they had assigned Him a grave; but, his work accomplished, further humiliation was not permitted. We know how, in fact, the rich man interposed to fulfil this prophecy.

What He really was began to come out, and to be owned of God. Burial with the rich man was the first only of a series of steps, the last of which placed Him "at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens."

No. V.

CHAPTER LIII. 10-12.

We are prepared now, therefore, to see where the path of the perfect Servant terminates. This is the fitting and necessary close of the prophecy, the Deuteronomic ending of this Isaian Pentateuch.

Mediator between God and man, the divine glory and the blessing of man were joined together indissolubly in His heart, as the names of the people were graven on the Urim and Thummim of the high priest's breastplate. For this double purpose He wrought, and its accomplishment was His reward. The "pleasure of Jehovah" in the salvation of His people was the fruit of the "travail of his soul."

"Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when his soul shall make a trespass-offering, he shall see a seed, he shall prolong his days and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul; he shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant turn many to righteousness, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors, and bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

It was Jehovah's pleasure he undertook to fulfil, and Jehovah's pleasure was that He should be bruised. But mark well, as the explanation of it, how again comes in the covenant name. God's interest in man it is that requires this—His 'delight' (for delight, that word translated 'pleasure' is in); and was not *His* "delight" also, who came to fulfil this, "with the sons of men"? Thus, then, His soul bowed itself to make for them a "*trespass-offering*;" fittingly this aspect of His sacrificial work

named here, because the trespass is the *restitution* offering, which repairs all injury, whether toward God or man. Thus the trespass-offering it is, the blood of which anoints the ear, and hand, and foot of the one but now a leper, to restore him to his place amongst Jehovah's people. It is the *governmental* offering also, satisfying the requirement of the *throne* of God, as the sin-offering does that of His *nature*. Thus He "sees a seed; he prolongs his days," becoming "last Adam," with no conditional tenure of life such as the first had. "He asked life of thee," says the psalmist, "and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever." This, then, His 'seed' share, possessors of eternal life in and with Him.

He then "shall see of the travail of his soul; *he* shall be satisfied:" blessed satisfaction of a heart like his! His rest, the rest of a perfect love, the rest of the Mediator! What follows as the expression of this? "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant"—there His heart Godward is seen—"shall my righteous servant turn many to righteousness,* and he shall bear their iniquities."

Aye, atonement satisfies Him also—Him who makes it. The righteous One could not be satisfied with anything short of this.

And now He comes forth the mighty Conqueror over sin, and death, and all the power of evil, to receive His recompense from God, and enjoy the spoils of His conquest. "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong," that is, as the strong do. But where has this might been shewn? and what is the field in which He has been Victor? It is the lesson for eternity, and happy those who begin to learn it now! Power in goodness; victory in suffering; the battle-field a cross: "*because* he hath poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors, and bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

F. W. G.

* It is the word most commonly and rightly rendered 'justify,' but which has also this meaning, as in Daniel xii. 3, where 'justify' would be impossible.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF J. N. D. ON SUBJECTS OF GENERAL INTEREST.*

IN these last days I look for His leading on His people unfailingly to their place of testimony, to their place of rest; we know that He surely will. I am very thankful that your mind has got so clear, though the difficulty for faith in the path I well know. They are those which attach to Christianity itself, and always have. It is a strait gate and narrow way—that is nothing new. As to the path being the path of faith, and the word, I have not had these forty years the smallest cloud; one must wait, of course, to see it. One difficulty—at any rate in the old country—is that multitudes are breaking loose from all the various systems, without the simplicity of purpose which subjects them to the Lord's discipline.

Everything established is breaking up on the one hand, and on the other, scripture being much more studied, the various dissenting systems are not found in it. To gather according to the word, that becomes the needed service, and this requires both grace and power; it requires the Lord, and I feel all the importance of this, and one's utter powerlessness, save as He works. Yet there is duty, and it is, in a good measure, what is taking me back to the old country. If God give me sufficient strength, I hope to get to the West Indies in winter, and, if all be well, return, perhaps, by America, but at sixty-eight one cannot count on much strength. But God is working in the West, and, with God's grace, younger hands will carry on the work till He comes, who will perfect all.

I cannot regret that in getting clear, all has been called in question. The church of God, the Christian,

* We have had it in our mind, and others have written to us on the subject, to collect and publish in our pages letters, and extracts of letters from this beloved servant of the Lord, and then, after a time, collect and issue them in one volume. We shall be glad if any of our readers will send us extracts, or copies of letters that will be of general interest, and for edification. If the letters themselves are sent, they shall be carefully preserved and returned in due time.

has to rest on the word now, and that must be personal faith, faith resting on the power of God. This is the teaching of 2 Timothy iii. It is trying to a humble soul to be forced to judge for itself, where the church and clergy claim deference, but in the perilous times of the last days this is exactly the point of faith—the word contrasted with the church. Faith is always really individual, and of course the word of God its warrant, but, as against sin and heathenism, the matter is simple, when the church and religious authority comes in it is apparently less so. But this is specifically the point of faith in the last days, the perilous times, the form of *godliness* without the power; thus the scriptures, and hearing the apostles, become the only sure ground of walk; what bears the name of the church has to be judged, and we are to hear, if we have an ear, what it is said *to* them, and not *by* them.

As regards settled peace, the great secret is the full and abiding consciousness that in us there is no good, and looking ever at Christ as our only and our perfect righteousness before God. But there is another kind of peace, which we must not confound with this, the peacefulness of heart which flows from conscious relationship with God. When this is in simple exercise, we rest in the sense of His perfect goodness, and enjoy it, and this is very sweet to the soul. If we are not walking in heart or way in consistency with this relationship, then we have to think of ourselves, and, at any rate, by God's own discipline, we do not enjoy the light of His countenance in the same way. We must not confound this with righteousness. This is ignorance of *divine* righteousness, and tends to put us back under law, and make us doubt. This is not of the Spirit. The Holy Ghost dwelling in us cannot make us doubtful of our relationship with God. He is the Spirit of adoption, "crying, Abba, Father," but He does make us sensitive of the approbation of God, and what suits His presence.

Abel had testimony by *his gifts* (that is, Christ the Lamb) that "he was righteous," but Enoch, before his

translation, had this testimony, "that he *pleased* God." You may find the two kinds of rest in Matthew xi. 28, 29. Our present relationship is a constant source of joy, and to be carefully cherished; our righteousness, on which it is founded, is unchangeable in the presence of God. The gracious Lord keep us walking *diligently*.

May, 1868.

J. N. D.

I rejoice with all my heart in the grace shewn to you and to her, in the case of your dear child. I feel, too, deeply the anxiety attending the young being brought into a path in which they have to follow Christ, before they have tried and broken with this vain and empty world, which a young imagination, and a heart as yet unwearied by it, suppose may give some real joy. If Christ have taken a strong hold, the path is simple, and the young may be saved many a pang. If Christ's, they will surely learn the world is nothing, and its friendship enmity with God, but it is better and happier to learn it in the blessed company of Christ than in regrets on a dying bed, or a heart repentant at loss and unfaithfulness. I do not expect young Christians to have learned everything, but the Lord expects them to be faithful to the light they have got: "And to him that hath shall more be given."

As to going through the world as a trial and exercise of faith, we have all to do it. It is like the ordinary sinfulness of our hearts and ministering to it, a process through which we have all to go, to have our senses exercised to discern good and evil, and Christ becomes everything to us, and we more like Him. Oh! how surely we shall feel it that day—that all that was not a heart given to Him, was loss and wretchedness. I trust your child sees that in Christ our acceptance is perfect and full, as our sins are wholly put away; but with that, we are His, and in feeding on Him, looking forward to His glory, to give energy on one hand, and feeding on Him, as the patient and crucified One, to abide in Him, we find in a lowly, gracious, and, for that very reason, firm life, the bright hope of transforming glory.

As to judging of those around (worldly Christians), their state is judged in the scripture. But if we get near to the Lord, if we are in communion with God within, in the holy place, we see all saints with His eyes, as dear to Him, washed in Christ's blood, and His in the power of the Holy Ghost, and they are clothed by faith and desire with what belongs to Him, objects of Christ's delight, and the fruit of the travail of His soul; then intercession for them is easy, and faithfulness to them becomes easy, and gracious too. But we cannot judge aright if we are not *there*. Our judgment of certain things may be right, and our rejection of them in our ways, but we judge them *without*, as forbidden things, and that, so far, is all right; but *within*, while this judgment is only deeply strengthened, other thoughts and feelings come in with it, which can be had only there.

The evil and loss for the saints, of the wretched path of worldliness, the dishonour done to the Saviour, the ruin of their testimony, is far more deeply felt, but because they are seen in Christ, not merely because they are wrong. We may fear for them, but the heart will carry them to God, to Christ, because they are His. Moses would not have the people cut off on the top of the mount, he called the faithful to cut them off when below, and both for the same reason. He connected the glory of God with the people—an extreme case, no doubt, but which shews us that divinely-given love for God's people on *high* is the spring of severity, even if needed, *below*. God's glory as the plea for and against the people.

Tell — how unfeignedly rejoiced I am that the gracious Lord has given her the immense privilege of belonging to Him. May He keep her close to Himself, and give her grace to keep herself in the love of God. My kindest love to all the saints; may the Lord consolidate them in the faith, and in one heart, and keep you all very near Himself, till He come to receive us to Himself.

July, 1869.

J. N. D.

A Tract entitled "Ephesians v. 30" had been sent him to look over.

I do not like the style of the tract I confess, it is what we call in French a style *ampoulé*. I do not use a hard English word, but it sets out to say wonderful things in a wonderful way. But to doubt that Christ is glorified, is to doubt the plainest passage of scripture (see John xiii. 31, 32, xvii. 5 ; 1 Tim. iii. 16), and practically many passages if the word 'glory' be not used, as, 1 Peter iii. 22, Acts ii. 33. The passage the tract alludes to, is plain enough too. Ephesians i. 20-23, John vii. 39, is specific in its statement. The Comforter would not come till Jesus was glorified. But He is come according to promise. John xii. 16 is equally definite. I might go on citing passages in numbers, for it lies at the basis of Christianity, but it is hardly necessary after these.

It is a mistake to deny actual union with Christ. It is true that it is not a natural union of flesh, but spirit is as real, and more real than flesh, though not material, and 'of his flesh and of his bones' should not be inserted, because it is not found in the best copies. Dead and risen with Christ is the scriptural language. Union with Him in death is not exact, because real union with Him is only when He is glorified, and we have received the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is the power of this union (see 2 Cor. i. 21, 22), but the reality of this union is definitely stated in 1 Corinthians vi. 17. Christians may not have learned this, and then we must have patience. They lose a great deal, but God can reveal this also unto them.

The other point belongs to simple faith in the plain statements of scripture, and belongs to the basis of Christianity, because the baptism of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost was dependent on it, and it is part of Christ's glory, as the foundation of all we are entitled to (see Heb. ii.), as defining the position. He is glorified, but all things are not yet put under Him.

If you put these passages peacefully and graciously before our brother, he will, doubtless, see that it is so,

and that may lead him on to the other point which, though plainly stated in scripture, is never connected with experimental acquaintance with that state.

1880.

J. N. D.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

21. Q.—What is the difference between ἀγαπάω and φιλέω? I am only quite a young Greek scholar, and know very little about it, yet I often get great help in understanding the scriptures from the Greek. Ἀγαπάω seems, I think, the highest, for John only of the apostles uses it in his epistles, and a great many times in his gospel; and God is love (ἀγάπη), yet “the Father loveth (φιλεῖ) the Son.” (John v. 20.) Φιλέω is translated *kiss* in three places. I am sure it is of importance to distinguish them. (2 Cor. v. 14; Eph. iii. 14–19.)

B. S.

A.—Ἀγαπάω means “to love,” and is used of God who loves His Son, and who so loved the world as to give His Son to die, and who loves His children. Christians are to love one another, and their enemies, for God is love; so, as born of Him, they are to manifest it. (1 John iv.; Matt. v. 44.)

Φιλέω speaks rather of affection or attachment to a person, or an object. Thus the Pharisees loved (φιλέω) the uppermost seats at feasts (Matt. xxiii. 6), and the world loves its own. (John xv. 19.) So the Lord warns us against loving father or mother more than Him. (Matt. x. 37.) Then we read that the Father loves the Son (φιλεῖ), and shews Him all that He does (John v. 20); and He loved the disciples because they had loved the Son (xvi. 27). Of the Lord we read, that whilst He loved (ἀγαπάω) the Philadelphian saints, He shews His love (φιλέω) to souls in rebuking and chastening where needed. (Compare Rev. iii. 9 and 19.) One sees the import of the term used when addressing the Laodicean assembly. And we can understand the significance of it as used by Martha and Mary, when they sent to the Lord

in their sorrow, and said, "He whom thou lovest [*φιλεῖς*] is sick." (John xi. 3.) And surely the term was well chosen, when the Jews at the grave, observing the Lord's emotion, said, "See how he loved him" (*ἐφίλει*). Peter's answer to the Lord's challenge is all in character, as he uses but one word of himself. He loved Christ (*φιλέω*), whatever his denial of Him might seem to imply. And in harmony with this is the apostolic word, "If any man love not (*φιλεῖ*) the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha." (1 Cor. xvi. 22.)

A derivative of *φιλεῖν* is *φίλημα*, "a kiss." So *καταφιλεῖν* is "to kiss." How base the treachery of Judas to manifest special attachment to the One whose betrayal he had compassed! With the bearing of *φιλεῖν* before us, we can see the import of the compound *φιλαδελφία*, brotherly love; *φιλαργυρία*, love of money (1 Tim. ii. 10); *φιλανθρωπία*, love towards man (Titus iii. 4); *φιλήδονος*, a lover of pleasure. (2 Tim. iii. 4.) And one can see the force of the word used by James, when denouncing the friendship (*φιλία*) of the world as enmity with God. (James iv. 4.)

C. E. S.

22. Q.—Do we get any expressions in scripture which give the same idea as one would get from reading the lines—"Who didst for sinners shed Thy blood?"—"Which He on Calvary spilt," &c.; which we find in the "Little Flock" hymn-book?

T. A.

A.—His blood *was shed*. (Matt. xxvi. 28.) And *He gave* His life a ransom for many (Matt. xx. 28), and the life of the flesh is in the blood. No man taketh it from Him. (John x. 18.) He offered up Himself. (Heb. vii. 27.) The Lord Jesus was the offerer, the offering, and the priest; and it was at a place called Calvary in Latin, (Luke xxiii. 33), Golgotha in Aramaic, there they crucified Him. We must not quarrel with these expressions in the "Little Flock" hymn-book.

C. E. S.

"FORTY DAYS."

No. VI.

CONFLICT AND VICTORY.

"THEN was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.

"And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

"But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

"Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

"Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

"Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

"Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

"Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him." (Matt. iv. 1-11.)

"And Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

"And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.

"And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

"And the devil, taking him up into a high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time; and the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will, I give it. If thou, therefore, wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

"And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

"And Jesus, answering, said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

"And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season." (Luke iv. 1-13.)

We may recall very easily another scene that was enacted about a thousand years before this (of which we have two detailed accounts given by two of the writers of the Gospels); the former happened in the valley of Elah, as narrated in 1 Samuel xvii. David—then a stripling, and just about to enter on his public service in the reign of Saul—had come down from his father's house to the aid of his brethren and the people of God, who were trembling in terror at the power of the Philistines. Goliath, their champion, had challenged them each day for forty days, when David arrived on the scene. At once he is rejected by his brethren, and then entered into the conflict alone—a conflict, of which the issue was

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complete victory for the armies of God, and deliverance for His people, at that day.

It was but a shadow, forecasting that greater conflict of the greater than David, who came from His Father's house to re-open that great question, commenced four thousand years before in Paradise, between man and Satan, and to shew what the true "Man after God's own heart" could do in the presence of the foe. It was but a faint type, but it points, as all things did in God's hand, to Jesus.

If we examine these two accounts of the temptation of Christ, we find that He not only enters on this scene and conflict to prove His right as the Second man, the Lord from heaven, in all that in which the first man had failed; but He begins that wondrous course of education—if I may so say—in which He learned obedience by the things which He suffered; and suffered, being tempted, that He might be able to speak a word in season unto him that is weary, and that He might succour them also which are tempted; thus practically fitted to be a merciful and faithful High Priest for us.

We are not told what passed in those "forty days and forty nights." God has drawn a veil over that solemn conflict. But we are allowed to see its close—"all the temptation" being finished.

We may note the difference in the order in which the temptations are spoken of in the two Gospels. This, like everything in the word of God, is of importance, and has its significance. In the account in Matthew, the order is this: you have His obedience tested first, then His dependence. These are the two characteristics of the new man—Christ in us—of which He was the grand and blessed exemplar. Then to this obedient and dependent One are presented all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and He triumphs over the enemy and all his toils.

In the Gospel of Luke I think another lesson is presented to us. Here we have the trinity of evil which came in in Paradise when our first parents fell. "The

lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," then entered this fair scene: "when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise." This, then, is the order here. In verse 3, &c., we have the lust of the flesh; in verse 5, the lust of the eye; and in verse 9, &c., the pride of life. And at the close, we find that when the "devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him *for a season*." Then, at the close of His course, He said to His disciples, at the end of John xiv., on His way to the garden of Gethsemane, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." This was the second time the tempter was permitted to cross His path. At the beginning he sought to seduce Him from His path of obedience, and then to deter Him from being the Victim in making atonement at the end. This was the time when He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood in His agony, when accepting the cup from His Father's hand.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, which unfolds the Priesthood and work of the blessed Lord, we find those two scenes alluded to separately and distinctly. In chapter iv. 15, the Spirit of God specially refers to the close of the forty days' temptations at the opening of His public service, in the words, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but was in all points tempted like as we, except sin (*χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας*);" and in chapter v. 5 we have the other scene at the close of His life: "who, in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared." In the scene of Gethsemane, in Matthew, we find those prayers, supplications, and strong crying and tears referred to in verses 39, 42, and 44, His "prayer" deepening to "supplication," and His "supplication" to "strong crying and tears," to be answered fully on the morning of resurrection, and to be dried up for ever when He entered upon His heavenly joy and glory.

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But when we contrast those words which describe His sorrow with those which describe the heart of the tried saint, in Philippians iv., instead of "prayer and supplication, with strong crying and tears," as with Him, He has taken the sting out of every bitter sorrow for His own, and with them it is "prayer and supplication, with *thanksgiving*." He has borne our sins—not one remains. He has tasted our sorrows—not one is without His sympathy. In life and in death, and in life for evermore, He is our perfect High Priest and Saviour!

Over those "forty days" temptations God has drawn a veil. "Afterward [mark the word] he hungered." Note now the wisdom of the foe. We shall always find that the tempter adapts the temptation to our *present state*. With Christ it was ever perfection. He hungered; but this was not sin; there was nothing evil in being an hungered. Still, the temptation was suited to His then state by this father of lies.

Is not this the case with us? Does not the tempter know how to suit his temptation to our present state? Does he not know what is suited to move our lusts—to seduce us out of the path of obedience? Does he not know the love of the world in our hearts?—the ambition of another—the pride of a third—the vanity of another? Does he not see the covetousness of that heart—the lust working in this? Does not the tempter know how to draw each one away of his own lust, and entice such? There is a poor man struggling with the world and his children's need. The tempter tempts him to be discontented with his lot. There is a godly woman with a bad husband. She is tempted to impatience with her life of sorrow. There is that rich man who hoards his money. He has been often deceived, he thinks, in giving it away. There is a corner of his heart over which "covetous" may be written. He gives way to the temptation to close his purse-strings, and the tempter has his victory.

I might go on in this strain; but all who read these words know well how the thing that suited the "old man, which is corrupt," within them, has been ministered

to by the tempter, and how, perhaps unknown to themselves, they have fallen his prey for the moment. I say "for the moment," for I speak of those who are open to his devices—saints of God with the flesh in them. The poor child of Adam is often left alone by the tempter; he is his sure and certain prey, and needs no special watchful care from the enemy of Christ. With him, his course seems in Satan's highway, and unless grace turns his heart there is no need; his own heart, and his own lusts, and the world around, answer well enough for him.

But Jesus "hungered." This was the will of God. Could it happen without such? Nay. "Command that these stones be made bread," suggested the tempter. "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God," had passed the lips of the Eternal Son, and now on earth He will obey. Have we never satisfied our hunger, our need, at the expense of the word of God? Look at our daily life, reader; does it not cut home deeply into every motive of our life and ways? Our needs, too, each day, are they ever satisfied independently of God? Alas, for the reply, even from the lips and hearts of the brightest saints! How "Christ" detects our souls, yet, blessed be His name, forms us after the image of Himself who thus lays us bare. Jesus came to be the subject One, the will-less Man (though divinely entitled to have a will, surely). To "command," then, was not for Him who came to shew us how to obey. To command the winds and waves was His, when in obedience to His Father and God. To command for *self* and His need could never be, for "self" was never there! To obey was all with Him in a scene formed by man under Satan's power, independently of God. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." No word had passed His "mouth" to "make stones bread" to satisfy hunger, apart from His will. Thus was the tempter stripped of his power; obedience to the word of God left him a conquered foe, and Christ was victor by obedience over man's mighty conqueror.

We have a nature capable of being drawn aside, and an ever watchful enemy ready with his temptations. Christ had not this; but still, whether for Him or for us, obedience is victory. We never can be in a single circumstance where we cannot—nay, are not bound—to do the will of God, be that what it may. Thus we may ever be conquerors, as He was here. But let us ever remember that it is the state of soul in which we *are* to which the tempter presents his wile, adapting it to that which is uppermost at the moment in our heart; and each moment of each day and hour is the opportunity for his defeat or victory. If the latter, the soul may be restored, but the scar remains, telling us of a moment's defeat in us, and of a victory of the enemy.

Now mark what ensues. The skilful general does not continue to attack the point where he has been repulsed successfully, he changes his mode, and turns the flank of his foe. How rapidly, too, is this accomplished by the successful tempter. How well the human heart is known. How frequently have those who have resisted well in his attacks fallen, forgetful that they were never nearer a fall than when they had resisted well.

In the case of Jesus how sudden was the change. "*Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,*" &c. So with us: one thing is tried, and we resist, and foil the foe; the next moment we fail where we least expected to have done so. Our success was thought to be our own. We ceased to be dependent, and withdrew our eyes from Him who withdraweth not His eyes from us; and thus, and only thus, we fall. A heart distrustful of itself, which ever looks to Him, He succours with His timely help to keep us from a fall.

Will Jesus, too, be a dependent One, and teach us so? The tempter says—using, as it were, the word of God, by which He lived, that to which He had appealed as His guide, and the director of His life—he says, "*If thou be Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and in their*

hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." The promise of God to His Messiah who dwelt in the secret of the Most High, and lodged under the shadow of Abraham's God, who had made Jehovah His refuge and fortress; His God, in whom He would trust. It was to Him this promise was made, just quoted by the enemy. But mark the word which accompanied this promise; how God, as it were, delighted to unite with His promise the dependent heart of this blessed One, which only brought out His deep perfections. "Because thou hast made the Lord my refuge, even the Most High thy habitation." This was the dependence of Jesus; this, what drew forth the promise of the Lord just quoted by the enemy. He *had* made His God His refuge and His trust: no need, then, to try would He be as good as He had said—no need to test One fully trusted. We put the test to those we do not fully trust, not to those we do. To do so, would be but to "tempt the Lord." Satan sought to inspire Him with confidence in the word of God in spite of disobedience. He quotes the promised security, omitting the required trust. Jesus quotes that word to Israel which made the obedience the ground of His security, and kept His blessings as the dependent Man!

Oh, my reader, have we no word in this for our own souls? Have the promises of our God been clung to, and even rejoiced in, by us when walking in disobedience? Have we never beheld this in those we love and esteem as His own? What He has done for them in salvation trusted in and enjoyed; while a disobedient pathway speaks so plainly as to need no word from us to point it out? In this, too, Jesus was the blessed Conqueror—in this the enemy of souls was foiled.

"Again," (ver. 8.) What, "Again!" Yes, my reader, and "again," and onwards to the end. No truce here in this path for us, no time here is allowed to put off the armour of God, even for a moment. "Again," then, all the glory of the world is presented to Him whose own it is, but refused by Him from any hand but from His

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Father's. The distant time might have been shortened, the path of suffering spared, the cross and shame avoided. But this was not to be. The Giver was valued in His gift, and the Son chose to have it alone from His Father's hand. Let the blessing come only from Him, and all would be well. The malignant foe is discomfited, and Jesus stands at the close of this conflict a Victor! "Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," closes the scene.

Satan departs from Him "for a season," and angels came and ministered unto Him. Mark this striking scene. How it reminds one of that final day of victory which ushers in the millennial glory: "The kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them," stretched out beneath His gaze; then all His own. Satan cast into the bottomless pit for the thousand years' restraint; God's unfallen creatures ministering to their true and only Lord with willing hearts and hands. It only wanted His own blood-bought ones, His church, to complete the scene. But the day is coming fast when she, too, will be there, and when Satan, as lightning, will fall from heaven, and the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever.

There is a calm for human hearts, too, which conquer in temptation even now—a holy sense of deep dependence and of joy felt by those who have resisted, in the strength of Christ, the tempter's power. The angels who ministered to those who shall inherit salvation may thus be employed even now. But the day is approaching when every trial of our faith will come forth as gold tried in the fire, and be found unto His praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Would not the Lord, too, as He looked across that scene of sin, and sorrow, and evil which stretched before His view, as Satan was cast down before Him—the obedient and dependent Man—would He not think of all who then were His; and all who would come after, for whom,

He had thus learned what it was to "suffer, being tempted," and how to speak a "word in season" to every weary heart? This, too, ere He descended to traverse that path which led only to His cross and shame.

But remember, dear friends, that, while the tempter thinks of your state of soul, and suits his temptations to your desires, there is Another, too, who thinks of us, who "ever liveth to make intercession for us," One who has been in conflict and in victory, and thus has shewn us how to obey, and how to conquer too. We have to do with a beaten foe, and to be sustained by his Conqueror. But this must ever be as dependent ones, who, like Himself, should "learn obedience by things which we suffer." He learned as One to whom to obey was a new thing—new, for One who commanded all from eternity. We learn obedience, too, as a new thing as well as He, but new to us in another way; new, because God's will is now taking its place in hearts hitherto opposed in will to Him, but taking its place surely, though it may be slowly, in hearts renewed by grace, to which the deepest joy will be, that His will shall flow in unhindered blessedness in that scene of rest, from our restless wills, when God will rest in His love for ever.

F. G. P.

THE LESSONS OF THE AGES.

THE TRIAL BY HUMAN GOVERNMENT.

(Concluded from page 229.)

THE failure is on two sides, that of the governed and that of the governors alike, for both are men. On the part of those in authority is found weakness, the want of *self-government*, as in Noah, which exposes it to the contempt of those who need most the display of power; or as in Nimrod, the abuse of this, tyranny and oppression. Babel ends this scene in a general revolt against the source of all power—against God—the issue of which is to bring down judgment and stamp the whole scene, even outwardly, with the brand of "confusion."

The failure begins with Noah, and this is the occasion of Ham's sin and the curse upon his posterity. The break-up of government is primarily the fault of those to whom God has committed the authority, with the responsibility, of government. God would be with His own institution necessarily to maintain it, if only those to whom it was entrusted did not betray their trust. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" But then subjection to Him is the secret of subordination on the part of the governed. When man gave up his supremacy over the beast, then the beast rose up against him. He had sunk down to their level practically by giving up God—for the beast knows not God. "Being in honour and abiding not, he is like the beasts that perish." Thus, long after this, Nebuchadnezzar is driven to the beasts, until he should know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men. His own account is very striking: "And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar *lifted up mine eyes unto heaven*, and mine understanding returned unto me; and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation. . . . At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me."

Noah's departure from God was not what Nebuchadnezzar's had been; but it was as real if not so manifest. We have in him the beginning,—the root, and not the full ripe fruit. A root is not *manifest*; but it is what the other springs from. Noah's failure is easily read as the unguarded enjoyment of blessings away from the restraining presence of Him whose gifts they are. But this is the very secret of a departure, the limit of which is then only with God and not with man. The soul has lost its anchorage, and cannot choose but drift. Noah is drunk, loses his garment and is naked. In many points

it is the Eden-scene repeated. This nakedness is matter of contempt to those who are themselves wholly away from God, and who use it to their own worse shame and ruin. From this family of Ham comes, later, Nimrod, "the rebel"; and the beginning of his kingdom is Babel.

The order is instructive and important. God's thought for man is weakness, dependence, subjection, but so blessing. To realise this they are to be scattered abroad upon the earth. But of all things the pride of man refuses the acknowledgment of weakness, as his will resents subjection. Power and a name he covets. "Union is strength" is his watchword. "And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

Now God's thought for man is a city too. Faith looks for a "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Cain's city was not original with him, nor is God's thought caught from man's. It is itself the original; only that it must wait for another scene for its accomplishment. For He cannot build in a storm-vexed and shifting scene, such as the present; and the anticipation of God's time is unbelief, not faith. Man's union is thus confederacy, a compact of selfish wills, of which the cross is the outcome: "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us."

Meanwhile God is digging deep, in the sense of emptiness and nothingness and guilt, Christ as the foundation of a city whose walls shall be salvation, and whose gates praise; where union shall be communion with the Father and the Son, and thus accord with all things that serve God. Jerusalem shall be therefore "the possession of peace." The outcome of man's confederacy—judgment only stamping it with its true character—is Babel, "confusion." And this is the beginning of his empire, who is the type of the great final "rebel," who crushing all lesser wills into his own, shall be at the same time the "lawless one" and the iron despot.

This "man's day" will come to an end, and the king-

dom of Christ be seen to be the only refuge; all other kingdoms but its shadow, this the substance. The perfect Man must come—Himself the perfectly obedient One,—in whom shall be no failure; no degradation of power, and no lack of it: whose of right the throne is. Till then the trial of government, however this may be needful (and therefore “the powers that be are ordained of God,” and “he is the minister of God to thee for good”), becomes only one of the things that manifest more and more man’s hopeless ruin. He who could not maintain himself in blessing cannot recover himself; nor is there redemption for him in his brother’s hand. F. W. G.

LETTERS AND EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF
J. N. D. ON SUBJECTS OF GENERAL INTEREST.*

DEAREST B—— I was, for some days back, waiting the moment to write to you, moving about from meeting to meeting in the Jura, moved by the same motive which brought me yours, for which I heartily thank you, and am so glad that mine was delayed, as I had yours without even one from me. If your strength be spared a little I hope to see you. I purpose on my way to Canada, instead of sailing from Liverpool to go and see you in Dublin and get on board at Cork. I trust the Lord may so order it, but His way I am sure is best. Oh, how truly I feel that! You can hardly think how I feel that, and myself a stranger here. I have ever found in you, dear brother, everything that was kind; nor be assured was it lost upon me, though I am not demonstrative. Besides the value I had for you, it was not a small thing to me

* We have had it in our mind, and others have written to us on the subject, to collect and publish in our pages, letters and extracts of letters from this beloved servant of the Lord, and then, after a time, collect and issue them in one volume. We shall be glad if any of our readers will send us extracts, or copies of letters that will be of general interest, and for edification. If the letters themselves are sent, they shall be carefully preserved and returned in due time.

that you, with dear C. and H., were one of the first four, who with me (through God's grace, the fourth) began to break bread in Dublin—what I believe was God's own work.

Much weakness I own in carrying it out, little faith to make good the power which was and is in the testimony, but God's own testimony I am assured, in every respect, even as to the gospel to sinners, what He was doing. I knew for myself in no wise, the bearing and importance of what I was about, though I felt in lowliness we were doing God's work. The more I go on, the more I see of the world, the more of Christians, the more I am assured that it was God using us for His testimony at this time. I never felt it as I do, but it is not my purpose to dwell on it now, and I fully own our weakness. It is to you, dear brother, my heart turns now, to say how much I own and value your love, and to return it; I rejoice that, while I have been the object of many kindnesses on your part down here, it is one which will never cease, which has had Jesus our Master for its bond, though with many human kindnesses. But oh, what joy to know ourselves united to Him! It adds a joy to every sweetness: it is the source of good. Surely He is all.

For me, I work on until He call me, and though it would seem a strange Dublin without you, yet I go on my way, serve others, say little and pass on. Not that I do not dearly love others, but this will come out in its truth in heaven, perhaps on one's death-bed; but I have committed my all to Him till that day. My hope is still to see you, my beloved brother; should I not, be assured there is none who has loved you more truly and thankfully than myself: it can hardly be unknown to you, though with me there is more within than without. Peace be with you. May you find the blessed One ever near to you; that is everything. Faithful is He withal and true. In His eternal presence, how shall we feel that our little sorrows and separations were but little drops by the way, to make us feel we were not with Him, and when with Him—what it is to be there. Oh, how well ordered all

is! I ever long more to be in heaven with Him before the Father, though I desire to finish whatever He has for me to do; and if it keeps me awhile out, it keeps me out for Him, and then it is worth while, and grace I am glad to have a moment to finish my letter. I am full 500 or 600 miles from where I began it, and somewhat with a child's joy embrace unexpected leisure.

I have thought too of little fruit. I find that while specially happy in evangelising, my heart ever turns to the church's being fit for Christ. My heart turns there. God knew, I suppose, that I was too weak and cowardly for the other; but I reproach myself sometimes with want of love for souls, and above all for want of courage, and love would give that—it always does; but in the consciousness of my shortcoming I leave all with Christ. He does, after all, what He pleases with us, though I do not seek to escape blaming myself through this; and if He is glorified I am heartily content with anything, save not to love Him.

May His joy and peace be with you, dearest B——, and again thanking you for your letter, which was a true delight to me, ever yours affectionately in our blessed Master,

J. N. D.

1864.

“Him no words can rightly praise.”

I WAS very glad to hear you were better, for we were uneasy about you, though sure the Lord is right, and to have accounts of the work and of the beloved brethren in Canada, to whom I am greatly attached. God knows whether I shall ever see them again.

As to your question as to the manna; the colour is nothing. It was a yellowish-white which Bdellium is said to be. It had an oily taste, but was sweetish.

Matthew xviii. 16, &c., offers no difficulty at all. Call it an assembly, which is what the word is, and all question disappears. The Roman Catholic does not hear the church: he forms part of the church (all the faithful do to make up the church). He hears the clergy, but they are not the church. As to the passage itself nothing can

be more simple; if I am wronged I seek to make my brother feel it; if that fails I take two or three more, so that it may not rest on my word merely. If that fail, I tell it to the whole assembly; if that be refused, I disown the offender. What has the clergy teaching a doctrine to do with my telling something to the assembly? They pick out three words from the passage quoted; and even so it is not the church they hear.

"The times of the Gentiles" is the time during which, from the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar till the beast is destroyed, Jerusalem and the throne of God in it has been set aside and the Gentiles been in power.

The "fulness of time" in Galatians, is when the responsibility of man having been fully tried, the due time has arrived for Christ to come and accomplish redemption. The "dispensation of the fulness of times," is when all ages having rolled round, and all being ready, all things in heaven and in earth are put under the authority of the second Man as Head.

The kingdom of God is general and embraces all the rest. The kingdom of heaven is God's kingdom when the rule is in heaven—when the king is there. This results in a special division, the full heavenly part which is the kingdom of the Father, and the subject earthly part—the kingdom of the Son of man.

There was no gift by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, but by the laying on of Paul's. It was an apostolic prerogative. The Holy Ghost was given by the laying on of the Apostles' hands; it is *with* as to the presbyters: they were associated, as approving witnesses of Timothy. Hence in modern imitations, or tradition, they are ordained by the bishop, but two or three presbyters join in laying on hands as a sanction but cannot ordain. The presbytery was the company of elders who doubtless knew Timothy, and thus testified of it: compare Acts xvi. 2. These are all your questions.

The Lord willing, we start for the West Indies November 17. The desire to hear is very great here; constantly people cannot get in, and a majority of men, and I trust

the brethren are getting on, as to numbers rapidly. Scotland is greatly opened and meetings formed, indeed in Ireland too. But all things are loosening up in every way and there is a good deal of religious action, very independent, but godly souls getting dissatisfied with looseness. We have just closed our labourers' conference here, I hope with blessing. Peace be with you. My kindest love to the brethren at Quebec and Montreal. The Lord graciously lead them on and bless them, and gather many into the paths of peace.

1869.

J. N. D.

MOST glad I was to get your letter, and doubly so from its contents. The Lord has been indeed blessing you, nor have we been without some droppings of the shower. Barbadoes was very interesting; numbers came, earnest, attentive, and many declared they had never heard the real gospel before; and considerable numbers found peace. Some were added every Lord's day we were there, and a good many have now to decide between taking up their cross and following Christ, or accommodating themselves to the world, and religious error and false doctrine, which they know to be wrong. The Lord give them grace to be faithful.

However we had to come on to Jamaica, where there is scarce one to labour and not much spiritual life, but some nice brethren as far as we have seen, glad to profit by what we are enabled to afford them. How far the door may open is in the Lord's hands, at Barbadoes there was no mistake as to this. It helped, too, dear — who had been labouring under reproach, a lowly man, distrustful of himself, but whom the Lord has blessed there much; treated as a bringer of strange doctrine and folly, but many saw *now* "we charged him with wrong doctrine but now we see it was we who were wrong," and the rumour of it spread through the place. The brethren are in much union and harmony here; there are a good many scattered small gatherings in rather inaccessible places—no roads or means of communication. I suppose I shall

have, as people do, to buy a carriage and horses, and sell them again on leaving, riding when a road ceases, lodging where one can.

We want labourers. Oh, that the Lord would raise up single-eyed devoted workmen, coming direct from Christ to those around, enduring hardness too by times, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. He has raised up some, His name be praised, but we need many more. We have to pray the Lord of the harvest, and may He grant them. I suppose I shall have to go back to Europe from this; France and Germany claim a visit. I thought I had done with them. And I have some London work. But I am so used to the Atlantic and so well on it, if God preserves my strength, I may yet see the States and so, the Lord willing, Canada. What effect has the new work in Western Canada? But it is the Lord's work, and He only wakens and arouses.

— has suffered a little, otherwise we are all well. No doubt it tends to destroy exertion, but people are needlessly frightened about the West Indies. The land is magnificent, full of misery, and like all the West Indies degraded in morals, but temporally has seen its worst.

The full mind of God has opened itself out to me more largely than ever in these latter times, but I am not satisfied with myself as to my love to souls. I bow to filling up the little niche I may have been allotted, but still envy (not with an ill-feeling) more active evangelists, and sometimes ask myself whether cowardice and want of zeal does not hinder one. Fully occupied and labouring, the question is whether a simple love to souls would not put me in another place.

I am content with and thankful for any the Lord will allow me to have, unworthy as I am of any. I ask if the exposition of scripture is the task allotted me. I see the church's need as to it and am content with anything, but I have ever loved evangelisation. I have gone out on that work. The church is at my heart perhaps more than souls; yet I trust I love them. But Christ's glory must connect itself with evangelising for me. Some

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much prized, though I heartily rejoice in it, falls cold on my heart for this reason; but all is in His hands, only I would not avoid my responsibility. Well, enough of myself.

Give my kindest love to the brethren. May they be kept very near the Lord, and truly waiting for His Son from heaven. My heart is with them in their blessing. May they know how, through grace, to keep it. Kind remembrances to Mrs. — and your boys too: the Lord graciously keep them from the world and by His own gracious power.

1870.

J. N. D.

He had been written to with reference to the general work of the gospel, and the connection of "Brethren" (so called) with it.

It is the greatest joy to me, that the hearts of the saints have been turned to souls, not surely from the word, but charity thinks of souls. I remember often in olden times saying to you, Remember the people have souls.

As to the work, I heartily and with deepest thankfulness delight in it. No doubt, human infirmity may accompany its effect and working amongst men. Does that make one turn away from the manifest hand of God? There may be in given cases accompaniments which make it impossible to join in particular meetings or acts, but where God is free, where the spirit is, there I ought to be; and if I cannot join, as I could not when Christ is preached of contention, I rejoice, for all that, that He is preached, and brought to souls.

I see that it will be a judgment on the professing church because it seeks the credit of God's work and does not own the presence of the Holy Spirit, and I have no desire that the truths which have made us own that, and our place in the last days, should be in any way enfeebled, but if full and happy liberty were left anywhere to the Spirit of God, nothing that grieved Him maintained, this

consideration would lead me rather to cultivate intercourse.

I judge it would be a deplorable sign if brethren could not freely rejoice where God evidently works, but I have no desire in having my heart large, and tender too as regards the Lord's work, to have my feet out of the narrow path.

It is a very great joy to me to know these dear young — are converted. Give my kind remembrance to their father and mother, and tell them how heartily I sympathise with them. I was greatly rejoiced too in —. Surely I remember him, for in two or three weeks I had become greatly attached to him. I never saw, I think, a soul receive Christ and the gospel as he did, a soul open under its influence as his did. The Lord grant his wife may follow his path. I trust the — may be in testimony there also, and that they may remain humble, serious, simple, and unexcited; but I say cultivate these droppings of divine grace, this springtime of the soul.

There is need of building by the word, but the earliest fruit of an awakened soul will be feeling, not knowledge, and this will become feeble and unhealthy if not fed by Christ and the word. But this process went on at first, and has given the epistles, but we see the weakness which may accompany it; they would have given their eyes, but did not hold fast justification by faith. All this needs the continual work of the ministry, not to make a fuss about the first feelings, the flowers which precede the fruit; but to labour therein to feed the soul.

As to conversions in singing, there is nothing at all unscriptural. If the truth is in the hymn spoken of, with divine affections or souls' affections expressed respecting a truth already outwardly admitted, it is quite within the ways and operation of the Spirit of God to act on the soul in a quickening way by it, not without truth, but by truth so addressed to the soul.

I do not say that the work will be there as deep, or the foundation as solidly laid at the moment for after exercises, as if it was the direct application of the word by

the Holy Ghost to the conscience ; but the heart receives Christ convincingly and lovingly so as to live. I have ever said that the smallest atom of Christ suffices for the Holy Ghost to quicken by, if it be really He. No doubt a profound conviction of sin by the word casts off a mass of imaginings of the flesh by a deeper inward work, which such a conversion leaves undiscovered. But if God works, He will do His own work, and bring it to a good issue.

The work in Ireland has confirmed me largely in the truth of all I have learnt connected with brethrenism, so called, but it would be deplorable if I could not rejoice in God's acting wherever His own blessed sovereign goodness is pleased to do it. I do so with my whole heart, and if one is not ready for *Him*. There may be first last, and last first, without the truth being weakened. Salvation was of the Jews ; alas, it was in result more for others than for them ; the fields were whiter for harvest elsewhere than there.

May the brethren be found with their hearts free, and their feet firm ; and they may be of the largest blessing to the church of God at this moment.

Here, God be thanked, God has largely blessed my visit ; and the brethren, I may say, are in peace.

J. N. D.

It is not the first time that our beloved brother has been exercised on this subject. I once exchanged a letter with him on the subject. But where it is a process going on in the soul it is impossible, as far at least as I can say, to give counsel as to it, but many collateral questions come in. I should be greatly grieved if brethren ceased to be an *evangelising* set of Christians. Indeed they would fade in their own spiritual standing, and get probably sectarian, not in theory but in practice, because the enlarging principle of love would not be there. Thank God, it is not as yet so. But *grace* alone can maintain the testimony.

I confess I feel a sort of envy of those whom God has

called to evangelise. My want of courage keeps me humble, but it would be better to be humble without it; but our part is to be where God calls us, and I trust I am ready to feed, if it be given me, the weakest of the flock and count it a privilege. To souls getting peace and liberty, God has blessed me, but comparatively little in awakening, though He has where I have served in this way.

I have said there are collateral questions. God is not always awakening souls in a marked way. It is done in a place and ceases, though souls may be converted afterwards. An awakening may again occur through other means, another layer being reached, and by those morally nearer their state. The evangelist may have to go on elsewhere. I have known it cease and go into a neighbouring village.

At the *beginning*, brethren were engaged, and pretty much alone, in the roughest evangelising,—fairs, markets, races, regattas, and everywhere in the open air. Gatherings grew up and the care of them became needful, though evangelising went on and was blessed, and in a measure is in many places. Others since have occupied the field who are really their followers under God. If even contention mix itself with this, if Christ be preached, we ought to rejoice.

But the care of the scattered gatherings is most precious work, not altogether neglected, but the labourers are few. There is no reason why — should not exercise this local care for a time, and there is large room for it. If God still calls him to evangelise he will find the craving after souls forcing him out to do that work. At all times in a general way we have to do it, as Paul says to Timothy. Often those nearer the state of the unconverted are more apt for it. This may be imperfection, but so it is, and if then they go on holding to that, they grow little and meet little the spiritual wants of these last days.

As to dear —, I should say let him, while in the kind of retreat he is in, while evangelising everywhere he can look after these small gatherings, a thing I have

greatly at heart, and visit them elsewhere; and, I repeat, if filled somewhat with their company, he will feel urged out, if God so call him, to seek souls among those without, but in nearer and more untouched places, or in large towns where there are always masses unreached. Mere evangelising does not cause to grow, though God may allow and bless it. Thank Him that He does, but see what was taught the Thessalonians at starting.

But evangelising in Christendom is different from doing it in heathenism. A full salvation does give a basis for growth, but in Christendom it is necessarily separative, and hence the need of wisdom in that work, but *sorry* indeed should I be if it was given up. I see joy and gladness in conversions even in heaven. It is the making a fuss about them and writing up the people I dread. But God bears with many things. Still the feebleness of work is felt afterwards. Hitherto we have got on happily; here and there is some life and progress.

If younger, I should look to a longer sojourn if spared; as it is I am the Lord's servant, desiring only His will, and when my work finishes there is its end, and He will gather His own people, in which I shall rejoice in that day. The Lord be with you and keep you near Himself, humble and serving, but having more of Him than you spend in service. I am very thankful for the blessing He gives you. We are His, and may we so walk.

There is another point, in passing from the love of God in mercy to sinners filling the soul, and the love of God to the saints as such, when we have become interested in them through the other. It requires both distinct gift, and being very near Christ in consecration of heart, to carry on both.

J. N. D.

1875.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

23. Q.—Are the prophets spoken of in Ephesians ii. and iii. the same as those referred to in Luke xxiv. and Acts iii. ?

S. H.

A.—The prophets in Ephesians ii. 20 refer to the prophets of the *New Testament*, as is plainly taught in Ephesians iii. 5, where the *fact* is stated that the “mystery of Christ” (that is, the church) had not been made known unto the sons of men in past ages, but “is *now* revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.” What is in question is the *ministerial* foundation (by teaching) of the church; in this building (the church) Jesus Christ is the chief corner-stone.

In Revelation xxi. where the church is seen in glory, as the bride the Lamb’s wife, we read (ver. 14), “And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles *of the Lamb*.” This confines the foundations of the church to the apostles of Christ, not as the Messiah, but as the Lamb; that is, after redemption had been accomplished: see Acts i. 26.

In Luke xxiv. 27, 44, the prophets referred to are certainly those of the Old Testament, and their testimony is concerning Christ as the Messiah of the nation of Israel, and the church is not in question.

The same is true of Acts iii. 18, 21, 24. All these refer to Christ in connection with Israel, and have nothing to do with the church. Till the ascension of Christ to glory there could be no Head of the church; and no revelation was given to *any* Old Testament prophets as to Christ, save in connection with Israel and the nations, and this only went as far as blessing for man on the earth under Christ as King and Saviour.

The church had been hidden in the mind and purpose of God, till Christ, having been rejected by Israel, had wrought redemption and entered into His glory. C. W.

London: G. MORRISH, 20, Paternoster Square.