

“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.

1883.

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“Words of Faith.”

LAODICEA A CONTRAST, NOT A SEQUENCE, OF PHILADELPHIA.

ALL must admit the importance of the question that is agitating many minds, as to whether Philadelphia and Laodicea are concurrent or successive phases of Church history. If they both go down to the end, Christians may be in either one or the other of them. If, on the other hand, the one has merged in the other, all Christians are now in Laodicea.

Leaving aside the question as to whether Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, do not *all* go down to the end, as undoubtedly they do, and as has been hitherto taught and received, we will confine our inquiry to the last two churches.

A few moments' reflection will impress on the mind the gravity of such an inquiry, with the practical consequences, as to walk and testimony, that are involved in it. Upon the concurrent view, according as we recognise ourselves in either the one or the other of these churches, will be our responsibility to give heed to the special testimony respectively borne to them. Those who take Philadelphian ground must listen to what “He that is holy, he that is true” says to Philadelphia; while those who take Laodicean ground must listen to what “the Amen, the faithful and true witness” says to Laodicea.

Upon the succession view, Philadelphia being over and Laodicea alone in question, *all* must listen to what is said to Laodicea, at least, all will who have an ear to hear “what the Spirit saith unto the churches,” and those who

hold this view may rightly say that it is self-will and rebellion against Christ to hold to Philadelphian ground when He has left that ground, and is addressing Himself to Laodicea. Sad and humbling as it may be to give up Philadelphian ground, with all its comforting and encouraging words, and take that of Laodicea, with its solemn warnings and rebukes, it will be our wisdom and our blessing to do so. Better to humble ourselves before Him who, though outside, in grace stands knocking at the door, ready and willing to come in and have communion with any who, hearing His voice, will open the door to Him, than in hardness of heart to try and stand upon higher and better ground where He *can* have nothing to say to us.

All this sounds very pious and well, but is it really so? Is it true that "all is Laodicea now"? or is *this* view a delusion of the enemy, having for its aim the destruction of God's testimony on the earth by detaching believers from the Holy One and the True One, and, while taking from them the comforting hope of His coming and replacing it by the threatenings of judgment, plunge souls into uncertainty and confusion, putting them, at the same time, on a false ground, where self and self's doings take the place of Christ and God's sovereign grace? That we may make no mistake in so serious a matter, let us carefully look into what is involved in taking Laodicean ground, and then compare this with that of Philadelphia. In order to do this safely, we must get rid of all preconceived thoughts on the subject, and receive simply what is taught in God's word—"what the Spirit saith to the churches."

Assuming that Laodicea represents the last phase of the professing church, as the responsible witness for God on the earth, what we have to do is to learn what is said to it by Him "who walketh amidst the seven golden candlesticks." To do this effectively, we must note first the *characters* in which He presents Himself to this church, and the *position* in which He places Himself while addressing it.

With reference to the characters He assumes, what first

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strikes one is, that none of them are ecclesiastical, and none of them those in which John sees Him "in the midst of the seven candlesticks." None of them are judicial, but they are those that present the ways of God in blessing for man, and in the knowledge of which he finds his blessing. Nothing more touching than this, when all is heartless indifference to Himself: "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." He speaks as being all these, specially at the moment when addressing *this* church.

As "the Amen," He is the One in whom all the promises of God are fulfilled and made good on man's behalf, "for all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us." (2 Cor. i. 20.) As "the faithful and true witness," He has revealed and brought down to man all that God is in grace and truth, as well as the One who, as man, has faithfully witnessed for God, and "he that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." (John iii. 33.)³ As "the beginning of the creation of God," He is the One in whom and under whom all things, as flowing from God in a new creation, have their commencement, and will have their display. He is this as risen from the dead, all in the new creation having its origin from Him, and being placed under Him as its Head in resurrection, so that "if any man be in Christ he is a new creation." (2 Cor. v. 17.)

It is of importance to observe here that Christ is all this as the One in whom God's glory, and all blessing for man, is secured and made good after man, and here specially the church, has failed to maintain God's glory and testimony in connection with the blessing in which he has been placed, and it is only as having Christ Himself that the church, after having failed as God's responsible witness on the earth, will have her part in that new creation, which will have its effectual display in Christ when He comes in glory.

This fact makes the *position* which Christ assumes, when addressing the church of Laodicea, of such solemn import. He is outside it—practically it is without Him

and all the blessing contained in Him. He was merely lingering in grace at the door, no longer expecting the mass to hear or heed His words of warning and rebuke. He presses Himself closely on the conscience of the individual before He severs all connection between Himself and the professing church.

Having noted these two points, as to character and position, and keeping them in our minds, we will now attentively examine what He says to the angel of the church of Laodicea. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot; so then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." The condition depicted here, and which brings unconditional judgment, is that of the hollow profession of Christ's name and service, without there being anything really from Him or for Him. Benevolence and service to man—works of this kind, there are plenty, done, too, in His name, and with the claim of being the church of God, but really without there being anything that is for God's glory.

Thus indifference to God's claims, honour, and truth, with no sense of Christ's love or attachment to Him, characterise the last phase of the professing church. It is what men boldly and significantly call "Broad church." Latitudinarianism of the worst kind, where what is held and taught is no matter so long as people are religious, moral, and respectable, and where ritualism, evangelicism, and rationalism are peaceably combined together to form the church of Christ—not Jews or heathens, but Christians by profession. He abhors such a state. It is like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold; He will spue it out of His mouth as nauseous to Him—a thing not worth special judgment at His hand. Even the bold and blasphemous Thyatira was more tolerable to Him, He would judge her.

With this utter indifference to Christ and His claims, though with the empty profession of devotedness to Him and His service, there is much pretension and ostentatious parade of resources and competency in themselves

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that have not Him for their source. Therefore He says, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear: and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."

Worldly possessions, human righteousness, and human wisdom and knowledge are possessed in abundance, with no sense of need of any kind, but nothing properly Christian, nothing of the new creation, nothing suited to God, nothing that will stand the test of *divine* judgment or last for eternity; hence He addresses them in terms that apply *only* to the unconverted and unsaved. "Wretched, miserable, and poor," they needed divine righteousness, that which can stand the fire of divine trial, that which Christ Himself is, "who was made sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." For *this*, "gold tried in the fire," they must come to Him, and for it they might well exchange some of their boasted wealth, so as to be "rich towards God." He says, "buy of me," for the very first principle of the *Gospel* is unknown to them, and He takes them on their own ground, like the foolish virgins of Matthew xxv., who go to "buy," and return to find the door of grace closed.

"Naked" in God's sight, whatever they were in their own, they required "white garments," and for these, too, they must come to Him, who alone could communicate to them a life which, in its expression of living and practical righteousness, flowing out of His being in them and known as a redeemer, should so clothe them that, manifested as those that "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," "the shame of their nakedness should not appear."

"Blind," they stood in need of "eyesalve," that no mere human apothecary could supply them with, and from Himself alone could they get that "unction of the Holy

One," the teaching of the Holy Ghost, which would give them divine intelligence, for as yet they saw nothing that was of God in a *new creation*, and required to be born again even to "*see the kingdom of God*," not to speak of entering in it and having part with Him there.

Such is the internal state of those who compose the church of Laodicea. In a word, they are Christless souls. Still He lingers over them in grace, while an already pronounced judgment waits its accomplishment. Most solemn moment in the church's earthly history! Mercy's last pause before all is over.

"As many as I love I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore and repent," is affection's last appeal; touching yet stern in the earnestness with which it presses immediate repentance. How like Jehovah's last appeal and statement of ways with the Jews ere He gave them up to go down to Babylon! "I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking: but ye hearkened not unto me." (Jer. xxxv. 14.) How, too, it reminds one of the Lord's attitude towards Jerusalem ere its history closed in judgment! "And when he was come near he beheld the city, and wept over it." (Luke xix. 41.) And should not we weep in our day over that which, still called by His name, is about to be overtaken by judgment. True, "they are enemies of the cross, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things," but shall not we, with the apostle, speak and think of them, "even weeping" and longing for their salvation?

Unheard by the church, Christ turns to the individual, and addresses each one singly, "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me." If but one even would hear His voice, and would open the door to Him, He would go into that one, save him, and give him part in the heavenly kingdom, He was about to bring in. He would have communion with him in heavenly and eternal things, in contrast with the earthly and temporal things the mass around

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are enjoying and boasting of; but not as one that was already His and had heard His voice before. It is not here the voice of the Shepherd calling "His own sheep by name," however, until now, estranged in heart and ways. It is as a Saviour He seeks admittance, and the up-till-then closed door has to be opened that He may go in, where as yet He has had no place. His call to repentance has to be heard, and, as it were, He proffers Himself "to be guest with man that is a sinner," and when within would surely say, "This day is salvation come to this house," but such an one is only just saved, at the last moment snatched out of the fire.

On every ground it is important to see that it is not here the door of some faithful one, amidst a church of unfaithful ones, that is opened to a Lord who seeks communion with one, who, truer than others, and loving Him more, longs for closer association with Himself and more enjoyment of His love. Such thoughts savour of one whose self-occupation and unbelief in his brethren (true and faithful servant of the Lord as he was), led him into *isolation* in days gone by; and whose self righteousness prompted him to say, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts, because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thy altars, and slain thy prophets, and I, even I, only am left." Little knew he of Jehovah's love and preserving grace in that day for a poor and feeble flock—an "election according to grace," who, if they lacked the faithfulness that could stand in open testimony against evil as he was doing, were as dear to Jehovah's heart as himself; and little knows such a one to-day of the love of Him who, "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end," whose service for them, all feet-washing as it may be, will not cease till He has them *all* in glory with Himself. Nor is the "will sup with him, and he with me," anything special; it is merely grace in the manner of its presentation, just as in Luke xiv. 15, where the Lord, in answer to the man's remark, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of

God," replies "a certain man made a great supper, and bade many." It is plainly here the gospel. So again in Revelation xix. 9, "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." The Lord in connection with the exercise of His grace to the Samaritan woman, says to His disciples, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." (John iv. 32.)

The promise in Laodicea to the overcomer, the one who hears His voice—is very bare. "To him that overcometh," He says, "will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am sit down with my Father on his throne." There is nothing special in this as the reward for pre-eminent faithfulness. It is what attaches to salvation, to being simply His, and is just the general ground given in Romans viii., that we must "suffer with him that we may be also glorified together;" the same as in 2 Timothy iii., "If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him." Now, this is not suffering *for* Christ through faithfulness, but suffering *with* Him, as *all* that are His do, and must do, simply because they are associated with Him by saving grace. It is "the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith," the proof of the possession of life in the Son of God, and which has its parallel in Christ's own victory. He tells His disciples, to comfort and cheer them, "I have overcome the world"—overcome everything in the world that Satan could bring to bear to separate between the soul and God. He is here our example; "as I have overcome," He says, though surely His grace alone can give strength for such a conflict. Wonderful the grace that first gives everything by which we can overcome, and then rewards the faithfulness His grace alone produces. It is *thus* the overcomer in Laodicea is rewarded. Not to be so rewarded were to be lost.

C. W.

(*To be continued.*)

Nature has circumstances between itself and God; faith has God between the heart and circumstances.

J. N. D.

“FORTY DAYS.

No. VII.

REDEMPTION AND GLORY.

“THE former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen. To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them *forty days*, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God : and, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me : for John truly baptised with water ; but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

“When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel ?

“And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power ; but ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you : and ye shall be my witnesses, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

“And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up ; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

“And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel ; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven ? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven.” (Acts i. 1-11.)

The last of these striking periods of “Forty days” is

now before us, and suitably concludes the series which scripture presents, and which we have in measure received. The opening of the passage above, from Acts i. begins with a risen Saviour in the midst of His disciples, and closes with an opened heaven; and a Man, who having accomplished redemption, passes from the earth into the glory of God. The interval between the resurrection of Christ, until He went on high, was "forty days." In the opening of His ministry there was the period of "forty days" of His conflict and victory, in the temptations in the wilderness. In the close there was the other "forty days" characterised by accomplished redemption and glory. (We may here recal that there were also two periods of "forty days" in the ministry of His servant Moses. The first, when he returned from Mount Sinai with the tables of the law, which he broke before he entered the camp of revolted Israel. And the second, when he returned—his face reflecting the mercy of Jehovah—to place them unbroken, eventually, in the Ark of the Lord.) There is thus a certain analogy lying between the two. But in the first period the Lord came down after His conflict with the Tempter, with His title made good by obedience, as a Jew, to the land of Israel. (Deut. viii.; Matt. iv.) And as the second Man before God. His Messiah blessings also secured by His full answer to the dependence depicted of Him in Psalm xci.; and much more indeed. Then in the second "forty days" He went on high after having made atonement, and borne the curse of the law, to begin a new service, then, in the glory.

The blessed Lord, too, as well as His servant, had His "seven days" of preface to these "forty days"—that solemn work after His entry into Jerusalem; His passion and His atoning death; His tomb, and His resurrection.

It needed but three days to establish the fact of His death; forty were needed to do so as to His resurrection. "Jesus" had been revealed, and proclaimed on earth. His "resurrection" was to be coupled with that theme. These two things were the grand subject now. "Jesus

"FORTY DAYS."

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and Resurrection"—His Person, and His victory over death, were to meet all the need of man, and display the power and glory of God. God had intervened, when man in weakness as a sinner, and Man in grace in Jesus had met, and when the enemy's power could go no further, and had wrought a new thing, against which the "gates of hades" could not prevail: Christ had died and risen again: He had emerged from the tomb, into that new sphere where Satan could no more reach, or man defile. The Conqueror of death—His mighty work was done: nought now remained but to enter upon its results on high, and make good its power in all who bow to that Name, and mighty victory.

Resurrection was but little taught in the Old Testament scriptures. Enough, that it had been spoken of, and hoped for—vaguely it is true, still it was there. But when that mighty triumph of God had entered the scene, and the Son of David was declared "Son of God in power by resurrection of dead [ones]," either in those He had raised to human life again, or in His own (Rom. i. 5), then it was the constant theme of His Spirit by His chosen witnesses; and the New Testament is lighted with the glories of resurrection. If Satan had his ready tools, to oppose *Himself* in life and ways on earth, in the Pharisee, full of his superstition, and his tradition, which made void the word of God; he had his fresh tools ready to his hand, when Jesus rose, to oppose His resurrection, which was the triumph of God over all that under which man had fallen, in the infidel, freethinking Sadducee.

But not merely was the resurrection of Jesus, and the resurrection of His people, and of those who had died in their sins—"both the just and the unjust" to be the preaching now, when the Lord had gone on high, but a resurrection, not *of*—but *from* the dead was to be the theme. One, of which Jesus was the "firstfruits," from among the dead. No small wonder was it when the disciples heard for the first time of this, and "questioned one with another what rising [not "the rising"] from

among the dead should mean" (Mark ix. 9, 10), a resurrection which taking place for some, would leave the mass of men behind, who had died in their sins.

The resurrection was the divine proof of the accomplished mission and work of the Son of God. It was the foundation on which all was now to rest. "If Christ be not raised your faith is vain," said the apostle, "you are yet in your sins." "Yea," he continues, "and we are found false witnesses of God, because we testified of God that he raised up Christ; whom he raised not up if the dead rise not." (1 Cor. xv.) Satan, in the last days too, would seek to deny this, and find fresh instruments to say, "The resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some." (2 Tim. ii.)

These "forty days," then, were used of God to bring out, by the most incontestable proofs, the great and stupendous fact that Christ was risen. Without that, all the testimony was, we may say, worthless: with it, all would flow easily, and as a consequence. The disciples themselves were but slow to believe it: they looked upon the story of it as "idle tales, and believed it not;" Jesus, as it were, forces it upon their acceptance, in the most tender and gracious way, till every heart was convinced; and all were made bright and living witnesses of this new thing. He appeared to them in various ways, and at various moments, about twelve times, during those "forty days." He did not seek to convince them by miracles; for there was but *one* enacted while He remained on earth: if indeed everything He did was not a miracle. (Comp. John xx., xxi.) But He took up His pledges given in His lifetime, and made them good in resurrection. What as a ministering Christ He had promised, as a risen Christ He performed. "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you," said the Lord, when He would assure their hearts and say, "It is I myself: handle me and see." He would eat, too, before them, assuring them that He who had been their human yet divine Companion, was still the same. Yet not the same, for since He had left them, and they had fled from Him.

in His hour of need, He had made peace with God, and the proof that it was made was a risen Saviour in their midst—its first and blessed Preacher!

Let us look now at some of these appearings of the Lord to His disciples after His resurrection. The most touching one, and full of blessed teaching for our souls, is that to Mary the Magdalen. We find how the risen Christ is the answer to every condition of soul. Is there an ignorant but devoted heart? The risen Jesus will meet it in fullest sympathy and instruction. Is there one who has denied His Lord, when he had the opportunity of confessing Him? The risen Saviour will restore. Are there ignorant ones, whose hearts are under the power of unbelief, and false hopes as to their own aggrandisement? He will correct and instruct and reveal Himself afresh, and fill their souls with joy; proving thus to each and all how truly he would meet every heart, with suited and needed instruction.

See this in Mary of Magdala. She was one who proves to us that the Lord does not *teach* us through the intelligence merely (while using it), but teaches us through the conscience or the affections. How often has that verse in John xiv. (ver. 21) been used amiss! Have we never thought His meaning was that all His own have His commandments, and they that love Him keep them, and thus shew their affection? Nay. Let us be clear in this—that all His people, alas! have *not* His commands. They live too far from Him; their affections are not stirred in love to Jesus. Does this not challenge our hearts, beloved? Nay, He means that, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, *that is the one** that loveth me." Yes, but the love to Him came first, and thus he received His commands! So it was with Mary. Her ignorance is plain to all; but so is her affection: that of a true heart which had lost its all, as she supposed, when Christ had died. The world was His tomb for her, and the shadow of death shrouded the

* ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν ὁ ἀγαπῶν με.

scene. Angels may speak to her, she heeds them not. Others might go to their homes: she now had none. The night and the day were both alike to her. There was no dawn on her soul, for the Light of her life had been quenched, and all was darkness and tears. That heart loved Christ with deep, though ignorant affection. Once it had been the abode of seven devils; now it was the shrine of a crucified Saviour. To such He will reveal Himself—the risen One: He will remove the sorrow, dry the tears, and make her a blessing to others, while blest herself. He would "bless her, and make her a blessing." And He gives her His commands, for her own soul, and she kept them, and brought them to others that morning, and has done so ever since that day. The finest message that ever passed through mortal lips, first came through those of Mary! "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." (John xx. 17.)

What awakening of hopes was here, which seemed buried for ever, in His grave! What beams of resurrection flowed in upon her soul—taught through its deep affections. In that new sphere all His own were to stand on the same platform of resurrection with Himself: His Father, their Father; His God, their God.

Look, too, at those two poor ignorant disciples on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus (Luke xxiv.), as they walked and were sad. They were full of *reasoning* among themselves as they communed together. This had to be rebuked and corrected; but their *hearts were sad*. This the risen One would meet and comfort. He would draw their eyes away from *self* and its earthly hopes, and fix them on *Himself*—His sufferings, and His glory. He was now, though "The hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble," but "a wayfaring man, that turneth aside to tarry for a night." (Comp. Lev. xiv. 8.) They thought of *themselves* as yet, and not of *Him* and *His* glory; thus were their blessings hindered. They had built their earthly hopes on Him, and now He was gone; the cup was rudely dashed aside, and they were desolate,

"FORTY DAYS."

15

"We hoped that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel."

But the Author of scripture, and the Subject of scripture was there, beside them on the road, in the darkness of that night of their sorrow. He was there to make their hearts "burn within them by the way." To create new hopes; impart fresh energy; unfold His glory; and make scripture tune with Christ Himself: "O fools, and slow of heart, to believe *all* that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses, and *all* the prophets, he expounded unto them in *all* the scriptures the things concerning *himself*."

Would He send a message to His disciples that He was risen, and not think of one whose soul had wandered in self-trust and fallen—oh, how deeply; and forget to couple the name of "Peter" with that general message to all? To do so might be just: but He who had seen His poor servant's bitter tears when no other eye beheld, and saw the right moment for a loving message to reach his heart, couples that name, which He Himself had given him, with the rest, in special recollection. A risen Saviour meets and restores His warm-hearted, though erring disciple. Every heart is met; every ignorance instructed; every soul which erred restored, at the suited moment, in the suited way; and by those ways of grace which would be least known to each one personally. What splendid proofs were these, that "*he himself*" was there! Proofs which none could analyse for another. Such proofs that make us feel even now, in these poor cold days, that we still have to do with Him and He with us, by ways which are known best and only by him who has received them; yet all tended to one great point—Jesus the Lord is risen!

When this resurrection is, "by many infallible proofs," made known, then comes His mission as the *risen One* (not yet the *ascended One*) to His disciples. In Acts i. 6, at the close of those "Forty Days," the disciples asked the Lord, if He would at this time restore the kingdom

to Israel? He replied that it was not for them to know the times and the seasons: such were for the earth and Israel, not for heaven and a heavenly company. "The *Father*" had such times and seasons in His own power: *they* would receive the power of the Holy Ghost in "not many days;" and they would be His witnesses—witnesses of a Christ risen from among the dead.

But now mark well the force of His reply. When He, in His incarnate days, was presenting the kingdom to Israel, and when sending forth the twelve on this behalf, He said, in detailing their mission in Matthew x., "Go not into the way of the Gentiles; and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Here was the extent of this mission of former days. Strictly confined to the "lost sheep" of "Israel." But all this had been refused. Israel's day was past, and Zion had refused her King. The old enactment ceased then when Israel "would not."

The barriers were thus broken down; the cross of a malefactor being the answer of Israel, to Him in grace, when they exclaimed, "We have no king but Cæsar."

As in enacting fresh decrees a nation must repeal the old, which only suited another day, so the Lord, it might be said, repeals the mission of former days: His heart is free now to go beyond the narrow circle of Israel. He was then "the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made to the fathers"; now He would inaugurate a new thing whereby the "Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy;" and yet still as Israel was now on *sinner's* ground, not withdraw the hand of mercy from them.

He was now passing out to the Mount of Olives amongst His disciples; leading them out to the spot where He would say His last farewell on earth. As His footfall grew lighter, and as the moment for Him to be received up drew nigh, He turns to them with those words, which repeal their old mission, and extend it on its fresh basis from the risen Saviour: "Ye shall be my

witnesses," said He, "both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

As the stone, dropped into the peaceful waters, sends ripple after ripple from the spot where first it entered, till they are lost in the expanse around; so does this mission, now begun in Himself, extend with its waves and ripples of mercy, embracing the world of sinners within its ever-increasing circles!

Jerusalem had been the scene of His death and shame, there they should begin, where faith was dead and a lifeless form.

Samaria lay beyond that once-holy spot, with a faith corrupted for centuries: half heathen, half Jewish in its forms and its Gerizim.

The "uttermost part of the earth" had no faith at all! but lay in all its heathen darkness under the "veil of covering" upon all its peoples.

But whether for Jerusalem with her dead faith, or Samaria with her corrupt faith, or the uttermost part of the earth where no faith was, a risen Saviour would be their testimony and meet it all! And thus they went forth in the "Acts of the Apostles;" those three concentric circles gradually unfolding themselves before us in the Book. For it is worthy of note that they divide the Book in a remarkable way. "Jerusalem" was the centre of testimony from the day of Pentecost (Acts ii.) until she refused finally the "sure mercies of David" when Stephen yielded up his spirit to the Lord. Then came "Samaria" with Philip and Peter and John. And lastly the scene enlarged to the "uttermost part of the earth" through the great apostle to the Gentiles, and those who accompanied with him. (See Acts ii.-vii., viii., ix.-xxviii.) God Himself had been revealed; His grace made known. Therefore He could not now confine His dealings to the "smallest nation under heaven," as in the day of His testing man. The cross had broken down the "middle wall of partition" on earth; it had opened up the way for God to man, and man to God, through a veil rent

from top to bottom; and thus the breadth of His ways should now take in all in its scope and aspect. All "had sinned" and are "come short of his glory," and His glory was then the measure of the grace of His salvation. What a message to a world of sinners! None were left out: His parting words declare it. His heart was unchanged, and only more deeply and fully revealed through the revolted heart of man; and thus His heart, in grace, is still turned towards man, until that day comes when "This same Jesus" will come again to "judge the world in righteousness." Thus He blest them, and in that attitude, with uplifted hands, He passed to His glory; and they returned to Jerusalem to begin their task, "praising and blessing God."

We have now come to the close of our meditations on those "Forty days." May the Lord in His good mercy apply some sweet lesson, to the hearts of His own beloved people, from what we have reviewed; and lead our souls into deeper, fuller communion with Him, of whom all scripture speaks, separating us more distinctly to Himself in these our days of weakness; and preparing our souls by that education which He knows so well how to apply, while we "look for his Son from heaven," "even Jesus, who hath delivered us from the wrath to come."

F. G. P.

The union of motion and inspiration, which infidels have endeavoured to set in opposition to each other, is found in every page of the word; moreover the two things are only incompatible to the narrow mind of those who are unacquainted with the ways of God. Cannot God impart motives, and through these motives engage a man to undertake some task, and then direct him, perfectly and absolutely, in all that he does? Even if it were a human thought (which I do not at all believe), if God approved of it, could not He watch over its execution, so that the result should be entirely according to His will?

J. N. D.

REMARKS ON THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.

THE touching earnestness with which "the prisoner of the Lord" appeals to the Ephesian saints "to walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing with one another in love; using diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace," is sufficient proof of how much he had at heart, as one in fellowship with Christ, that saints should in their walk one with another, as "the habitation of God in the Spirit," keep that unity.

That energy may have its proper aim and effect, the object before the mind, that should call it out, must be clearly apprehended and desired. It may seem rather late in the day, when "the unity of the Spirit" is on every tongue, and on the tip of many pens, to ask the question, What is the unity of the Spirit?—what is comprised by this term—what in *God's mind* it is that His people are enjoined to keep? Still we are convinced the question is not out of season, and that much confusion of mind, to say the least, is abroad concerning it.

With no desire to be dogmatic, but with the simple wish to help others, so that there may be more unitedness of aim and object amongst those that are "called in one body," we make the following few remarks, looking earnestly to the Lord, that, in a matter that concerns so much His glory, and the comfort and joy of "His own which are in the world," we may write nothing that will mislead or stumble the weakest. We will first try and make clear what is *not* "the unity of the Spirit;" and then attempt to unfold briefly what, as we believe, it is.

It is *not* the unity of the body, though it is intimately connected with it, and if fully carried out, secures its manifestation.

It is not the unity of believers, though it results in and effects this, where it is kept.

To make it either of these, would be to reduce it, either

to the manifestation of the unity of the body, in connection with fellowship at the Lord's table, maintained through discipline; or to the agreement of believers one with another, where what would tend to separate is by common consent excluded, keeping together being the object aimed at, but with the effect of producing a sect.

Making it the unity of the body or the church, so that the realisation or manifestation of *that* unity is the object with which diligence is to be used, is the *principle* that underlies Popery—an *external* unity, maintained at all costs, where man can have his place, and his will and rule take the place of God's and the holiness that becometh His house for ever. It is the fatal error of making the church, instead of Christ Himself, the object before the mind.

It is a great mistake to regard the unity of the Spirit as an accomplished fact—as something now here in unbroken existence. The unity of the body, or "the body" more correctly, is this, therefore we are not enjoined to keep it as if *it* could be broken, which the expression, "using diligence to keep," plainly supposes possible. Now, though we have not to make the unity of the Spirit, we are enjoined to keep it, but this is not the same thing as saying, the Spirit has formed such a unity, in the sense of its having been formed and existing now as once formed. This would be to confound it with "the body" into which Jews and Gentiles have all been baptised by the one Spirit, and which exists in unbroken unity at all times.

That we are all, and always, responsible to seek to manifest the unity of the body, of which Christ is the Head in heaven, none will surely deny, and more, that to tolerate anything in doctrine or practice that would destroy or enfeeble the expression of this blessed unity is one form, if not a gross one, of the iniquity that those who name the name of Christ should refuse and depart from; nor could any one *truly* endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit make light of the importance of that which is itself a part of what is involved in endeavouring to keep that unity; but to make it one and

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the same thing, is practically to lose both; and, where it is a question of dealing with evil, it is to confound the demands of God's holiness in His own house, with the gracious bearing of saints towards one another in what affects themselves, and in which they are to exercise lowliness, meekness, and long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.

A moment's reflection will convince any godly person that where dealing with evil is in question according to the claims of God's nature in holiness, forbearing one another in love would be totally mistaken; hence we find in scripture, that when evil has to be dealt with the very reverse of such a line of conduct is enjoined. Saints are not, *then*, besought to exercise all the gracious ways of Christ toward one another, so that they may walk together in the Spirit's unity, but the manner of Him who could say, "the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up," and who unsparingly denounced and drove out the evil that was there, is sternly forced upon them. The word now is, "Get thee up; wherefore liest thou on thy face, Israel hath sinned"—"Up, sanctify the people;" "Purge out therefore the old leaven;" "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person"; "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you"; and "Let every one who names the name of the Lord withdraw from iniquity." Surely none will say that this means, "bearing with one another in love; using diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace." A bond of peace enjoined in connection with the toleration of evil, of any kind or degree, would be corruption of the worst sort. A making grace minister to sin, and Christ the companion of Belial; it would, I believe, be the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes "which thing I hate," saith Christ.

A view long held, and still acted upon by many, is that the Spirit has formed a unity that embraces all the members of Christ's body, and that *this* is the unity that we are enjoined to keep, acknowledging all to be in and of this

unity, save those whom discipline, according to the word, excludes from it. Now, what is *this* unity? It cannot be the body, for we cannot be enjoined to keep it, and, thank God, to exclude any from it, even by discipline according to the word, is impossible. It cannot be the house of God—that which is "builded together for an habitation of God in the Spirit," for to be enjoined to keep God's house would be equally out of the question; though discipline is here thoroughly in place, but surely not "forbearing one another in love" in connection with it.

There is a manifest incongruity in such an association of ideas, besides which there is the danger, that evangelists and pastors who have souls specially before them are peculiarly open to, that in regarding things from the side of love for souls, and with a feeble sense of God's holiness and the Lord's claims, the unity of the Spirit might be stretched, so to speak, as far as possible in dealing with evil, lest any should be excluded from it that the Lord would have retained. The question then would really be, if fairly looked at, how much of what we acknowledge to be wrong in one another, we can forbear with and tolerate ere we exclude them from our fellowship at the Lord's table. In this way the plea of unity might be used to cover sin and retain it amongst us, lest we should break the unity, or sin against the Lord by reason of harshness to those that are His.

There is also another danger that flows out of this view of the unity of the Spirit, and that runs in a totally different direction, a danger to which teachers, especially those who have the truth of the church and the well ordering of God's house at heart, are open to. With such, any breach of this unity is so serious a matter that exclusion from fellowship at the Lord's table is considered imperative; and intelligence as to the truth of the church, with open separation from the systems around, are desirable, if not absolute pre-requisites for the reception to the fellowship of this unity. Hence there is a tendency to harshness, the gracious and tender feelings of the Lord's heart towards wayward, and it

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may be wilful, members of His body, are not realised. With this there is often lack of interest in souls requiring the gospel, and we cannot but express our conviction that, allied with this, the principle of legality, with a subtle form of self-righteousness, is unconsciously working, the absoluteness of divine grace, upon which all divine government in the church rests, not having been fully apprehended. It will not be difficult to see that the outcome of this view may be two widely separated and antagonistic parties; the one characterised by looseness, and the other by exclusiveness.

By the misuse of a leading and influential truth the heart and conscience are alike put into difficulty and act in a wrong direction, and this misuse of scripture is one of the cleverest and most effectual ways by which the enemy works to dishonour Christ, and rob His saints of their best blessings.

We have, we think, said enough to shew what "the unity of the Spirit" is not, and to make it plain, too, that discipline, all-important as it is, connects itself with the unity of the body, and not directly with the unity of the Spirit. The one is ecclesiastical, and engages the mind and conscience with what is at the circumference; the other is moral, and occupies the heart and energies with what is at the *centre*, a distinction of the utmost importance.

C. W.

(*To be continued.*)

The pretension to competence in every one who takes it into his head to judge for himself, independently of what God has instituted, is, taken in its most favourable aspect—not an individual pretension which is its real character—the well-known and unscriptural system which has been known since Cromwell's time, that is, independency—one body of Christians being independent of every other as a voluntary association. This is a simple denial of the *unity of the body*, and the presence and action of the Holy Ghost in it.

J. N. D.

LETTERS AND EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF J. N. D. ON SUBJECTS OF GENERAL INTEREST.*

BELOVED BROTHER,—

It has not been my desire to interfere in matters in England, until I could do it seriously on the Lord's behalf, as called upon of Him to do it, and thus pursue it with the advised certainty of His calling, as His service and obedience. It makes *all* the difference as to one's work, in certainty and effect too; indeed, nothing else is properly work. Save in two places (in the second only with one person), when I was specially asked, I did not touch this question in England. I was in general very happy, always indeed, as to the course this matter is taking. Every provision of God's working in it has taken place, and been surpassed considerably as to blessing. Individual souls have been exercised, and much more reality in Christ exists, without which all is nothing.

A mass of brethren had received blessed truths superficially though really, and they were unconnected with an *inward* walk which associates the soul with Christ in them. The first wind blew much of this down; but when the inward state of the soul laid the ground for it, all this deepened exceedingly, and strengthened, and made to understand the relation between the *soul* and Christ in these things, and a large increase of real growth has been the consequence.

I blame myself as unfaithful in passing over many truths for the sake of what is called peace. And God took the matter in hand, and now I doubt not the ground of the truth which God is using will be far more deeply felt and understood, and a path according to it more intelligently pursued by those who, through grace, have laid hold on it. This I thankfully believe God is doing. A humbling sifting was needed and it, and in gracious love and faithfulness, *that* He has sent us. It will put to the proof whether Christ is preferred to brethren (even though loved), to ease, to everything; and this links our souls with the time when He *will* be. I regret what was attempted at —; I regret what was done at —. . . . But what was done at — and at — does not affect me, because it was but a needed expression of what was to bring about the sifting. Hence I remained and remain quiet. When God is acting, it is useless for man to put in his hand.

I do not speak of fidelity when in the circumstances. My path is to consider it a *settled* question, and to go on in faithfulness in the

* *We shall be greatly obliged if any of our readers will kindly send us copies of, or lend us for a short time, letters of J. N. D. that will be for profit and general interest.*—ED.

truth, delivering according to what is given to me, when the case is presented to charity, as from any other evil, but to seek positive good. What is of the world will sink in, somewhere or other. What is not attached to Christ by the Holy Ghost, according to the needed truth by which He is now acting in and on His church, will fail in the conflict somewhere; but I act on the quiet conviction of entrusted truth, and the assurance that what does not receive it, cannot bear its fruit without agitation. *Those who do not see what the church is will not stand.* But *that* is not the wickedness itself, but they will not be capable of holding good against it; and I act accordingly, or rather walk, acting only when called on. One may rest sometimes with God, as well as act with Him; for we cannot act without Him, save to trouble, even though meaning to do good.

Along with steadfastness in testimony, the saints in general want building up in Christ, and also personal leaning on the grace of God towards them. In general abroad we have to be thankful. . . . They are walking in a good deal of simplicity and love, with little public preaching help, and a good deal of dependence on the Lord. The world in general has the conviction that if a man is converted he ought to be there. Save a very few, if any, Christians *are* there, and the world, as men say, "go to church," but unless one they are all poor. Query—If the rich came, would they remain as simple? *The gracious Lord that loved them, keeps them!* What a mercy to be kept in the secret of His grace!

My feeling is, and indeed conviction, that there is decided progress, and that of God, though with needed (needed through the state of souls) slowness, in the godly discernment in conscience of what is right and wrong—a coming to themselves in the saint. This is the only work of any account: that we must have, or nothing; I decline all else as useless. Deputations and going up to B——, and all such like are useless and worse, save as God uses everything (and in this I have full confidence), without denying that individuals may do it conscientiously according to the light they have. But it must come to a conscientious judgment in *one's own* conscience of evil by the Spirit of Christ, or to nothing. And this will be a humble always, not a haughty thing. The rest one must leave behind or cast away.

My purpose is to come to England as soon as ever I can. I am bringing out the second volume of "*Etudes sur la Parole*"—the only definite thing which keeps me—but paying any needed visit on the way. I purpose (D.V.) to come to England as soon as that is done. . . .

One great thing we have to seek is, that communion with Christ Himself be as strong as all the doctrines we hold or teach. Without that the doctrine itself will have no force; besides we ourselves shall not be with God in it, and after all that is all. Peace be with you, dear brother, and much of this communion. It is easy for the life within to decline before the outward exercise of gift or activity does. I am sure the brethren want to be more exercised with Christ for them-

selves. When the full truth God is using is not held and walked in, there cannot be community of service; that is, where it is denied, for there may be ignorance of it. And further, what would be called the highest truth is the only safeguard against the principles of the worst error. If I am not one with Christ—that is, if I depart from this, I am ready to Judaize and worship angels. It is the easiest lost, because it requires the flesh to be mortified, and that living faith should be in exercise—spirituality; and if this is lost, it admits the worst errors. Farewell. Peace be with all the brethren.

Ever your affectionate brother in Christ,

November, 1850.

J. N. D.

I have a profound conviction that the question with God, and that in grace on His part, goes much deeper than the particular evil which gave occasion to the break up of Plymouth. I agree with all you say, but if it was the negation of evil, the case would be sad, because I have never found, though this be a bounden duty, that it sufficed to gather. I believe at my deliverance from bondage in 1827–8, God opened up certain truths needed for the church. I believe that, though holding and seeking to help souls by them, for what was called peace and union, I swamped them—had not faith to make them good in service. I do not enter into all the questions of how far it was permitted, or how far grace entered, or natural dislike of conflict, but so it was. God would not allow this; and what was founded on this unfaithfulness, and associated with what was opposed, was broken up. I have no regret at this now, though the passage was painful. It is the grand reason why I have left the exercise to go on without interfering. It is no use attempting to daub with untempered mortar.

I have, as you know, long said that for my part I begin again, that my proper work now begins. In saying this, I only confess my unfaithfulness, but on the other hand it is an encouragement, for to begin with God is always an encouragement. He has never lost time—alas, we often. But I have faith in what I believe, only I feel it humbling even that God should be obliged (so to speak) to do so much outside what I am confident is His truth. It does not enough absorb the work. This however is true, that the truth now given by grace is not merely foundation, and elementary, as at the Reformation, but while setting that again on its true basis, builds up and brings out that needed for the latter days—that which was earliest, and always, is soonest lost—"holding the head from whence the whole body," &c. Hence people can content themselves with a certain Christianity which saves, which gives elementary truth, which has delivered from Popish corruption and the like, without that which puts faith to the test.

But the question will go, I do not doubt, on large grounds in England. It is the question which is now exercising it as to prophecy. This will require patience, for the great body have not the ground on

which to judge these questions: they have not faith in the doctrine of the church. Now Ebrington Street, brought down to its worst form, was not ignorance but opposition to this truth, which is what God would have brought out, and—as the corruption of what was best is the worst corruption—was gone as far as possible.

Negations are nothing to build on, though conscience be a ground of conduct. This many have not understood, and because separation from evil may have been a duty, have supposed it to be a ground of union and gathering. It is not such. I should have been much disposed to begin afresh at —, not as rejecting many dear brethren, far from it, but that they and I might enjoy together the refreshings of God's love in joy and peace: and this is a general principle with me. Perhaps continuance at — might have got it on this ground, but across many wearisome difficulties.

As to the judgment they form of my separation and all the rest, even supposing there might be mistakes, I am more indifferent than as to the form of the paper I am writing on: because they have no perception at all, I am satisfied, either of the principles on which I acted, nor on which God has dealt, nor on which He would have us to act.

The only point on which I ever have questioned whether I might have acted better or more wisely, they know nothing about, nor anyone else. I bless God for it now, though that does not justify *me*, for I do not think I knew, or in a certain sense ought to have known, the evil of Ebrington Street, the least as I know it now. I leave all that, their judgment and their course, entirely out of question.

I should in England, as indeed I have done, go on my own ground, the Lord's I believe, and if they liked to come on that, well—if not, well. I shall go on no other; alone, or with beloved brethren, I shall go on what I believe the Lord wills I should go on. I am quite decided to walk in what I am satisfied is the Lord's. If they do not like it, I have no desire nor thought of quarrelling: we shall not walk together. The Lord will judge who is right. That judgment I accept beforehand, and bow to it with my whole heart. Hence it is I am in no hurry, and I may add, full of confidence. I see abundant failure in myself, but it is not where others see it, but just the contrary; but I believe in the Lord's grace.

I believe He has confided a testimony to me, however feeble I may be and unworthy. I do not say that to the exclusion of others of His servants, but as that for which I am responsible. I believe I failed in it, and I trust now in my little measure I may not. Until I am myself in England, I refrain from all interference in what passes there, because I wait upon God, not being yet called upon to act. The cloud seems rising to lead me back. . . . In general there is considerable blessing in the work, with the usual opposition.

Affectionately yours in the Lord,

February, 1851.

J. N. D.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

1. Q.—May I ask the following questions through your periodical relative to the “Gold,” as given in scripture?

Is *gold* divine righteousness? for we find it in Ezekiel xxviii. in Satan’s covering, “*every precious stone was thy covering . . . and gold.*” In Revelation xxi. 18 the *city was pure gold*; in verse 21 the *street of the city was pure gold*; the precious stones forming the foundation of the *wall of the city*, are also found in *Satan’s covering* (Ezek. xxviii.), and in the breast-plate of the High Priest (Ex. xxviii. 17–20), “they shall be set in *gold* in their inclosings.” We read, too, of the golden altar “to burn incense upon;” the ark, overlaid round about with *gold*; a mercy seat of *pure gold*; the golden candlestick (in Zech. iv. 12—marginal reading, “empty out of themselves oil into the *gold*); and also we read of the calf of *gold*; Nebuchadnezzar’s *image of gold*; and Peter speaks of *gold* “that perisheth,” and “ye are not redeemed with silver and *gold.*” In Revelation iv. v. we find “*crowns of gold,*” and “*golden bowls*;” and in chapter iii., “I counsel thee to buy of me *gold.*” The woman in Revelation xvii. is decked with *gold*; with a *golden cup* in her hand.

Is *gold* anything communicable? as Satan was a *creature* and had it as such. If so, would Colossians ii. 15, “having spoiled principalities and powers,” indicate that “*Jesus the Lord*” had taken it all away from Satan, and in the headship, of verse 10, had possession of it all Himself (Luke xi. 21, 22), and, if so, in what way do we (as members of His body) get *gold*? Is there any thought of power in it? F. B. W.

A.—There can, we think, whatever other typical import may attach to it, be little doubt that *gold* is divine righteousness, and stands in contrast with *brass*, which would be human righteousness. Hence we find *gold* *inside* the tabernacle, where God dwelt, as in the breastplate of the high priest, the mercy-seat, the altar of incense, and the candlestick; while *outside* it, on the way of approach, we find the brazen altar and the brazen laver. These two things meet in Christ’s person in Revelation i. He is girt about the paps with a “golden girdle,” and His feet are like unto “fine brass.”

Gold would seem, also, to typify power, or supremacy, as in the “head of fine gold” in the image of Daniel, and as in the “golden crown” of the Son of man in Revelation xiv. 14. We should like to know what any of our readers have to say on this interesting subject. C. W.

LAODICEA A CONTRAST, NOT A SEQUENCE, OF PHILADELPHIA.

(Continued from page 8.)

TURNING, now, to the church of Philadelphia, we find that it has this in common with that of Laodicea, that none of the characters in which Christ presents Himself are ecclesiastical or judicial:—"These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." We have here what Christ is personally, and governmentally in His kingdom.

At the close of the church's earthly history, when all, outwardly, is hollow profession, and neither truth or holiness, nor subjection to divine authority are to be found in the mass of those who bear the name of Christ and claim to be His church, He presents Himself in *these* characters for the individual faith and encouragement of His own. *Personal* attachment to Himself, and subjection to His authority are now everything, and the promises He makes are in connection with this individual faithfulness; and, by the bond of a personal tie, those really and livingly His would be associated together, not by an ecclesiastical position,* but by the *individual* faith and

* There is nothing of church position after Thyatira. The ecclesiastical form and history of Christendom goes down to the end with this church, and though Christ in Sardis is presented with all the spiritual fulness and administrative power that applies to the church ("the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars") it is simply as His (not "in his right hand"), and not in manifested order and active working. Hence, although the unity of the body is the precious truth of the heart, and the only *true* ground on which saints can gather to Christ's name, all present attempts at the *manifestation* of this unity, in an ordered governmental way are, *I believe*, contrary to God's mind, as not recognising the ruin of the church, and will end now, as before, in sorrow and confusion. At the end of the church's history, when *all* is failure, and "the faithful and true witness" is about to appear and make good in and by Himself what the church has failed to be, it is surely not the

devotedness that He takes knowledge of, and to which He addresses Himself.

The way in which Christ presents Himself to this church brings to light the striking analogy that exists between the position of true believers now at the close of the present dispensation, and that which He Himself occupied in the last days of Israel under the first covenant. Then, as now, all was high-sounding profession, without reality, and leading on to apostasy. He was then, as we get Him in the gospels, the Holy One and the True One; the One wholly devoted to God, and the One in whom all that is true was livingly made good before God and presented to the eye of man. Whatever His ministry of grace and goodness towards sinners, meeting, as He did, every form of human want and misery, the exercise of this grace never enfeebled or clouded for one moment His personal character in what He was for God; nor can divine grace, in a world of sin and sorrow, ever be divorced from the maintenance of personal holiness and truth in those by whom it is exercised and ministered. He was, and is still, the Holy One and the True One, because divine love must find a channel for itself in a world where all is sin and departure from God. It is thus Peter presents Him to the Gentiles in Acts x., "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him." In this character and according to this power, at the beginning

time to attempt to *display* the church's position. Separation to God from *all* evil at all costs in the power of *truth* individually held, while the mass have let it slip, is the path of faith and power. To follow Christ in life and righteousness, by the moral power of grace and truth acting on the *heart and conscience*, when all ordered ecclesiastical power is lost, or, where claimed and displayed, is in the hands of man controlled by Satan, is what the Spirit of God now calls to, and this will throw together those who would "call on the Lord out of a pure heart," and keep them together, not so much by the maintenance of church discipline, as by the *moral* bond that flows out of "using diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," based on the principle that holiness becomes God's house for ever.

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of His ministry, the devils recognised Him, "saying, Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God." (Luke iv. 34.) Blessedly, here put together, are these two things—holiness for God, and delivering power for man.

This is the One that challenges the faith and confidence of His people in His address to the church of Philadelphia. The One who, on the one side, was all for God, and, on the other, all for man. He would have them in individual and personal association with Himself, not now so much according to a dispensation as given to Paul to administer, but in what is essential and divine as developed by John in his epistles. That is in eternal life, and in the character and ways in which that life had displayed itself in Him. It is not the church relationship of saints with Christ, and thus with one another, but the life of faith that connects itself with the Person of the Son of God, in whom all blessing is secured, and all dispensations will have their accomplishment. Those whom He addresses know Him as the Holy One and the True One, and thus have eternal life. "This is life eternal," He says elsewhere, "that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3), and so John, in his epistle, "We know the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." They are "his own which are in the world," and of whom He can say, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me;" as the objects of the Father's care and keeping they must have the character and ways suited to Himself. They, too, must be holy and true, and withal, they had been sent into the world as He had been sent into the world.

This is the true and real, though undeveloped, ground on which those addressed as the church of Philadelphia stand. The way Christ presents Himself here, and what He subsequently says to them implies this. They are the

objects of His love, and those who are truly acting for Him during His absence, and hence those to whom He can rightly present Himself as, "He that hath the keys of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth." All authority for man's blessing is in His hand, and, as He Himself, in His time of service on earth, entered "in by the door" which the porter opened to Him, so that no power of man, high priest or scribe, could hinder His getting at the sheep and bringing them out into blessing, so now in the sphere under His immediate control, perhaps here more specially Christendom in contrast with the world at large and the commission given at the beginning (Mark xvi.), He says to every true servant, "Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man *can* shut it."

It is to be remarked that it is in *this* connection He says, "I know thy works," and, although He says the same to the other churches, it is said here without any "but," and, it seems to me, with special significance, as if of works that were peculiarly according to His own heart, and which had His deepest interest and approval. They were works such as His own had been; "my works," as He calls them in His address to Thyatira; works of grace and mercy, little thought of by the mass around them, and that attracted no attention from the world, but works which He knew and valued. Those who did them had His approval, and with this they must be content. As it were He says, "I see you love souls and are seeking them for My name's sake; you understand the joy it gives My heart when one sinner repenteth; you know what I meant when I said to others long, long ago, when on earth where you now are, 'I have meat to eat that ye know not of,' 'My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and finish his work;' and His work was that I should seek and save the lost. This work is as near my heart as ever; two thousand years of rejection and indifference have not chilled my heart in its yearning love for sinners, and still 'my Father worketh hitherto and I work.' Be not discouraged by all the ruin

and opposition and apostasy around you, none shall close the open door I have set before you, 'for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and not denied my name.'"

The reasons He gives them why that door should be shut by no one are of touching and deep interest. It is the very least that could be said of them as Christians. To have said less would have been to disown them altogether. It is acknowledgment of a very negative character, and yet it secured them in the fullest blessing, and brought out from Him the most unqualified encouragement, and assurance of His love.

They had a "little strength"—not that of Peter, or of Paul, in whom He wrought mightily in earlier days, yet that which He *could* acknowledge, as flowing from Himself. What strength they had was of the *character*, however small its measure, of that enjoined by Paul on Timothy, "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." It was the strength that is made perfect in weakness—His strength and theirs, because they were His and trusted in Him. They were not high minded and were, at least, standing by faith, when the church as a whole had left this ground, and not continued in "the goodness of God."

They kept His word. The word of God as a revelation to man they held by. It was their sole ground and confidence. While others around were giving up that word, and putting in its place the traditions of man or the philosophies of the human mind, they kept it. Adherence to scripture characterised them.

They had not *denied* His name. There was not, as in earlier days, the bold confession of His name before a hostile world, and the carrying of His name and word among every nation under heaven, in a way that carried all before them, and turned men to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and wait for His Son from heaven. Those were the days of the church's triumph and pristine faithfulness, but now all was decline and apostasy in that which bore the name of Christ collectively before the world.

It is not saying much to tell them they have kept His word and not denied His name, yet it is everything at *such* a moment, and forms the ground upon which He could, and would acknowledge them in fulfilment of His own word, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. x. 32, 33.) This is not the faithfulness that distinguishes some believers from others, but that which stands connected with life and salvation. They are the necessary and essential characteristics of every *true* believer. Not to keep His word, or to deny His name, were to be lost. He does not tell them they were *doing everything* in His name; or that they were gathered formally to His name. There is nothing here that contrasts some Christians with others, but simply that which constituted those thus characterised Christians. One who trusts in Christ, keeps His word, and does not deny His name is a true Christian, and *all* such are comprehended in the address to the church of Philadelphia. It is a state of soul and not a church position that is in question.

How sweet, then, the announcement, just before the Lord returns, that before every true believer in Jesus stands an open door for preaching the gospel to poor sinners that no man can shut. Oh! that all may have the love and faith to take advantage of it, and may none seek to limit its application, or mystify its significance.

But, beside infidel deniers of His word and name, there *are* those who oppose, and seek to frustrate this blessed gospel of the grace of God; the proud and pretentious claimants to an hereditary God-given religion, and to apostolic succession. Such look down upon the humble believer in Christ, and despise the weak and unaccredited proclaimers of His grace; as to such He says, "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them come, and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."

This has special reference to what is now happening in Protestantism, and refers to the last final invasion of the church by Galatianism, and the revival of the weak and beggarly elements of Judaism, under the name of high church, and ritualism, where sacramental grace and law keeping are taught for life and salvation. Such are "the synagogue of Satan." They assume Jewish privileges and position, with sacrificing priests, and freshly and continuously offered unbloody sacrifices, denying the true priesthood of *all* believers, and the once offered and completed sacrifice of Christ. They, as it were, "*say* they are Jews." It is a lie. They are not. They are the synagogue of Satan. Solemn and terrible fact. It is not the Jezebel character of Satanic working, plainly and boldly idolatrous, as in Thyatira, or Popery, though it will infallibly end in it, but that which precedes it, as in Smyrna, with this difference, that it was attended there with persecution and martyrdom, but here with subtlety and corruption, and to stand against this latter is a more difficult task than to endure the former.

The true knowledge of Christ, and faith in God's word, with the holding by and teaching the doctrines of grace thus characterise Philadelphians, as in contrast with those who deny revelation and Christ's name, and those who maintain ecclesiastical authority, and who, making everything of outward and visible order, are simply Satan's instruments for teaching false and damnable doctrines that keep souls far away from God in sin and unbelief. Systematised religion is the cover under which Satan spreads false doctrine, especially that which denies the gospel. It gains the applause and attention of the world, but eventually those who compose this masterpiece of Satan shall have to bow at the feet of those whom, in the days of their proud and pretentious power, they had despised and disowned, as even belonging to Christ, or at least to His church, and learn that those they had so despised, all outwardly weak as they appeared, had been the real objects of Christ's love. Meanwhile Christ's love and approbation take the place of everything else for all

true believers, and with this blessed comfort they may well wait for public acknowledgment before the eyes of others. This, in its day, shall surely come, "when he comes to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe."

C. W.

(To be continued.)

OUR VOCATION.

PAUL unfolds the vocation, and then calls on us to walk worthy of it, in the first part of Ephesians iv. The necessary effect of being brought so close to God as we are is lowliness and meekness; how can it be otherwise? The greatness of the grace makes nothing of self. This is not easy. In Christ's life you see it plainly enough, in Philippians also. Then the effect of lowliness and meekness is to manifest the unity of the Spirit. "With lowliness and meekness," that is what we ought to be before God; then the effect towards others will be longsuffering; others may not be lowly and meek. Practically this brings God in and self is gone. The power of love walking with God brings in longsuffering towards others. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; as servants of Christ, and self being gone, we are looking at others. "Yea, and if I be offered [poured as a libation] upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all," says Paul.

The mere fact of there being Jews and Gentiles in the church, and the constant tendency among the Jews to think little of the Gentiles, made this needed—"endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit," not the unity of the body, God keeps that. Then it comes to be jealousy for Christ's glory. What comes from the Spirit is always one; why are we not all agreed? Because our minds work; if we had only what we have learned from scripture, we should be all the same. The body is one that cannot be kept by our endeavours; but all this is the *practical* realisation of what is in the purpose of God.

J. N. D.

THE PERFECT LOVE OF CHRIST—HIS WORK AND HIS PURPOSE.

EPHESIANS V. 25-27.

THERE are two things here which bring out the perfect love of Christ to the church. First, what He has already done; second, what He is about to do; or, in other words, His work and His purpose,—“Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it.”

The way in which we value a thing, is according to what it costs us; the greater the price a man pays for it, the more he values it. Thus Christ values the church according to what it cost Him to possess it. He paid an infinite price, He gave up everything—His place, His rest, His glory with the Father, all His rights and glories as Son of man, and, beyond all, He gave Himself. Gave Himself to God for us, to glorify God on our behalf, to suffer all that was due to us; laid down His life to pay the ransom price, that He might redeem us to God. He could not have given more, done more, or suffered more. His love was proved to the utmost, but endured firm as a rock. The many waters could not quench it.

But there is another way in which we value a thing, namely, for what it is in itself, according to our own estimation of its worth, which may exceed the actual cost at which we purchased it; it has to ourselves a peculiar value beyond all cost.

So also from eternity Christ's heart was set upon the church, He formed His own estimate of its worth, *to Him* it possessed a peculiar value and beauty, to Him it was like a pearl of great price; the one object which His heart was set upon, full of beauty and loveliness in His eyes. He gave up everything to possess it.

But here His estimation of its preciousness was formed before He purchased it, He would possess it at any cost. What wondrous love was His, to see beauty in such an object, found in such a condition of sin, poverty, and degradation! It seems almost too marvellous to be true.

And yet His own word assures us that it was so,—“ My delights were with the sons of men.”

However this truth is often lost sight of, or only feebly apprehended when thinking of the love of Christ to us, and of His death as the great expression of it. We think of His grace in dying for us, as if His object in doing so was merely to set us free from the state in which we were found; of how He bore the judgment in our stead and set us free, of how He died for us and secured our salvation. But this, though all true, is not half the truth. He died, in order, not merely to set us free, but to *possess* the church for Himself, and having possessed it to bring it to His own estate. (1 Thess. v. 9, 10.)

Let us suppose, by way of illustration, that the son of the Queen heard of some poor creature in prison, that he has compassion for her, and is willing to become her substitute, that he leaves his own estate, the comforts and honours of his home and position, comes down to the prison to endure the penalty resting upon this poor creature, and suffers the whole term of her imprisonment, to set her free. What compassion! What condescension! What kindness! Beyond anything we can conceive as possible. Yet after all, this would not be *perfect love*. Wondrous compassion and kindness, but not *perfect love*. He has secured a great benefit for her, she gets freedom from the judgment of the law, and from the prison, but there he leaves her. Now if he really loved her perfectly what more would he do, having set her free? He would desire to possess her for himself, take her for his wife, and clothe her in attire which would suit himself; bring her to his own home to share equally with himself all his own riches, blessings, and honour: that is, in every way he would raise her up to his *own estate*. Nothing less would satisfy perfect love.

Such love, and such ways in any human creature, are altogether beyond conception. But such has been, and is the perfect love of Christ for the church. And here we have brought before us the present activity of His love, in what He is *now* doing for the church, “ That he might

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sanctify it, purifying it by the washing of water by the word." It is because He loves the church so perfectly that He desires it should be separated from all that is defiling, that its moral condition should be what is suitable to Him. He is therefore seeking by the word to cleanse it from everything of the world, from everything not befitting the high and holy relationship into which He has brought it, having redeemed it for this by the giving of Himself. His perfect love could not be satisfied with anything short of its present moral condition being worthy of Himself. And if we think of His love we shall truly appreciate this present service of Christ, and it will awaken in us the corresponding desire to answer to His desires for us, and we shall not be satisfied with less than being separated from everything unworthy of Him. We shall value the word because of its cleansing effect.

This brings us to the second part of our subject—the purpose of Christ for the church, what He is about to do for it. He gave Himself for the church, not only to redeem it, but to *possess* it, and with the purpose of bringing it up to His own estate, to His own place, and in a state suitable to Himself, "That he might sanctify it by the washing of water by the word, that he might *present the church to himself glorious*, having no spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it might be holy and blameless." His love will never be satisfied until He has brought us to His own place, raised us up to share with Him His own honour and glory, brought us into the full enjoyment of the place and condition in which He is at present in the Father's house, to share with Him all His own rest, joy, and glory, as far as He can give it us: when will be fully realised the truth, "He that sanctifieth and those that are sanctified are all one." Then His desires will be fulfilled, and He will rest in His love.

For this He is waiting in patient expectation. He must bring the object of His love into the enjoyment with Himself of *all His own delights*, the joys, the blessings, the glory of His own place, and in a glorious condition in every way suited to the place and to Himself. What is

said in Psalm xlv. of His Jewish people will be even more fully true of His heavenly bride, "The King's daughter is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold, she shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework." Then the church will be seen as a "bride adorned for her husband." Such is the purpose of Christ for the church, and this is what He is about to accomplish for her. He could not do more, and He will not do less.

Now comes a question for us, namely, How far do we respond to such love? How far are our affections and desires in accordance with it? I do not mean as to any return we can make, for to do so in any adequate manner would be impossible. But I speak of the receptivity of our hearts to His thoughts and His love. Do we take them in, do we really believe this love? Are we really looking away from and beyond everything here, to that which is before us, the coming glory? Do we really believe that in a little while we shall have done with everything here, shall have left this world in which we now are, and all the things with which we are occupied on earth, and shall in a moment be translated to be in the place where Christ is, with, and like Him? That soon the last time will have arrived, when we shall gather around His table to celebrate His death; that before another Lord's day comes, the moment of our rapture may have come, and we may be with the whole church, glorified, and *in the presence of our Lord above, to be with Him for ever.*

I ask, do we really believe these truths? Are we *reaching forth* with earnest desire, *pressing towards* the mark for the prize of our calling on high? Does the patience of our hearts correspond with the patience of His heart? How little our minds and hearts are impressed and imbued with these thoughts of Christ about us.

In Paul (Phil. iii.) we see a man whose heart was so possessed by the love and purpose of Christ for him, that he relinquishes everything here, in his longing desire to realise the fulness of blessing of being with Christ, and like Him. He could say with truth "One thing I do,

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forgetting the things behind, and stretching out to the things before, I pursue, looking towards the goal, for the prize of the calling on high of God, in Christ Jesus."

But if we find with ourselves that the hope has waned, that we lack this ardent desire which separates the heart from everything where Christ is not, then what shall we do? What will put our hearts in a right state towards the Lord, and that which He has set before us as our hope? Well, it is of no use dwelling upon our failure, our feeble love and response to Him. We must seek, rather, through the ministry of the word, by the Spirit to our souls, to get our hearts more occupied with, more possessed by His perfect love to us, and His thoughts and purpose concerning us. This is the only thing which will rekindle our love and desire for Him.

May God accomplish this in us all, that we may be found as a people waiting and prepared for the Lord.

F. H. B.

"HOLY! HOLY! HOLY! LORD."

LAMB of God! Thou Son Eternal,
Hosts, before *Thee*, veil the face;
Powers on earth, and powers infernal,
All must own Thee, in Thy place:
"Thou art worthy,"
"Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord."

Lamb of God! who lives for ever,
The eternal throne amid;
Bursts of homage—ceasing never—
Speak Thy fame, no longer hid:
"Thou art worthy,"
"Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord."

Lamb of God! *we now* adore Thee,
And confess Thy holy name;
We, in Spirit, fall before Thee,
And Thy highest praise proclaim:
"Thou art worthy,"
"Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord."

Feb. 1882.

G. W. F.

REMARKS ON THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.

(Continued from page 23.)

BEFORE directly taking up the "unity of the Spirit," and attempting to define it, it will help to clear our subject if a few words be said on the three aspects in which believers corporately are viewed in the latter part of Ephesians ii. We find there: 1st, Jew and Gentile reconciled "unto God in *one body* by the cross;" 2nd, "fitly framed together as that which groweth unto an *holy temple* in the Lord;" 3rd, builded together for an "*habitation* of God through the Spirit." All these three aspects of the assembly commenced at Pentecost with descent of the Holy Ghost, and are in present existence on the earth, but it is important to distinguish between them as, though co-existent, they are not all co-extensive, nor can the terms by which they are respectively described be used interchangeably.

"The body," as we learn from 1 Corinthians xii., is formed by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and comprehends all true Christians. They are vitally united by the Spirit to Christ as the Head in heaven and to one another to form His body on earth. The body, in scripture, is always regarded as a complete organic whole, having its sphere of display and activity on the earth, though growing from the Head in heaven "by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (Col. ii. 19), and so compacted together that there "*can* be no schism in the body" (1 Cor. xii. 25); while so intimate is the union of one part with the other that if one member suffer all the members suffer with it, and whatever affects the members on earth reaches the Head in heaven. (Acts ix. 4.)

No outward ruin of the church, or apparent scattering of the members of the body, touches this *vital* unity, nor enfeebles in the least degree the living and divine sympathy, or interdependence of one member on the

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other. It may not be intelligently or consciously recognised that the condition of the members in Australia affects that of those in England, and that the well-being, or otherwise, of one member reacts upon the whole body in spite of all ecclesiastical disorder and separation, but it *is* so nevertheless. This is a blessed and soul-subduing fact, though a sad and solemn one in view of practical denial. In the body all is the Spirit's work from first to last, without any human instrumentality.

"The holy temple" is *being* built by the Lord Himself, and is *growing* to completeness, each stone being fitly framed and put into its place by the hand of Him, who says in Matthew xii., "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." It is of this holy and growing temple that Peter speaks in chapter ii. of his first epistle, "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious. Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house." The holy temple is composed entirely of true believers, and here, as in the body, no human hand comes in; it is all the Lord's own work, and will have its completeness at His coming, when the last living stone has been put in its place.

"The habitation," begun by God Himself instrumentally by man, and thus *set up* perfect, is built by man and committed to his responsibility, consequently conditions are found in it in entire contrast with those that obtain in either the body or the holy temple. In both of these *all* is divine, and hence *all* perfect. In the "habitation" it is God's building, and the sphere of His working in the world, but man being the *actual* workman failure comes in, and good and bad materials are found in this building in its *subsequent* development. Its formation and history we get in 1 Corinthians iii. Paul, as a labourer, "together with God," and as a "wise masterbuilder," says, "I have laid the foundation and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

As *commenced* by God, working in and by man, the habitation or house, and the body were equally composed only of true believers, and were thus co-extensive, but very soon the absolute work of God by the Spirit, and that instrumentally wrought by man, in which room was left for man's responsibility to declare itself, parted company, and, while at the beginning all those who confessed Christ and were baptised were true and living believers, very soon the weakness of man's hand shewed itself, and mere professors, destitute of *living* faith, were brought in on confession and baptism, and builded together with the true believers, and the habitation enlarged itself beyond the body, being composed of dead and living stones builded together, but not united one to the other by the living bond of the Holy Ghost. The building continued the sphere of God working, and the place of His dwelling with its blessed privileges and solemn responsibilities for faith unaffected by the state of those composing it. Still is it God's house, and will remain so to the close, as the solemn warning of Peter tells us. "For the time is come," he says, "that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (1 Peter iv. 17.) It is this external, visible building or "habitation of God by the Spirit," and still as much as ever "the house of God," that has fallen into ruin and disorder, and which will close its history on earth, as man's work, in judgment, to reappear in heaven, according to God's mind made good in His own infallible power, as "the tabernacle of God." (See Rev. xxi. 3.)

But besides the formation of the church as the body; the commencing of the holy temple: and the building of believers together externally and visibly as the habitation of God, another thing came into existence at Pentecost, in fulfilment of the prophecy of Caiaphas, that Christ "should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John ii. 52), and the Lord's prayer—"neither pray I for these alone, but for them also that shall believe on me through their word: that

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they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us : that the world may believe that thou hast sent me " (John xvii. 20, 21), and that was that all believers, "as called in one body," were brought by the Spirit's power and presence into a divine and moral and practical unity of mind, heart and purpose, as we read, "all that believed were together, and had all things common" (Acts ii. 41), "and the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul, neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own ; but they had all things common" (Acts iv. 32), this is "the unity of the Spirit;" a unity where all is according to God's mind, flowing out of, and sustained by, the presence of the Spirit amongst believers, and based upon the great principles given us in the latter part of Ephesians ii., "one new man;" "one body;" "access by one Spirit unto the Father;" and "builded together for an habitation of God."

The unity of the Spirit in its perfection is then the power of the Spirit which produces *divine* accord amongst believers, and enables them to realise their relationship to *all* saints, thus securing the manifestation of the one body on earth ; and taken in its completeness it cannot be separated from the one body, yet it is not the same thing, for "there is one Spirit," and "there is one body."

Practically the "all may be one," and the "one in us," of John xvii. is the unity of the Spirit, and this is what believers are enjoined to use diligence to keep "in the uniting bond of peace." Jews and Gentiles gathered out to Christ at Ephesus were not to follow their own separate interests, or quarrel, but to walk together in "all holiness and meekness with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;" visibly together, and in *divine concord* by the power of the Spirit which made God's mind and theirs all one here on earth. Reconciled to God and to one another by the cross, and before the Father in communion by the one Spirit, their walk was to be together according

to *that* communion. The unity of the Spirit begins *here*, but develops itself practically out in accordance with what the children of God are in connection with all other saints, as "the one body" and "habitation of God by the Spirit."

Abstractedly the unity of the Spirit is the mind of God, and when the mind of one believer with another believer goes on together with the mind of the Spirit it is practically kept, but when saints do not see together, so that the mind of God is not made good in them, the unity of the Spirit is not kept, even though there may be no outward breach. They may be together outwardly as "one body," but they are not inwardly one in divine accord, as being "of one heart and of one soul," the "one in us" is not there.

At the beginning, at Pentecost, the unity of the Spirit was fully kept, and all believers were outwardly and inwardly together in one, and the unity of heaven shone brightly on earth for a brief space, but soon Satan entered the heavenly scene, and in Acts v. and vii. we find the unity of the Spirit is gone, though the power for its manifestation remained. The unity of the body remained untouched, and even its outward manifestation was still maintained, but the unity of the Spirit had not been kept. A sad and solemn fact! C. W.

(To be continued.)

"If those to whom God, in His grace, has committed a testimony do not employ this testimony on behalf of others according to the grace that bestowed it, they will soon become unfaithful in their own walk before God. If they truly acknowledged God, they would feel bound to make known His name, to impart this blessing to others. If they do not own His glory and His grace, they will assuredly be unable to maintain their own walk before Him. God, who is full of grace, being our strength, it cannot be otherwise." J. N. D.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE HOUSE OF GOD,
AND
THE PLACE OF THE ASSEMBLY IN A CITY.

WITHOUT any thought of raising questions, but with the simple desire to edify, the following thoughts are suggested for the prayerful consideration of my beloved brethren.

After the resurrection of the Lord, and before the formation of the assembly, we find the disciples gathered in one place—an upper room, the doors being shut. (John xx. 19.) After His ascension they returned to Jerusalem, and are found again in an upper room. (Acts i. 13.) At the descent of the Holy Ghost, "They were all with one accord in one place." "It filled all the house where they were sitting." (Acts ii. 1, 2.) The multitude was attracted to that place, but we are not told whether the first *preaching* continued at that house, or in the city, or temple. "The same day there were added about three thousand souls." "And all that believed were together." "And they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home." Their public place for teaching and prayer was the temple, for some time. (Acts ii. 46; iii. 1; iv. 1.) And for the moment this was the will of the Lord:—"Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." (Chap. v. 20-42.)

But besides the temple and every house, there was also *the place* of the assembly:—"And being let go, they went to their own company." "And when they had prayed, *the place* was shaken where they were assembled together." (Chap. iv. 23-31.) This was after the number of the men was about five thousand. (Chap. iv. 4.) Thus, besides the temple for teaching and prayer, and every house, there was a special place of the assembly. The case of Ananias implies the same thing. They came to a place to lay the money at the apostles' feet. "And great

fear came upon all the assembly." This did not hinder the testimony in Solomon's porch, or in the streets where Peter passed. Neither did it hinder their entering into the temple in the morning to teach. (Chap. v. 12-21.)

The murmuring of the Hellenists as to their widows in the daily ministration, and all that follows, seems to have been in the same well-known place of the assembly. (Chap. vi.) As to Jerusalem, a great change, no doubt, took place after the scattering of chapter viii. 1. The gospel is preached to the Gentiles, and the assembly is found at Antioch as well as Jerusalem. (Chap. xi. 19-26.) And though much people are taught, yet there seems to be one distinct place of the assembly. (Chap. xiii. 1-4.) The servants of the Lord are gathered together, and there the Holy Ghost specially acts. To that one place they return, and gather the whole assembly. (Chap. xiv. 27.) It might be felt to be a difficulty as to how such multitudes could be gathered thus together to one place.

Such was the case, however, as may be seen. "And it came to pass, in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue (or meeting-room) of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude believed." (Chap. xiv. 1.) In a similar manner a great multitude heard, and believed, in a synagogue at Thessalonica. (Chap. xvii. 1-4.) Also many of them in the synagogue at Berea heard, and believed. (Chap. xvii. 10-12.) Many, also, of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptised. And the place where Paul preached was this—"He reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath," and this for a year and six months. Still more striking is the case at Ephesus. After speaking boldly in the synagogue for three months, we find him in one place in the school, or hall, of one Tyrannus; "and this continued for the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." It is not to be supposed that they were all together at one time. Something like this takes place to this day in the East. The servant of the Lord enters a town, takes a room. The people begin to come in the morning, and

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continue for days or weeks, scarcely giving time to eat, until the town and district hear the glad tidings. It would be profitable to compare much of the modern machinery of man with God, and that poor traveller, the ambassador of Christ in that one place, the school of Tyrannus.

A careful study of the Acts will shew remarkable unity in the Spirit's work in these cities, at the beginning, in every case. A fountain of living water gushed forth, and watered all around. Multitudes drank of the stream. In like manner there seems to have been in each case recorded one place recognised as the gathering-place of the assembly, and all was connected with that, both for ministry and administration. (See Acts vi., xii., xv.)

Shall we now examine what light is thrown upon this question in the Epistles, after great numbers had been converted, and added to the Lord?

We will take Rome. In Rome there would be doubtless more believers than would be allowed to, or able to gather together at one time, in one house or place. Yet it is not a little remarkable, it is only respecting one house that the expression, the assembly, is used. It appears, when the Epistle to the Romans was written, those honoured labourers and companions of the apostle, Priscilla and Aquila, were at Rome. The apostle sends his first greetings to them: "Likewise the assembly that is in their house." (Rom. xvi. 3-5.) He also sent salutations to many other brethren, helpers, and labourers, and those *with them*, evidently in different parts of the city. There were those of, or who belonged to, Aristobulus; to Narcissus; again, "Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and *the brethren with them*; salute Philologus, and Julias Nereus, and his sister, and Olympus, and *all the saints with them*."

Now why does the Holy Ghost speak of the assembly only in one house, and of all the rest of the fellow-labourers by name, and the saints with them? The same principle may be noticed in 1 Corinthians xvi., and remarkably these same honoured servants of the Lord,

Aquila and Priscilla, his wife, "with the church that is in their house."

The same principle is observed at Laodicea: "Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, *and Nymphas*, and the church which is in his house." Mark, there are the brethren, and also the assembly, in the house of Nymphas. Is it not, then, clear that the assembly in such a house, in one place in each city, is not the same thought as the assembly of God in such a city, which must embrace all the brethren, whether in Rome or Laodicea? (Col. iv. 15.) Still more:—"And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the assembly of the Laodiceans." It does not say in the separate assemblies, but, in the assembly; and we see the house of Nymphas as the one place named, as the assembly place. It would follow it was to be read *there*, until all the brethren heard it. The unity of the Spirit may have been thus maintained in every city, however many thousands may have composed the assembly of God in that city. One place, marked out by the Lord, and recognised by all, as the centre, or assembly, for all purposes of administration. Such a place there was, evidently, in Jerusalem. This did not set aside the breaking of bread in other places, or preaching in the temple, or in every house. So in Rome, although there were so many local companies, perhaps converted through the persons named, at all events under their spiritual care, but one place only called the assembly in their house. There was evidently one place in Jerusalem for deliberation. (Acts xv.)

Was it not a beautiful sight at Antioch to see all the servants of the Lord Jesus in that city met together in one place, fasting, and waiting on the Lord, He guiding them by the Holy Ghost, as to all service, whether in that city, or far away? It is by no means implied that the whole assembly of God was assembled together, but the Holy Ghost specially acting in that one place for the whole. How simple, and how effective also, would discipline have been in such a case. It would not require, say the whole of the saints, in such cases as Jerusalem and

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Rome, and probably Corinth, to have been together in one place. The same may be said now of even those gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus in London. If it requires the whole to be actually together, then calm deliberation and discipline would be impossible; and since Jude wrote his Epistle, unanimity would be still more impossible.

If we read 1 Corinthians i. 2, and 2 Corinthians i. 1, it is evidently all these; all saints everywhere; and again, "All the saints which are in Achaia" could not be together in one place. And yet the act of discipline was evidently in one place, and surely binding on all. And mark, though the apostle is writing to the whole church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints that are in all Achaia, yet he says, "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment which was inflicted *of many*." It therefore does not follow that either all were present, or that all were unanimous. But the punishment was inflicted by many. If we have here the principle on which the Spirit of God acted in the beginning, we see at once how the perfect unity of the Spirit would be maintained, as to fellowship, administration, discipline, and service, however large the city, or great the numbers; and it would be very difficult to explain the scriptures we have looked at, and many others, on any other principle.

It is, however, evident that, though there was one recognised place of the assembly in every city, yet all the saints were free, surely, to go to that place, and when anything unusual occurred, great numbers did assemble together, as in Acts xv.

In applying these scriptures to our present time, and the Lord's present testimony, it is true we must remember the present ruin of the church as a witness of Christ, looked at in its profession, but the question is this: are these scriptures to guide those gathered to Christ, in whatever weakness? and if not, what scriptures will meet the case of a large city, with several meetings in it, say like London? If the scriptures do not speak of assemblies in a city, can we?

May we all have spiritual discernment to understand

the Lord's mind from His word, by the *Holy Ghost*. Let the mind of the Lord, in any case, be *thus* known by the saints gathered to the name of Jesus in one place in a city, and admitted to be binding on the whole church of God; let that one place be the recognised place of the whole assembly's deliberations, for administration, discipline, and service; and, above all, let the Lord be owned and waited upon *there* for the whole church of God in that city; then surely none who own Him, and meet together on the ground of the one body, would refuse to bow to the decision of such an assembly, open to all, but not requiring all to be *present*, to arrive at His mind.

C. S.

[We have inserted the above in our pages, not as endorsing the views expressed, but as desiring, with others, prayerfully in the light of scripture, to consider the important and intensely practical question raised in them. They are, by the wish of the writer, put before our readers as simply suggestive, and in no sense as direct teaching.--ED.]

LETTERS AND EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF J. N. D. ON SUBJECTS OF GENERAL INTEREST.

BELOVED BROTHER,

Few, I should trust, have a larger spirit than myself, or are more disposed to leave the fullest liberty of conscience. I fear being too large sometimes, but I do not quite understand individual liberty in public common discipline. . . . The difficulty of present circumstances in exercising that discipline I understand most fully; but supposing discipline to have been justly, and consequently divinely exercised, surely saints elsewhere are to act upon it; or confusion, and disorder, and slighting the saints and Christ Himself in anti-nomian liberty, is the result.

I freely admit that, as things are, it is difficult in many cases, not of common evil, but of ecclesiastical judgment, to deal otherwise than the best we can; but it is always well to respect brethren unless one has a clear case of conscience. Of course, — is free not to be bound by the judgment of brethren, but if people put things on this ground—why, we might say as much. But woe be to him who, if brethren have walked humbly and patiently with God, holds himself free from their judgment. Such may despise them, and for a time they may for their good have the lowest place, but I do not believe such a course will prosper, for God is with them that fear Him, however He may humble them.

Certainly no one has less sought to make a party than I have: I trust my heart is too much in heaven to find such a thing supportable. I am sure I am too morally lazy. But I shall pursue the course I believe to be of God, and He who judges the secrets of men's hearts, will judge all things and all men. The cry of party does not move me. It is evidently the enemy's cry: the only danger is others shaking one by it, by giving decided persons the reputation of being a party. But I am not afraid of the enemy, though I would be on my guard against him. . . .

I see looseness is an easy road, but I prefer following Christ. And I see very clearly here that gentlefolks who want an easy berth would prefer — for unholy reasons. Perhaps God in the present state of the church would give them an easy path, half-way with the world. They have their own cross then for their class, and they are not capable of more. Christ preferred the poor: ever since I have been converted so have I. Let those who like society better have it. If ever I get into it, and it has crossed my path in London, I return sick at heart. I go to the poor; I find the same evil nature as in the rich, but I find this difference: the rich, and those who keep their comforts and their society, judge and measure how much of Christ they can take and keep without committing themselves: the poor, how much of Christ they can have to comfort them in their sorrows. That, unworthy as I am, is where I am at home and happy. I think I am intellectual enough, and my mind, though my education was in my judgment not well *directed* save by God, cultivated enough to enjoy cultivated society. I have none of it, but I prefer the cross.

London has given me the opportunity latterly of comparing through all this break up, the effect of what I embraced joyfully on principle, and as a principle, 27 years ago. I thought then it was the cross, but took it up in the energy of first and inexperienced zeal. I have had the opportunity of weighing it by experience. And when, perhaps in the most trying way, I have found it to be the cross, and with the additional difficulties arising from my own failure, and poor, feeble, and with little wisdom to know how to walk in it, I accept it still. I am sure more faith might walk more *powerfully* in this path, but the path is the right one. There I walk with God's help. I have seen many swerve and seek ease, I have seen my own failure and feebleness in it, but the path is Christ's, and I desire to walk there still. I did not enter into this path for its success, but for its truth, because I believed it Christ's. I walk in it still for the same reason. I did not enter into it for brethren, or brethernism: there were none to join. I did so because the Spirit and the word shewed me it, and that it was following Christ. It has not ceased to be so; and now that many have left for a broader, and I think more worldly one, I still prefer the narrow one. I did not choose it for them; I do not leave it because they have left it. Faith may be more exercised, the faults of others and my own may have made it more difficult to walk in it, and it is so, but have not altered it. When I left Ebrington Street I thought

myself alone. I think the brethren behaved very badly, but I recognise my own failing enough to leave all that, and walk straight now through grace. If others will not, I mourn always when they do not, but do not change my path for the world, more or less.

I endeavour, and earnestly desire, to shew grace and largeness of heart to those I think even wrong. I do not deny that in the conduct of the affair, the failure of judgment as I think of others, has made my own path much more difficult, but I cast all this on God, and go on looking to Him. The result is in His hands. If alone, alone; if He grant union, it will be my heart's joy, but at any rate faithfulness, and His favour and approbation. This is my answer to these things.

Ever affectionately yours,

May, 1852.

J. N. D.

The re-sifting to separation from the world must begin through this: naturally more painful in — than elsewhere. Nor will growth upwards, as to work, begin till this be gone through. As with Christ Himself, many of His disciples went away at that saying, and walked no more with Him, and yet it was the most blessed thing of all He said then; but it did not suit their state. Pruning having, I suppose, been neglected, brethren must pass through this winter, to sprout in spring; and it will be a fresh work, not associated properly with old joys, but in the truths, and yet much more in the *Christ*, that produced them. It is a mercy all did not slip back into the loose, worldly religion which generally characterises the decay of revivals. I look on it as a very great mercy from the Lord.

There is an enduring to the end, and patience having its perfect work. It is trying when people are not decided, and have not definitely taken their place as on a finished question. Then we can deal with *restoration*, but I doubt you are fully there at — yet. . . . It is absolutely necessary to be settled in order to restore, and this must be by being really fixed in the true Christ, or being all wrong; but eternal questions cannot restore. That which gathers is Christ, and grace and real work in bringing Him down to souls: that is what we want. It is that which must always do God's work, can, and ought alone to do it. Now, with looseness as to Christ, this is done in a measure (because the error may not appear—only, when this is hollow, there will not be power, and God will not bless it), even to conversion, if there be a true witness.

But there may be a mass of souls who are loose, and do not like the trouble of being faithful, or, in such a time, the question connected with it. But, alas! they are then gathered to acquiescence in unfaithfulness, and the world is more or less there—religious world, perhaps, but not the cross properly. If the cross be not taken up, this ensnares; that is, if Christ be not everything, and the world, therefore, not wanted, and its neglect, therefore, easy to bear. Some few simple souls may be ensnared, but they will get out when

exercised in God's time. But then, on the other hand, these settlings of questions, even rightly, will not gather souls. They must be right as to what they are *gathered to*; and it must be a Christ in power and grace, without any questions, that gathers them. God alone can give this, and He will not, till there be sufficient exercise to make the Christ gathered to, the same Christ as that which gathers. But it is free, outgoing grace alone that gathers.

I do not know if, at —, you are quite at this point, but I count it a great grace the Lord has so dealt with the brethren. The good effect on *souls* has been astonishingly evident also: they are worth, morally, incomparably more than they were. If it be not arrived there, it will suffer yet awhile, but the apparent advantage of the unfaithful will be hollow and worldly, a mere re-descent into the mixed religious system of the day. When it is not, it will be a restless, angry feeling, as I see in some gatherings elsewhere, especially when the Lord allows blessing to flow a little elsewhere; and they do not escape worldliness after all. Then they will have more rich and respectable people, who like looseness and liberty in religious things, but it is not a real testimony to Christ. But, I repeat, living grace, bringing in grace Christ—by the Holy Ghost from heaven, to souls—can alone really gather and recruit souls.

There is, through great mercy, a little blessing here. . . . Several souls who had wandered from God have been restored to peace and joy, and there is an ingathering re-commenced, quite as fast as—I feel, at any rate—we have power to watch over or help them. . . . The work is very constant, but I am happy in it, and, through great mercy, how undeserved I well know, and would say how unworthy, but that it is not a question of worthiness, I feel the Lord with me in it. I have plenty of work besides London, and plenty in it—indeed, as to care, I feel it is not done, and only find a resource in Him who perfectly cares for His sheep.

Kindest love to the brethren; the Lord sustain and bless them. It is a winter time for them, but heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning, and to the upright there ariseth up light in the darkness. There is no doubt the Lord must carry on the sifting work He is doing to the end, with those who need it. I desire earnestly a restoring spirit, grace dealing and seeking souls in grace, but it must be to a known Christ we are faithful, and, in our little measure, that the gathering and restoration can be. . . .

Ever your affectionate brother in Christ,

July, 1852.

J. N. D.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

2. Q. Do the treasure and the pearl in Matthew xiii. 45-46, teach different truths?

A.—We believe that the symbols used in the verses referred to both picture the same thing; that is, the saints of the *present* dispensation, or, in other words, the church. Under the symbol of the treasure the *preciousness* of the church to Christ is set before the eye; under that of the pearl, her *beauty* as seen by Him who loved her and gave up Himself and everything He had, as the Messiah, to possess her.

3. Q.—What is the meaning of Matthew xi. 12, and Luke xvi. 16, and in what way do the violent take the kingdom of heaven by force, and men press into it?

A.—The kingdom of heaven here is looked at as a position of blessing on the earth, though connected with heaven where the King is. Into this actual and manifested relation to the King those who believe in Christ had to “force” their way in spite of all the opposition of Satan; they have not merely to enter it, but to “*press*” into it, because there is a force opposing their entrance. It looks at the responsible side of the path of faith, and while grace, of course, alone can enable the believer to enter into and sustain such a conflict, yet he has by *personal* and spiritual energy to gain the position he seeks for. The opposition of Satan in this world to Christ and His kingdom is a very real thing, and if we do not meet him and pass over him, as “the violent” and as those who by force “press” on, there is no getting into the kingdom. It is really what persecution means, and under this, for present, as well as future blessing, there must be *faithfulness* to Christ. (Compare Rev. ii. 12.)

4. Q.—Is it scriptural for one to give thanks, another to break the loaf?

J. M. H.

A.—Luke xxii. 19 certainly gives no ground for it, nor does 1 Corinthians xi. 24. Still, we have known those in great repute break the bread after another had given thanks, and, therefore, we should not like to say it was *wrong*, though we should not feel happy to do it ourselves.

C. W.

LAODICEA A CONTRAST, NOT A SEQUENCE, OF PHILADELPHIA.

(Continued from page 36.)

BUT another thing, and a very special one, characterises the Philadelphians to the eye of Christ: they have been, through grace, kept from "the error of the wicked," and have not given up "the promise of his coming;" therefore He says, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

Christ, in whom "all the promises of God are yea, and Amen, to the glory of God by us," sits at the right hand of God in heaven, and there all true believers know Him—know Him as the One who, "when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. i. 3.) But He sits there, too, according to the word spoken to Himself, in answer to His own faithfulness on earth, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." (Psa. cx. 1.)

In this way believers in Christ are connected with heaven, and with the hopes that attach to Him who is there; "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world," He says of them, adding, "and for their sakes I sanctify myself [sets Himself apart in heaven], that they also might be sanctified through the truth." (John xvii. 16, 19.) Christ sits at the right hand of God awaiting the fulfilment of the promises made to *Himself*, when He shall come, put down all evil, and take His kingdom; for this all His people wait with Him; they keep, however feebly, and it may be unintelligently, the word of *His* patience. As of others, in the day of His rejection on earth amid Israel, He, as it were, says again, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptation." To our eyes were they entitled to have this said of them, but He said it—His *grace*

thus clothed them, and so now. They belong to heaven because they are His, as believing in Him during the day of His rejection, and they are associated with Him in the patience of hope that connects itself with His present position. In keeping with this, the apostle Paul prays that the Thessalonians, and thus all saints, might have their hearts directed "into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ." (2 Thess. iii. 5.) So, too, John, associating himself with *all* believers, says, "I John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." (Rev. i. 9.)

It is not the rapture, but His appearing that is here in question, and before this appearing, which all saints necessarily love, takes place, a time of terrible trial will come upon the whole world to try them that dwell on the earth; from this His own people, who are not dwellers on the earth, but pilgrims and strangers, having *their* citizenship in heaven, shall be kept—taken out of the world to be with Himself before it even begins. Nothing is said as to how far they are walking *according* to this hope, but they keep it, do not give it up, and His word of comfort and encouragement has reference to this fact, though doubtless the *happy assurance* of being kept from the hour of temptation will depend upon the degree in which the word of His patience fills the heart and forms the path; still it is pure grace that gives any a part in this hope—"the *mercy* of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." And it is important to remark here that, whatever the special comfort any faithful heart may have in this promise, this being kept out of the hour of temptation is in effect the rapture of the saints, and hence, necessarily includes all true believers, just as the dwellers upon the earth include all *mere* professors. There are but these two classes in view at the moment of which the Lord speaks, and "them that dwell upon the earth" are a class distinguished all through the book of Revelation as being under Satan's delusion, and the special subjects of judgment; no true saint is so described.

But while the coming of the Lord, however dimly

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apprehended, is the hope of *every true* believer, this hope needs to be roused into a living anticipation, and into active energy; so the Lord says, "Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." This is a word of mingled encouragement and warning that must not be overlooked or unheeded. All on the side of His grace is secure, but there is danger, and a danger of no ordinary character. A subtle and mighty foe has to be withstood and overcome, and to be worsted on this battle field—is to lose crown, and with it everything else. (Compare Rev. ii. 10, 11: "the crown of life," and "not hurt of the second death.") They are to hold fast that which they *have*—His word, His name, His coming; to give these up were to lose all that keeps the soul with God, and thus in blessing. The danger here is not failure in walk, or the yielding up of a true christian position; nor is it the passing from the Philadelphian state to that of Laodicea, but something far more serious—it is apostasy. To possess nothing that Christ can own, and to be warned and invited to receive at His hands what He can own, is one thing; but to already possess what He can own, and to be warned not to give it up is quite another. Now, although no true believer can be lost, he is yet responsibly in a position of danger, hence the warnings and ifs that run through scripture, and addressed to believers with reference to the blessings that they *are* in the possession of, so "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor. x. 12.)

The promise in Philadelphia to the overcomer—the one who holds fast what he has, is very full and complete; believing in and following Christ during the day of His rejection, and thus associated with Him in shame and loss in this world (compare Rom. viii. 17), above all, despised by that which, covered with earthly glory and filled up with human riches, claimed, though falsely, to be His church and witness on earth, he is fully and openly associated with Christ in heavenly blessedness; shares with Him all the glory that He has acquired by His life of faithfulness to God on earth. He acquired it, but He

gives it to His people. "The glory which thou hast given me I have given them," He tells His Father in John xvii. So here, He says, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God ; and he shall go no more out ; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God : and I will write upon him my new name."

The peculiar blessedness of all this is the complete association of the overcomer with Christ Himself in all He specially delights to call His own. "In the temple of my God"—the one weak, and disowned on earth by a false church, shall be a pillar of strength. That temple, too, shall be the dwelling, from whence shall never remove, the one that here had been a pilgrim and stranger for His name's sake. "The name of my God"—His Saviour God, shall be written on him who, refusing man's salvation, was held by man to be outside God altogether. "The name of the city of my God"—the new and heavenly Jerusalem, shall be publicly stamped on him who, refusing man's church and authority (Babylon), was accounted to be without place or portion in God's kingdom, and to have no link with heaven. And he who had no name on earth at all that man would own, content to be simply a Christian, and boast no name but the name of Jesus, shall have "my new name"—that name of heavenly glory given Him by the Father, which prophets have not declared, and no one after the flesh *can* know. What more can love say to encourage ? What more can grace bestow ? Himself and all He has, as man, is the Philadelphian overcomer's portion and reward.

The brief and imperfect sketch we have given of the essential and characteristic features of Philadelphia and Laodicea cannot, we think, fail to establish our position, that the one is the contrast of the other, and, in the view we have taken of what this contrast really involves, the one cannot be the sequence of the other, in the sense of Philadelphia becoming Laodicea, nor do we think that Laodicea even collaterally developes *out of Philadelphia*.

LAODICEA A CONTRAST.

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Before closing our subject we would call attention to a few noteworthy facts as to these two churches. In both of them the angel and those he represents all go together—no distinct class is distinguished; in Philadelphia there is no bad class; in Laodicea, no good class. Now, in the other churches the Lord distinguishes those whom He approves from those whom He disapproves. This is very marked in Thyatira, where He addresses “the rest” separately even from the angel. In Philadelphia all is approval and unqualified encouragement. In Laodicea all is unqualified disapproval, without one word of encouragement: He rebukes, threatens, calls to repentance, promising blessing on repentance, nothing more. We cannot but express our conviction that in Philadelphia all are viewed as converted, while in Laodicea all, at least ostensibly, are viewed as unconverted. That grace pleads with these latter up to the last moment, after judgment has been unconditionally pronounced, makes no real difficulty, and we quite believe that to Christ’s eye, amongst the judged mass, there may be elect objects of His love who will hear His voice, and, by doing so, cease really to belong to Laodicea before He spues it out of His mouth.

The difficulty, where it exists, arises, we believe, out of making these two last churches, *church positions* instead of regarding them as two distinct *states* of soul in which all professing Christians come under the eye of Christ at the close. States that together really cover the whole ground of the church up to the end; here discriminated, put side by side and depicted *characteristically*. With this view it is a question of a true or a false profession, with the consequences that attach respectively to it, that Philadelphia and Laodicea represent. We have the analogy of this in the book of Malachi.

C. W.

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J. N. D.

Head, the spring and manifestation ; all taking, in the *new* creation, its starting-point of existence from Him, its place under Him. Adam had such a place in the old, the image of Him that was to come ; Christ, in the new, of which the saints are the firstfruits. But here, the church, which in profession as founded on His resurrection had this character, having wholly failed and gone back in professed riches of human nature to the old, Christ comes forward as the beginning of it all, the One in whom it had its rise and its truth ; all the rest being wholly dependent on and flowing from Him. The *Amen* maintains the promises now to be fulfilled—the faithful and true Witness. One who had, and now would make fully good, the character of God, which man, His image, and the church, too, had failed to do. The beginning of the creation of God, one who, when God made all things new, as He was now about to do, was the ἀρχή, the *fons* and the *principium* of it all, the first in, and the first from, whom it all flowed.

The position He takes in respect of the church, shews the same relationship to it. He was practically without it, looking at it as gone, though it were not yet spued out of His mouth. It is a question, though He warned it yet, of individuals hearing His voice that they may escape—may have fellowship, and He with them. He has not given it up ; but it has become wholly human in its real state, as judged by Him ; so that He has to come in to the individual *if* he was anything to Him, or Christ to him : "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

The *whole* body of members of the professing church were *judged* to be *men* now, *not sons of God* or *Christians*, though judgment was not publicly executed, but Christ still acting in grace ; divine things (the alone true ones) recommended, human things boasted in. *If* the individual heard Him who still called and knocked, though as outside at the door, He would have communion with him. The promises answer to the bringing in of the new order of things, not heavenly joys, still a share

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with Christ. As they listened in time, they would be on the throne in the kingdom. It was immense grace, but no more is promised; not the tree of life, no hidden manna, no white raiment spoken of to the soul, to encourage it in faithfulness within; they would not miss the kingdom. Blessed, surely, and wonderful grace, but *only just not shut out.*

This, of course, closed the church's history. The reader will remark that the instruction being moral, a state that is judged, promises ever precious, the warnings and exhortations are available to the saints at all times. The special application may be more or less seized. The words of Christ have power at all times for the heart and conscience; and this is the force of the exhortation at the end to every church: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."

J. N. D.

HOW GREAT THE GRACE!

O BLESSED God, how great the grace,
That gave to ruin'd man a place
Of perfect peace with Thee
Made through the sufferings of Thy Son!
He, He alone, that place hath won,
Himself hath set us free.

How sweet that freedom tasted now,
Our souls with adoration bow
Before Thy throne of grace;
We gladly worship—wait to see,
The Leader of our praise to Thee,
In glory face to face.

We praise with Him in His own joy,
His praise our ransom'd souls employ,
Both here and soon above;
No less a place of praise is given,
No greater here, nor when in heaven.
We share His boundless love.

J. N. D.

WAITING FOR HIM.

1 CORINTHIANS XV. 51-56; 1 THESSALONIANS IV. 15-17.

THERE is a great danger in the present day of this most blessed truth—"the primary hope of the saints"—being *practically* lost sight of. "We walk by faith and not by sight," says the apostle, but *we* reverse God's order, and, alas! too often, walk by sight, and not by faith. The doctrine of the "coming of the Lord" is accepted, but how many believers are living, and contented to live, in a state practically opposed to that which characterised the saints at Thessalonica, who "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to *wait* for his Son from heaven." (1 Thess. i. 9, 10.)

Before the Lord left the sorrowing disciples He gave them the promise that He would come again: "If I go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." (John xiv. 3.) The disciples were sorrowful because their Lord was going to leave them, but what did the Lord Jesus give them to raise them above their sorrows? He gave them *this* hope, that He would come again; that He would not always leave them down here in the place of His rejection—in the world which had refused Him, their Lord and Master, where they could not expect to be treated any better than their Lord. "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you;" and again, "If ye were of the world the world would love his own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

If all their hopes and expectations, as to the One for whom they had left all had ended here, then they might still have sorrowed: but the Lord revealed to them another thing—that He had not left them down here to get on the best way they could, in a scene where everything was against them, and the enemy of their souls.

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opposing them at every step; had this been the case, it would have been a very pitiful one. The Lord told them that it was necessary for them that He should leave them for a time: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." (John xvi. 7.)

So that by the Lord's absence we are really gainers, for He has given us blessings that we could never have possessed had He Himself remained with His disciples down here. He is gone to prepare a place for *us* in the Father's house; and soon He is coming again to take us to be with Himself. How soon we know not, and His desire is that we should be *waiting* for Him. This is our hope—He is coming again. He has left us His word for it, "I will come again."

Are we living in the enjoyment of this? Has this hope any real power over our souls? or are we *practically* denying the fact that we are "waiting for God's Son from heaven"? The Corinthian saints came behind in no gift, and were "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;" are we following their example in this? It is a question we need to ask ourselves continually—Are we waiting for Him?

There is one thing that will give the soul a deeper longing for the Lord's return, and that is, a deepening knowledge of the One that is coming. Who is the One that is coming? What has He done for us? It is the Son of God who left the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity, and humbled Himself, took upon Him the form of a servant, was seen walking down here as a man, the meek and lowly Jesus, of whom it is recorded, "Lo, I come, to do thy will, O God"—a life of perfect, unswerving obedience to the will of God. He could say of Himself, and He was the only one that ever could say it, "I do always those things that please him." And this very obedience to His Father's will brought Him down even into the dust of death.

He was a perfect Man, the *only* perfect Man that ever

trod this earth; He was just, but He suffered *for us* the unjust; He knew no sin, but He was made sin *for us*. On the cross He suffered for us when He offered Himself without spot to God: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree."

Now, we can say, "In whom we *have* redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins," and we have liberty and boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. We can find our deepest joy and delight in the presence of God, because His blood cleanseth us from *all* sin. And, beloved, He has not only given all that He had—all that He possessed, but, blessed be His name, *He gave Himself*. Could He give more? Impossible! By this He has not only met our need, but He has also glorified God, and brought us into the presence of God, as perfect as He is Himself. We are "holy, and unblameable, and unproveable in his sight."

He is now seated in glory at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and He is waiting there for the moment when He shall come, and take us to be for ever with Himself to share in His glory. He will not be fully satisfied till we are enjoying His presence; till we are with Him, where He is. He is waiting *there*, and we are waiting *here* till we hear that "shout, and the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God," when the dead in Christ shall rise, and we shall be changed; when our body of humiliation shall be fashioned like unto His own body of glory, and when we shall enjoy Himself and the fulness of His love for ever.

Beloved, may the Lord in His grace keep this blessed hope ever and always fresh before our souls, that we may be in living association and communion with Himself while passing through this world, as those not of it, but as those separated to Him, who gave *Himself* for us; so occupied with Him that we may be really and truly waiting for Him; looking for and expecting to hear His voice, "when this mortal shall put on immortality," and death be "swallowed up in victory."

Oh! may He preserve us, and keep us from being in

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any degree in the condition of that "evil servant," who says in *his heart*, "My Lord delayeth his coming," so that we may be ever, and always, watching and waiting for Him.

A little while—He'll come again ;
 Let us the precious hours redeem :
 Our only grief to give Him pain,
 Our joy to serve and follow Him.
 Watching and ready may we be,
 As those that wait their Lord to see.

W. S.

IS THE HONOUR AND POWER OF THIS WORLD
 ANY PART OF THE ENDOWMENT OF THE
 SAINTS, ACCORDING TO THE WORD ?

I FEEL this question to be one of immense practical importance. When the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world, the Jews—as they had done before, when they said to God, "All that thou hast said unto us we will do"—asked Jesus, "What shall we do that we may work the works of God?" Man flatters himself that all that is necessary for him to know is, what *he ought to do*, and he will do it. Jesus did not flatter them, but said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." There are a very large number of believers in the world, who do not at all recognise their position before God. There are very many of whom it may be said that they are not unbelievers, and yet by their position in the world they cannot be addressed as *Christians*. The word of God does not recognise them as in a christian position. This should shew us the importance of not being in a position to intercept the word when it speaks, but to be able to say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth;" and of so walking, as to be discerned by the world as those who are not of the world.

There are some also who think that because they are Christians there can be nothing unchristian in their position. While nothing can alter a believer's relation to God, there may be many things in his position which the

scriptures cannot recognise. I confess I can think of scarcely any other relations in which the word of God recognises the Christian, than the natural ones—as husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, master and servant.

It is possible that we may be in a position of hostility, like our Lord, "When I am for peace they are for war." one might suppose that the relation of subject and prince being recognised in the scriptures, we ought to take part in the power of the world; while others may go to the other extreme and fall into a fearful mistake, that if it were wrong for a Christian to act as a sovereign, it must be wrong for him to act as a subject. Paul, in his epistle to Timothy (1 Tim. ii. 1, 2), exhorts them to make "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all men; for kings and for all that are in authority."

While we are in this world, we are commanded to submit to the powers that be. But as to the saints themselves being those powers is another thing. Surely none would say they wished to abide where God's glory must depart; and God does not abide in the high, easy, comfortable places of this world. All that is in the world a Christian is called to give up. Is the honour and power of the world any part of the endowment of the saints, according to the word? I must broadly answer, No. The answer to this last question should be brought into a very narrow compass when we read those words, "They are not of the world, *even as* I am not of the world." We find the Jews wanted to make Him a king, but He pointedly rejected it; and I cannot see any opening or authority in scripture for a Christian to say, *Our Lord* had nothing to do with the honour or power of the world, yet I may. Again, when one came and acknowledged Him as Master and Lord, and said, "Speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me," Jesus answered him, "Who made me a judge or a divider over you?"

I believe it to be essentially wrong to touch anything of the mechanism of this world. I do not want to go into all the depths of the question, but all I have to do is just

to ask, What did Jesus do? And upon *that* ground I safely take my stand. Who is the highest person in the rank of this world? The scriptures tell us Satan is; and therefore the higher I get in the world, the nearer I get to Satan. Jesus is at the bottom of the ladder, Satan at the top; and I would ask those who desire the high places in the world, Is it best to sit nearest Jesus or Satan? I have never seen any good from a saint's association with the world's glory.

Our work is *in the church*, yet while we cherish the church of God, we should remember to pray for those who are in the world, who are not yet manifested. It is a most wicked thing for the child of God, who knows he is in a wrong place, to ask, How shall I do God's will in my own way? The language of our hearts should be this, that He would cast down "imagination, and every thing (high) that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." It is not for a believer to choose his own place, and then ask God to show him what to do in that place. Again, there is often a fear of bringing the light of truth really to bear upon our position. One great practical difficulty, so to speak, is, having dug at the foundation, to go no deeper. God would say, Go very deep; but we say, We have not man's leave to go deeper. The question with us should not be, Where will these principles lead us? but if they are *of God*, let them lead to the antipodes, let them take us out of the world, what matters that?

Dear friends, what the most ignorant wants, is honesty; it is a single eye that we so much need, if we shrink, as I believe many do, from an increase of light. Oh, dear friends, let me warn you that that is a fearful darkness which is brought on by a man's own disobedience and rejection of the light. There are two things I desire for the saints; that we may be guarded from the knowledge that puffeth up; and if we do get more perfect knowledge we may with the knowledge get more honesty.

G. V. W.

REMARKS ON THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.

(Continued from page 46.)

FROM what has been thus far before us, as to the unity of the Spirit and what it comprehends, it is plain that it has two very distinct aspects, intimately connected the one with the other, and yet capable of being viewed separately, and of being, too, practically separated. They both equally depend upon the Spirit, and flow out of what the Spirit produces, as much in the one case as the other, though the one aspect goes further than the other.

They bring two distinct and important truths before the soul, according as one or the other of these aspects is before the mind. The first of these truths, and perhaps relatively the more important of the two, is that, through Christ, "we both [Jew and Gentile] have access by one Spirit unto the Father." (Eph. ii. 18.) The second is that, "by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free." (1 Cor. xii. 13.) According as the unity of the Spirit is seen in connection with one or the other of these truths, its aspect will be, so to speak, either *moral* or *ecclesiastical*. The one has to say to our communion and walk together before the "Father"; the other, to our walk together as members of the "one body." In any one *intelligently* "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," these two truths will unite to regulate the walk; and hence, it will be readily seen that in proportion as the one, or the other, of these truths is powerfully engaging the soul, will the moral or ecclesiastical aspect predominate, and with corresponding practical consequences; the danger lies in making it either exclusively moral, or entirely ecclesiastical.

Now, although all believers have equally access by "one Spirit unto the Father," and are all baptised by one Spirit "into one body," they may be *intelligently* very deficient as to either or both of these truths, and consequently unable, through ignorance, to answer fully to

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the apostle's exhortation to "walk worthy of the vocation with which they have been called."

If we apply practically what we have written to the present and actual condition of things amongst true Christians, we shall find all will acknowledge a common life and relationship before the Father, obtained through Christ, and sustained in the power of the Holy Ghost; they "cry Abba Father," and they realise their relationship to one another as His children, and with this allow, however feebly and failingly carried out, the obligation to walk together "in lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering forbearing one another in love;" and they recognise a spiritual unity, flowing out of a common relationship, that they ought to endeavour to maintain in "the bond of peace."

Many get no further than this, they know nothing, or at least very little, of a relationship one to another as members of "one body." If it engages their thoughts at all it takes the form of an "invisible church," and really, as far as their intelligent understanding of it goes, does not rise above the thought of a divine relationship in which they are set with others by the possession of life and the Holy Ghost. Doctrinally the basis of this state is the 1st Epistle of John; they know, though perhaps in some cases not without doubts, that their sins are forgiven for "his name's sake," and they know the Father; they know, too, that they are "passed from death unto life, because they love the brethren," and that God dwells in them and they in God, "because he hath given us of his Spirit."

This is the divine and eternal ground in which they are set in blessing, and, though their souls may not be *intelligently* conscious of all it involves, they have the instincts of divine life and the actings of the Spirit, that dwells in them, leading them to the Father, and to the seeking fellowship with one another as His children. The family bond is felt and acknowledged, and that a lowly and loving walk, in peace and unity with other believers, is the moral obligation that rests upon them. The desires of the Lord as to the practical unity of His

own, given us in John xvii., affect their hearts and consciences, and they feel that this unity of believers must be suited to the character of a "Holy Father" and a "righteous Father." Thus many of them really endeavour "to keep the unity of the Spirit" in its moral aspect; that "good and pleasant" thing which, like the precious ointment on Aaron's head, is fragrant worship before our God, and, like the dew on Hermon, descending on the mountains of Zion, is blessing and joy amongst His people.

It is impossible to overrate the essential blessing of all this, and the importance of *this* endeavour to walk in fellowship with God and one another, even though no true thought of the church enter into it. According to the light they have, they are owned and blessed of God in this endeavour, even though by their ignorance they are kept in systems contrary to His word, and dishonouring to His name. Did they intelligently know the truth of the church, whether as the "one body," or as the "habitation of God through the Spirit," they could not stay in them. The anomaly is this, that while believers in system may be *morally* endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit, they are at the same time *ecclesiastically* breaking it by the very fact of their being in their respective systems.

When we come to those who, knowing the truth of the church as the "body of Christ" and "the habitation of God," are gathered, outside systems, to the name of Jesus, upon the ground of the "one body," the ecclesiastical form of the unity of the Spirit is added to the other, and perhaps becomes prominent. The ordering of the house of God in unity, whether as to the exercise of gift and communion, or discipline, based upon the headship of Christ and the unity of the body, as unfolded by the apostle Paul, comes into question, and we have a visible unity of believers under an ecclesiastical form, and as far as it goes, without attempting to display the whole positions, the manifestation of the unity of the body is secured. The unity of the Spirit, in this aspect of it,

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declares itself, 1st, in the communion of saints at the Lord's table in partaking of "one loaf"—"The bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one loaf, one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." (1 Cor. x. 16, 17.) 2nd, in the exercise of gift towards *all* saints as "holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (Col. ii. 19); and 3rd, in discipline being the same in all places, so that one put out of fellowship, say, in England is out of fellowship in New Zealand—the Spirit being one, and acting under one Head, His ruling must be the same in all places. Those gathered upon the ground of the "one body" cannot escape from this fact, and though discipline does not connect itself *directly* with the unity of the Spirit, but rather with that of the unity of the body in its manifestation, and has for its object the maintenance of the holiness of God's house rather than that of the maintenance of unity, it cannot be separated from the endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Independency in the church of God cannot, in faithfulness to the Lord, be tolerated by those who stand for His rights, and the truth He has revealed to them as to the unity of the body. It must be refused at all costs or the testimony of God would be surrendered, and following "righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" would be rendered impossible.

The maintenance of the unity of the Spirit in its ecclesiastical aspect, having respect to what is visible and external, has this danger, that it can be separated from the moral, and we may here have the anomaly of those who are endeavouring to keep it *ecclesiastically* breaking it *morally*; it is apt to become *itself* an object before the mind, and, being thus separated from Christ, the heart and conscience lose that which alone can keep both in God's presence, and a rigid ecclesiastical unity may be maintained with a sad lack of the gracious feelings of Christ

towards those so dear to Him, and without sufficiently respecting their consciences : in this way a judgment or rule, right enough in itself, is accepted without the divine conviction of its being God's, and thus, even unintentionally, the will and rule of man take the place of Christ's. Party feeling and action *may* spring up in connection with a doctrine, even a true one, and with this there will be the danger of *evil* being left unjudged lest the external unity be endangered.

All this being so, and surely few in the main will question it, what we have to do is to minister Christ to souls according to their need, and to teach those in system the truth of the church, and induce them to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit ecclesiastically as well as morally ; and, also, to press upon those who, gathered to the Lord's name outside the systems of men, are maintaining it ecclesiastically, that they use great diligence to keep it better morally, so that there may be no breach between its inward reality and outward manifestation.

It is of the utmost importance to see that, irrespective of all ecclesiastical ideas or formal gathering together, saints have to walk with one another in unity according to the Spirit's power in their daily and hourly intercourse, where everything in them *morally* is constantly being put to the proof ; and here the true test of how far we are really "using diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" comes in ; here, too, the need will be felt of those gracious dispositions of the mind that alone can enable us in any degree so to keep it. It is only as we are near Him, and learning of Him who says, "learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart," that any lowliness and meekness will be found in our hearts ; unless lowliness and meekness *be* in us before God, and with this longsuffering and forbearing one another in love, to keep the unity of the Spirit morally is impossible. The "bond of peace"—that walking as Christ walked, can alone be exerting its holy uniting influence on others, as the peace of Christ, "to which we are called in one body," is ruling in our hearts, and, with it, that "wisdom which

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is from above, first pure, and then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

Have we sufficiently recognised our unceasing obligation to keep it in *this* way? Are our consciences exercised as to how frequently we fail thus to maintain this blessed unity? Is the moral breach of it less serious before God than the ecclesiastical? Will He accept the one without the other, or rather will He not blow upon the latter if it be not maintained in the power of the former? Above all let us remember it is the SPIRIT'S unity, a unity of which He, as God, is the living Centre, source and power; and if on the one side He be "the Spirit of *Grace*," He is on the other the "*Holy Spirit*," nor can there be any true unity, whether moral or ecclesiastical, save as we walk individually, and together, with Him who says, "Be ye holy for I am holy," and of whose house it is recorded, "Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever."

C. W.

THERE are two great principles in God's nature owned of all saints—holiness and love. One is the necessity of His nature, imperative in virtue of that nature on all that approach Him; the other is its energy. God is love; He is not loving, but love. He is this in the essential fountain of His being. We make Him a Judge by sin, for He is holy and has authority: but He is love, and none has made Him such. If there be love anywhere else, it is of God, for God is love. This is the blessed energy of His being. In the exercise of it, He gathers to Himself for the eternal blessedness of those who are gathered. Its display is in Christ, and Christ Himself is the great power and centre of it. His counsels as to this are the *glory of His grace*; His applying them to sinners, and the means He employs for it, are the *riches of His grace*.—J. N. D.

LETTERS AND EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF J. N. D. ON SUBJECTS OF GENERAL INTEREST.

*He had been written to as to the proper subject of gospel testimony,
and the manner of its presentation.*

THERE cannot be a more important subject, in every aspect, than that you refer to. The simpler we put Christ's dying for our sins the better. All these great truths are facts, in which I admire the wisdom of God, as the simplest can thus understand them (through grace), and the strongest intellects must bow, and take them as such. When we inquire—and people inquire about everything now—there are depths in it which none of us can fathom.

The full claim of God against sinners is, that they should serve Him according to the relationship they stand in towards Him of creatures in the knowledge of good and evil—"The man is become as one of us, knowing good and evil." He was bound to own God and his neighbour in everything due to them, and that as far as covetous lusts in his heart. Of this, even when man was not under it, the law was the perfect measure. But then, in fact, things went a great deal farther, because there were dealings of men and dealings of God, both of which brought out what man was, and imposed new obligations. Man did not like to retain God in his knowledge, and does not, when he knew Him as God, as he did in Noah's time, he set up devils to worship, and degraded himself below the nature of man.

Now judgment is according to works, God taking account of the degree of light in pronouncing the judgment (see Luke xii.); but judgment is according to works, and that is eternal exclusion from God's presence, whatever degree there may be in actual infliction of punishment. But there is a great deal more behind. The mind of the flesh is enmity against God, wholly and always, besides breaking through obligations, and leads to our doing this. Man was driven out of God's presence at the beginning, and, besides future judgment for works, finds, when his eye is open, that he is lost now; though this be concealed from those walking by sight, when the veil of sense and the show of this world is gone, he finds it is for ever.

Now, though the law proved this to the divinely-taught mind, its grand proof was in the rejection of Christ: "He shall convince the world of sin [not of sins, also true], because they believe not on me." Up to the flood, the first world, it was—but with testimony from God—man left to himself, and God was obliged to bring in the flood. Then, after it, government came in with Noah; promise in Abraham: law in Moses; prophets; and lastly Christ; that is, dealings of God with men, a complete system of probation, which ended in the proof that he not only would not obey, but had no cloke for his sin, and had seen and hated God in

grace—"have seen and hated both me and my Father." Hence it is said, "Now once *in the end* of the world," and so the Lord, "Now is the judgment of this world;" and Stephen, after reciting the call of promise in Abraham, declares, You have not kept the law, have repelled and persecuted the prophets, killed the Just One, do always resist the Holy Ghost. Then man's history ended. He was not only guilty, subject to judgment, but his mind was *proved* to be enmity against God. This is not sins, but sin, man not judged, but lost already, while judgment, which is not yet come, is according to works.

Now, Christ was just personally exactly the opposite of this, He loved the Father, and was obedient. But this was Himself, and always. But He had a work to do according to the ever-abounding love of God; He died for our sins, according to the scriptures, and if a man believe in Him, his sins are gone, forgiven, and blotted out, the guilt and responsibility met. But when we look into the work of the cross we see more than this. He glorified God there, and when made sin. This was a wonderful mystery; a perfect victim, spotless before God, perfect in obedience, in absolute self-surrender, perfect in love to His Father, perfect in His love to us, able, as a divine Person, to sustain the weight of God's glory in the place of sin, that is, as made sin for us, not only in the likeness of sinful flesh, but for sin. "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him; if God be glorified in him, God shall glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him," and Christ, as man, is in glory at the right hand of God.

As the meat-offering, He was fully tested by the fire of God's judgment in death, and was only a sweet savour; in the burnt-offering He was a sweet savour to God, but it was positive propitiation, or atonement, as glorifying God in righteousness, love, majesty, and everything He was in the place of sin, as for sin; as the sin-offering He bore our sins, but that was not a sweet savour, though the fat was burnt on the altar. Christ was thus the Lord's lot, as well as the people's lot. The bearing of our sins cleared the responsibility incurred, the guilt. This is true of His people; and the blood upon the mercy-seat has perfectly glorified God in all that He is, and laid the foundation for the accomplishing the counsels of God, which were before the responsibility even existed. God's love provided the Lamb, and God's righteousness required the propitiation; and by the cross alone the righteousness, and love, and majesty of God are secured, and what He is made known. The Son of man must be lifted up, and the Son of God is given.

As regards the epoch of completing the work, it is clear that, as the wages of sin is death, He must die to complete that; but there was a far deeper truth in what that involved, and it was equally important that the drinking of the cup of God's forsaking should be over, because He was to give up His own spirit in peacefulness to God, as He did, laying it down of Himself when all was finished.

The forsaking of God was of its own, and the deepest character of the sufferings of the blessed Lord. This He felt anticipatively in Gethsemane, when He was not outwardly suffering, but it cannot be separated from death, because it bore the character of divine judgment against sin, and not an accident, so to speak, of mortality. But it is not in itself judgment, that is, the judgment to come. It is appointed unto men once to die, and *after this* the judgment; but all possible suffering combined against Christ—betrayal, abandonment, and denial: the bulls of Bashan and dogs came against Him, and the power of Satan in death, the power of darkness, and His beloved people assisting. This led up on the appeal in it to God (Ps. xxii.), to the sense of being in it forsaken of God. He was heard from the horns of the unicorns; when all was finished He gave up His own spirit, commending it to His Father, crying with a loud voice, and actually died.

I can only rapidly trace in a few words what presents itself to my mind in this, that there is nothing like—in the history of heaven and earth, that in which Christ could present a motive to His Father to love Him: "Therefore doth my Father love me." All is looked at as a whole; for the blood and water came from a Christ already dead, and must have done so to be of any avail. (Compare 1 John v.)

But, I repeat: the more simply, in our work with souls, we put the blessed Lord's dying for our sins, the better; but to have a solid and deep work, we must know ourselves, and sin as well as sins—what we are in flesh, as well as what we have done (see Rom., from chap. v. 12), but this goes on to our being crucified *with Him*, which is another truth. . . . The Lord be praised for His goodness to you. Good He ever is.

1871.

J. N. D.

He had been written to with reference to the connection between gospel and church work.

ONE thing that you relate gave me much to think of, as indeed it has been a subject of thought pretty often for a long while, nor am I sure that I have the Lord's mind clear upon it. I think evangelising the greatest privilege of any in respect of gifts, though I am not an evangelist, only, when I can, doing the work of one as well as I can. That is not my difficulty, but what you say, that the evangelisation has enfeebled the teaching the saints. The gifts are clearly distinct, but I do not see that one should enfeeble the other. Paul assuredly evangelised, and as surely taught, and taught in evangelising: witness the Thessalonians, and if he did not look for, he certainly found, present fruit. He distinguishes being a minister of the gospel, and a minister of the church, to fulfil (complete) the word of God. This is not in the Thessalonians: there all is personal, not corporate. We must be with God for each, as called of Him to it; and then I do not see why power should not be there for both.

But a certain salvationism, instead of Christianity, I think, has to

say to it, which God may bless, but which carries its effect with it. Few carry in their mind "I endure all things for the elect's sake." It is a general idea that God is love, and would have all men to be saved, which is blessedly true; but thus it ends in being saved—man's safety. There is no purpose of God in it, no glory of Christ—all called upon to bow to and own Him. Hence, as to the preacher's state of mind, when he has got the person saved, and this confessed, he is content, going no further. God's interest in His own is lost, which leads on to building them up. If we were with God about them, the heart would soon be drawn out in testimony to them.

There is another thing—glory to Christ, and His church. This I confess greatly absorbs my spirit, though I be but a poor hand for this work too. But this leads us to prayer for saints, as also to testimony to them. The evil is not earnest devotedness to evangelising, which is itself the way of blessing to an assembly—or rather God working in one by His presence builds up the other—it is being absorbed by it. But this affects the evangelising itself; there is less of Christ in it, more of man's importance, and when pursued in a revival way, more of delusive work; it never gives a solid foundation to build upon.

I should be most loath to weaken evangelisation: I believe God is blessing it, especially for gathering out in these last days, and it is healthful for those in an assembly that their hearts are engaged in it.

At the very beginning it *characterised* brethren, and I trust still does, though it be more common now on all hands. The love exercised in it binds also saints together. But God in a great professing body, is awakening them to their state, and this has its importance also. The cry that awoke the virgins was not the gospel, ordinarily so-called. Finally the hand cannot say to the foot, I have no need of thee.

I do not reject the joy of counting converts, but we must not lean upon it: when ye have done all things we should say, "We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do." The bond of service to Christ is kept up, and this is of great importance. It is not referring the effect to our work, but our work and heart to Him. I am sure if we were near Christ we should do both well, assuming of course that Christ has called us to do it.

Do not be content to put one in place of the other, but see what Christ means by it. Be with Christ about the saints when you have to say to them. Be with Christ as to both, and then see what is the result. The question in general has long pressed upon me in connection with the spiritual activities of the day. I have never been allowed to see much fruit, and have been more blessed in bringing into peace than awakening. There is One, I thank God, who is above all, and does all: let us look to Him. The Lord be abundantly with you, and guide you both in heart and work, and keep you in much enjoyment of Him, as well as for Him.

1874.

J. N. D.

I believe we ought to preach the love of God to sinners, and appeal to them more than we do, though I do so more when addressing a mixed crowd of, probably, careless people, than in the assemblies where you would hear me. In these you must remember that the great body are believers, and want rather to be better founded than called. All I look for is that the preaching should be such that it should convict of sin, and the impossibility of sin and God going together, so that it should be well understood that there is need of *reconciling*. And here Christ at once comes in, and atonement and righteousness. Holiness precludes all sin from God; righteousness judges it. This I believe the sinner should understand, so that he should know *what love applies to*, yet that love should be fully preached. It does itself often convict of sin, for the conscience has often its wants already, and this draws them out, so that men find consciously where they are. But conviction of sin under righteousness is a very useful thing, if grace be fully preached with it, and both unite in Christ.

I think it very important that preachers should go to the world, especially now, with a message of distinct love to them. All I desire is that it should be love manifested in Christ, so as to bring out the sinner's condition to himself; that it should not be mere easiness as to sin; that it is a gracious love to sinners—grace abounding over sin—grace reigning through righteousness, than which nothing is more perfectly grace. Sometimes I think the love of God is so preached as if it were a kind of boon of the sinner to accept it. It is God's joy. Still, as a sinner, his being a debtor to God, ought to be before his soul. . . . I count evangelising the happiest service. Yet my heart yearns over the saints, and the glory of Christ in the truth too. Happily there is One above *who does all*. J. N. D.

The following six questions were sent him :—

1. *Is it well or scriptural to say that we put away from the Lord's Table? For example, "So-and-so has joined the Baptists, and is put away from the Lord's Table." Does such a mode of expression give sufficient place to the worship of other Christians in this day of brokenness, or would it be time-serving to avoid saying the Table around which we meet is the only Lord's Table?*

2. *Is the name of "Lord" that of authority only, or can it be used in reference to communion? And does the Lord's Table imply communion, or does it mean the Table over which the Lord's authority is set?*

3. *Could it be said that other christian tables are the tables of devils, or has the passage in 1 Corinthians x. no reference to Christendom as it now is?*

4. *Is it right to say that all professing Christians are of the church of God (not the body)?*

5. *Could a Christian, holding that he stands for acceptance before God in Christ's imputed righteousness, be orthodox as to the*

nature of Christ's Person, or must he necessarily hold the consequences of such doctrine so far as they relate to Christ being under divine wrath throughout His lifetime on earth?

6. *When it says "communion of the body of Christ," is the body of the Lord spoken of, or is the corporate body of believers intended?*

DEAR BROTHER,—

I should not say "is put away from the Table," but "is no longer in communion with us;" he has left you and you cannot put him away. But I should not in the least avoid saying that we meet around the Lord's Table. I could not own sectarian tables as the Lord's Table with the light I have; but saints who may honestly think us in disorder go to it as such, and, I do not doubt, enjoy individual communion with the Lord.

The *Lord's Table* is used simply as a title of Christ in contrast with devils. In itself a title of authority, it has nothing to do whatever with communion: where communion is spoken of it is not used, nor, that I am aware of, is Lord of an assembly a scriptural idea. He is either Lord absolutely, or of individual servants.

To call the table of nationals, or tables of sects, "tables of devils" is a simple absurdity, in defiance of plain language of scripture. I could not go to them; but what "devils" means is distinctly stated in scripture, and means nothing but the gods of the heathen—and is a reference to Deuteronomy xxxii. 17, "they offered to devils and not to God." To refer this to Baptists or Independents is a gross abuse. The apostle speaks of communion with devils (in idol temples) and heathen sacrifices, and of nothing else, and to apply this to wrong ecclesiastical principles, where the Lord is owned as the only object, is trifling with scripture and nonsense in itself.

Saying that all professing Christians are of the church of God may be called into question. The church of God is employed in two senses—or better, two things are spoken of the assembly—one, that it is the body of Christ, and of this all professors were not, as soon as false brethren crept in; it is also the habitation of God through the Spirit, the house of the living God, and in this hay, wood, and stubble may be built in, all professors are of or in the house. It is not true if we speak of the body, though they take the place; it is true if we speak of the house.

As to the 5th question, I do not doubt that a Christian holding he stands for acceptance in Christ's imputed righteousness may be quite sound as to the nature of Christ. I have known most true and beloved saints who were muddled on the point—though I think they lose a great deal. We must not impute even true consequences of a doctrine to the persons who hold it—it may be if they saw the consequences they would give it up—we may use them to shew the doctrine false, seeing it leads to such.

As to communion of the body of Christ, in verse 16 of 1 Cor. ~~xxx~~, it
x

is the body of the Lord, as in the same verse the blood, but the other is closely connected with it. What the apostle is speaking of is, that the priests, in eating of the altar, were identified with the idol, had *κοινωνία*, not merely *μετέχουσιν*, or partook, but were morally completely associated with it—hence with demons—so the Christians with Christ. But then if all were associated with the body of Christ they were with one another, and only one body themselves: it was included in it, but verse 16 refers expressly to the body of Christ 17 shews the other, our unity in one body, to be included in it.

I have only to add, dear brother, that the servant of the Lord must not strive. I know by my own experience how difficult it is. Without the most distant thought of an unkind feeling, we are not always gentle to all men.

Affectionately yours in the Lord,

J. N. D.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

5. Q.—What is the scriptural title to the Lord's table? and what amount of intelligence should be looked for in those seeking to come to the table before they are received to it?

A.—That which, according to scripture, entitles to the Lord's table is, we believe, the possession of life in the Son of God and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. This will be evidenced by faith in Christ and His finished work, so that there is the knowledge of salvation, peace with God, and the ability to say, "Abba Father." Desirable as may be intelligence about the church, and with this the perception of the unscripturalness and evil of human system, these latter should never be made necessary before souls are received to the table of the Lord; but with a true faith, such as we have spoken of, however little the intelligence, there must be the "unleavened bread of sincerity and truth," which allows neither moral nor doctrinal evil. In other words, a true faith and godly walk are what entitle to the Lord's table.

6. Q.—What is the teaching of 1 Corinthians xiv. 26;—is it a rebuke or what?

A.—We should certainly say that rebuke is what the apostle meant by the question he puts. It is evidently disorder that he is correcting. They were apparently speaking and acting several of them at the same time, so that edification was hindered, not to speak of worship.

C. W.

SOME REMARKS
ON
THE RUIN OF THE CHURCH, WITH THE
PRESENT PATH OF FAITH.*

I BELIEVE that the churches have been merged in the mass of ecclesiastical popular hierarchism, and lost; but I believe also that the visible church, as it is called, has been merged there too.

Still, there is a difference, because churches were the administrative form, while the church, as a body on the earth, was the vital unity.

What I felt from the beginning, and began with, was this: the Holy Ghost remains, and therefore the essential principle of unity with His presence; for (the fact is all we are now concerned in) "*Wherever* two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

When this is really sought, there will certainly be blessing by His presence; we have found it so, most sweetly and graciously, who have met separately.

When there is an attempt at displaying the position and the unity, there will always be a mess, and a failure; God will not take such a place with us.

We must get into the place of His mind to get His strength. That is now the failure of the church. But there He will be with us.

I have always said this. I know it has troubled some, even those I especially love; but I am sure it is the Lord's mind. I have said, we are the witnesses of the weakness and low estate of the church.

* Although these "remarks" have been in print more than once before, we reproduce them, believing that many of our readers have never seen them, while those who have will, we are sure, re-peruse them with profit, as, though written many years ago, the principles they enforce are of the greatest value for present help and guidance.—ED.

We are not stronger nor better than others (dissenters, &c.), but we only own our bad and low estate, and *therefore* can find blessing. I do not limit what the blessed Spirit can do for us in this low estate, but I take the place *where* He can do it.

Hence, government of bodies, in an authorised way, I believe there is none; where this is assumed there will be confusion. It was here (Plymouth), and it was constantly and openly said that this was to be a model, so that all in distant places might refer to it. My thorough conviction is that conscience was utterly gone, save in those who were utterly miserable.

I only, therefore, so far seek the original standing of the church, as to believe that wherever two or three are gathered in His name, Christ will be, and that the Spirit of God is necessarily the only source of power, and that which He does will be blessing, through the Lordship of Christ. These (the Spirit present and the Lordship of Christ) provide for all times. If more be attempted now, it will be only confusion.

The original condition is owned as a sinner, or as mutilated man owns integrity and a whole body. But there a most important point comes in. I cannot supply the lack by human arrangements or wisdom; I must be dependent.

I should disown whatever was not of the Spirit, and in this sense disown whatever was—not short of the original standing, for that, in the complete sense, I am—but what man has done to fill it up; because this does not own the coming short, nor the Spirit of God. I would always own what is of God's Spirit in any. The *rule* seems to me here very simple.

I do not doubt that dispensed power is disorganised; but the Holy Ghost is always competent to act in the circumstances God's people are in. The secret is, not to pretend to get beyond it. Life and divine power is always there; and I use the members I have, with full confession that I am in an imperfect state.

We must remember that the body must exist, though

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not in a united state, and so even locally. I can then, therefore, own their gifts, and the like, and get my warrant in two or three united for the blessing promised to that.

Then, if gifts exist, they cannot be exercised but as members of the body, because they are such, not by outward union, but by the vital power of the Head, through the Holy Ghost.

"Visible body," I suspect, misleads us a little. Clearly the corporate operation is in the actual living body down here on earth, but there it is the members must act, so that I do not think it makes a difficulty.

I believe, if we were to act on 1 Corinthians xii. 14, further than power exists to verify it, we should make a mess.

But then the existence of the body, whatever its scattered condition, necessarily continues, because it depends on the existence of the Head, and its union with it. In this the Holy Ghost is necessarily supreme.

The body exists in virtue of there being one Holy Ghost. There is one body and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling; indeed this is the very point which is denied here.

Then Christ necessarily nourishes and cherishes us as His own flesh, as members of His body; and this goes on "till we all come," &c. (Eph. iv.) Hence, I apprehend, we cannot deny the body and its unity (whatever its unfaithfulness and condition), and (so far as the Holy Ghost is owned) His operation in it, without denying the divine title of the Holy Ghost, and the care and headship of Christ over the church.

Here I get, not a question of the church's conduct, but of Christ's, and the truth of the Holy Ghost being on earth, and His title when there, and yet the owning of Christ's Lordship. And this is how far I own others.

If a minister has gifts in the Establishment, I own it as, through the Spirit, Christ begetting the members of, or nourishing, His body. But I cannot go along with what it is mixed up with, because it is not of the body,

nor of the Spirit. I cannot touch the unclean, I am to separate the precious from the vile.

But I cannot give up Ephesians iv. while I own the faithfulness of Christ. Now, if we meet, yea, and when we do meet, all I look for is that this principle shall be owned, because it is owning the Holy Ghost Himself, and that to me is everything.

We meet and worship; and at this time we who have separated meet in different rooms, that we may, in the truest and simplest way, in our weakness, *worship*. Then whatever the Holy Ghost may give to any one, He is supreme to feed us with, perhaps nothing in the way of speaking; and it must be in the unity of body.

If you were here, you could be in the unity of the body as one of ourselves. This Satan cannot destroy, because it is connected with Christ's title and power.

If men set up to imitate the administration of the body, it will be popery or dissent at once.

And this is what I see of the visibility of the body; it connects itself with this infinitely important principle—the presence and action of the Holy Ghost on earth.

It is not merely a saved thing in the counsels of God, but a living thing animated down here by its union with the Head, and the presence of the Holy Ghost in it. It is a real, actual thing, the Holy Ghost acting down here. If two are faithful in this way, they will be blessed in it.

If they said, "We are the body," not owning all the members, in whatever condition, they would morally cease to be of it. I own them, but in nothing their condition. The principle is all-important.

Christ has attached, therefore, its practical operation to two or three, and owns them by His presence. He has provided for its maintenance. Thus, in all states of ruin, it cannot cease till He cease to be Head, and the Holy Spirit to be as the Guide and the Comforter sent down.

God sanctioned the setting up of Saul; He never did the departure from the Holy Ghost. The "two or three"

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take definitely the place of the temple, which was the locality of God's presence, as a principle of union. That is what makes all the difference. Hence, in the division of Israel, the righteous sought the temple as a point of unity, and David is to us here Christ by the Holy Ghost.

On the other hand, church government, save as the Spirit is always power, cannot be acted on.

I suspect many brethren have had expectations, which never led me out, and which perplexed their minds when they were not met in practice. I never felt my testimony, for example, to be the ability of the Holy Ghost to rule a visible body. That I do not doubt, but I doubt its proper application now as a matter of testimony. It does not become us.

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. Still, I believe God has provided for the maintenance of its general principle (save persecution), that is, the gathering of a remnant into the comfort of united love, by the power and presence of the Holy Ghost, so that Christ could sing praises there.

All the rest is a ministry to form, sustain, &c. Amongst other things, government may have its place; but it is well to remember that, in general, government regards evil, and therefore is outside the positive blessing, and has the lowest object in the church.

Moreover, though there be a gift of government, in general, government is of a different order from gift. Gift serves ministers, hardly government. These may be united as in apostolic energy; elders were rather the government, but they were not gifts.

It is especially the order of the governmental part which I believe has failed, and that we are to get on without, at least in a formal way. But I do not believe that God has therefore not provided for such a state of things.

I do believe brethren, a good deal, got practically out of their place, and the consciousness of it, and found

their weakness: and the Lord is now teaching them. For my part, when I found all in ruin around me, my comfort was, that where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, there He would be. It was not government, or anything else, I sought. Now I do believe that God is faithful, and able to maintain the blessing.

I believe the great buildings and great bodies have been a mistake—indeed I always did. Further, I believe now (although it was always true in practice), the needed dealing with evil must be by the conscience in grace. So St. Paul ever dealt, though he had the resource of a positive commission. And I believe that two or three together, or a larger number, with some having the gift of wisdom in grace, can, in finding the mind of the Lord, act in discipline; and this, with pastoral care, is the mainspring of holding the saints together, in Matthew xviii. This agreeing together is referred to as the sign of the Spirit's power.

I do not doubt that some may be capable of informing the consciences of others. But the conscience of the body is that which is ever to be acted upon and set right. This is the character of all healthful action of this kind, though there may be a resource in present apostolic power, which, where evil has entered, may be wanting; but it cannot annul, "where two or three agree, it shall be done."

So that I see not the smallest need of submission to popery—that is, carnal unity by authority in the flesh; nor of standing alone, because God has provided for a gathering of saints together, founded on grace, and upheld by the operation of the Spirit, which no doubt may fail for want of grace, but which, in every remaining gift, has its scope; in which Christ's presence and the operation of the Spirit is manifested, but must be maintained, on the ground of the condition the church really is in, or it would issue in a sect arranged by man, with a few new ideas.

Where God is trusted in the place, and for the place,

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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.

If there be one needed wiser than any of the gathered ones in a place, they will humbly feel their need, and God will send some one as needed, if He sees it the fit means.

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 masses, when mind is active, you will see, I doubt not, turn to rationalist infidelity; the upper orders and governmental powers to be under the influence of Judæo-heathenism. Still, as yet, God holds the reins, and there is One who, if He shuts, no man can open; if He opens, no man can shut; and in the energy of His grace, it is our part in all wisdom, for the days are evil, to assert the Lordship of Christ, the spiritual holiness of His name in the world, and the perfectness of His redemption, gift of a God of love when no good was in man, and perfect in reconciling us to Him. The written word is the great unchanging sure rule, where God Himself speaks; pointed out as the safeguard in the last days, when the pretensions of the church, which contradict Christ's Lordship (for I have a lord, not a lady, over me, and cannot serve two), and corruption are rising up, as we wait daily for Him who shall present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."

J. N. D.

CONSECUTIVE ONLY, OR CONCURRENT? A QUESTION ABOUT THE FOUR LAST CHURCHES.

IT is God's prerogative to declare the end from the beginning—on several occasions has He done this. In both the Old and in the New Testament we meet with it.

Israel's history has thus been traced out, and that in a double way. Jacob, on his dying bed, foretold the political fortunes of that people. (Gen. xlix.) The Lord, in the arrangement of their ecclesiastical calendar, traced out in order His dealings with them in grace. (Lev. xxiii.)

But there are other interests dear to God's heart of which the word speaks—the kingdom in which the Son of His love will be displayed as His King; and the church through which God's all-various wisdom is now made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenlies. Of the glories of the kingdom, and of the previous humiliation of the King, the Old Testament prophets have sung. But between these events a great gap is found in time. The Lord's humiliation has ended for eighteen centuries. The establishment of the kingdom in power is still a matter of the future. Of truth about the kingdom during this long gap in time the Old Testament can tell us little. It is here that the parables of the kingdom, all given us by the Lord Jesus Christ, come in, supplying, like the pieces of a child's puzzle map, what was wanted to make the picture complete. With these parables the outline about God's kingdom becomes complete.

But side by side in the New Testament, with the truth about the kingdom, we have another revelation of and concerning the church, which, though heavenly in character, as the complement of Him who is its Head, and His bride likewise, has nevertheless an earthly history, ere it enters into its full relations with Christ as the wife of the Lamb. Of the church's earthly history

we have in measure an outline given us by Christ Himself in the addresses to the seven churches in Asia, recorded in the prophetic book of the New Testament, the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him to shew to His servants things which must shortly come to pass. This outline is prophetic in character. It does not describe the rise and spread of the church in apostolic days. That one must look for in the Acts, and in the historical notices of the work found in the epistles. Nor have we, it should be remarked, in any of these seven different addresses the planting of these churches described. God's assembly had evidently existed for a time in each of these towns, ere the Lord addressed them to state what He saw was their then condition, and to shew how He would minister to souls in such different states, warning and encouraging as was needed.

The order in which these churches are noticed is the order in which, starting from Ephesus, one might have visited them, passing on through Smyrna northward to Pergamos, and then returning southward by Thyatira, Sardis, and Philadelphia, till Laodicea was reached. But another reason there evidently was for writing to them in this order, which none but He, who sees the end from the beginning, could then have known; for the state of these different assemblies, illustrative of the church' condition, we now learn, and as the number seven intimates, would comprise a full outline of its history from apostolic days to the Lord's return. Yet surely till our day that could not have been fully understood.

All these assemblies were, it is clear, co-existing, though when a church was planted in most of these places is hidden from us; for with the exception of the first and last named assemblies, namely, Ephesus and Laodicea, we only learn in scripture of the existence of the others from the mention of them in the book of the Revelation. All of them, however, then co-existing, all of them together made up the "things that are" of Revelation i. 19, distinct from the things that shall be *after these*. On this point the word is definite. John was to write the things that

are, and the things that *shall be after these* (ἀ μέλλει γίνεσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα). He performed his task as regards the first in chapters ii., iii. He was then told to come up by the Voice which spake to him (chap. iv. 1), surely the same as that of chapter i. 10, to see what must be *after these* (ἀ δεῖ γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα). The seven churches then are the things that *are*, the dealing in judgment with the world (chaps. iv.–xx.) comprises the things that must be *after these*. Not that the church as a visible professing body would necessarily cease to exist on earth ere the events described in iv.–xx. would begin to take place; but after the commencement of events, which start from chap. iv., that on earth would be no longer owned as the assembly of God. Hence the phases of church history, illustrated by the condition of these seven assemblies, and in the order in which they are taken up, must all appear as phases of the christian assembly, ere the door is opened in heaven. A word will make this plain. In chapter i. 13 the Lord is seen as the Son of man, in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, amongst which He walked (chap. ii. 1), and delivered His judgment of each, and to all of them. In the vision of chapters iv. v. He is seen as the Lamb in the midst of the throne, no longer on earth, for what He owned as the church was no longer here, but in heaven.

But here a question comes in. Granted what has been said, Are these phases consecutive in existence only, or are there any two or more of them concurrent likewise? Consecutive they are and must necessarily be as to their appearance, but they need not be, as in fact we learn they are not, consecutive only in existence.

In the address to the angel in Thyatira we meet for the first time with the notice of the Lord's coming, "That which ye have already, hold fast till I come." (Chap. ii. 25.) This hope is spoken of not to the overcomer, though "the rest" of chapter ii. 25 did surely overcome. It is a hope set before those who were already keeping Christ's works. We get the two, the overcomer and the one originally faithful addressed together, yet distinguished.

And he that overcometh, and he that keepeth my works to the end. (Καὶ ὁ νικῶν καὶ ὁ τηρῶν.) The overcomer in Thyatira would share with the keeper of Christ's works to the end, as the overcomer in Sardis would share with the one who had always kept his garments undefiled. "He that overcometh shall *thus** be clothed." (Chap. iii. 5.) It is plain, then, from chapter ii. 26 that there will be the Jezebel character of evil continuing, and those called "the rest" till the Lord comes. The Thyatiran phase, therefore, goes on to the Lord's coming in the air for His own, it being the first of the seven phases of the church history of which we read, that it will continue to that date. And we may now see, viewing these epistles in their prophetic order, that the Lord intimated that the Thyatiran phase of things must appear ere He would come. Yet He expresses it in such a way, that none then could have said, "He will not come in our day."

Thyatira, viewed as illustrative of a phase in the church's history, takes in the whole professing church before the Reformation, being the last of those addresses which viewed the church as a whole. It was characterised by corruption in doctrine, whilst the godly manifested themselves by their works. So it is *works* the Lord dwells on with approval, not *doctrine* or *word*. Jezebel most likely signifies the papacy. But as the papacy, though most conspicuous, did not overrun the whole area of the professing body, one can see why, in addressing the angel as responsible for Jezebel's influence being permitted in the assembly, the Lord, nevertheless, distinguished him throughout from her. Of her deeds, that of her children, and that of those who committed fornication with her, we read in verses 20-23. All this is about Jezebel, viewed as distinct from the angel, though suffered by him, so that she taught, &c. The Lord, addressing the angel, says, "I will give unto every *one of you* according to his works." (Ver. 23.) Here the angel, it appears, comes in for judgment.

* οὕτως *thus*, not οὗτος *the same*, is the reading of the three oldest uncials, and all the versions cited.

Following on the Thyatirean phase comes the Sardian. Not that the former had or has ceased, but the Lord had worked in a new way, recovering truth at the Reformation. The Sardian phase is consequent on the recovery of truth, but when that truth had ceased generally to have power over the consciences of those who professed to hold it. For, as we have already remarked, in none of these addresses have we the state of the assembly as just founded, but its state after it has had time to be proved whether it would continue faithful or not. Thenceforward there are two phases of the church concurrent, namely, unreformed churches on the one hand, and reformed churches on the other. Now these, as we see, continue, and we learn will continue to the close of the true church's existence on earth.

A third phase—necessarily from its character, more recent in appearance—is illustrated by the church in Philadelphia. Here there is no call to repentance as in Sardis, but the angel is exhorted to hold fast what he has, that no man take his crown. (Chap. iii. 11.) In this address he is identified with the whole assembly; no faithful ones being now viewed, as in the two previous addresses, distinct from him. Here, too, for the first time have we the promise of the church being kept out of the tribulation. (Chap. iii. 10.) To the overcomer, and to the faithful in Thyatira this is implied (chap. ii. 28), but here only is it assured to the whole company, and that not conditionally. It is an unconditional promise addressed to them all, because they had kept the word of Christ's patience, though at the same time they are told they must persevere to the end. Beyond the rapture then, as regards earth, this phase of the church's history does not continue. What characterises Philadelphian condition is faithfulness to Christ, His word, His name, His patience. In a word, the principle which characterised the saints in Thyatira and in Sardis, faithfulness to Christ—His works in Thyatira, keeping the garment undefiled in Sardis—is the principle descriptive of the whole company in Philadelphia.

After this comes the last phase, the Laodicean—profession without reality. Nothing had they which the soul needed, to have part with Christ. No sense was there of anything lacking, nor any intelligence of the condition they were in consequent on the fall. Gold, raiment, eyesalve, all three is the angel exhorted to buy (for this the right reading ἐγχοίσαι “to anoint,” not ἐγχοῖσον, makes plain), he being described, representing the assembly, as the wretched and the miserable one, and poor, and blind, and naked. But it is said that the Lord’s words in verse 19 prove the existence of saints within the assembly. As regards the assembly in John’s day the existence of such would be proved by their opening the door to the Lord Jesus. On that of course we can say nothing, for nothing has been declared about it. But His words, it should be observed, are addressed to the angel, as the Lord goes on to say, “Be thou zealous, therefore, and repent.” His Christless condition, as representing that of the assembly in general, had been already plainly declared. A conclusion then drawn from those words as to the certainty of the existence of real Christians there would prove too much, for then the angel, and the mass there, must be thus regarded. “As many as I love [φιλῶ] I rebuke and chasten.” Compare this with the language to the angel in Philadelphia, “They shall know that I have loved [ἡγάπησά σε] thee.” The Lord would let all understand that He loved him, and those represented by him. To the Laodicean angel He speaks differently. It is an abstract statement, His way of dealing with those in whom He feels personal interest. He does not say, “I love thee,” nor does He employ the word ἀγαπάω, commonly used of divine love flowing out in grace, but φιλέω, only twice elsewhere used of such affection to saints. (John xvi. 27, xx. 2.) Addressing this last church on the ground of its profession, the Lord explains why He thus spoke. It was from the love of His heart, and He expresses His personal interest in the everlasting welfare of souls. But how carefully, it seems, He guards against telling the angel He loved him, or the assembly. But when should

this phase of the church's condition appear? Necessarily subsequent to the appearance of the Philadelphian phase, for it is its counterfeit unmasked by Christ. Necessarily, too, must it appear before the rapture, for historically the Laodicean phase ends with the assembly being spued out of Christ's mouth. What becomes of that which is spued out is another matter. The land of Canaan would spue out Israel, its inhabitants, under certain conditions (Lev. xviii. 28, xx. 22), as it did the old inhabitants. (Chap. xviii. 25.) God's final dealings with both the one and the other were a different matter. So with the assembly in Laodicea. It would be rejected as nauseous by Christ. And certainly what He would spue out, He would never take back, or accept, either in whole or in part.

At length, then, we have four phases of the church's history on earth all concurrent; unreformed and reformed churches, which, in these two aspects, together comprise all Christendom. Then those who are for Christ in truth, and value Him, and those who are for Him only in name. In a word, we have in these four last churches, the church viewed in an ecclesiastical aspect, namely, unreformed and reformed assemblies, and viewed also in a moral aspect, real Christians and mere professors.

All these seven assemblies co-existed in John's day. There can be then nothing incongruous in any two or more of them co-existing when viewed as phases of the church's earthly history. Now these last four are so viewed, for beyond the Lord's coming, first met with in the body of the address to the angel in Thyatira, we have nothing historically of a later date in the body of the addresses to the angel in Philadelphia, or in Laodicea. Of course the promises to the overcomer carry us in time beyond earth. But in the body of each address, which views the assembly as on earth, and the Lord expressing His judgment of its condition, there is nothing historically later in Philadelphia than the rapture (chap. iii. 10, 11), and the consequent spueing out of His mouth of the Laodicean assembly. (Ver. 16.) In Sardis, on the contrary, the event in history yet to be made good, of which

the Lord speaks in the body of that address, is judgment on the professing church with the world. In Thyatira, Philadelphia, and Laodicea the event contemplated is that mentioned in 1 Thessalonians iv. 16, 17, whilst the event contemplated in Sardis is mentioned in 1 Thessalonians v. For the announcement of Jezebel's doom, and that of her children, are merely facts, awfully solemn ones surely, but without any date affixed to them to acquaint us with the time of their accomplishment. Now if these different phases were only consecutive, and not at all concurrent, how comes it that in Sardis we historically look on to a later date than to any that we have in the body of the addresses to the angel in Philadelphia and in Laodicea ? In Laodicea it is simply rejection, though in the most decided way, without anything being there said as to what will be done with that which is rejected. In Sardis the language implies more than that, and carries us on to a later date.

Looking abroad in this day, what do we find ? Christendom divided into unreformed and reformed churches. But the question of the day in both parts of the church is not, "To which do we belong ?" but "Is each one really for Christ or not ?" One need not here particularise instrumentalities which God is now using, but go where one will in Christendom, where God is working, the question raised with souls is surely this, "Are you a Christian in name or in reality ?" and that nothing less than the latter will meet the Lord's approval. Viewing the church in its moral aspect, one sees why no date appears in the body of the two last churches beyond that moment, when the Lord will settle whom He will have by separating, through the rapture, the one class from the other. Viewing the churches in their ecclesiastical aspect, it is equally plain that outwardly reformed churches will be found on earth after the rapture, awaiting their doom with the world ; and hence why the date in the address to the angel in Sardis looks on to something later than the rapture.

In Thyatira the Lord first speaks of His coming for

His saints, so that phase, one sees, must have come into existence before He would come for His own. In Philadelphia He again speaks of that coming, so that phase must be also in existence before He comes. In Laodicea He gives us nothing beyond it. So as that last phase is now confessedly in existence, how near may be that hour for which we are taught to wait !

C. E. S.

A WORD ON EARTHLY ENJOYMENTS.

I HAVE no doubt that it is in virtue of the sacrifice of Christ, as is plainly taught in connection with Noah's action after the flood, that seed-time and harvest are secured to man while the earth continues, and thus a flower can be enjoyed by a Christian because of Christ's death. This will be more plainly in question during the millennium, when man will possess the earth under the new covenant based upon Christ's blood. The point with us now is, whether, as *new creatures* in Christ Jesus, blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, and as having the Holy Ghost as the earnest of *this* inheritance, we can, according to the Spirit's power acting in the *new nature*, enjoy the earth. There is nothing wrong in finding pleasure in flowers, &c., and God has *given us freely* "all things to enjoy," so that they can be enjoyed in His presence with thankfulness, as the expression of His will and pleasure for us—the heart being subject to Him in its enjoyment—eating and drinking to His glory; but faith, as in contrast with nature—sight and sense, is engaged with the things that are not seen and eternal; hence, when the *new man* is acting according to the principle of its being, faith occupies it with what is heavenly and unseen; flowers are seen, hence not enjoyed while the *new man* is in activity. The word then is, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. iii. 1–3.)

C. W.

THE LESSONS OF THE AGES.

THE PREFACE TO THE TRIAL BY LAW. ABRAHAM AND THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

AN important period comes now to be considered ; not itself forming part of these probationary ages, but having nevertheless the deepest significance in relation to these. The trial by law, it is evident, was the fullest and most detailed trial that man received ; as it was the trial of the only religious system that ever was the fruit of man's mind simply. We have seen it in principle already in Cain—a mere natural man, of course ; but with the believer also there are thoughts of the natural mind which are no better. God, in the giving of law, does not yet reveal His own way of blessing, but adopts, for the sake of experiment, man's way ; only supplying the needful conditions that the experiment may be fully made, and the issue such as may not at all be doubtful.

But in a case of this kind, special care would be needed also to guard against the mistake, so sure otherwise to happen, of confounding this adoption of man's way, for a certain purpose, with the acceptance of it by God as the true one, and His own thought. This in fact has happened, because unbelief in man can set aside the plainest testimonies that can be given ; while the systems which set these aside necessarily, in proportion as they do so, deny the simple facts connected with the giving of the law, and which are indeed part of a testimony which He has thus graven upon the history itself.

Thus those who affirm the law to be in any sense God's original thought, have endeavoured to prove, as it was needful to prove, its universality and its existence from the beginning in a fallen world. Its universality, for that which was God's way of blessing for man, could not be (according to His own design) shut up from the mass ; its existence from the beginning, partly for the same reason, and partly because God's thought would surely be the one first announced by Him.

To establish its universality they have had to distinguish between a written and an unwritten law; or, as they assume to call it from scripture, a law written on the heart. What they mean is in fact conscience, an implicit law which every one has, while the ten commandments are only its explicit form, and as such given to Israel alone. In the same way they prove equally, as they think, its existence from the beginning.

Scripture refuses this, however, utterly. The "law written upon the heart" is only used of Israel's condition when finally converted to God. It is one of the blessings of the new covenant, "I *will* put my laws in their minds and write them in their hearts;" words which prove conclusively that such a condition is not every man's natural one. While in the passage in Romans often quoted, where at first sight a similar term seems to be applied to the Gentiles, it is in reality a very different one: "which shew," says the apostle, "the *work* of the law written upon their hearts"—not the law written, but its *work* written, as the original text declares without any question. The work of the law is conviction: conscience does this work in the one who has not the law, though far less completely: "By the law is the knowledge of sin;" and this knowledge conscience in measure gives to every one, and in that respect they "having no law" (so the Revised Version correctly gives it), "are a law unto themselves." *Had* they a law, they would *not* be a law to themselves.

There is no escape from the plain statement of scripture that the law written on the heart is conversion, and not the natural state; and that if it were, God could not promise to do it for those who already had it done in them. Positive, too, is the statement that the Gentiles have "no law." But beside all this, the introduction of law at the beginning in a fallen world is the subversion of the whole argument of the apostle (Gal. iii. 17), that "the covenant which was confirmed before of God in Christ"—or rather "to Christ"—"the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, could not disannul, that it should make the promise of no effect." For "though

it be a man's covenant, if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereunto."

He here shews one of the meanings of this Abrahamic period preceding the dispensation of law. No less than four centuries does God require to put between the promise of grace to Abraham and his seed and the legal covenant between Himself and Israel, to prevent the one being confounded with or added to the other. And the importance of this will be seen, when we compare the real universality of the first with the restricted bearing of the second. "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed," God says to Abraham, speaking to him as the pattern man of faith, the "father of all them that believe." For "they which are of faith," says the apostle, "the same are the children of Abraham." And the scripture, foreseeing that God would "justify the heathen"—the nations—"through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then," he adds, "they which be of faith are blessed with faithful"—or rather, "believing"—"Abraham."

Thus God had proclaimed, centuries before the law, that the Gentiles should be blessed upon the principle of faith. Even as, long after the law was given, He had declared by Habakkuk, that "the just shall live by faith." "And," adds the apostle again, "the law is not of faith; but "the man that *doeth* them shall live in them"—an entirely different and conflicting principle.

Even thus far it is plain, that as God's universal way of blessing, the gospel had possession of the field before the law came in at all. But God would make it more evident; and He confirms this covenant of promise (really) to Christ, when He afterwards adds, "In *thy seed* shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." This is of course the completion (and therefore confirmation) of the former promise; and its full significance is seen in connection with that offering up of Isaac, and receiving him back (in figure) from the dead, which so plainly find their anti-type in Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection. The true Isaac is that One Seed, as the apostle points out, "to

whom the promise was made." If "in thee" shewed that the blessing was to be by faith, "in thy seed" reveals the object of faith, the Person and work through whom alone the blessing for all nations could in fact come.

Law is excluded from this covenant of promise. It has absolutely no place there, And what proves this, according to the apostle, is just the fact of its having been made and confirmed of God four hundred and thirty years before the Sinaitic. Even a man's covenant made and confirmed cannot be re-opened to insert new conditions. How simply impossible then to add the law as a condition to the covenant of grace !

Theological systems would come in here to assure us however that the law was written upon man's heart from the beginning, and thus upset altogether the apostle's reasoning. Instead of grace having priority of law, as he affirms, according to these it is law that has the priority. Either he or they, then, must be in error.

In the epistle to the Romans also he speaks of a time before law. "For until the law," he says—or rather, "until law"—"sin was in the world." Law did not introduce it therefore, he means to say ; but again they would correct him : according to them there was no time "until"—that is, *before*—law. And some would doubtless quote the next words of the apostle in proof : "but sin is not imputed where there is no law." The mistake is in supposing "imputing" here to be the same thing as elsewhere in the epistle ; it is in reality a different word : "sin is not *put in account*" (as the different items of a bill), is the true thought. "Sin is not put in account where there is no law ; nevertheless death reigned"—proving that sin *was* "imputed," "*from Adam to Moses*, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." For Adam had "transgressed : " he had overstepped a positive law under which he was. "From Adam to Moses" is just the time of the most part of the Genesis history : it is the time *until law*, when sin was already in the world, but when it had not as yet this aggravation. The supposition—for it *has* been supposed

—that *infants* are in question “from Adam to Moses,” is scarcely deserving a refutation.

It is not true, then, that the law given at Sinai was only the explicit announcement of what had been implicitly in existence from the beginning; but, on the contrary, law, as a principle of God’s dealings in a fallen world, came on them. It is what He was forced into (to speak after the manner of men), rather than desired. Abel, in the world before the flood, declared what was His way from the beginning; and this Noah’s altar proclaimed again as His, when those waters had scarcely dried from off the face of the new world.

In this prefatory period of which we are now speaking, the types of the law and its significance the apostle has taught us to find in Abraham’s history. How suited their place there, should be surely evident. Hagar is thus the “covenant from the Mount Sina, which gendereth to bondage,” and every detail of her history is, I am assured, luminous in this way. That she is but handmaid to Sarah, the covenant of grace, every one owns of course. Sarah’s name is “princess,” for “grace reigns.” Hagar is an Egyptian, child of fallen nature; and *her* name is “fugitive,” for alas, the natural effort now is to get away from God. She is fleeing towards Egypt, when the angel finds her at Lahai-roi; and when dismissed with her child in obedience to the divine command, again we find her gravitating towards Egypt. How plainly is it taught thus that the law is characterised by “the elements of the world,” with which the apostle connects it in Galatians! As a *principle*, it is man’s way, not God’s; as specific commandment, holy, just and good; and in His intent in giving it, surely worthy every way of Him. These things alter in no wise the fact that it is man’s way—his experiment with himself—taken up by God, and worked out in His own perfect manner to a true result.

Thus it should be very plain why Hagar is first *found* by God in relation to Abram, manifestly his own shift through little faith to obtain the promised and desired fruit. *Finding* her thus, He appears to her at the well

Lahai-roi, and sends her back to submit herself (mark) into her mistress's hands, and to allow the trial already begun to be fully wrought. But while He allows it, He does not leave the issue for a moment doubtful. The fruit of law is but the natural fruit. Ishmael shall be born, but be only the "wild-ass man"—untamed, untameable flesh.

Abram thus exhibits in his own history the lesson which afterwards, for so many centuries, his posterity were set to learn. In his own person he is the witness of sovereign, electing grace; called out of the darkness of heathenism, as Joshua reminds the men of his generation,

Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor; and they served other gods." Here "the God of glory appeared unto" him, and called him from country, kindred, and father's house, to be the special witness of His name and way.

Before Hagar appears in the history, God gives testimony to Abram, as a man righteous through faith; and it is instructive to see how the apostle, when he brings Abram before us as the pattern man of faith, passes over all the time of his connection with her as so much loss. "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb; he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform: *and therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.*"

In the last words the apostle seems to ignore the facts of history; for Abram's body was not yet dead when God said to him, "So shall thy seed be," and when his faith was first counted for righteousness. It was after this—probably some time after—that Ishmael was born; and *he* was thirteen years old at the time of which the epistle to the Romans speaks. All these fifteen years

or more the apostle treats as so much lost time, to bring together the period in which he is first spoken of as having the righteousness of faith, and that when he received the covenant of circumcision as the "seal" of that righteousness. Circumcision means, as the same apostle elsewhere tells us, the "putting off of the body of the flesh;" and they are the "true circumcision" who have "no confidence in the flesh." God Himself thus brings these two periods together; and circumcision is seen to be indeed, as the Lord says, "not of Moses." In its spiritual meaning, it is the fundamental opposite of law.

How fully in all this the character and purpose of this intermediate time comes out! Even the natural seed—Israel after the flesh—will find their blessing in the end from God according to the grace of the Abrahamic covenant, and not according to the Sinaitic, the only one according to which they have yet received the land. The Abrahamic covenant will thus be in very deed to them a "*new covenant*." The grace still as a nation holds them fast, as it ever has, for future blessing; a blessing which when it comes will alone be the proper fulfilment of the "covenant of promise."

Isaac, Jacob and Joseph give us, as types, yet further lessons. Isaac shews us the Seed through whom alone the blessing can come. Jacob, the immediate father of the twelve tribes, in both his character and history foreshadows theirs. And Joseph, rejected by his brethren, and yet at last received perforce as their saviour and lord, shews in so plain a way their history in respect of One infinitely greater that it needs no insisting on. For our present purpose enough has been already said to prove how in this period prefatory to the law, the law itself is guarded from misconception, and grace is declared God's way, and only way, of blessing for man. Even for Israel God's covenant is the covenant of circumcision. Carnality and unbelief, stopping at the outside, may misread all this from first to last. If those misread it, for whom has come the full and final revelation, "the veil is upon their hearts."

F. W. G.

LETTERS AND EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF J. N. D. ON SUBJECTS OF GENERAL INTEREST.

BELOVED BROTHER,

I was very glad to get your letter. The date of mine will explain that my being at Guelph in September is hardly likely, but my heart will be anxiously with you; but I do not know whether anxious is the right word, for one ought to trust the Lord, so faithful, so full of love, and patient goodness with us. But affection will, in one sense, be anxious, and how unfeigned my affection is for Canada I trust you know; and surely I never became more attached to any place, my heart more linked up with those in it.

It is a time of encouragement; even here it is. For a time there had been a relaxation of energy, not an uncommon thing in individual or christian communities after the first impulse of grace. But there is considerable reanimation, and our Conference is largely attended by brethren interested in the truth, many a new generation of saints springing up, and the coming of the blessed Lord has a more actual and practical place. I thought I had done with France, Switzerland, Germany, &c., when I went to America, but I believe the Lord has led me here, and there is a renewal of strength and christian affection. I am to be at a like meeting in France, September 15, and you may all remember us. Then I have Italy, where the Lord is gathering and raising up more labourers, and Germany.

There is a wish to have something like a satisfactory Old Testament in German, and in French. I hardly know how it will be effectually carried out, but it is one object of my visit to Germany. You see my absence from Canada is not idleness. I was very glad to have been in the West Indies. It is, oh! how great a measure of thankfulness to be led of the Lord. The power of evil is in astonishing progress. The boldest denial of all truth alarming Christians; and the world even, anxious and uneasy, and now often considering and inquiring even of brethren why they are so quiet and peaceful. Not that we have not many things to deplore, but in sum we are at peace, feeling the evil more in a divine way, but having a kingdom that cannot be moved, a peace which nothing can take away. The brethren have come with cordiality and readiness from all sides to the meeting, which has cheered and encouraged. There are two Englishmen who have thrown themselves, in some measure, into the work here. Some are going to America.

It is possible I may, now I am growing old, become set apart to sedentary work (though still preaching and teaching), but I do not quite give up seeing you all again. For I am very well, and though I begin to feel the difference of age as to physical exertion, I am for work, thank God, able to go through more than most. This would

not as yet hinder me. My difficulty is the rapid progress of the last days, which requires the faithful testimony of those who feel where we are, more perhaps in Europe than elsewhere. Men of the world as well as Christians feel all things shaking, an irresistible torrent rising, professing Christians at their wits' ends. The peaceful testimony from a position which God secures is of moment to souls, and however weak it may be individually as such, it tells on peoples' hearts. *My comfort is, for Canada as for England, that the blessed Lord Himself cares for His people. A poor feeble people, but their home is in the Rock.*

God is raising up many active witnesses, and the Lord is more waited for. He Himself fills the heart sufficiently to enable us to forget ourselves; still the present link with Him, I feel, is not sufficiently felt, so as to bring Him out as fresh and full as He is given to us. That is what we have to seek here, and for that, it is death working in us—"always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." That we are dead, and in Him, is a simple and blessed truth, but always to bear it about that only He may appear—this is what we have to seek.

I write at intervals in the midst of our Conference, so you must not be astonished at my letter bearing the impress of this interruption. . . . I have been thinking of one of the joys of heaven, after Christ, and it will be His joy—seeing of the fruit of the travail of His soul and being satisfied—seeing all the saints perfect according to the heart and mind of God Himself, and His who has sought and saved them; what satisfaction and joy that will be. Truly it is what one's heart desires now. Then it will be perfectly satisfied, and Christ glorified in it; and this, thank God, will surely be.

I have been distinguishing latterly a good deal, the responsibility of man fully met by Christ for us on the cross, and the counsels of God before the foundation of the world (see Prov. viii., Titus i. 2, and 2 Timothy i. 9); the Cross laying the foundation for their accomplishment, in the Incarnation, the ground laid for fulfilling Proverbs viii. What a thought—His delight being in the sons of men, and how fulfilled in the Incarnation, and then the Cross giving us a part in it: Man in glory, and the Father's House shewing us what it is. Along with perfectly glorifying God, it makes the Cross a wonderful thing, and grace a wonderful thing; and the old man put off, and the new man put on.

But I must close as you see. Peace and much blessing, dear brother, be on you and yours: much love to them and to all the saints, may they and all the Lord's dear workmen be abundantly blessed.

Ever yours affectionately in Him,

1869.

J. N. D.

BELoved BROTHER,

I rejoiced in getting your letter. I had heard of the blessing in different places through the Gospel, but rejoiced to find that it had roused you up also. Most thankful indeed was I to hear of ——'s conversion too. I trust it is a permanent work. . . . But the energy of the first impulsions always calms down, and the real value of Christ to the soul appears. It is not that the first impulses are insincere, but there is the impulse given by the first powerful impression, and that dies down. These two things appear, which after all are really one; how far the soul has been fully reached and its state and affections filled with Christ, and how far diligence of heart in cleaving to Him has been produced.

The Apostle says, not only I have suffered the loss of all things, but I COUNT them but dung. The excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus gave permanency to his estimate, of what was in the world around him and gave to him as a natural man. That third chapter of Philippians gives us the principle of walk, which stamps its energy and character on the Christian's course, a positive active energy with an object in view. Chapter ii. gives us the graciousness of the Christian's life; chapter iii. its principle of energy: the former Christ descending, the latter Christ in glory whom the soul runs after as its sole object. This it is gives energy: "The double-minded man is unstable in all his ways;" even in natural things the man who has one object is energetic and full of force. It is this continuance in the judgment of the worthlessness of all things that marks the place Christ has in our hearts, gives true joy and liberty, and makes us a bright witness for Christ in the world. Only remember that he that seeks finds, that we need force every moment, and that the manna of to-day will not do for to-morrow. The world solicits always; we need the constant grace of Christ, the whole armour of God, having done all to stand. It is a blessed place, blessed now, but requires singleness of eye, not merely avoiding actual evil, but the heart positively set upon an object pursued with lowly, cheerful, but constant energy.

The last days are hastening on, and we have to be as men that wait for their Lord, when He shall return from the wedding, that when He cometh and knocketh they may open to Him immediately. Fix your mind calmly, but steadily, on His coming.

I have been half round England and had a local meeting like Guelph, besides working very hard in London—then visited 14 places in Switzerland, and had a Swiss Guelph meeting, and now the same in France, having visited some 12 meetings there. So that I have not been idle, and now leave for Germany to work a little there, and help in having a more correct Old Testament. But I have more on my hands in this respect than I know how to do, but I labour on. If possible I shall go to Italy, but not just yet; there the door seems opening. . . .

Ever affectionately yours,

1869.

J. N. D.

BELOVED BROTHER,

Canada is dear to me for the work's sake, and for the affection of so very many from I have received every sort of kindness—beloved ones in the Lord. When I have laboured in a place, I always feel it mine, not in possession, but in the service I have to render to the saints. I have a faint hope—but wait on the Lord as to it—of getting to the Guelph meeting. I should be glad to see them once more, but, as I have told some of them, I am in my seventieth year, and though, through mercy, strong still, we know that threescore years and ten close the title of man's active life, though our God can do what seems Him good. It depends a little on my getting through the work I am about here. I feel how great the privilege of evangelists is. I preach here in the country around, regularly speaking, unless some special hindrance, two or three times a week, but every one has to do the work, and fill up the little niche assigned him by God. My work is more in setting souls free, and now, in these last days, where all is going so fast to evil, getting, as the Lord enables me, the word of God, in its contents and purity, among those who profess His name. They need being built up here; the work has greatly extended. And besides, I have undertaken nothing less than correcting the whole Old Testament, working it from the Hebrew with all the helps I can. It is service underground, but I trust it will be a help to the saints. They were really without an Old Testament, either an excessively incorrect one, or by infidel translators. We have done (I have helpers for pure German), the Prophets, Job—the most difficult of all—and all in good progress, with other parts. The historical are very easy comparatively. I had done the Psalms, a few few years ago, for them.

I believe God is graciously helping us. I am very happy in the work, but a little anxious as to the time it will take. Then I have three Gospels ready of the new edition of the New Testament (English), that and the French being now out of print, and the French are waiting for the English corrections. But if I get another Gospel quite ready, I might perhaps get, for a couple of months, to America, and return; if fine weather, it would be a rest for me, and that I somewhat want. I am generally hard at work from seven or eight to twelve o'clock at night, but, thank God, very well, but a little worn; save to the post or meetings, I never get out. . . . I accept my present work, while it is so important in these last days that brethren should have the word of God, and that they should have it as pure as possible—and we must expect in these days to have the poor, as always, when the church gets into its own place in the world, at least for the great mass; and I feel I am serving the Lord in using the little knowledge I have of Greek, Hebrew, &c., in furnishing brethren who have them not with the word of God as nearly as possible as it is; otherwise, the times call for building them up in the truth solidly, as once given; so that I am jealous as to how much time I spend on what is means, however

precious, for we cannot esteem the word too precious. It is that which God has given us when the church went wrong.

I rest on the Lord's goodness towards His people, though I be a poor intercessor for them. I feel the difference of counting on the Lord's love (that I feel through grace I can do), and using it in the activity of faith to obtain the blessings it has in store for His people; there I feel weak. God will give surely according to His own thoughts and purpose, but He allows us to have a part in carrying them out, first by prayer, and then by service; and while I doubt not all is foreknown and surely ordained for those for whom it is prepared of the Father, yet herein comes our responsibility, the place of a single eye that does not confer with flesh and blood—one so wrought from the beginning, holding himself dead from that time—and always bearing about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus. We, alas! have often to learn how to do it, or do so, at least, after much mixture of the living and the dead. Yet he (Paul) had to be helped, and have a thorn in the flesh, and be delivered to death; but then it was from God, and for Jesus' sake. The flesh was not different, but the man was. However, the Lord is all we need, and He is perfect.

I have not doubted a sifting time would come for the work in Canada, but the workmen must not be discouraged by it. I doubt not there may have been some excitement and craving after it, still, with self-knowledge. I dread excitement, but I do not forget that when the Lord sowed, only one in four came to perfection. I do not mean this as a rule; we do not see it thus when the apostles preached. It is danger, and characteristic, but I use it to check a false judgment upon a work where some disappointment may come. I am more anxious about what the world, and the spirit of it forming a clergy, may do, than about the reality of what has been done. I know — too, but I know the gracious Lord is above all our weakness. It is a great point to know how to serve in what we find, not expect all as one would. Christianity works with what it *brings*, not with what it finds; and we are poor creatures ourselves, after all.

My kindest love to the dear brethren, and I am, dear brother, affectionately yours in our blessed Lord,
1869.

J. N. D.

ERRATUM.

The article "Is the honour and power of the world any part of the endowment of the saints according to the Lord," in our March Number, and taken from a recent publication named "Collectanea," is not by G. V. W., as stated, but by SIR C. BRENTON, long since gone home to be with the Lord.

THE PERSONAL AND CORPORATE ACTIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

I.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A QUICKENER AND A WITNESS.

“WHAT and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?”

“It is the Spirit that *quickeneth*; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” (John vi. 63.)

“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down in perpetuity at the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected in perpetuity them that are sanctified.

“Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a *witness to us*; for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

“Now where remission of these is there is no more offering for sin.” (Heb. x. 12-18.)

In these two scriptures we find the two great truths which I desire to present to my reader—

1. The action of the Holy Spirit of God here on earth in *quickenings* the souls of sinners, thus awakening them to the sense of their need in the sight of God; and—

2. His presence here on earth as a *Witness* to us of the perfection of the work of the Lord Jesus, and of its acceptance by God; thus providing an answer to the awakened soul by a testimony of the value of that work by which it is saved.

First of all, let us be clear as to the fact, that while the Son of God is the Actor by whom all divine actions are performed, the Spirit of God has always been the direct Agent in every action of the Godhead which has ever been done, whether of creation, or providence, or government, or redemption. We see references to this in all parts of scripture, even as to those actions which took place before the world was. In Genesis i. 14-19, where

the appointment of the sun and the moon to rule the day and the night was made, we read of God having made these two great lights (the sun and the moon), "and the stars also." And we read in Job (chap. xxvi. 13) that the Spirit of God was the Agent in doing so, for "by his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens." So also, when from the chaos of matter found in Genesis i. 1, God would form the Adamic earth as an abode for man, we read that "the Spirit of God brooded [or moved] upon the face of the waters." He also filled Bezaleel, the son of Uri; and Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and understanding and knowledge to do all the work of the tabernacle in which God was about to dwell in Israel. So also David had the pattern of the temple which Solomon built "by the Spirit" from God. (1 Chron. xxviii. 12.) He came on the prophets; inspired the word of God; gave Samson his great strength; and, in short, all divine actions have ever been by the direct agency of the Holy Spirit. This is seen more fully when we come to the New Testament, both in the Lord's ministry and acts of power ("by the Spirit of God cast out devils," &c.), as afterwards in the church of God formed at Pentecost, which brings us down to the present interval. I only refer to these facts in passing, that we may have this great truth established in our minds, before we pass on to the special subject before us.

It will also be needful here to remark, that God had not fully revealed Himself in the Old Testament days. He is known there under various names, in connection with certain actions, and relationships entered into, whether in creation, or after the fall of man, or with individual souls of the elect, or with the nation of Israel—His elect earthly people. We find Him then as Elohim, and its derivatives; Jehovah, El Shaddai (Almighty God), Gnelion; Adonai, and its cognate words; as well as by other names.

Still, "One God" was the great truth presented, in contrast with the plurality of the gods of the heathen;

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and to witness to this unity of the Godhead, Israel was chosen and called apart from the world:—"Hear, O Israel; Jehovah, our God is one Jehovah." (Deut. vi. 4.) But the Trinity of the Persons of the Godhead was not then the subject of direct revelation. There were hints as to it at all times; but the fact was not then made known. I might adduce many instances of this, such as the plural character of the name of Elohim—God; and also the thrice holy ascription of the seraphim in Isaiah vi. compared with John xii. 39–41, and with Acts xxviii. 25–27. See also Isaiah xlviii. 16, "Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I; and now the Lord God, and his Spirit hath sent me." The triune Persons of the Godhead are here plainly seen.

It was therefore reserved for the advent of the Son of God into this world, when He had definitely assumed manhood, and taken His place as man on earth, that the Trinity of the Persons of the Godhead should be made known. This took place at the moment when the Lord Jesus commenced His service on earth, at thirty years of age. The Baptist had been arousing Israel with the testimony of the solemn issues of his mission, and as the one who was going before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways. His cry to Israel was "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The axe was laid at the root of the trees; it was not now the time of the lopping off of branches; the root was reached, and every tree which bore not good fruit was to be hewn down and cast into the fire. Judgment was impending over all. The Lord appeared amongst the crowd which came to be baptised of John—confessing their sins. John resents this approach of Jesus, "I have need to be baptised of thee, and comest thou to me?" The Messiah could pardon sins; but could not confess them, for He had none. But *grace* was moving in the hearts of Israel. God had touched their souls; and instead of saying, "We have Abraham to our father," they were accepting their true place of convicted sinners—having no title on any ground to the

promises, but that of sovereign mercy. With this movement of grace in their souls Jesus identifies Himself. The sheep of Israel were in the waters; the Shepherd of Israel would be there too! And His reply to the Baptist is, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us [Me and thee] to fulfil all righteousness; you to receive Israel's confession of their sins; I to go with the grace which brought them there; and to receive, and delight in them, as the excellent of the earth." (Ps. xvi.) Straightway the heavens were opened! An object worthy of all heaven was seen for the first time. The Lord as a man on earth receives the Spirit of God. He is sealed as man by the Holy Spirit—proof of the excellence and perfection of His Person, on which the Spirit could descend as a dove and abide, without bloodshedding or sacrifice. The Father's voice is heard from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The whole Trinity is here first definitely made known—Father, Son, and Spirit—the Godhead's glory is revealed, in the Trinity of the Persons by whom the operations of grace are performed.

But we must now retrace our steps a little, in order to ascertain the varied spheres in which the Spirit of God had wrought with men in former days. We must, therefore, go back to the days before the flood. Here we find that the strivings of God's Spirit had for their object the whole race of man. During the one hundred and twenty years previous to that moment of judgment, the word was, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." (Gen. vi. 3.) It could not be said at any subsequent period that *the race* was the subject of His strivings. Hence we can say there is now really no salvation for *man* as a race in scripture; while there is salvation for *men*. "He turneth man to destruction; but saith, return ye children of men." (Ps. xc. 3.)

That period of dealing passed away. His Spirit strove for that allotted time, and the flood of waters closed the scene. The race would no more be the subject of such grace. But when the earth renewed itself, and men again re-peopled its surface, and then were scattered at

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Babel for their pride, God called out one man (Abraham) and in him a nation, by whom and in whom a fresh dealing began. This was the fresh sphere in which or by which the Holy Spirit would again carry on His operations—either working *within*, amidst that people by the many ways of grace then used, or *by* that people to draw the nations of the earth to that centre of God's ways.

This fresh platform corrupted its way, and was cast forth out of the land of Canaan. Still, the word for faith was, "My Spirit remaineth among you; fear ye not." (Hag. ii. 5.) And the godly remnant was sustained in faith until Messiah came. When that time came, Jesus alone was the One to whom the Spirit is given without measure. He is the Centre to whom all must now gather, in the ways of God. But, cast out and slain, He ascends to heaven, and receives the Holy Spirit afresh there from the Father, and "shed forth this [as said Peter on the day of Pentecost], which ye now see and hear." (See Acts ii.) This sending of the Spirit forms the disciples into a spiritual house on earth, a "Habitation of God through the Spirit," which becomes (as it is still, though enlarged into Christendom) the fresh sphere of the operations of the Spirit of God. There is now no action of God's Spirit *directly* from heaven, on the heathen around us. There is no action apart from that sphere where the Spirit of God now dwells. God works *in* it, or *through* it, wherever His work is done. Many instances may be adduced to illustrate this fact. God had lit up a light-bearer on the earth, to be the "Epistle of Christ, known and read of all men:" "A city set on a hill which could not be hid." He owns no other light, and works through no other channel than the church of God. We see this in the Acts of the Apostles at the first, when this habitation of God was formed. The Jews must be convicted by the Holy Spirit from that platform, through the mouth of Peter, of their sin, and find God's remedy for it, and come into God's habitation. The Gentile (Acts x.) who had been hitherto drawn towards the God of Israel, and had loved His people, as the channel of

mercy in a former day, must now "send for Peter" and "hear words of him" whereby "he and all his house should be saved." The angel sent from heaven to him, can only point to the true sphere on earth where salvation would be found.

And although the church of God has corrupted her way in the earth, God knows no other channel to those "*without*," nor sphere of action for His Spirit but "*within*," where the good word of God is heard, and the operations of His Spirit are carried on. The heathen or the Jew, whenever reached by the word of the gospel, hears it through the testimony of Christianity. The professing Christian within that sphere is the object of the varied operations of the Spirit of God. We hear of a heathen, the chief man in —, who used to reason, "I made this canoe; some one formed the tree from which I made it;" but there his reasoning ended. The — Christians had established a missionary settlement in those parts many years before, but had found no fruit. At last this man came to hear. He heard of a Creator God, and one who had given His Son when His creature fell. "Ah," said he, "this is what I have been looking for," and he embraced the gospel. He learns the truth through the light God had set up on earth. His reasoning prepared the way for the testimony of Christ and His word to shine in upon his heart; but he must learn it through God's ordered way. Like the centurion of old, whose faith eventually rose above that of Israel (Luke vii.), he had loved their nation, and had built them a synagogue; yet now that Christ had come, his faith was directed to a higher object, and he learns from Christ Himself of His grace.

We hear, too (to cite a case from "*within*"), of two miners who met one day in the depth of their mine in —, when one said to the other, "Do you know that there are people come about here preaching, who say you should know your sins forgiven in this life?" "Oh," said his fellow, "that is nonsense; no one could ever know that here." They parted for the moment, but happened

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to meet again in the course of some days. "Do you know," said one to the other, "*I know my sins forgiven?*" "You!" said his comrade; "impossible!" "Not at all," said the other; "come and hear for yourself." He came, and *he, too* learned the gospel! Here was one of the ten thousand cases "within," as the other was from "without," illustrating the sphere of action or channel of blessing, from which God does not depart while present things remain, even though the light is dim, and the candlestick no more shines with its early light. Still the Spirit of God remains and works, abiding in the church of God during her whole pathway here, though outwardly enlarged to Christendom.

I will now draw your attention to the way in which the promise of the Holy Spirit came out during the Lord's sojourn with His people on earth; that "other Comforter," who was to take His place amongst them—"in you" and "with you"—when the Lord Jesus was gone away. He would abide with them for ever; while the Lord Jesus must depart after His short sojourn with them on earth. This comes out definitely in the gospel of John. In the gospel of Luke, when the hearts and the consciences are so much exercised by the Lord; and the needs of the soul are suggested in advance of their then state, we find the Lord, after teaching His disciples to pray (Luke xi.), and by parables shewing how that while man needed to be importuned to grant a request, when his own convenience was at stake, God as a Father to His own, would "how much more, give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." Thus, while in reality the Spirit was given in answer to the prayer of Jesus Himself to the Father (John xiv.), the Lord would produce desires in His people's hearts for what He was about to bestow.

When we turn to John xiv., we learn that He was about to go away, and that ere He would return again to receive them to Himself, the Holy Spirit would be given to dwell with them—not for a few years, and then depart, as Jesus, but "for ever." "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may

abide with you for ever. The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth [or 'shall dwell'] with you, and shall be in you." (Chap. xiv. 16, 17.)

Again, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you of all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (Ver. 26.)

In these passages we find the Lord praying the Father for the Holy Spirit to be given: and then the Father sending Him in the Son's name.

In chapter xv. 26, yet another step in advance of these, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." In this passage the Lord Jesus, gone on high, is the sender of the Holy Spirit Himself. "And when he is come he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not on me. Of righteousness, because I go unto my Father, and ye see me no more. Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." (John xvi. 8-11.)

All this came to pass in Acts ii. When the "day of Pentecost was fully come they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, which filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." And in explaining this, Peter says, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, 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." (Acts ii. 1-4, 32, 33.) Thus was the promise fulfilled—the Holy Spirit was sent, and filling each one, also filled all the house where they were sitting—forming these disciples into a habitation of God by the Spirit. This was from thence-

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forth that sphere in or through which, as we have seen, the work of grace would be carried on on earth.

Now, the faculty in man in which, and by which, the Spirit works is the *conscience*; faith springs up in the soul thus wrought upon. The soul is thus alive to its true state, in some measure, before God. This is, in general, followed by great distress in the soul. But it is thus a proof of life being there, and as a consequence the soul turns to God, though in misery. There are times also when only the natural conscience of man is moved by the word or truth used by the Holy Spirit; and the effect then is to cause the soul to turn away from God. This is always the case where only the natural conscience of man is roused. The case of Adam when he fell, and ate the forbidden fruit, proves this. He became as God, knowing good and evil. This was conscience; the principle he received when he fell, and when he accepted his responsibility in eating the fruit which was forbidden. It was the interdict given of God to be the test if his will would be subject to his Creator or not. The man and his wife fell—the sense of guilt and nakedness was theirs, and as they cannot change it they seek to hide it from each other. This being done, they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hide from God. This is the effect of the word on the natural conscience of the sinner: it drives him away from God. But the moment God speaks to the man—“Adam, where art thou?”—the conscience is wrought upon by the word of God, and they come forth—guilty and naked, yet they are drawn towards Him.

This will be found the constantly-presented fact in scripture, especially when conscience is directly before us in God's dealings in the New Testament. When awakened or quickened it draws towards God, but often in misery. When unawakened, the effect of God's word, or the current truths of it, drives it away from Him even farther than before; and man's heart keeps him away from God. The case of the prodigal son, so full of divine instruction for us, shews us the effect of the awakening

of the soul when absorbed in the wretchedness of the far country of this world. "When he came to himself" the sense of his condition reached his conscience, and at once the sense of goodness in God springs up in his soul, and he is drawn towards Him, yet in deep self-judgment and misery. He finds no answer to this awakening of soul until he meets the Father; then all is settled by the Father. "God is love," and "God is light;" the only two things He is said to be. These answer to the heart and conscience in man. The light deals with the conscience, and exposes our true state as sinners in God's sight; but the love attracts the heart, and draws out hope in Him in the soul. One or other may and does preponderate before God is fully known in Christ; and the soul is swayed between the two until then. The light presses upon the conscience of the prodigal, and shews him his unfitness; but the love sends him on his way to meet the Father. All the while the Father had anticipated all, and was ready to meet both the conscience and the heart with the answer they required. Many instances are found in the word of God as to this work of the Holy Spirit, and many are seen around us every day.

But at times the natural conscience is wrought upon for a while by the Spirit, and like Herod, in whom we see a man who, by hearing John Baptist preaching, "did many things and heard him gladly" (Mark vi.), yet returned to his lusts and beheaded John; and when Christ stood before his judgment-seat (Luke xxiii.) was given over to these lusts, and Christ answered him never a word. He was silent towards him, as one whose day was past.

Now in these truths we find the action of the Spirit of God upon souls in awakening them to a sense of their state before God; a needful and preparatory action to that of witnessing to that work of Christ, which provides an answer to the need thus produced.

We will now examine the truth presented in the second scripture quoted at the head of this paper. Of the first we have already treated, by shewing the action of the Holy Spirit as a *quickener*, producing life in the soul of

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the sinner by a work in the conscience, effected by the word of God, the flesh profiting nothing. "The words that I speak unto you [said the Lord] they are spirit, and they are life."

As to the second, we will turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews—which we might characterise generally as God's acceptance of the work of Christ, and the Holy Spirit's *witness* on earth of this great truth. Chapter ix. is occupied specially in contrasting the old oft-repeated typical ritual in Israel with the one perfect work of Christ, which obtained eternal redemption for us by His offering Himself through the eternal Spirit without spot to God once and for all. In the close of this chapter we find Him represented as appearing in three distinct ways. In verse 26 we read, "Now once, in the consummation of the ages, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Then in verse 24, "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." And in verse 28, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and to them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation." The first of these "appearings" was at the work of the cross, when the whole trial of the first man was over, there to accomplish that work, the final results of which will be seen in the state of eternal blessedness, in the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. The second is now going on; He appears before the face of God for all who believe. And the third: His being seen by every eye, at His second coming, will be to introduce us into the result of all His work. This third appearing is manifestly future.

In the two last verses of this chapter we find the state of sinful man contrasted with that of those who believe. One verse (27) begins with "As," and the other with "So," placing each in contrast with the other, "As it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment." Here we find the two solemn certainties which

fill the heart of man with terror—"Death," and then the "judgment." What worlds would not man give to escape these terrible realities! Then come the two blessed certainties for those who believe—"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and to them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation." Blessed certainties indeed! The full result of His first coming known, and our sins borne, and put away for ever! The final result of His second coming presented for our hope; He will come again, apart from all question then of sin, for full and final salvation! We are placed, then, between the first and second comings of the Lord; cleared from our guilt by His first coming and His cross; the heart then set upon Him who is coming again to take us into the fruition of all.

With these two thoughts before us, we will read the next chapter aright. It opens with the grand results of His first coming, and work accomplished then, and closes with the hope of His return:—"For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (Ver. 37.) But in the interval between these points, we find from this chapter how the "Holy Ghost is a witness to us" here below of the perfections of all. He calls upon our consciences to *look back* on the work of Jesus on the cross, and to know that the worshipper once purged should have no more conscience of sins. He leads us to *look up* into the holiest of all, and to enter there, by faith and at rest, to praise our God; and He leads the heart to *look forward* to that moment when Christ will come again, and the affections are at rest.

How blessed! to have a Divine Person here as truly as it was so when the Lord Himself was here on earth, bearing testimony to us—to every burdened, awakened soul—"Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more!" How sweet for such to bow to this assurance from this faithworthy Witness! We need not search our own poor hearts for such a testimony—they will but tell the opposite tale. A Divine Person sent from heaven to dwell on earth; to bear witness that the one perfect

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work of Christ is accepted of God, instead of the works of our ruined souls; to lead our hearts, out of ourselves, to behold in Him the divinely-given answer to our guilt. Here we may rest in the full assurance of faith—assured of God that our sins and iniquities are remembered no more. This requires no *experience* in us to realise; it needs but that the soul should turn to God, who thought of us when ruined and lost; to His Son who came to accomplish all His will, who, when He had done so, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; and to the Holy Spirit who was sent from the Father and the Son to bring the news of God—Father, Son, and Spirit, being all “for us,” giving our souls perfect and eternal rest!

Leading us, too, to look, with souls at rest, for Him who shall come again to take us to be with Him and like Him for ever!

It is thus, dear reader, that the Holy Spirit not only awakens our souls to this need of a Saviour, but becomes Himself the witness to us of that Saviour’s work, answering the awakened conscience with that which alone can purge our sins, and cleanse our consciences, and make us as white as snow.

F. G. P.

If the conscience has been set to rights by the blood of the cross, in reference to the claims of God, the conduct must be set to rights by the holiness of the cross, in reference to the claims of practical righteousness. These things must never be separated. God has joined them together, and let no man put them asunder. The hallowed union will never be dissolved by any mind governed by pure gospel morality. Alas! it is easy to profess the principles of grace, while the practice and power thereof are completely denied. This is vain, and worse than vain. “He that doeth not righteousness, is not of God.” (1 John iii. 10.)

C. H. M.

BRIEF NOTES OF A READING WITH J. N. D.
ON "THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT."

EPHESIANS ii. 18 is not yet the one body, but both Jew and Gentile are together before the Father in communion, and this is "the unity of the Spirit." It begins here, but from this it goes a great deal farther.

The three great principles of the unity of the Spirit are: (1), one new man; (2), access to the Father by the Spirit; (3), builded together for an habitation.

It is the power of the Spirit which keeps saints in the *realisation* of the whole of the relationships in which they exist in one body. This secures the manifestation of the one body on earth.

The unity of the Spirit is gone—was in Acts v., vi., but the power for the manifestation of it is here.

It is an abstract idea, and the difficulty comes from making it an absolute fact.

It is when your mind and mine go on together with the mind of the Spirit. Where we do not see together, it is not realised, but one could not say it was broken.

If you and I are quarrelling, are we doing it in the unity of the Spirit?

But, apart from all ecclesiastical ideas, I am to go on with you, and if you are naughty, I am to forbear with you in love. Then the unity of the Spirit is kept on my part, whatever it is on yours.

Two godly baptists might be morally endeavouring to keep it, but they have broken it by being strict baptists.

Taking it in its completeness, you cannot separate it from the one body.

There are three unities in John xvii.: (1), apostolic—"one as we," one thought and purpose; (2), "one in us," like 1 John i. 1-4—the true fellowship of saints—is the unity of the Spirit viewed practically; (3), entirely future—unity in glory—"perfect in one."

J. A. T.

Croydon, September, 1882.¹

G. H.

[S. S. 168]

A THOUGHT OR TWO ON REVELATION

XXII. 16.

REVELATION xxii. 16 is for the churches, which were previously shewn to be in ruin, and about to be judged. The Lord announces Himself as "the Root and the Offspring of David,"—a title which shewed He had a glory to shew to the earth when the churches were set aside; "and the Bright and Morning Star,"—a title in which His blessedness is suited for those who watch through the night, as we do, that is, the living members of the heavenly church who are found amid the ruined churches.

The title of Christ, as to *the earth*, is that of "the Sun," as may be seen in Malachi iv. 2, and in Psalm xix.—the day-dawn upon the earth; but ere the Sun shines we shall be with Christ in the heavenly glory.

In 2 Peter i., the exhortation about the Day-star arising in your hearts seems to me simple enough. "Hold to the prophetic word, and give heed to it, until you see that Christ will appear to remove His church, ere He comes down to the earth," is the substance of the exhortation. We talk of the sun rising in London, rising in Paris, &c., and so the light of Christ as the Morning Star—hope of His bride—does not shine into every believer's heart, though the privilege of all. In Revelation ii. 28 he says, "I will give him the bright and morning star." This, I should suppose, like eating of the hidden manna, shewed a peculiar connection to come with the Bright and Morning Star to the overcomer—an entering, perhaps, into the affections, thoughts, and sentiments of His heart, as the One that has been waited for during the night.

In this passage it comes, as it does in Revelation xx., after a clause which points to the earthly side of the Lord's coming glory, and, perhaps, there is a contrast in Peter also, for he speaks of "the more sure word of prophecy" which he had, and which they to whom he

wrote had, besides the vision on the mount, and this day-star shining in the heart. We know the blessed Lord is spoken of as *now* upon the throne, either as the Son or the Lamb; hereafter, as entering the heavenlies to receive His church; and thirdly, as descending from the heavenlies to the earthlies, in which He will shine forth as the sun. Is it not in His transit from where He now is, the Son of man upon the throne of the Father, and the Lamb upon the throne of God Almighty, that this morning-star glory comes in?

It is a blessed subject, one that refreshes one to think of.

G. V. W.

ALONE WITH GOD.

"COMMIT thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." (Psa. xxxvii. 5.)

*Commit thy way, O weeper—
The cares that fret thy soul,
To thine Almighty Keeper,
Who makes the worlds to roll.*

*Unto the Lord, who guideth
The wind, and cloud, and sea;
Oh, doubt not He provideth
A footpath, too, for thee.*

*Trust also, for 'tis useless
To murmur and forebode;
The Almighty arm is doubtless
Full strong to bear thy load.*

*In Him hide all thy sorrow,
And bid thy fears good-night;
He'll make a glorious morrow
To crown thy head with light.*

*And He shall bring it near thee
The good thou long hast sought;
Though now it seems to fly thee,
Thou shalt, ere long, be brought.*

*To pass from grief to gladness,
From night to clearest day,
When doubts, and fears, and sadness,
Shall all have passed away.*

PAUL GERHARDT.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER ON PHILADELPHIAN TESTIMONY.

SETTING up to be Philadelphia was being of the spirit of Laodicea, as indeed I have often said. . . . I had trusted that God was working towards that, but setting up to be something was the very opposite of that work.

Philadelphia is never gone till Christ comes; has the promise, because she has kept the word of Christ's patience, to be kept from the hour of temptation that is coming on all the earth, and the promise that Christ is coming quickly. I trust that there will be a much more decided Philadelphian testimony; that is not what I quarrel with, but the *corporate* pretension to be it now.

The next thing I object to is making those who open when the Lord knocks specially excellent Christians, who are in this spiritually advanced state. I see nothing of the kind. They are unconverted, or professing to be Christians, in so low a state, that all is going to be spued out of Christ's mouth, and they are warned to get Christ, and what is real. There is not a word of their coming out, and being in testimony. Christ goes in, and sups with them. But so far from thinking the promise the highest, I have *always* thought it the lowest. It is merely reigning, a wonderful thing, no doubt, for such as we, but what the Old Testament saints will have too. It is the external glory, not being inside the house.

The exhortation is to get what is real from Christ, instead of their empty pretensions, that the shame of *their nakedness* do not appear, and get their eyes anointed, that they may see. I see nothing of extraordinary advance in spirituality here; a most salutary warning in the present state of things, but nothing extraordinarily spiritual. . . .

I desire earnestly to see the beloved saints roused to entire devotedness, and strength and constancy of communion, but it is not pretension to be something which characterises this.

J. N. D.

THE MINISTRY OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.

"A LIGHT for the revelation of the Gentiles" was part of old Simeon's announcement in the sacred enclosure of the temple. (Luke ii. 32.) He held for a moment the babe in his arms, of whom the prophets had sung. He saw God's salvation, and was satisfied. Years, however, had to pass ere his prophetic words received their full accomplishment.

The child grew, increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men. He commenced His ministry on earth, called people around Him, ate with sinners, sent forth labourers to preach, but only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The line which divided between them and the Gentiles they were charged on no account to overstep; "Go not into the way of the Gentiles" was His peremptory command (Matt. x. 5), for to the lost sheep of the house of Israel was He only sent. (Matt. xv. 24.) How fully the Syrophenician woman felt the dispensational barrier that existed between her, of the race of Canaan, and the former conquerors of the land, the children of Israel! The centurion, too, though probably one of the conquering race of his day, and holding office in the Roman army which garrisoned the country, acknowledged that privileges, in which he did not share, belonged by birth to the people of Israel. So he sent the elders of the synagogue to ask the Lord to heal his servant who was sick. (Luke vii. 2, 3.) Before the cross no mission was sent to the Gentiles.

On the day of the Lord's resurrection, however, He announced to His disciples that Gentiles were not to be excluded from the blessings they were commissioned to proclaim. The day of Pentecost came, Jews and proselytes heard the word, and three thousand were converted and sealed, but as yet no Gentile was evangelised, though God that day announced by Peter, in words perhaps not then understood, His determination to bless Gentiles equally with souls of the house of Israel. "The promise," said Peter, "is unto you and to your children, and to all that

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are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts ii. 39.) But this divine purpose was still awaiting fulfilment.

The time for its accomplishment now drew near. Peter, who had made the announcement, and had quoted Joel's prophecy, which was in harmony with it, the keys of the kingdom having been committed to him by the Lord (Matt. xvi. 19), used them to open the door to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius. But as yet the apostle of the Gentiles was unknown to the apostolic college. The hour having come, however, for Gentiles to be saved, and to be made one with those who had been Jews, the servant especially intended to evangelise them was brought into light by the conversion of Saul, one hitherto most zealous for the law, and the determined opponent of the Lord Jesus and His disciples. He now became a most marked example of grace, and was a chosen vessel to bear Christ's name before Gentiles, kings, and the sons of Israel. (Acts ix. 15.) Paul, separated for that work from the womb (Gal. i. 15, 16), was made acquainted by Christ Himself, whilst still on the ground near Damascus, with the special service to which he was appointed. (Acts xxvi. 16, 17.) Still the hour was not yet come for him to go forth on that mission. Later on in the temple at Jerusalem, whilst in a trance, he received his instructions to depart unto the Gentiles. (Acts xxii. 21.) Henceforth he was to be known as their apostle. (Rom. xi. 13.)

What a mission was this! Gentiles as such formed the special sphere of his work, a sphere bounded only by the confines of the habitable earth in its truest and widest sense. The Romans viewed their empire as co-terminous with the habitable earth, *οἰκουμένη*. (Luke ii. 1.) The limits of Paul's field of labours reached far beyond that. Wherever any of the human race were found, who were not of the seed of Jacob, there were some of those to whom Paul was commissioned to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. What a field, and what a message! Grace was thus displayed in a double way. Paul was a most wonderful example of grace. The persecutor of the

church, most zealous for the law, became the most ardent champion of grace, and the conservator of the liberty of those who had once been Gentiles. (Gal. v. 1.) To the Jews the eleven could go, and Paul as well. His special work, however, was among Gentiles, who were no longer hidden in darkness as outside the circle of dispensed divine favour. Those once far off shared in it equally with those who were nigh. (Eph. ii. 13.)

But Paul had another line of service entrusted to him, and the field for that was only bounded by the number of the true saints of God on earth. It was given to him "to enlighten all as to the dispensation of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things." (Eph. iii. 9.) For evangelistic purposes the Gentiles were Paul's field of labour; for teaching the dispensation of the mystery, he was to have all saints as his audience. Paul was a minister of the gospel, and a minister of the church. (Col. i. 23-25.) Wherever a Gentile was found, there was one to whom Paul could preach the unsearchable riches of the Christ. Wherever a saint was met with, there was one whom he was to enlighten as to the dispensation of the mystery, till then hid in God who created all things.

Gentiles heard the glad tidings and rejoiced. (Acts xiii. 48.) Saints, too, must have received with interest the unfolding of the dispensation of the mystery. Has every Christian who reads these lines entered into something of what this second ministry of Paul's really was? There was a mystery, now revealed, which concerns equally all the saints of God. Are all willing to hear about it, and to be instructed in it? But are men only interested in it? It is true they alone share in the blessings connected with it. There is, however, another order of beings who feel an interest in the unfolding of it, namely, the angelic powers in the heavenlies, who learn by the church the manifold wisdom of God.

What scenes have they witnessed! They saw earth emerge out of chaos at the fiat of the Almighty, and prepared by Him for the introduction into this scene of an

entirely new creature—man, who was created on the sixth day. (Gen. i. 27.) They attended God at the giving of the law. (Acts vii. 53.) The heavenly choir praised God at the birth of the Lord Jesus. They ministered to Him in the wilderness, one of them strengthened Him in the garden. He was seen of angels whilst in life, His tomb was watched by them after His resurrection. He whom they worshipped and obeyed as God, they saw in human form as a man, and witnessed His death on the cross. The creation of man, the incarnation of the son of God, His life of dependence on God, His death of shame and suffering, with all this they were familiar. But now a new thing was disclosed to them by the church. He as man was Head in heaven of a body which was on earth, united to Him in the closest way. Of this wonderful truth the angels learnt from the church of God. He had ascended up to heaven, angels, authorities and powers being made subject to Him. And those very angelic powers learnt that as man He was not complete without His body, He in heaven its Head, and the saints on earth His body.

What a ministry then was that entrusted to Paul, concerning as it did all Gentiles, all saints, and all angels. To no one else was such grace given. How fully Paul felt the grace of it. How far has each true Christian understood and entered into the subjects of it? C. E. S.

There is a fine principle involved in the expression, "*against the Lord.*" Although the matter in question was a wrong done to one's neighbour, yet the Lord looked upon it as a trespass against Himself. Everything must be viewed in reference to the Lord. It matters not who may be affected, Jehovah must get the first place. Thus, when David's conscience was pierced by the arrow of conviction, in reference to his treatment of Uriah, he exclaims, "I have sinned against the Lord." (2 Sam. xii. 13.) This principle does not in the least interfere with the injured man's claim. C. H. M.

LETTERS AND EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF J. N. D. ON SUBJECTS OF GENERAL INTEREST.

BELoved BROTHER,

I have long purposed to write to you, but if you knew how I have been occupied, you would not be surprised at my having delayed in doing it, and now I can only say a word; but I was anxious to write to you, if it were only to keep up the communication of christian love, in which you have a large place in my heart, which flows out to those around you; indeed, my heart is greatly knit to the States and God's people there. It is somewhat a charge on my spirit to be called to the continent of Europe just now, but we are servants, and like soldiers, to go where we are bid. The door is opening, happily, in Italy for work I can take part in, though I am a bad hand at the language; and I owe to the love of brethren in Germany a short visit, which I shall soon (D.V.) pay them.

My heart is greatly in America; my comfort is, One can bless according to *His heart*, and from whom no place can be far. What a comfort that is: His blessing makes rich, and adds no sorrow thereto. I was anxious, too, about dear —. He got led away sadly—I fear in every way—but my heart was not turned away *from* him, but *to* him. I heard he made a full confession, for there was actual evil, besides all the high pretensions of —'s, which he joined in. I know not if he confessed as to both, but is his soul restored?—that is what I am anxious to know.

I find a great difference, both as to the application of the word, and as to prayer for ourselves and others; between being *in* the sanctuary, or *without*. I can apply the word honestly to my ways and comfort, as being *here*, and pray for my wants, and the wants of others, *as here*, and it is all quite right; but I *may be within*. The word comes down from above, reveals God, and in grace it does give me light *down here* in fact, but it *can* also take me *up there*, and form my heart, and desires, and spirit, and joys too, with what is there, and so my prayers. If in *there*, what a place, and kind of place, saints have in my heart; they are clothed with Christ's love, with His character, as what they ought to be, as for His glory, and theirs too indeed; and my prayers flow from seeing them in that, that they may be brought into it. The spirit, and character, and love of the place I am in will be in my prayers.

Oh, it is a great privilege, a great blessing! I do not write as if I could do it much, for it is the very thing I have to judge myself in—how little real power of intercession I find in myself, but I see the difference. It is anything but carelessness as to walk, called charity, but charity about the walk. Though I admit the difference of dispensations, yet I see the identification of the people with God's glory *alone* was the spring of Moses' prayer; and the same thing made him call the faithful to cut off his neighbour and brother down here.

Ours is the same in grace and dependence; be it so, but there is a principle which shews it is not taking evil lightly. —, surely I prayed about in earnest: I was in the West Indies, and could not get there. One thing I can say—if I have worked in a place, it is always on my heart. I am old, my brother, but if I am spared my strength yet longer, I should like to see you all at — again. The Lord be with you, *that* is what is good.

The work is proceeding; as to numbers and gatherings they increase much. Our anxiety is more, a true and consistent testimony. Attacks continue more than ever, but that does not do much harm; they are left unanswered, save by God. In Germany, too, the work has largely increased. You know of Canada better, probably, than I do. Thank God, the brethren are in general walking well—many young men, and a great and serious desire to hear; but with such a multitude as we have now, it needs great looking to God to keep the world out. The more things go on, the more I feel the need of the testimony of brethren—the one body—God in grace towards all, but a peculiar people also belonging to Christ, and to a heavenly country; but the more I feel it must be an *unworldly* testimony, if it is anything at all—a holy people to the Lord, a people who have Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith. But I must close. Kindest remembrances to your circle, dear brother, and to all the saints cordial remembrance in Christ. May the Lord keep and bless them.

Yours affectionately in Him,

1869.

J. N. D.

DEAREST —,

Very glad indeed was I to get news from —, and thank you much. The work in America I have much at heart, and — had much exercised me, but I fully trusted the Lord I think I may say, and He has brought evident good out of evil. I always feel my work a very poor imperfect one; I sow great principles, truths of God's blessed word which I know to be truths and infinitely blessed; but I am no wise master-builder. Indeed in these last days I believe it is not the time for it, but for establishing the saints in those truths, and that separation from the world and a worldly church, which places them in right testimony where Christ would have them. What a blessing that is! If it is where He would have them it is the right place. And after that we must labour, and labour with Him.

I do not think anyone can have a deeper sense of the evil than I have, but we must not be occupied too much with it. It is very possible that it has made progress at — since I was there, for it does so, and rapidly everywhere. The clergy are at their wits' end in Europe through the boldness of infidels among themselves, yet cling together that there may not be a division in the church, so called. When the world is separating into Romanism and infidelity, Christians must have their place, and keep their eye steadily fixed on that. "Simple concerning evil," says the apostle, "wise concerning

that which is good." I do not want saints to be unconscious of what is going on all around them; they are warned, but not to be occupied with it. The passage I have quoted is for every day walk, but there is a principle in it.

Two things we need to have; what Christ has in the world as perfect as possible, and to be looking to Him constantly for it. He can give: and He loves the church! Oh! that we might have more of the spirit of intercession, that He might be glorified. It is of every importance that those who do walk, should walk in unity and in power. God has been most gracious in —, and I trust the work will yet go on. Only stick close to the Lord. . . . I not only have undertaken a corrected version, from Hebrew, of the German Old Testament, but have finished the Prophets within a day or two's work, I trust with satisfaction. I feel the Lord with me in it, but tied up by it, and sometimes say will the Lord not make it soon useless. But the church needs the word above all now. I find it wonderfully clear and daily all clearer.

This dead with Christ, well weighed, opens up practical truth—the truth as it is in Jesus—far and wide, God's ways putting responsibility and purpose in their place, but goes deep into the conscience. I am very hard worked, the rather as I am anxious to finish and be at other labours. . . . One thing I do feel, the word of God is everything under grace; the church here below a judged thing; the word light from God.

May the Lord keep and bless you, and keep you all very near Himself,

Affectionately yours,

1870.

J. N. D.

BELoved BROTHER,

I have some little hope of getting to Guelph this year: I cannot tell. If fine weather the voyage would be a rest to me; that is not a difficulty. But I am greatly shut up in work. I am at work at the correction of the whole Old Testament in German; from the Hebrew, not a correction from Luther, which is too bad. A German, and a Dutch brother, hold the Dutch and a German translation of it, and I the Hebrew, with all other accessible helps to boot. We shall have, in another day, the Prophets done, but still, though nearly all far easier, a great deal more to do; and then I have the English New Testament to complete a new edition of, in which I have examined for myself all the readings far more accurately. In the translation, save a few passages made clearer, there is no change.

The work goes on in England pretty widely, and with blessing. I cannot doubt that the Lord is preparing a people for His coming. All things are rapidly progressing and breaking up. But we have only to be perfectly peaceful and quiet; and earnestly seek from God that we and all the saints who seek His face, may be faithful and devoted. I feel this, in the wide-spreading of the work, that we must

take care that the testimony to unworldliness be maintained as to actual separation from all around us—it is in a measure, but in the spirit and temper of brethren. Here the work has spread considerably, but there is some want of learning Christ, though they are going on well. But we must remember that in prayer God is ours, power is put in motion, and that, if through grace we can bring them up before Him, it is sure to be for blessing. The Lord prepare His people for Himself. One thing we have to do; to live for Christ: for what is not seen. It will be seen, and then how glorious. But I do not like to look at this as only wilderness, and that as rest and praise. We have the love of God, and the fulness of Christ to enjoy, if we walk with Him. And how free from hindrance then, I need not say. But it ought to be well known now, though beyond all our thought.

I almost fear sometimes that scripture gets too clear for me as a plan or system of God, if the parts are not filled up with the fulness of Christ. But it is wonderfully clear, daily more so: yet so as that we know in part. In that way we are little and narrow. However, all is true; and we shall find the fulness of it as a whole, and much more when with God.

The history of the church is to me darker and darker in its character. I begin to have solemn thoughts as to what it all was; I mean, the power of Satan in it. God had His own loved people at all times, but history says little of them. But all this that is now coming up as good and primitive, though mere superstition in many, is in itself the power of evil. Our part is a quiet path in consistency; but it is no harm to be clear, as to what that is, with which we have to do. The word is ample, thank God, for our own walk; but it presses on me as a solemn thought what the working of the enemy was, in that which the Lord had set up so blessedly at first. Yet we are not to be occupied with evil, or be in any way terrified with the adversary, as if the Lord had not the upper hand. He has overcome, and is leading us to a full blessing, when the enemy will be bound. We must go on in the confidence that power belongs to Him—is in His hands. I do not mean that they are not perilous times; but in them, we have to look out of them, to Him who cannot fail us, who is full of blessing, and whose grace is sufficient for us, whose strength is made perfect in our weakness.

Canada is ever dear to me. I do not know how to account for my attachment to it, if it be not all the love I met with in it: that I ever feel. But I am now in my 70th year; I have had some five Guelph meetings since autumn began, and travelled—save some time in London, close work, constantly. . . . How very gracious God has been in —; He ever is assuredly. I will write (D.V.) to dear —, but my letters get on slowly—from 7 or 8 to 9, and then I have to search out all the hard passages in Hebrew. May every mercy and much faith be with you,

1870.

Affectionately yours,

J. N. D

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

7. Q.—How can one reconcile Matthew xxvii. 3–8 with Acts i. 15–19? The first says Judas hanged himself, the second that he fell down and burst asunder; again, the first says the Chief Priests and Elders bought the field, the second that Judas bought it himself. E. J.

A.—In Matthew, the bare fact that Judas hanged himself is stated; in Acts, the manner of his doing this, with its effect, is given. He evidently destroyed himself by hanging from a tree (the sign of being cursed), falling some distance in doing this. This tree, I gather, was in the field subsequently bought by the Priests and Elders. Being bought with his own money the possession of it is attributed to him. The verb used in the original is the same as used in Matthew x. 9, “provide,” and Luke xviii. 12, “possess,” and signifies to acquire by any means whatever.

8. Q.—Is it scriptural to say that Jesus is crowned *now*? does not Hebrews ii. 9 refer to His priestly office? J. M. H.

A.—The distinct statement of Hebrews ii. 9 is that Jesus is crowned *now*, though “all things” are not as yet put under Him. This has reference to royalty and not priesthood. A crown forms no part of purely priestly garments.

9. Q.—What do you consider the meaning of the 19th and 20th verses of 1 Peter iii.? J. W. T.

A.—You will find our thought on this subject in the August number of last year, page 224.

10. Q.—Will you explain the difference between suffering with Christ, and suffering for Christ? A. H.

A.—Suffering *with* Christ is what is necessarily involved in our being Christians. Every believer suffers with Christ, and simply because he is Christ's. Possessing Christ as his life, and having His Spirit in him, he cannot evade the suffering that belongs to the christian position. It is what is spoken of in Romans viii. 17, where the suffering with, and being glorified with, go together; the one depends on the other, and cannot be separated from it. Suffering *for* Christ is what comes upon us in connection with devotedness to Christ; hence the more devoted any are to Christ and His interests, the more they have to suffer *for* Him; this is privilege and not necessity,

being given to us—"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." (Phil. i. 29.) It is the kind of thing we read of in Acts v. 41, where Peter, and those with him, "departed from the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."

11. Q.—What is meant in Revelation xvii. 8, "The beast that was, and is not, and yet is;" and what time is it that the beast "is not"?

A.—The beast referred to here we consider to be the Roman Empire. It "was" in the time of the Lord; it "is not" now; and "will be" by-and-by, before the Lord comes, so as to be the special subject of His judgment then. The beast "is not" now at this time, for at present there is no Roman Empire, though there is a king at Rome. Compare Revelation xvii. with Daniel vii. "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom," it says in verse 23, and this kingdom, the Roman Empire in its restored condition, makes war with the saints and continues until "the Ancient of days" comes.

12. Q.—What is the difference between the unity of the Body, and the unity of the Spirit?

A.—The unity of the Body is the indissoluble bond in which saints are unity to Christ and one another by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. A unity that God keeps and that nothing can break or enfeeble. The unity of the Spirit is the practical realisation and display of the unity of the Body according to the Spirit's power. This unity the saints are enjoined to keep, and it can be and has been broken.

13. Q.—Is it not possible for a true Christian to be lukewarm—apart from the professing mass of Christendom which will end in apostasy—without being an apostate; and is there not a difference between "apostasy" and "having a form of godliness, but denying its power"?

I. P. P.

A.—A true Christian may become worldly and lack warmth of affection for Christ, but to be "lukewarm" is a distinct state of soul that has no real link with Christ. It is mere profession devoid of *all* love for Christ, and brings His complete and final rejection. "Having a form of godliness but denying its power" is what leads on to apostasy, but apostasy is the open denial and throwing off Christ altogether, even in name. There are individual apostates now, but the apostasy, or "falling away," referred to in 1 Thessalonians ii. 3 is future, and

does not take place till the Holy Ghost has gone, then the *whole* professing church will become apostate.

14. *Q.*—Is there scriptural authority for putting away a person from the Lord's table simply for long absence? J. W.

A.—If any one wilfully, and without justifiable reasons, long absented himself from the Lord's table, and refused remonstrance, such an one, we think, should certainly be named as no longer in fellowship; but we should hardly say, "be put away," as he is already away from the table by his own act, and it would be a question of receiving him back upon repentance, if he again desired to break bread.

15. *Q.*—Is it scriptural for the one who breaks the bread at the Lord's table to do so before giving thanks? W. P.

A.—We do not think that scripture lays down any *rule* as to this. The Spirit of God might lead to the bread being broken before the giving of thanks; and looking to the fact that what the breaking of the bread represents is retrospective now, instead of being anticipative, as it was when the Supper was instituted by the Lord, a good reason might be given for breaking the bread before giving thanks, because what is given thanks for is Christ given in death for us, and redemption accomplished. Still, the scriptural order given in Luke xxii., and repeated in 1 Corinthians xi., after the Lord had ascended to glory, is plainly that of giving thanks before breaking the bread.

16. *Q.*—Some time since there were gospel meetings held in a village about six miles from this; several professed to see the place of separation, and took their place outside system, and a little while ago they began to break bread. Would it not have been more in keeping with scriptural order for it to have been given out here that they purposed breaking bread before commencing to do so? J. C.

A.—Without knowing all the circumstances of the case in question, it is difficult to give an answer to your inquiry. It looks like not recognising the unity of the Spirit, but this may have proceeded from ignorance that anything was involved in their not previously communicating with the saints near them, already gathered to the Lord's name on the ground of the one Body. The godly and scriptural way would certainly have been to have sought your fellowship in setting up the Lord's table, and in this way the practical unity of the Spirit would have been maintained. C. W.

THE DEITY OF CHRIST AND WHAT CONSTITUTES CHRISTIANITY: BEING AN ANSWER TO THE INQUIRIES OF A UNITARIAN STUDENT OF DIVINITY.

IN the first place, there are the direct passages—John i. 1: The Word was with God and was God. This is in every way a striking passage: when *every* thing began He *was*, that is, had no beginning, was God, as indeed it must be, yet was a distinct personality; He was with God, and always such, was so in the beginning, that He created every thing.

Subsequently we find the Word made flesh. The effort to weaken the force of the word God here by the absence of the article is perfectly futile, unless in reciprocal propositions the predicate never has the article.

We find in Hebrews i. the same truths. He the Messiah, for of Him he speaks, the Son, is God, is worshipped by angels in the beginning, laid the foundations of the earth, and is the same in Hebrew, Psalm cii., *utta Hu*, Thou art the existing One, the Being, where the testimony is so much the stronger by comparison with verse 12, where Christ in humiliation addresses Jehovah.

In John viii. we find, before Abraham was I AM, in contrast with His age as man, which the Jews perfectly understood, and would have killed Him for blasphemy.

Colossians i. 16, All things were created by Him and for Him, where it is unquestionable Christ is spoken of, the true force of verse 19 being all the fulness (*πλήρωμα*) was pleased to dwell in Him, and spoken of Him as man living upon earth, and accomplished in fact in chapter ii. 9, "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

John x., "I and my Father are one."

His name is called Jesus—Jehoshua, that is, Jehovah the Saviour, for He shall save His people—who and whose people in connection with explanation of such a name? Christ is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. Thus John

xii., Isaiah saw His glory and spake of Him, quoting Isaiah vi., whose glory was seen there? Jehovah of hosts.

Hebrews xii. 24-26: whose Voice spoke from heaven (compare chap. i. 1, 2)? whose at Sinai on earth? Hence His name was also Emmanuel, God with us.

So John the Baptist's ministry was preparing the way of Jehovah, Matthew iii. 3, quoting Isaiah xl., Malachi iii. 1, "I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me, and Jehovah, whom ye seek, shall come." (Compare Mark i. 42.) If the judgment to come on the earth is referred to difference of interpretation as to this, or the passing on from Christ's first coming to His second, does not affect the question of the Person who comes, He who first came will come again.

The more we compare passages as to this, the more we shall see this identification, and that it is not forcing one or two texts, but the doctrine of scripture woven into its whole texture. Jehovah is Israel's righteousness, but Christ is made our righteousness. The Lord (Jehovah) our God shall come, and all His saints with thee (see Zech. xiv. 5), and Jehovah said a goodly price that I was prized at of them, and I took the thirty pieces of silver, &c. (Chaps. xi., xiv.) Then shall Jehovah go forth . . . and His feet shall stand in that day on the Mount of Olives. So as to Redeemer, Jehovah alone is their Redeemer. In Isaiah lxiii. this Redeemer is clearly Christ. So in Isaiah l., Thus saith Jehovah, wherefore when I came was there no man? and then He goes on and asserts His unenfeebled divine power, yet He continues, Jehovah-Elohim hath given me the tongue of the learned, and the sufferings of Christ are then spoken of.

In Psalm ii. the kings of the earth are called to trust in the Son—the Christ, yet a curse is pronounced on trusting in man, or in any one but Jehovah. See Revelation xxii., He who comes quickly is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last. (I do not quote chapter i. 11, as it is probably not genuine, nor verse 8, because its application to Christ may be questioned, although I have no doubt of it.)

Many of the passages in which God and the Lord Jesus are mentioned with one article, in Greek may possibly unite them, only in the subject matter of the sentence. Hence, although I think they prove a great deal as to the identification of God and the Lord Jesus, I do not quote them as simply proving, in an absolute way, the divinity of Christ. But the force of the passages in Titus is apparent, "Waiting for the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." It is unquestionably Christ who appears, as it is now in the face of Jesus Christ, that we see the glory of the Lord.

This unity of God and Christ is manifest throughout John's writings, "I and my Father are one." We are in Him that is true—that is in His Son, "He is the true God and eternal life." Take again such an example—for it is only an example—"And now little children abide in him, that when he shall appear we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming." If we know that He is righteous we know that every one that doeth righteousness is *born* of *Him*. "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God, therefore the world knoweth us not because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Now, who will say to whom this applies, Christ, or God? It is impossible to distinguish them. What characterises all the writings of John in the language of Christ is One who has the place and title of perfect equality, yet now being a Man takes nothing, never glorifies Himself, but receives all from His Father, as in John xvii.

In them we have God over all blessed for ever, which I doubt not, for my part, is the only true sense; and other passages I do not quote, as they are matters of criticism. Indeed, I have only cited such as suggest themselves to my memory. So Thomas—"My Lord and my God."

But there is another class of texts, which to the mind, sensible of what is due to God, evidently shew who He

is. Grace coming from Him as is found everywhere—"Out of his fulness have we all received and grace for grace." Christ is all. His love passes knowledge. Christ is to dwell in my heart by faith. If Christ be to me what the scripture says He is to be to me and be not God, *He* must exclude God altogether. The very fact that Christ made Himself of no reputation when in the form of God, is again a moral proof of His divine nature. Every creature was bound to keep its first estate; He who was high and sovereign could, in grace, come down and take another nature.

Everything confirms this. He does not merely work miracles and cast out devils, but sends others out and gives them authority over all devils. When He says, "destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up," who was dwelling in the temple? This kind of proof shines forth in every page of the gospels, and to the mind whose eye is open to see, affords a proof more powerful even than individual texts stating it in the letters, as I speak of the letters. Let me add the remark, that when it is said the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily, it is not a vague word, as we speak, of what is divine.

The Greek has a distinct word for these two things; for the vague thought it is *Θεότης*, used in Romans i.; and *Θεότης*, used in Colossians ii. Where the leper says, Lord, if thou wilt thou canst, and He says I will, be—who can so speak (it)? The proofs that He is a Man must not be cited against it. We hold to this as anxiously as any one—His being God is only of special value to us because He is Man—a true very Man, though a sinless One. God with us and then we in Him before God. One who took flesh and blood that He might die, and partook of flesh and blood because the children were partakers of it, a dependent, obedient Man who, though He had life in Himself, lived by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God.

When I am called to believe in Jesus Christ come in flesh, which Christians are, they hold He is a man; but

why insist on this?—if He was simply a man, how else could man come? Not an angel, for an angel must not leave its estate, and He did not take up angels—words which have no sense if He had been one, and was taking up the cause of others as such. When He says, “the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father,” and that He is in the Father, and the Father in Him, the last might be said of a man, perhaps; the former impossible as a mere man, or of any but a divine Person. So, when He says, “None hath ascended up to heaven,” that is to state what is there—“save he that came down from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven;” and if all men are to honour the Son even as they honour the Father, it cannot be that He is a mere man, or not have the nature which has to be honoured.

Jehovah has sworn that *every* knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue give an account of himself to God, but it is at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow. Hence, though the Son quickens whom He will, as the Father, yet the Father judges no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all may honour the Son as they honour Him. There is no God but Jehovah—I know not any, as says the prophet; but we have seen by multiplied examples that Christ is Jehovah.

That as Son He has taken a place subject to the Father as Man, every Christian believes; receives the glory He once had with the Father before the world was, every one who bows to scripture joyfully accepts, for He is a Man for ever, in that sense a servant, but He who is the servant can say, I and my Father are one, and I am in the Father, and he who has seen Him has seen the Father also.

Compare the description of the Ancient of Days and chapter i. of Revelation, and see if the Ancient of Days, who receives the Son of man in Daniel vii., be not the Son of man in Revelation i., and in Daniel vii. too; from verse 22 of the chapter the Ancient of Days comes. Hence we have the blessed and only Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords—then the appearing of Christ;

but in Revelation He who comes on the white horse has on His vesture and on His thigh, King of kings, and Lord of lords. You see, the more scripture is gone through, the more comes to light that He is the true God and Eternal Life.

I know not that I need multiply passages, after these I have quoted. What you will remark is, that it is not a question of expressions as to which criticism may be exercised, but the doctrine and system of scripture. It is Christianity as it is given to us in scripture, I take up Christianity as the truth, and that is Christianity. A religion is what it professes itself to be, and that is what Christianity professes itself to be—the revelation of God, and eternal life in the Person of Christ.

It professes another truth, that is, atonement, or expiation of sin. It does not teach a goodness of God which can bear with any sin, but maintains the perfect holiness of God, and the putting away of sin, but it does it in a way which equally maintains infinite and perfect love. Man instinctively felt the need of expiation. This is publicly known in heathenism; but there it was very much the dread of a god who had passions like ourselves, and men might justly say, *tantæne animis cælestibus iræ?* Judaism, as revealed of God, maintained this thought, but it began by a deliverance of the people, and witnessed a God not revealed, but who gave commandments, ordained sacrifices, which kept up the thought that sin would in nowise be allowed; but it was the “forbearance of God” in view of a work to be accomplished, the way into the holiest not yet having been made manifest, nor peace given to man’s conscience, though it was relieved through sacrifice when occasion called for it; Christ appears in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; was once offered to bear the sins of many, and give a perfect conscience, without diminishing—nay, in maintaining in the highest way holiness in the judgment of sin in the conscience, according to the majesty of God; and withal giving the perfect sense of unbounded love, in that God did not spare His own Son, but de-

livered Him up for us. The love that gave Christ, Christ gave Himself in a love that is divine, and passes knowledge.

The foolish question has been asked, What righteousness is there in an innocent being suffering for the guilty? It is a foolish question. There is no righteousness in my paying my friend's debts. It is kindness, love, but it meets the righteous claim of his creditor. The claims of a holy God are maintained—intolerance of evil, and that is of the last importance for the conscience and heart of man; it gives him the knowledge of what God is in holiness. There is no true *love* without it. Indifference to good and evil, so that the evil-doer is let pass with his evil, is not love, and the dissociation of right and wrong by God's authority, the highest possible evil. Now good and evil are elevated to the standard of it in God's nature. We walk in the light, as God is in the light, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses from all sin. The glory of God is maintained, and the heart of man placed in association with the perfectness of that nature, and in peace with the perfect knowledge of His love, and that is the highest blessing, the highest good. Diminish the holiness, diminish the love, I have not God, I have not my soul formed into communion with *Him*. Take away the character of judgment or righteousness exercised, as regards evil, and you obliterate the authority of God, the creation, place, and responsibility of man.

This part of the truth, again, enters into the whole texture of scripture, from Abel to the allusions to it in Revelation. I shall merely quote a sufficient number of passages to shew that Christianity must be given up, as taught by Christ and His apostles, if expiation be. I do not quote the Old Testament; expiatory sacrifices are, beyond all question, its doctrine, and prophetic testimony is clear that "He was wounded for our transgressions, the chastisement of our peace laid upon him, and that with his stripes we are healed; that he made his soul a sacrifice for sin, and that he bare our iniquities."

When I turn to the New Testament, I find Christ.

stating that He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. (Matt. xx. 28.) The Lord's supper—the standing institution of Christianity—is the sign of His blood shed for many for the remission of sins. John the Baptist points Him out as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. (John i. 20.) *Paul* tells us that God hath set Him forth as a propitiation, through faith in His blood (Rom. iii. 25); *Peter*, that we are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Pet. i. 18, 19); *John*, that He is the propitiation for our sins and the whole world (2 John ii. 2); *Peter*, again, that He bare our sins in His own body on the tree. (1 Pet. ii. 24.) The *Hebrews* enlarges on it fully as a doctrine, He must offer for sins. (Chap. ix.) He offers one sacrifice for sins, and then sits down. (Chap. x.) We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. (Eph. i. 7.) We are justified by His blood. (Rom. v. 9.) Without shedding of blood is no remission. (Heb. ix. 22.) He gave Himself for our sins. (Gal. i. 4.) It is when He had made the purification of our sins that He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. (Heb. i. 3.) Cleansing, justification, forgiveness, peace, redemption, are all attributed to His blood. He bore our sins, gave Himself for our sins, makes propitiation for the world, is delivered for our offences.

As I have said, it is a doctrine interwoven with all scripture, forms one of the bases of Christianity, is the sole ground of remission—and there is none without shedding blood—and that by which Christ has made peace. (Col. i. 20.) The thought that He was sealing merely His doctrines by His death is utterly groundless, it is never stated as its force in scripture, expiation is constantly; and if it was a mere testimony—perfect as He was in it—it does not serve for one, for the testimony would be that the most faithful of men was forsaken of God. What testimony would that be? Take out expiation, and scripture becomes impossible to understand; introduce it, and all is plain.

“GLORY OF GOD IN THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST.” 149

I have not written a treatise, but simply recalled what must present itself to every unprejudiced reader of scripture, as memory furnished it, and what the soul convinced of sin cannot do without. If Christ be not God, I do not know Him, have not met Him, nor know what He is. No man can by searching find it out. If Christ has not offered Himself as a sacrifice for sin, then I had neither peace of conscience, according to the holiness of God, but pass lightly over the guilt of sin, remaining at a distance from God, nor do I know God's love, who so loved as not to spare His own Son. There is no true knowledge of sin without it, no true knowledge of God.

J. N. D.

“THE GLORY OF GOD IN THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST.”

JESUS, Thou glorious Son of God,
Our Life eternal and our Lord,
Gladly we gaze upon Thy face,
Its beauty and its glory trace.

When in ruin, chaos, sin,
By darkness and by gloom hemmed in,
Thy voice we heard, the living Word,
And now we live to Thee, our Lord.

What led Thee, Lord, so great, so holy,
To take that place, made sin, so lowly ?
Oh, 'twas that we might be with Thee,
From sin and all defilement free.

'Twas love, 'twas love, that led Thee there,
That we in righteousness might share
Thy Father's love—be heirs with Thee,
Joint heirs through all eternity.

While gather'd to Thy name, Lord, here,
Thyself our hearts and minds doth cheer;
And nought amongst the things of time,
Can gladden hearts by grace made Thine.

Jesus, Thou glorious Son of God,
Our portion now, our sure reward;
All that we need we find in Thee,
And ever Thou our all wilt be.

We praise Thee, and shall ever praise,
As on Thy glorious face we gaze :
Grace and glory there we see,
And gazing are transform'd to Thee.

(R. S.)

THE PERSONAL AND CORPORATE ACTIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

II.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A SEAL.

(Continued from page 125.)

“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; *for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*)” (John vii. 37-39.)

“For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us. Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath *anointed* us, is God; who hath also *sealed* us, and given the *earnest of the Spirit* in our hearts.” (2 Cor. i. 20-22.)

“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after that ye believed, ye were *sealed* with the Holy Spirit of promise.” (Eph. i. 13.)

THESE passages present to us three great facts. First, that the Holy Spirit was never given to dwell in the believer, until Jesus had accomplished the work of redemption, and had entered His glory on high. He had wrought, as had the Lord Jesus, before He came; and then as the Lord Jesus had come into the world, so was the Holy Ghost sent down to dwell—not merely to work, as in former days. This He did at Pentecost. Secondly, we see that God anoints with the Spirit, and seals us in connection with the new place for man, “in Christ,” risen from the dead and ascended. And, thirdly, in the last-cited passage, we find that the believer in Him receives the Spirit as a seal, as a consequence of his faith in Christ.

I will ask you again, as in the former paper, to recal with me some of God’s dealings in the Old Testament days, which will cause His present dealings to stand out in contrast with all that went before.

I pass over the pro-patriarchal days, and commence with Abraham, in whom these dealings of God began. We first find promise given to Abraham. “I will bless

thee," said the Lord to him, "and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee . . . and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. xii. 2, 3.) These promises were confirmed and repeated to Abraham at the figurative resurrection from the dead of Isaac (Gen. xxii.), which was typical of Christ risen from the dead.

There were afterwards promises given to David, as the root of the royalty of Israel, Abraham and David being the two great vessels of promise on the earth.

But previously to David we find an intermediate dealing of God with Israel by the law, which brought Israel under a covenant of faithfulness on their part to perform the terms of a covenant which was the ground of their blessing or otherwise. In the promises there was but one party who entered into certain obligations in perfect free will, to fail in which would be for God, who made them to fail—which can never be. If I were to say to a person, "I will give you this book to-morrow," and I did not do so, it is I that would fail. But were I to say, "I will give you this book to-morrow if you do so-and-so," it depends both on *his* accomplishing the terms proposed, and then on *my* fulfilling my promise on his having complied with the conditions. *This* would be the principle of law; *that* of promise. If the latter were to fail, God would fail, which He cannot; all His promises and gifts and calling are without repentance.

Now, these dealings of God were going on in the Old Testament: Israel was being tested under law, and the promises of God, given before the law, stood in abeyance until God's due time came. At last Jesus came to this world—"Born of a woman," through whom sin had entered the world; and "born under the law," through which Israel was under the curse. In Him all the promises of God were yea and amen. In His own Person He embodied them all, whether to Abraham or to David; the former, the root of a race; the latter, the root of royalty in Israel. But He was cast out and slain. Those who had the promises rejected them when they were ful-

filled in Christ. And when this was so, and the work of the cross was accomplished, and Christ had risen and gone on high, a new thing is presented for faith, which is neither *law*, under which man was condemned, nor *promise*, which was now fulfilled. This was *accomplishment*; redemption was completed, and God's righteousness established; His truth manifested, and His grace set free to act in sovereignty outside all former dealings, and to bring out what was in His mind before the foundation of the world.

Hence when the cross was past we have the "*nows*" of scripture brought fully out.

1st. "*Now*, once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." This was Christ upon the cross. (Heb. ix.)

2nd. "*Now* the righteousness of God is manifested" apart from the law. This was seen in Christ upon the throne of God. (Rom. iii. 21.)

3rd. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. But is *now* made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and incorruptibility to light by the gospel." (2 Tim. i. 9, 10.) This was by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven.

4th. And again, "To the intent that *now* unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by means of the church, the manifold wisdom of God." (Eph. iii. 10.) In this we find the church of God displayed.

Let me here remark that we possess four things (with many others) which were never known in the Old Testament times:—The righteousness of God as the ground of His grace to us; a purged conscience through the blood of Christ; and, as a consequence, the indwelling of the Spirit; and, still more so, the knowledge of the Father. All these are ours now through the accomplished work of Christ

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Let us, also, state that the new place for man as "in Christ" before God was never known, nor could it be, until Jesus had taken His place in a new sphere for man—risen from among the dead. The patriarchs and saints in Old Testament days could not be said to be "in Christ," nor could such be said of those who were with Him in His sojourn here on earth. It would have no meaning to speak of such being "in Christ." I name this, for it is in connection with this new place for man, risen with Christ, as of a new creation—"If any man be in Christ [there is] a new creation," 2 Cor. v. 17—that the Holy Spirit is given. This new state for the believer came out when the Lord went up on high; and carries with it the complete blotting out of his whole previous state, with the guilt thereto attached, as a child of Adam.

We come now to what happens as a consequence of faith in the Holy Spirit's witness of the work of Christ when received by faith. It is that the Holy Spirit is given him as a *Seal*; I say a "consequence," because it does not need that the believer should ask for the Spirit to be given him (though when he possesses the Holy Ghost he may seek to be filled with the Spirit as a true state indeed); but when the work of Christ is presented, and received by the awakened soul (for it is not a *sinner* that is *sealed*, but a *believer*) as an answer to his need of conscience, the Holy Spirit follows, as from God, who sets His seal of appropriation upon the person so blest. Just as Paul could appeal to the Galatians, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Of course it was by the "hearing of faith."

Many instances may be seen in the Acts of the Apostles which illustrate this; such as that of the disciples who had previously been quickened as *sinners* during the Lord's lifetime, and who received the Holy Spirit subsequently as *believers* on the day of Pentecost. (Acts ii.) So also the Samaritans, through Philip's preaching (Acts viii.), afterwards receiving the Holy Ghost. Saul of Tarsus also, when quickened by the voice of Jesus from heaven, is three days after sealed with the Holy Spirit. (Acts ix.)

Cornelius, a truly-converted soul, who prayed to God alway, &c., must send for Peter, and hear words of him for salvation ; and, as a consequence, the Spirit of God seals those who heard and received the word of grace.

In the passage from 2 Corinthians i., already referred to, we learn the progress of this great dealing of God very simply. Christ, in whom all the promises of God were yea and amen, is cast out and slain, and the children of Abraham who had them are themselves cast out—having rejected them all in Christ. But all this only makes this new place for the redeemed, and "God stablishes us [Jews] with you [Gentiles] in Christ" risen, where there is neither Jew nor Gentile—and in keeping with this new place He anoints us with the Spirit. This unction or anointing is for power over the works of the flesh and knowledge of all things—we "have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things." "Who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." The same action of the Holy Ghost, doubtless, but having another character, that is, an appropriation on God's part of those whom He has marked as His own, and an earnest to us of all that is coming in a future day, as in Ephesians i., "An earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession."

We will now examine some passages of scripture which shew the effect of the possession of the Spirit individually in us.

1st. First we turn to Romans v. 5, &c., where we read, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us."

Here is the first effect of the possession of the Spirit. We are assured of the love of God, who has saved us ; it is assured to the heart. But lest in possessing the Spirit we should become mystical or introspective ; lest we should turn *inwardly* upon ourselves to seek for evidences of this love of God, immediately the eye is turned *outward* upon that which is the full proof of God's love to us in the verses which follow. There we learn how "God commends his *own* love" (this is omitted, but is in the

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Greek) toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. “*Without strength*” to appropriate this love of God; “*sinners*,” still in our sins; “*ungodly*,” for whom Christ died; and “*enemies*,” who needed to be reconciled! How full and abundant is the proof of that love which the Holy Ghost sheds abroad in our hearts—pointing us to God, outside ourselves; yet giving the assurance of it, and the joy of it within!

2nd. Then in Romans viii. 9 we are assured that we “are not in the flesh, but *in the Spirit*, if so be [or since it is true] that the Spirit of God dwells in us.” *The standing* is changed from “in Adam” to “in Christ,” from “in the flesh” to “in the Spirit,” and all proved by the Spirit being given unto us. God reveals this, faith receives it, and the Holy Spirit makes it good in the soul.

3rd. Again, in 1 Corinthians ii., “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things freely given to us of God.” Here “*the things*” which are ours are made known to us by the Spirit. In the Old Testament it was said, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that wait for him.” But now our portion is all made plain, to be realised and possessed. “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.”

4th. *Union* with Christ, too, is known by our souls, for “He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit.” (1 Cor. vi. 17.) By the Spirit we know that we are in Christ, and Christ in us.

5th. *Liberty* is enjoyed in that new sphere to which we are brought. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” The freedom of a soul which has done with all questions as to self, as to Satan, and as to God. Freedom with the Father in looking up to Him on high: freedom, too, with ourselves from all the workings of lust and flesh within. Alas, how little realised, but, nevertheless, ministered unto us by the Spirit of God given us from Christ in glory.

6th. *Sonship*, too, is known and enjoyed. “God hath

sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (Gal. iv. 6.) Thus we are introduced into that positive relationship with the Father—as already the children of God.

7th. *Power* for our walk here on earth over the works of the flesh is found in the possession of the Holy Ghost. "Walk," says the apostle, "in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." (Gal. v. 16-23.) Walking after the Spirit is ever to have the soul's vision on Him whom the Spirit glorifies. If Christ is before the soul, then the workings of the flesh are kept in the place of death. It is not by the effort to reduce ourselves to order and manage ourselves, but by the superior occupation with the Lord Himself. This gives power, not intrinsic power in one's own soul, but in the sense of weakness in ourselves and as over ourselves; the eye is turned on Him, and power comes forth to draw the heart after Him, and thus gives us victory over the flesh.

8th. Our *Inheritance* with Christ is made sure to us by the Spirit of promise given us. (Eph. i. 13, 14.) He waits to redeem that inheritance of all created things from the enemy's hand. He purchased it by His blood when here; took it with its load of guilt upon it, and died to redeem it all. But still the enemy is the usurper, and must be cast out. Power must be put forth to deliver it from the bondage in which it groans. Until then we also wait, but are sealed with the Spirit until the day of its redemption, when we shall inherit all as joint-heirs with Christ.

9th. We must "not *grieve* the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed until the day of redemption." (Eph. iv. 30.) How often, instead of being the source of joy in Christ, and in all that is ours, is the Spirit of God turned into a Rebuker of us! We turn after the things of time and sense; we run after the things of the world, and we wonder why our souls are not in their fresh joy. Ah, the Spirit is grieved; the soil is felt by that most intimate Guest who dwells in us; and in faithful love we are made to feel the stain, the heart is rebuked, and the soul made to feel its pain, and brought back humbled, but

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instructed to hearken afresh to this word to us, "Grieve [him] not?"

10th. Thus we find that this same blessed Guest within us, is as a well of water springing up into everlasting life, the source and power of *prayer*, of *singing* the praises of God, of *worship*, too. "I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also." (1 Cor. xiv. 15.) "Praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." (Eph. vi. 18.) "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth." (John iv. 24.) And "We are the circumcision, which worship God by the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Phil. iii. 2.)

Thus, dear friends, we see how great a sphere of enjoyment and privilege, and responsibility, too, is opened up to us by the possession of the Spirit of God—given us as a *Seal*, consequent upon our faith in the work of Christ. The *love of God* is assured to our hearts: the *New state*, as "in the Spirit," is made ours. The *Things* which God hath freely given us are made known. Our *Union* with Christ is by the Spirit given us. The true *liberty* of a saint from self and flesh and Satan's power, and with our God, too, is enjoyed. By the Spirit of adoption we know our *Sonship* with the Father. *Power* for our walking outside the lusts of the flesh is ours. Our *Inheritance* is made sure, and we must not *Grieve* the Holy Spirit of God; and by the Spirit given us we *Pray* and *Sing Praises*, and *Worship* the Father who has sought and found us, and made us vessels for His eternal praise!

F. G. P.

WHEN we think of grace, we think of our interests *in* Christ; when we think of glory, we think of our interests *with* Christ. The first subject is really the deeper, the more personal and affectionate—it takes us to the heart of the Lord. The second takes us to His circumstances.

J. G. B.

“WHERE DWELLEST THOU?”

JOHN I. 33-39.

THERE are two great parts in the revelation God has given us of Himself. There is, first—and it is of first importance to us—He reveals Himself; for how else should we know Him? We had lost every true thought of Him from Eden, so early had Satan poisoned the very springs of our being against God. The mind of the flesh is enmity against Him. But the moment was come at last when the heart of God, long yearning to tell itself out in this ruined world, was to have its full, suited expression. This we are brought to in the first chapter of John: “In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.” Blessed thought for us!—there has been from eternity with God the Word that could fully express Him; “and the Word was God,” for who but God could express God? For a moment we are introduced to the vast scene of the display of His Godhead and power in creation (ver. 3), but only to be dismissed in a word, to give way before what was infinitely greater, even the Divine Word, the Creator Himself come into the world that He had made. “He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.” Yes, it is even so, for “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us”—God manifest in the flesh. And the opened eye of faith beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. For this was the character of His coming: “the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” “No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.”

Thus the light of all that God is fully revealed had risen upon this dark world. With what effect? Oh, has it to be told? None whatever, if left to itself! Such is man, such the total ruin that sin has made of us, that what is impossible physically takes place. “The light shineth *in* darkness.” Perfect light was there; the dark-

ness remained as it was, perfectly unaffected by it, "the darkness comprehended it not." Such the profound moral darkness in which we lay! He was in the world, and the world knew Him not: He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. Do we not know and own it? Have we not had to prove it in our own souls? We saw no beauty in Him that we should desire Him. But mark the wondrous grace of the revelation. If He had shone into this world in all the majesty of His glory, who could have borne His presence? It would have been our destruction. But "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." He veiled His glory beneath the lowly garb of His humiliation, that He might bring down all the grace that was in God to us where we were in all our need of it, to draw us by the *grace* into the discovered *truth* of our condition. Had He come only to shine, we should have been left where we were, lost forever. Blessed be God, it is not so. If light is come, love is come with it, for God is love as well as light. And love is active to bring in the rays of the light into our consciences and hearts, that, being brought to know ourselves, we may know Him.

But this brings us to the second great part of the way He has revealed Himself, even the divine work, in all its completeness, by which He puts us in *the presence of His glory* at perfect rest. This, too, we find presented in the chapter before us, if not in its full result as to us, yet at least in the glory of Him whose work it is, and the work part of His glory. But God must work, if any heart were ever to open to His glory. Nor was the *fact* of an activity of divine love any new thing in itself in this poor world. God had ever wrought that there might be anything of Him, of blessing, or of good, found in it. Only all comes out clearly in the light now, and we see what the first essential work of all is, and what its character. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the children of God, even to them that believe in his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of

God." When the darkness of our condition was wholly unaffected by the presence of infinite light, when there was no heart here to answer to the infinite love that brought in the light, God wrought in that love—His word, applied by the power of the Spirit, as ever His instrument—that born of the Spirit and the Word—born of God—our poor hearts might open to receive Jesus, and that we might possess a nature capable of answering to, and (when set free) delighting in, all that was presented to us in Him. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." Oh, think of the wonderful grace that wrought when there was nothing in any of our hearts that answered to anything in His, to bring us into partaking of His own nature, that we might have capacity to know and joy in Him for ever! But this blessed enjoyment is not the first effect of being born of God—far from it. There must be the bringing out between the conscience and God of our sins as we never knew them before. Sooner or later self must be learned, too, to be nothing but sin. Thus we find ourselves out before God in the only truth of our condition—a condition that makes us *totally unfit for His presence*. What a place to be brought to, solemn and humbling, yet needed; and that is the sure mark, as it is the effect, of a work all His own. We are brought at last where Peter was in principle, as in Luke v.; "he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Blessed taking of God's side against himself, as it was; but *not to be left there*. No; that never would have satisfied divine love. More was needed for God's own glory—more, to give us rest in His presence. The answer to both is found in the glories in which the Lord Jesus is now presented to us in the testimony of John the Baptist. How suited and exquisite the grace, that, amid this full testimony to the varied glory of the Divine Word manifested on earth, we should find the complete work as an essential part of that glory, that was necessary if we were to have any part in it for blessing!

There are two further parts of the divine work, and

they are brought out in this testimony to His glory: first, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world;" and, secondly, "He it is that baptises with the Holy Ghost." These two parts of the work of the Son of God are needed to be added to the primary work of the Spirit of God, by which we are born anew, to complete the full christian position. In the slain Lamb of God we find the righteous ground—now for the first time manifested—of all the work of God in blessing that there ever had been, or could be, in a lost world, but here presented according to all the perfection found in it for God, and therefore in its full, complete efficacy, even to the clearing away of sin for ever, in a new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Of that first part of His work as the Lamb of God, He could say, "God is glorified in him, and if God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself." And He has done it. So that, where God rests in the full settlement of every question of sin, as it affected His glory, there we rest in seeing our sins gone in His death who bore them, and we ourselves judged, condemned, and crucified with Him. It needed, indeed, the whole glory of the work that lays the foundation of the new heavens and new earth to remove the stain of a single sin from our guilty souls; but it is there, an accomplished work for us. So that the moment the eye of faith turns from self, found out in its sin, to the Lamb of God, the scene is cleared for us, as it is for God, of all we have done and been. It lay in the perfection and glory of His work as the Lamb of God, to end all that was of the first man for faith, in infinitely executed judgment, and to lay the basis, in divine righteousness, for the accomplishment of all God's counsels, for His glory and our blessing, in the Second.

But this brings us to the second part of the work of the Son of God, as He who baptiseth with the Holy Ghost. It is all here still wrapped up in testimony to the glory of His Person. But we know it as accomplished. Having finished His work as the atoning Lamb

of God, He has taken His place as the accepted Man in the glory of God, and sent down the Holy Ghost. He is given to dwell within us, as each one receives the testimony of accomplished redemption, to bring us in power into the whole of Christ's own place, as man, before that glory. He baptises with the Holy Ghost. It is no longer the mere negative taking away of all that had to be taken away in God's judgment, but the full, positive bringing in of what was to be established in its room. Not till, in fact, the work of redemption was accomplished could the Holy Ghost be given; "for the Holy Ghost was not yet, because Jesus was not glorified." And so, in the faith of our souls, "In whom ye also, after that ye heard the word of truth, the *gospel of your salvation*, in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (compare Acts xix. 1-6; Eph. i. 15). Given immediately upon, and the seal of, the faith that believes God's testimony to the accomplished work of a risen and glorified Christ, the Holy Ghost gives us the consciousness of our new and wonderful place in Christ. This testimony is conveyed to us in the forgiveness of sins. Hence it is at the point at which we receive the positive and conferred forgiveness of our sins, that we receive the Holy Ghost to dwell in us. Compare Acts ii. 38, x. 43, 44; and the place of the introduction of the Holy Ghost, in the Epistle to the Romans, after peace with God through justification. (Chap. v. 5.) Also in type, in the case of the leper (Lev. xiv. 14-18), where the oil (type of the Holy Ghost) follows the application of the blood of the trespass-offering.

Thus, when the Holy Ghost was come, Jesus says, "Ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you." When He had made peace through the blood of His cross, and become Himself the first messenger of it to His disciples, in John xx., greeting them with, "Peace be unto you," as the last Adam, a quickening Spirit, He breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. It is the Spirit as the power of the life with which He was risen from the dead, rather than

given as a distinct Person to dwell in them. For this we know they had still to wait till the day of Pentecost. The Son of God was come, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." The Spirit is the power of that life now possessed in new association with the risen Christ. Hence it can be said, "The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. viii. 2.) It is a positive, actual deliverance, by divine power, out of the old condition in which we were into a wholly new one in Christ. Further, He is the Spirit of adoption; if we are the sons of God, by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. iii. 26), *because* we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father. (Chap. iv. 6.) Another blessed mark and effect of His presence is stated in 2 Corinthians iii. 17: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"—liberty to gaze on the unveiled glory of God in the face of Jesus, the token of God's perfect acceptance of the work, according to which we are accepted before Him in righteousness, that as we gaze, we may be changed into His image. There are also corporate effects of the gift of the Holy Ghost, as dwelling on earth, and uniting us to Christ; but these do not come within the scope of the Gospel of John; and it is profitable for our souls to distinguish the individual aspect of the baptism of the Holy Ghost from that which is corporate, for we must be established in the former, before anything of the latter can be known in privilege and responsibility.

J. A. T.

(To be continued.)

THE fathers were spoken to by the prophets, by those who had but visions and dreams. We are now spoken to by the Son, by Him who sees face to face, who has access to *all* that is of God. And this lets us into *heavenly* things as well as earthly. This discloses the *holiest* things to our view, as well as the courts, because our prophet is there, while the prophets of the fathers were more in the distance, in the place of visions and dreams.

J. G. B.

LETTERS AND EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF J. N. D. ON SUBJECTS OF GENERAL INTEREST.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

I saw so very few of you before I left, and for such a little moment, that I felt anxious to write a line, being separated from you in presence and not in heart.

When I took my place, my heart misgave me a little at leaving you all, but on looking to the Lord I felt it was more my natural heart, and that I was in the path of faith in going to France. I found, on going home from the Friday prayer meeting, a letter which confirmed me in the purpose of going speedily, but which at the same time will shorten my absence some weeks at any rate; nor indeed is it my present purpose to be long out of England, my thought is to visit the South of France and return at once, or at any rate make no stay in Switzerland.

The same faith which has led me, and made me feel it right to go, gives me confidence, beloved brethren, that the Lord will keep you true to the blessed testimony of His own faithfulness and grace. I would urge upon you walking in thorough unity, shewing all confidence one in the other, and casting all that may arise at once *on God*. His faithfulness to His church, and people who trust in Him, is infallible, and He cannot but help you in all for which you look to Him. I do not doubt His care over you. I trust that those who take part in any service, needed for all, will do it together with common consultation, and that it will be done diligently as a duty. I say this, dear brethren, because uneasiness creeps in where this is neglected, and soon produces discomfort, which hinders both unity and blessing.

It is written, Where two or three agree as touching anything they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. There is another thing I have on my heart to say, and that is, that as far as brethren can they should visit others, of course they must wait on the Lord's leading for it, but it will minister to fellowship and unity in brotherly love, and that is our joy, beloved brethren. For the rest I commend you to the Lord, He will guide you in waiting upon Him. If we assume nothing at all beyond what we are—a company of poor saints waiting upon God according to His will—we shall infallibly meet Him in blessing.

I believe we are not properly aware, few at least, of the unfeigned importance of the position He has set us in testimony of separation from evil and waiting on Him, but the secret of all strength in it is *assuming nothing*. Not expecting to be like other Christians, as the Israelites who would have a king like the Amorites and other nations, and thus falling back into the common path of unbelief, but truly

waiting upon God. If there be gift, blessing Him for it, but swift to hear and slow to speak, counting God's presence more precious than all, and while desiring God's ordinance in the testimony of His word to sinners; and if any can give a public testimony, accepting it, not counting the routine of a sermon necessary to the course of the saints.

Peace be with you, beloved brethren; may the Lord give you to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, knowing that it is *God* that worketh in you to will and to do of His good pleasure. Give my love to dear old S——. I do trust the brethren will visit him now that he cannot come out. If anyone writes to me I pray him to let me know as to B——'s and G——'s children. I suppose dear G——'s hardly yet through, but it is well, as I trust, and do not doubt, he feels. B——'s, I believe, were better. Again peace be with you all.

Your devoted brother,

J. N. D.

POSTSCRIPT, No. 1.—Since I came up I have other letters which make it probable that I could not stay in Switzerland, if so disposed; at least the French troops are on the frontiers, and the Swiss have been marched to watch them; and moreover Mr. —— and two sisters are gone to stay at one place in France, which might have detained me. The brethren at R—— Street are getting on quietly and happily, and though my toil, I doubt not, is not yet closed as to service, of which I am persuaded none of the brethren scarce know at all the evil met, yet I have been greatly encouraged and comforted.

I have a letter from dear ——, who has arrived at Bombay, and is happily lodged at a Christian's. He says, "And so I pray also the Lord that the brethren at Plymouth, who are simply gathered in the Lord's name, may never be dismayed in looking at their own weakness in meeting, but be glad that there is nothing to look to but to Him who is in heaven, the only One all eyes are fixed on; and that the brethren may constantly look for Him, who will come and not tarry, yet a little while and we shall see Him face to face. In the moment we limit His coming as unconnected with any circumstances, we begin to make our nest in the foliage of this world. And the dear brethren too at Plymstock I do never forget. Give to all of them my most affectionate salutations." He closes by saying, "Salute much all the brethren at ——, ——, ——," &c.

Have the kindness to tell the dear —— brethren of it, with my kindest love. It is a long letter with all the details of his voyage, and some interesting particulars as to his search into the prophetic question which I cannot here give. Peace be with you, most beloved brethren. Be of good cheer. Glory with Christ is ours; the love of Christ is ours. Only let us trust the Lord and we know not how much blessing is in store for us, though we ought to know how faithful, infallibly faithful, He is. The Lord has led out several to labour here of the younger brethren, and I have found others whom I trust He is

so leading. I quite trust He is working. He has led me wonderfully every step of the way. Your devoted brother in Him,

J. N. D.

POSTSCRIPT, No. 2.—Dearest —, as I had to acknowledge your £2 for the Swiss brethren, for which I thank you much, I send the enclosed letter, which is for all the beloved brethren (to whom I feel more closely knit than ever) through your hand. In much love to you, and kindest remembrance to Miss —. I trust the baby is getting on.

London, November 6th, 1846.

J. N. D.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I most gladly answer your letter, as far as the Lord enables me; perhaps we shall see each other (the Lord willing) in Dublin soon. I distinguish entirely between the *church* and prophecy. I do not believe the church is the subject, though it is the recipient and depository, of prophecy, as Abraham was of what should happen to Lot. The church has its own proper present relationship to Christ, out of which the scripture does not know it, but it (having received the Holy Ghost) has the mind of Christ. You may except the description of the heavenly Jerusalem, but which is really description, not prophecy, of events, though connected with, and closing and crowning them, when the heavenly government is brought into full connection with the earth.

Prophecy gives the course of *earthly* events, the wickedness of man, or the dealings of God. But the church is not earthly; its life is hid with Christ in God; it has its place with Christ while He is hidden: when He appears, it will appear; we await the manifestation of the sons of God. Hence it was hid in God from the foundation of the world (Eph. iii.), and the prophets do not speak of it; only it is true that it maintains (or ought to have maintained) the testimony of the kingdom during the interval of the rejection of the Jewish witness. As inheriting the promises, as being in Christ the seed of Abraham, it comes in, and maintains by divine wisdom their constancy and unfailingness. But the age is the same age as that in which Christ was upon the earth—"the harvest is the end of the age." Hence the church cannot be the subject of prophecy. It *was* not, as being a kind of wisdom hid in God, and is *now* made known to principalities and powers, and now it is not the subject, but the depository, of prophecy—not earthly, but heavenly, though on earth in testimony of what is heavenly, and of a hidden Christ, with whom it is one. Hence, what relates to it is, as I have said, only seen when it comes down out of heaven, having the glory of God. Hence it has no place in prophecy.

We are properly nowhere, save in the extraordinary suspension of prophetic testimony, or period, which comes in between the sixty-ninth and seventieth week of Daniel, or at the end of that age which was running on when Christ was here. the close of which was sus-

pendent by His crucifixion ; His return to establish it then, according to Acts iii., being precluded by the rejection of the testimony of the Holy Ghost, which followed—finally declared at Stephen's death. Whereupon the *doctrine* of the church in union with a heavenly Head, without distinction of Jew or Gentile, was fully revealed, and entrusted to Paul, who had joined in that rejection, in a ministry beginning, not at Jerusalem, but Antioch. In the Revelation, therefore, until the heavenly Jerusalem is revealed, the church is never, properly speaking, seen at all. The living creatures, or the twenty-four elders, may be taken—as to which I do not decide—as a symbolical representation in part of those who compose it, viewed in certain positions, but I certainly apprehend that the period spoken of in the Revelation (or from chap. iv.) is the interval between the removal of the church from the place of testimony, and the manifestation of it in a glorious testimony, as already stated in chapters xxi., xxii. Whether this had a partial fulfilment since the church failed in giving a testimony on earth at the beginning, and there were but a few imperfect witnesses, I will not say. I dare say it has, but whatever general principle of a year-day system may be admitted, there is no proper literal fulfilment of it, I apprehend, but in that which is to come, in which on earth, as such, the church will not be witness at all.

The great point for us is, to get distinctly the church's place, and the church's faith, and the church's own distinctive relationship as bride of Christ, to be revealed *with Him*, and to be faithful during His absence. What knowledge is given us of others, and of God's way towards them, and of their witness when the church is not there, is dependent on the sovereignty of God in gift, and our faithfulness in our walk in our place.

The present course of events are not revealed signs to me, but the church ought to discern these times. It is the rapid, but, as I judge, for the present arrested, development of the spirit of the latter day, which will issue in apostasy and delusion on one hand, and in the forming of the Roman empire on the other, and the preventing collision between northern and western Europe, till the great catastrophe take place in Palestine. Signs, I judge, are for those who have not been faithful enough to keep or find the bride's position (we are children of the day), a mercy to those in the latter day circumstances, but which would not have been needed had they apprehended the church's place, and been separated from the world to be in it, and taken the properly heavenly place, wherein we await only the marriage with the heavenly Bridegroom, who comes to receive us, and take us there where He is.

Such, dear brother, is the grand answer to your inquiry. If this, in connection with your own thoughts, suggest any difficulty, I shall be most glad, for myself, to hear them from you ; it is thus we learn, and, if the Lord afford time, to answer them. I write from the midst of much occupation. I have sixteen long letters to answer,

besides yours ; so I say, Adieu. Peace and grace be with you. Salute the beloved brethren with you, though I know them not by sight. In Jesus we shall know each other.

Very affectionately yours in Him,

May 1st, 1848.

J. N. D.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

17. Q.—Can you throw any light upon 2 Corinthians xii. 16—"being crafty, I caught you with guile"? A. R.

A.—It would appear to us that the meaning of this passage connects itself with the previous clause of the verse, as if the apostle took them on their own ground and answered, "Be it so ;" as if they had said : "Yes, you were not burdensome to us *yourself*, just to save appearances, but you take from us by sending another to receive it for you !" To meet this base insinuation he asks the question, "Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you ?" Had Titus, or the brother sent with him by Paul made a gain of them ? They knew better. He had not been crafty and caught them with guile in the way they suggested he had. The passage thus speaks of what the Corinthians had attributed to the apostle, and is not a statement by himself of the way he had acted towards them, as it apparently reads.

18. Q.—How do you reconcile Exodus ~~xxx.~~^{xxiv.} 10 ; 1 Kings xxii. 19 ; Isaiah vi. 1-5, with John i. 18 and v. 37 ? A. R.

A.—The appearance or manifestation of God, suited to the comprehension and senses of man—a visible, external glory that witnessed to His power and supremacy in creation and government—is what is spoken of in the Old Testament scripture referred to ; while the statements in John refer to His personal nature and being ; it is of this latter the Lord Jesus speaks, and in this way no man has seen, or can see, God ; as such He dwells "in the light which no man approach unto." (1 Tim. vi. 16.) Christ, as man, is the image and manifestation of the *invisible* God.

C. W.

ERRATUM.—The date at the foot of page 126 in our May number should be 1881, instead of 1883.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH, AND JUSTIFICATION OF LIFE.

JUSTIFICATION by faith is a cardinal truth of divine revelation, and an article of the creed of what are called reformed churches, which on this point differ most materially from the teaching of the Church of Rome, which, confounding justification with practical righteousness, really denies the ground of the believer's standing before the throne of God, to be only and purely according to the merits of Christ's atoning death, and the value of His precious blood.

On this vital subject scripture gives no uncertain sound. We are justified *instrumentally* by, or through (διά) faith of Jesus Christ (Gal. ii. 16; Rom. iii. 30), and of faith (Rom. v. 1), that is, proceeding from, or arising out of, faith (ἐκ πίστεως), in contrast to justification from, or arising out of, works of law (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου). We are justified in virtue of (ἐν) Christ (Gal. ii. 17; Acts xiii. 39), in contrast to justification in virtue of (ἐν) law. We are justified *meritoriously* in virtue of the blood of Christ (ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ). (Rom. v. 9.) And we are justified *declaratively* by, or from (ἐξ) works. (James ii. 21.) Such are the statements of scripture as to the manner of justification. The reader may see these different forms in two verses of Galatians ii. 16. 17; δια πίστεως, ἐκ πίστεως, and ἐν Χριστῷ, thus helping to point out their distinctive meaning. Then as to the time of justification, that is, on what it was dependent, we learn that the Lord Jesus Christ was delivered for our offences, and raised for our justifying, or justification (διὰ τὴν δικαίωσιν ἡμῶν). (Rom. iv. 25.) Our justification is here seen to be an act consequent on His resurrection. That was needed for souls to be justified.

Clear and definite is the teaching of scripture on this momentous subject. The Rev. Mr. Sadler, the rector of Honiton, has, however, written a book entitled, *Justification of Life*, in which he attempts to shew that the New

Testament teaching of justification "in every epistle of St. Paul, and in those of St. Peter, and St. John, appears as justification of life, that is, not justification in the sense of mere imputation of the merits of the death of Christ, or of the righteousness of His previous life; but justification in the sense of God imparting to us a share in His Son's resurrection-life, to be in us will, and power, and grace to serve and love God." Again he writes, "The especial aim of the treatise is to shew how God in Holy Scripture leads us to believe that justification is not a matter of *mere* imputation, but of the implanting within us of Christ's righteousness simultaneously." (*Preface* pp. 1, 10.) Mr. S. confounds justification with practical righteousness. He seeks to establish his point from scripture. To that we would appeal, and from it, as enabled by the Spirit of God, shew what the teaching of the word really is. "*Justification of life*" is a scriptural statement (Rom. v. 18), but its application in this book is, we think it can be demonstrated, clearly unscriptural.

For centuries the true doctrine of justification by faith had been lost by the mass of Christians. At the Reformation it was through God's grace recovered, for the first action of the Spirit of God in the process of the recovering of truth was to bring out afresh from the word the doctrine, which witnesses to the all-sufficiency of the atoning death of Christ. Since that day how much of the truth has been recovered! Who teacheth like God? said Elihu. (Job xxxvi. 22.) How true! He teacheth wisely and well. And we see this in the order in which He has recovered His truth. First it was the gospel made plain, and foundation-truth as to the believer's standing made clear, and what he needs as a saint set forth. After that his associations as a member of the body of Christ, and of the church of God, and what is connected specially with church truth was once more ministered on earth in the assembly of the living God. Who can doubt, as they survey the order observed in this recovery of truth, that the Spirit of God was at work in this matter?

Now, of all the apostles, Paul is the only New Testa-

ment writer who dwells on justification by faith, as he is the first evangelist, of whom we read, who preached it, and that in words which must have sent a thrill of joy through the heart of every child of God who heard them in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by [ἐν] [or, in virtue of] him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by [or, in virtue of] the law of Moses." (Acts xiii. 38, 39.)

Here, at the outset of our inquiry, we observe a marked difference between the apostle's announcement and the doctrinal statements put forth by Mr. Sadler. He affirms that apostolic teaching sets justification forth as, in part at least, "the imparting to us a share in the resurrection-life of the Son of God, to be in us will, and power, and grace to serve and love God." Those at Antioch heard from Paul of justification from all charge of guilt. The difference between these two is immense. Apostolic preaching had reference on this point to the past acts of those addressed, and their freedom from the guilt of them, with a righteous title to stand before the throne through the sovereign grace of God. Mr. Sadler would tell his readers that justification has respect likewise to the condition, or state of the person, by which provision is made for him to serve God. St. Paul treats on this point of the believer's standing before the throne of God. Mr. Sadler would mix up with it the question of the believer's state and walk. Both lines of teaching, freedom from the guilt of sin, with which our standing is connected, and freedom from the power of sin, which has to do with our condition and walk, are essential parts of the gospel of God. But to mix them up is to distort and really to misrepresent the gospel.

In the Acts, the only canonical book which supplies us with samples of apostolic preaching, Peter and Paul are both introduced as preaching forgiveness of sins (Acts ii. 38; x. 43; xiii. 38, 39), Paul alone adding to that the announcement of justification. This last truth, then, is

clearly different from, and more than that of, forgiveness of sins. Mr. Sadler quotes with approval from Dean Alford, that Paul in the Acts speaks of it as synonymous with forgiveness. (p. 48.)* One would have thought that remission of sins, and justification from all things, from which by the law they could not be justified, were not synonymous. Nor indeed are they. As forgiven, the believer is assured of freedom from the punishment he deserved. As justified, he knows that he has an unchallengeable standing before the throne of God. For if reckoned righteous by God, who can legitimately keep him out of God's presence? To be forgiven, and to be reckoned righteous, one would have supposed none could confound. As forgiven, the person owns he is not righteous. As justified, he learns that what he is not in himself, that God reckons him to be before the throne. The importance then of justification, in order to have peace with God, all may see, and the grace of it all understand. God thereby sets the guilty one, when believing, free in His presence from all fear of deserved punishment, because forgiven, and in the consciousness as well of the favour bestowed on him to stand in holy boldness and righteously before the throne. God reckons him righteous. Now the proper place of a righteous person is to stand before the throne of God.

But we must turn to the epistles of Paul to learn fully about justification. He declared it in Acts xiii.; he enters at length into the subject of it in the Epistle to the Romans. We have said that justification is more than forgiveness: the doctrine of the Epistle to the Romans makes that plain; for forgiveness, so clearly preached by both Peter and Paul, is not treated of in the Epistle to the Romans, though the primary and special teaching in it is

* Some as A C¹ and the Codex Sinaiticus omit *and* in verse 39 followed by Lachmann and Tischendorf. Tregelles and Alford, on the other hand, put it in brackets. But B C³ D E L P and the versions all have it, followed by Griesbach, Scholz and Westcott. But, whether the copulative is read or not, justification and forgiveness are not synonymous.

about the gospel of God. Only twice is forgiveness noticed. In chapter iv. 7 we meet with it as part of the apostle's quotation from Psalm xxxii. 1, but he does not dwell on that point, though he does on another part of that same quotation. Again in chapter xi. 27 we meet with it, where it comes in with reference to Israel in the future. The saints to whom Paul wrote knew of their forgiveness, yet he desired to preach to them the gospel (chap. i. 15); so he enters at length on the question of righteousness, and tells them about justification. Was it, we may ask, a proof of divine prescience that Paul wrote on this subject to the saints in that city, which in after ages would become the centre from which doctrine, subversive of this cardinal truth of the gospel, should be widely disseminated as true catholic and apostolic teaching?

Wrath of God from heaven has been revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. i. 18); and a day is coming when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to Paul's gospel (chap. ii. 16), a day described as one of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds. (Chap. ii. 5, 6.) Hence arises the necessity for the gospel, if any one of Adam's race is now to be assured of immunity from condemnation. Whereupon the apostle enters on that subject, demonstrating that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin, and therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified, for by the law is the knowledge of (ἐπίγνωσις) sin. (Chap. iii. 9, 20.) How then can any one hope to stand before the throne of God without being condemned? God can justify ungodly ones, is the glorious answer made to us in the gospel. And He is righteous in so doing, we learn from this epistle. Two questions are then taken up and settled. First how God can righteously justify ungodly ones; and second, how it is that guilty creatures can personally share in justification. The first of these questions is treated of in Romans iii. 21-31, the second in Romans iv.

(To be continued.)

C. E. S.

THE PERSONAL AND CORPORATE ACTIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

(Continued from page 157.)

III.

THE "BODY OF CHRIST," FORMED BY THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all *baptised* into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many."—1 CORINTHIANS XII. 12-14.

"There is *one body*, and *one Spirit*."—EPHESIANS IV. 4.

WE come now to examine, not the individual action, on persons, of the Spirit of God, but His corporate action, seen in the formation of the church of God on earth—the "body of Christ."

Before doing so, I would note that the saint now has two callings: the one, an *individual* calling; the other, a *corporate* one. They are not confused, nor can they be separated. The first of these is his "*heavenly calling*;" the second, his *church calling*, as a member of the body of Christ. We must therefore examine each of these in some detail; for we shall find that certain scriptures in the New Testament treat of the one, and certain of the other. This shews us why it is that in certain scriptures of the New Testament we find ourselves in company with Abraham, and David, and other worthies of the Old Testament, while in other scriptures we find ourselves apart from them altogether, and they are unnoticed, unless it may be casually, and in an inferior place in God's glory. They may be seen as "principalities and powers," while we are the body of Him who is set above them—"the fulness of him who filleth all in all."

Now, as soon as the earth became the scene of divine disappointment, when man fell, God retired from the scene, and the elect became "strangers and pilgrims in

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the earth," being called out of it to seek "another and a better country." When God returned to visit the elect in it, He did so in gracious and condescending love; and when He concluded His momentary sojourn, eating with and sharing their hospitality, He then "arose and went his way," for sin was there; and in such a scene God could not dwell. This is beautifully illustrated in His visit to Abraham, in Genesis xviii. This, then, was the "*heavenly calling*"—a calling out of the earth, by the revelation of Himself, to another scene. This calling is witnessed in all periods and ages of the world by the elect, or some typical person, which presents to us the features of this vocation in their day.

1st. It is witnessed in the *antediluvian days*, in Enoch, the seventh from Adam. The earth was corrupt before God; all flesh had corrupted his way in the earth; and "Enoch walked with God." Wonderful testimony! embracing all that man could desire. For three hundred years (Gen. v.), as the world was ripening for judgment, every step of Enoch was "with God." His course began at the birth of his child; just as some striking incident in a man's history becomes the divine voice to his soul. He names his son Methuselah, which signifies, "At his death he sends it."* Within the immediate circle of his family he witnessed that "the Lord cometh" in His judgments on the earth. His outward testimony amongst men was, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (Jude 14, 15.) "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."

* Or, "He dies, and then the arrow;" a figurative way of expressing that at his son's death the arrow of destruction would speed its way. Methuselah lived up to the moment of the flood, and passed away just as it came.

(Heb. xi. 5.) "He walked with God, and was not, for God took him." (Gen. v.)

2nd. It was witnessed in the *patriarchal days* in Abraham. The God of glory appeared unto him, and said, "Get thee out of thy country, and thy kindred, and thy father's house, and come into the land that I will shew thee." He does so at last, and then when there, and he had left all behind, God says, "to thy seed will I give this land." Here, then, was this man, outside of all he was linked to, and having nothing on earth but his tent and his altar—a stranger and a worshipper in the earth; a pilgrim journeying to a "city which had foundations, whose builder and maker was God." He possesses nothing here but a sepulchre, purchased from the sons of Heth, with these words on his lips, "I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight." (Gen. xxiii. 4.)

3rd. It was witnessed in the *Mosaic age* by the great leader of the people of God. "I pray thee," said he, "let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. But the Lord . . . would not hear me; and the Lord said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter." "And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the Lord shewed him all the land . . . and the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor; but no man knoweth his sepulchre unto this day." (Deut. iii., xxxiv.)

4th. It is expressed in the *royal days* by David, in the words which he sang by the Spirit as the sweet Psalmist of Israel: "Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto

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my cry ; hold not thy peace at my tears : for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. O spare me, that I may recover strength before I go hence, and be no more." (Ps. xxxix. 12, 13.)

5th. And in the *prophetic age* in Elijah, who went up to heaven, at the close of his prophetic task, by a whirlwind, with a chariot and horses of fire.

6th. And lastly, in the *Christian period*, in ourselves, with our own heavenly hope, while here on earth as "strangers and pilgrims," "partakers of the heavenly calling," and waiting for God's Son from heaven to receive us unto Himself, that where He is there we may be also.*

In all this we see that we follow in the great line of saints, patriarchs and prophets, kings and people who have journeyed onwards through and out of this scene to their rest. We see them as "the spirits of just men made perfect," but awaiting the "first resurrection," when they will with us, as "children of the resurrection," be clothed with their resurrection-bodies, and enter into their full heavenly glory. In the dispensation in which each lived, God marked and defined the manner in which they were to walk in existing things here on earth. Sometimes this was by an individual walk with God ; at others as a member of His elect nation ; but in none of them, before the present christian interval, do we find that in which we ourselves are called to walk in, as members of the body of Christ, formed by the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Hence we find ourselves, not only in company with that great army of saints from the beginning to the end, having our place in that heavenly calling ; but having a definite place in the counsels of God, which they will never share. In the church of God He glorifies Himself

* There will be another company of this great "heavenly calling" seen in the martyred remnant, in the last final crisis of the earth before the appearing of Christ, who receive a heavenly reward, and are caught up there, having been slain for the testimony of Jesus, and thus losing their earthly place in the earthly kingdom. They also belong to the "first resurrection."

in a way beyond all that shall ever be. In us He displays in the ages to come the exceeding riches of His grace, and His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. While He has given His Son, as a Man, a place, setting Him above all principalities and powers, not only in this age, but in that which is to come, He has given us to be His bride, His body, His joint-heirs; the Eve of the Second Adam for the Paradise of God!

It was His purpose "before the foundation of the world," "His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus." Still He kept the best wine to the last; He kept as His secret the mystery "hid in God," to display at last to those "principalities and powers in the heavenlies the manifold wisdom of God." He calls it the "unsearchable riches of Christ." None ever anticipated it in His ways. All else about Christ was "searchable" in the Old Testament Scriptures. His Incarnation was there, His life of suffering, His atoning death, His burial, His resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of God, His receiving gifts in the man (Himself), His coming in power and glory, His glorious reign. All these are to be found; but that which lay between His going on high, and His coming again—the valley that lay between the mountain tops, which when we behold them, is hidden from our view—this was never told to the sons of men, as it is now revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This was that which was "unsearchable," "past finding out," in His untraceable ways!

But we must now examine the scriptures as to the formation of this body, by the baptism of the Spirit. We will therefore look at the first prophetic mention of this "baptism" before it took place. We hear it first, then, from the lips of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus. When announcing Him he says (Matt. iii. 11), "He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." In Mark i. 8, the announcement runs, "I indeed baptise you with water; but he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost." In Luke iii. 16, it is, "I indeed baptise you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of

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whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose ; he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." While in John i. 33, we read, "And I knew him not ; but he that sent me to baptise with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost." And lastly, in Acts i. 5, the Lord tells His disciples, "For John truly baptised with water : but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

Here, then, we find the several passages of scripture where this baptism of the Spirit is formally announced. It will be seen that there is the additional baptism of fire named in certain of these passages, in keeping with the scriptures where they are found.

We are possibly aware that the four Gospels present Christ in various ways and characters. Matthew presents Him as the Son of Abraham and Son of David—the vessels of promise and Royalty in Israel. "He [thus] came unto his own, and his own people received him not ;" and He will return to them again in power and great glory ; thus having to do, in His first and second comings, both with grace and with judgment. Hence we have these two baptisms—that of the Holy Ghost, having to do with grace, and that of fire, expressive of judgment by-and-by. In Mark's Gospel we have Christ presented as the Servant of God, "who went about doing good."

As such, it is plain He has only to do with grace, hence in keeping with this characteristic we find in Mark only the one baptism—of the Holy Ghost—named. Now, in Luke we have the Lord's human genealogy and His Person presented to us as the "Son of Man." In keeping with which, and because He has so blessedly, in that character, to do with grace, as well as with all judicial actions, the baptism of the Holy Ghost and that of fire are both named. God "has given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man." (John v. 27.) But all will see that as the Son of the Father—the Son of God. as John's Gospel presents Him

—He would only have to do with grace; therefore there is but one baptism, that of the Holy Ghost, mentioned. This same reason shews us why, in Acts i., only one baptism, of the Spirit, is named, because the Acts of the Apostles present to us the work of grace begun after the cross is there unfolded to us. This makes all plain.

Now, "when the day of Pentecost was fully come," this baptism of the Spirit took place. And it may be well to remark here that this baptism never has to do with an *individual* saint, but with a number of persons, as a corporate action; also that once it took place it *never was repeated*. These remarks will be found to have great importance in our true apprehension of the church of God or body of Christ.

The number of disciples together in prayer on the day of Pentecost were thus acted upon—they were baptised into one body at that moment. Previously quickened and drawn after Christ, this fresh action changes their status from being mere individual believers to that of a body united to its Head in heaven. Christ had gone up there after redemption was accomplished, and He has entered into a new *state* for man by resurrection, and a new *place* for man, as ascended and seated in heavenly places. And in connection with this new state and new place, the Holy Ghost acts as such down from heaven, forming this "one body" in union with Christ and with each other, as "members of Christ." This is the only "membership" known in the word of God.

Now, here I would remark that, when this body was formed at Pentecost no one knew anything about it; because it was needful that a fresh offer be made, that Christ would return to Israel as a nation and bring in the times of the restitution of all things spoken of by the prophets, and bless His people on earth. The early chapters of Acts (ii.-vii.) are taken up with this tentative action towards that people; and it closed in the martyrdom of Stephen, and the message was sent after Christ, "We will not have this man to reign over us." The ground was now cleared to bring out fully the "eternal purpose" of

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God ; and Saul of Tarsus was converted by a heavenly Christ, and " separated from the people [Israel] and from the Gentiles, unto whom [said the Lord] I now send thee." He was heavenly in his origin and destiny and ministry, to bring out that body, formed by the Spirit's baptism on earth, while Christ hid His face from the house of Israel ; those " unsearchable riches " never before made known to the sons of men ; that valley between the mountain tops hitherto undiscovered and undisclosed. Saul of Tarsus hears from the Lord Himself that the saints on earth whom he was persecuting were Himself. " Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ? " " I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise [said he] and stand upon thy feet ; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of those things which thou hast seen [that is, Christ in glory] and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee." (Acts xxvi. 15, 16.) Here he receives an intimation that further revelations would be given at some convenient time not then arrived.

Now all this happened *after* the whole assembly was scattered, at the persecution which arose about the death of Stephen, in Jerusalem. Outwardly, what was gathered together and formed in Jerusalem was destroyed ; but Paul receives (he only of all the apostles ever speaks of the church of God) the revelation of that which had been formed at Pentecost into a divine unity, as one body, which never could be destroyed ; nor could its unity ever be broken ; God holds the unity of the body in His own hands.

The special revelations given to Paul (with that of his ministry generally), are noticed by his drawing marked attention to them in connection with this great subject. They are four in number : 1st. The unity of the body, " How, that *by revelation* he made known unto me the mystery [as I wrote afore in few words] which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men." (Eph. iii.) He then proceeds to unfold this body, composed of Jew and Gentile, yet being neither when thus united into

one. 2nd. He received a revelation of the Lord's Supper in connection with these truths committed to him, "I have *received of the Lord* that which I also delivered unto you," &c., and he gives the details of the supper (1 Cor. xi. 23, &c.), adding to it several new features not before given by the Lord in His institution of it on earth; but as now freshly instituted from heaven, as the Head of His body, which He was not until He went there. One marked feature being that it becomes, when observed in its truth, the symbol of the unity of the body of Christ on earth. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The loaf which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one loaf, one body; for we are all partakers of that one loaf." (1 Cor. x. 16, 17.)

A third marked revelation we find in 1 Corinthians xv., in connection with the resurrection of the saints who have fallen asleep, and the being changed of those who do not fall asleep before Christ comes. "*Behold,*" he says, "*I shew you a mystery:* We shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

The fourth we find in 1 Thessalonians iv., "For this we say unto you, by *the word of the Lord*, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not go before them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with voice of the Archangel and the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Thus we have in these four revelations: the unity of the body of Christ; the symbol of its unity on earth in the Supper; the first resurrection of the sleeping saints, and change of the living; and then the rapture of all to the glory of God. These embrace the constitution, employment, resurrection, and catching up, or rapture from

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this scene of the church of God or body of Christ; and form a complete and comprehensive summary of its whole truth.

Now, I must still endeavour to present more distinctly the present actuality of this body as here on earth, where as to personal place the Holy Ghost is. It is here that all its members are seen at one given time—as, for instance, while I speak these words. It is true that when there is a general abstract statement of this body as the fulness of Christ, “the church which is his body, the fulness [or, complement] of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. i. 22, 23), there is no time contemplated; and then the body is seen in union with Christ in heavenly places, as a matter of counsel, in connection with His exaltation as Man. But in *all other* places in scripture when this body is mentioned, it *only includes those members of Christ who are alive on earth at any given moment of its existence as you hear these words!* For there as to personal place the Holy Ghost is, who constitutes its unity, as dwelling in each member, and baptising all into one body.

Let us put a figure as to this. The ——th regiment of the British army fought in the battle of Waterloo. It is now in the roll of the army of England, having its identity, and the same number and name as then. Yet all its members have died off, not one man being in it now that was then in its strength. Others have come in, and filled up the ranks, and though the members are changed, the regiment is the same. So with the body of Christ; those who composed it in Paul’s day have died off, and others have come in, and filled up the ranks. Those who sleep, their bodies are in the dust, and their spirits with the Lord. As to personal place, they have lost their connection with the body for the present. They are *of* it, though not *in* it, now. They will all take their place in it when it is removed from this scene. Here, “If one member suffers, *all* the members suffer with it,” &c. Suffering is not the part of those who have passed away from present connection with it.

Formed by the baptism of the Holy Ghost at Pente-

cost, it has been carried along those eighteen centuries past in unbroken unity, souls passing away, and others coming in; and it is here to-day on earth for God and for faith, as truly as when Paul wrote, "There is one body and one spirit." The baptism never was repeated, but individual souls have been quickened and sealed, and thus united individually to that which the Holy Ghost formed by His baptism at Pentecost; and all its members can now, therefore, say, "by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body," because we belong to that which was then definitely and permanently formed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

There is one further important truth in connection with this doctrine, or the body, to which I would now refer before closing this paper. It is this—that wherever locally the members of this body were seen together "in assembly," they were always treated as the body: this, of course, not separating them from the whole body on earth, but treated of God, as acting on the ground and principle of the body, and in unity with the whole body on earth. This is found in 1 Corinthians xii. 27: "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." Here the principle is applied. The apostle had been teaching the great doctrine of the body (vers. 12-26): first, its unity, and then the diversity of its members, each having (whether comely or uncomely members) their place in the whole; and he applies this practically to the local assembly at Corinth, in the verse (27) above quoted.

This, then, is the body of Christ; this the corporate place of every member of Christ on earth; this the only membership known in scripture. The divine, positive fact and truth of that which no ruin of its outward unity, no corruption of Christendom, can ever mar or destroy. Grasping this in our soul's consciousness, and by faith, we have something stable, amidst the ruins of the professing church, on which to act; on which to rest in the last days. Of the practical use of the truth we shall hope to treat in the concluding paper. F. G. P.

“WHERE DWELLEST THOU?”

JOHN I. 33-39.

(Concluded from page 163.)

THUS the complete christian position is before our hearts in the testimony of John the Baptist, secured in the glory of His Person, and in the order of the divine work that brings us into it. All the divine fulness was pleased to dwell in Him. But if He is thus presented, there is also, as we have seen necessarily going before that any might receive Him, the work of sovereign grace by which we are born of God. Then there is contained in the glory of His Person, that He was the Lamb to take away sin according to the exigencies of God's own glory and of our discovered condition—and lastly, when by His precious blood our sins had been washed away, the Holy Ghost is given to bring us consciously into our wholly new place in Christ; for if any man be in Christ there is a new creation, old things are passed away, all things are become new. We are complete in Christ, before the Godhead's fulness. What a salvation it is, complete in its three parts, presented, too, in the order in which they are made good to our souls. First, life, and with it the conviction of our sins, for the life was the light of men; secondly, the blood of the cross, and a full and everlasting forgiveness by it; and lastly, the Holy Ghost, seal of the faith that believes God's testimony to it, that we may be established in Christ in the full christian position. Of course, as yet it was only found in the testimony of the glory of Christ, save that there was a positive actual work of divine quickening going on that any might receive Him.

Now we come to what may well challenge our hearts, as to the effect of this grace in salvation when fully known to our souls. For it is just here we have an historical incident of surpassing interest brought in, as the few given in the Gospel of John are always, to

illustrate the doctrine in hand. "Two disciples of John heard him speak, and they followed Jesus." Blessed practical effect of this truth, beloved brethren, too often lacking with us! And they followed Him, not for anything more that they could get from Him, but with one object. And, oh! what it tells of the manner of the love displayed in God come into this world in Christ! So completely had He won the confidence of these two hearts in attracting them after Himself, that their object that first day they ever knew Him is to find out where He dwells, that they may dwell with Him. The fruit of His grace as He turned and saw them following is sweet to the Lord in this cold heartless world, and He draws out the expression of it by His question "What seek ye?" Can He put such a question to us? We rest in the wonderful position we have been established in. It is well. It is the basis of any proper fruit of Christianity. But what are we seeking? For let not our hearts be deceived into thinking we are seeking nothing. It is impossible. The heart was made for an object, and a *personal* object, and nothing but a divine one can satisfy it. So that if we are not seeking Christ, we are assuredly seeking something that is not Christ. Ah! is it not the secret of so much failure, of so little brightness and power of christian life, of so little testimony for Him in separation from the world, where there is no question of the full christian place. There is not the attraction of Christ known personally as the one bright blessed object of the heart eclipsing all else. Not so could these disciples know their place; but thus early in their knowledge of Him they were bent on one thing, "Where dwellest thou?" And the Lord accepts and ratifies the desire, as of His own awakening in their hearts, "Come and see." "He satisfieth the longing soul."

But I think we may see a more extended scope in the place this touching incident has, at the opening and as the frontispiece of this Gospel. It is the awakening of a need in the soul, to which the Gospel of John supplies the answer. The other gospels tell us of the Son of man that

had not where to lay His head in the world He created. *This* is the revelation of the heavenly home of the Son of God. He dwells in the bosom of the Father. He has come to reveal it that we may find our home now in spirit, and for ever there with Him where He finds His. It was just what these two disciples, if there were but two, were drawn after Him to seek. Oh to know more of the power of such an attraction! and then we shall be more prepared for the full heavenly association with Himself, to which this gospel is the blessed moral introduction. In the light of what follows in it, "Come and see" is really the invitation to look into heaven now, and become familiar with it as His home and ours.

This testimony of heavenly things comes very early. Only, before there can be the reception of it, there must come the earthly testimony of the need of our condition in view of what is heavenly. "If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" The Son of man had come down from heaven to tell of what is there—"the Son of man who *is in heaven*," even when thus testifying of it on earth. (Chap. iii. 12, 13.) But in chapter iv. the richest heavenly things of divine grace in the Person of Jesus are presented in vain (vers. 10-15), till the Lord turns the testimony in upon what she is, and the first ray of divine intelligence enters as ever through the conscience. "He that cometh from heaven is above all, and what he hath seen and heard that he testifieth, and no man receiveth his testimony." Still there *was* this testimony in all its perfection, and grace working, as we have seen, that we might receive it—the Father drawing to the Son, that when we come, we may find the Son revealing the Father, as only the Son can, and in special character as the Son who dwells in His bosom. "No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Thus when the time was come, the testimony of His words and works being rejected, that He should leave the world and go to the Father, and He leads the thoughts of His people to the

Father's house for the first time in scripture (chap. xiv.), He can say, "Whither I go ye know." As though He would say, You know heaven quite well; the Father's house is no strange place to you. How can it be possible? Philip seizes the truth, so far at least that the Father's presence must make all the blessedness of the Father's house; he asks, "Shew us the Father and it sufficeth us," but only to shew how far he had been from discerning the proper glory of the Lord Jesus as of an only-begotten Son with the Father. "Have I been so long with you and hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me?"—His words and works, all that He was, made the revelation of the Father. So that however little hearts entered into it then or now, there had been revealed, and shining out in Him morally here, every characteristic trait of the divine and everlasting blessedness of heaven.

Nor was this all. He whose presence here had been the revelation of a place so new to the thoughts of His people, was now going to take His place as man, as the revealed and known centre of all the joy and blessedness and glory of that place. For "I go to prepare a place for you"—Himself the home and intimate link of their and our hearts with the place, His going there all the preparation of it possible or needed, to give us our place there in spirit with Him, till He comes to receive us to Himself. Hence the word never speaks of our going to heaven, but to Him. The person makes the place, even in natural things, how much more in divine!

But there was more in His heart for us—more that we needed to connect us in power with the place thus revealed to us. He had been the manifestation in His own Person when here of all that makes heaven what it is for ever. He has gone to take His place there as the One who loved us and gave Himself for us, that our hearts might follow Him there as to their own familiar home. And now from that home of love and joy and glory, He has sent the Holy Ghost to be the power of our

association with Him in it, and thus of our enjoyment of such heavenly blessedness (Chap. xiv. 16-20.) It is the full blessed answer to the awakened longing of the soul, "Where dwellest thou?"—the "Come and see" of Jesus in answer to it, that we may "abide with him." Thus we have before us in this gospel, the main elements, morally, that go to form a heavenly people upon earth, left here to express what is heavenly, and thus only truly to represent a rejected, heavenly Christ, while waiting for Him.

When the Lord Jesus was glorified and the Holy Ghost was come, we find this expressed as the normal christian position, and the responsibility that flows from it. "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." We are constituted such by the grace that has called us to Himself, but not without the revelation of a new sphere suited to us as such. "What eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, God hath *revealed* unto us by his Spirit." Hence "we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." (2 Cor. iv. 18.) But it is only by faith that this is true to us, so that we are willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord for the actual sight of them (chap. v. 7, 8), seeing through a glass darkly now but then face to face. Still the things that are eternal are revealed now that we *may* look at them; and more, as a risen people, "risen with Christ, *seek* those things which are above [and here we see the power of the link of Christ's presence there for our hearts], where Christ is, sitting on the right hand of God." (Col. iii.) And we are exhorted to set our *mind* (for the Spirit of God supposes that our *affections* will be there and says nothing of them) on things above and not on things on the earth. The mind is distinct from the affections. For as it has been truly put in illustration of this difference—a man's affections may rest in his family, and his mind be all the while engrossed in his business. Now the Spirit would have our minds *engrossed with Christ*. For many walk, the same apostle tells us, weep-

ing, who mind (using the same word) earthly things, and are enemies of that which is the distinctively separative power of Christianity, the *cross* of Christ, whatever their profession to be His. And then in one blessed expression of it he sums up the whole christian position, viewed practically, "Our citizenship is in heaven." He used a word of far reaching force for a Greek mind, who held all other relationships and interests in life subordinate to his citizenship. As though he would say: all that forms the life morally, in relationship, love, motive, object, and joy, is found for us in heaven now; whence we await in *hope*, too, the Lord Jesus as Saviour, to change this body of humiliation into the likeness of His body of glory according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.

Earnestly would I raise the question then, beloved brethren, in our souls, if in our christian place before God, have we been saved to rest in that place, or from it, as the clear starting-point, now to seek Christ for His own beauty and excellence, as our one worthy and individual object? Like one of old who could say, "One thing have I desired of the Lord that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord *all the days of my life*, to behold the beauty of the Lord." But if our hearts are set for this by His grace, we cannot find Him in the world out of which He has been rejected. He is ascended up to the scene of which morally He had been the full revelation in His own Person here, and our hearts follow Him. He draws them there that He may satisfy the desire He has awakened, in the enjoyment of the heavenly things of His home and presence. "Come and see. And they came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day." "He satisfieth the longing soul," in ever-increasing measure, and with increasing capacity and longing *now*; in the divine fulness of it when we are with Himself for ever. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am." "I will come again and receive you unto myself." "Surely I come quickly." "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."—J. A. T.

LETTERS AND EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF J. N. D. ON SUBJECTS OF GENERAL INTEREST.

BELOVED BROTHER,

I have no objection to call the Holy Ghost Lord as a general title in glory and Godhead, just as Jehovah our God is called Lord, regularly so, in the New Testament. The Lord said unto my Lord—Jehovah to Adonai; and thus I am quite free, and have no quarrel with those who do, because He who is God must, in a certain sense, be Lord; and I think that 2 Corinthians iii. 18 does connect Lord closely with the Spirit, but verse 6 gives it a peculiar force, when, after a long parenthesis, verse 17 takes it up again. The revelation of the Lord is in the present power of the Spirit of God; and that is the way in which we have even the new covenant. But He identifies this with the present power of the Spirit in saying, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

I do not think 2 Thessalonians iii. 5 amounts to a very distinct testimony. It is the general expression for the ordinary guiding power of grace over His people, and without any definite distinction. It is Christ that comes, if we define, with the term Lord to the mind. In the regular use of the word, κύριος is used in two ways in the New Testament. The LXX. have always translated Jehovah by κύριος, and so it is used as a name, without any article, in the New Testament. I have given a list in my French New Testament, in the Preface. There we have Christ set as Man in the place of Lordship. God has made this same Jesus "whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. To us there is one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ. This truth is very distinctly taught. It is not a question of nature, but of a place He has taken. And in this character the church, or Christians, constantly address Him: all that call on the name of the Lord Jesus, theirs and ours. It is a name of relationship—theirs: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Thrice I besought the Lord that this might be removed from me.

The Holy Ghost is the accomplisher of all grace in us. In that sense He carries out the Lordship work in us. It is not a question of the Holy Ghost's nature, or being, or personality. They that lie to the Holy Ghost, lie to God. He distributes to whom He will, and as thus acting, He is practically Lord. Still, though He exercises the authority in and over us, yet He refers our hearts to Christ. There are diversities of *operations*, but one Spirit. There are diversities of ministrations, but one Lord. So, as to unity, one Spirit, one body, one hope of our calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism. Thus, in the practical sense, the Holy Spirit acts as Lord; we are led by Him. The Spirit said, "Separate me." But the title, as appropriated,

is Christ's, or Jehovah, or the general divine authority and rule. The action by which Lordship is exercised in grace in us, is by the Spirit, as in I Corinthians xii.—distributing. But the title, Lord, in administration, is in Christ. If Christ direct my heart, the Holy Ghost would do it in me.

In Acts iv. it is another matter—it is *δεσπότης*, not *κύριος*—I mean in verse 24—as, “the Lord that bought them,” “the only Lord God”—despot literally—bought them, being the comparison of a master buying a slave. In verse 29 it is general, but, if defined, refers to Jehovah. “Child” is “servant,” Christ as man (exalted) is looked at as not *δούλος*, bondsman, but the servant of God.

But though Christ be made Lord and Christ as man, yet, through His oneness with the Father, and His being the true God, it runs up into a divine title, just as in the case with Son. He is in the place of Son, as Man, or we could not be with Him: That “holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God;” but it cannot be separated from divine and eternal Sonship. As Man He becomes and enters into—is, in so far as He is a Man, in the relationship with the Father as the divine and eternal Son. In all the works of God we find this co-operation of the Persons. The Son wrought, yet He would say, “The Father that dwelleth in me, *He* doeth the works:” and “if I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come among you.” I know not that I can add more to make it clear. Definitions here are not man's part—he receives, thanks, and worships.

My kindest love to the brethren. I rejoice in their blessing and joy in Christ as my own: in some sense more. The love of Christ directs the eye on them He loves. All is going on very fast here, but towards what?—but the blessed Lord is as sure for this as for every other state of His saints, and the truth, and the word of truth, increasingly precious; Christ more all, at any rate, more separately and contrastedly. . . . Peace be with you, ever dear brother.

Affectionately yours,

J. N. D.

P.S.—In reply to the fly-leaf I had not sufficiently noticed, I add, it is not any question of Person or dignity, as to the Holy Ghost, that hinders His being the object addressed in prayer, but the place He holds in the divine economy. He does govern as we are led by Him, but our communion is with (objectively) the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. It is eternal life to know the Father, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Yet, without the Spirit, and a divine Spirit, we could have no communion, and no knowledge. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us. Our bodies are His temples. But it is as in us He works, leading us objectively to the Father and the Son. But God dwells in us; by the Spirit we know the Son is in the Father, a divine Person thereby, we know we are in Him, and He in us. And in Romans viii. we

find Christ and the Spirit in this respect identified. The Holy Ghost is a divine Person, and in the unity of the Godhead adored and worshipped. He is the immediate agent of all that God does, immediate to the effect. But His place in the divine ways is not in the same way objective—as divine and as personal, but not in God's ways so objective.

1870.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

— assures me, for I had written to him, that he is quite sure that he joins heartily in praise and worship to the Lord Jesus Christ. He has only wanted the full sense of sonship to be known, and of nearness to God in Christ. Now this is right, and many fail in it, and have the feeling they can approach Christ and trust in His love, but not God. The Spirit of adoption is greatly wanting in many. . . .

It is possible some may have objected to it really. If they will not worship a man, the angels will, and moreover every knee bow to Him, of men and infernal beings. While scripture puts us into the glory with Christ and like Christ, it carefully guards the personal glory and title of Christ. Moses and Elias were seen in the same glory as Christ, but the moment Peter would put them on a level, they disappear, and the Father's voice is heard declaring He was His beloved Son. The heavens were as open to Stephen (through Christ's death) as to Christ when He came up from Jordan, but Stephen looks at Him as an object—as Son of man, and is changed morally into His likeness; heaven looks down on Christ, and instead of conforming Him to anything, the Spirit seals Him as He is, and the Father owns Him as He is. It is down here He says the *Son of Man* who is in heaven.

It is He, who came in in subjection by the door, the Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep, who says, "I and my Father are one." If there is the divine and human nature in Him, there is only one person. And he who says, I will not adore a man, is, to say the least, in danger of denying the unity of the person. He who has seen Him has seen the Father. The Man who spoke to Philip and washed his feet could say, and did at the same time, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in Me?" Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, addressed himself to the Son of man, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Authority is given to Him to judge because He is the *Son of Man*, but it is that all men "may honour the Son even as they honour the Father." (John v.) Is that refusing to worship Him? See verse 18, the Jews were more consistent.

To separate the Son of man and Son of God is to dissolve Christ. See John iii. 14, 16. See again 1 John v. 20, "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we should know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, that is in his Son Jesus Christ. This [He, *ὁ ὦς*] is the true God, and eternal life."

But Jesus is the name of Him who was born of the Virgin Mary; and Christ is the anointed Man. And the apostle emphatically adds in contrast, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." This is a most striking passage. In 1 John ii. iii. the inseparableness of personality and the distinction of nature is very striking—"Him at his coming," "is *born* of him" (chap. ii. 28, 29), so that we are sons of God (chap. iii. 1), and yet the world knew Him not—*sons of God* (ver. 2), but we *like Him* when *He* shall appear. All this blessed truth is lost if we dissolve, as I have called it, Christ. And yet I must know Him as a man, that is the distinctness of the nature; for He prayed to God and died, and yet *He* was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. When in the form of God made Himself of no reputation (*ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε*)—yet being thus could say, "Destroy this temple and in three days *I* will raise it up." No man knows the Son but the Father. But he who loses these things loses the Son.

Speaking of worshipping a man is losing the Person of Christ. And if the angels are to worship Him, worship is a just service as to what He is: for it is not our being exempt which is in question, but His being entitled to it. And there it is Christ, though His Godhead is brought out, yet as incarnate; for it is said, "when he had by himself purged our sins," and *He is here* "the first-begotten" not "the only-begotten," and Psalm ii. is quoted where He is distinctly celebrated as Messiah-Christ, or as in English "His anointed." But I fear there has been too much discussion. Refusing to worship the Lord is a very serious error, but discussion about His Person seldom leads to much fruit. I have spoken as plainly as possible, that there may be no mistake about my judgment about refusing to do it. . .

Firmness against false doctrine is always right. But there are a great many who are in the Martha state—"whatever thou wilt ask God," who, as not really free, cannot go directly to the Father, nor worship Him rightly—cannot worship under the conviction the Father Himself loveth them; not questioning God's love in sending His only-begotten Son, but who do not enter into the present privilege of direct address to the Father, as those who are in His presence and enjoy His love there—loved as Jesus Himself is loved, wonderful as such a word is, this love being in them.

Affectionately yours in the Lord,

J. N. D.

1880.

DEAR BROTHER,

There is nothing new to me in the subject you write about. I had to discuss it 25 years ago in Switzerland. It was the ground the dissenters took against me then, that it was a thing *to be* formed. In Switzerland the comparison of an army was presented, that when one corps was passing men said the army was passing, but nothing was really the army but the whole. I took up the simile, and said it was like recruiting and passing out into the reserve, and

freedom from service, and new recruits coming in, but it was always the army. This is plain: the Holy Ghost being down here, the body is recognised of God as being down here too. The deceased saints do not enter into account as in the body, of it now in the mind and purpose of God though not actually, as having passed out of the scene where the body is, as formed by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven.

My expression, I remember, was that those who have passed away, "*n'entrent pas en ligne de compte*" as regards the church actually. I do not know that I should use the word "perfect" body. The danger is to deny that anything is ever the body but the present thing on earth, that is that there will be no body of Christ when He is Head over all things *de facto*, so that the body is a temporary thing. It is quite clear to me that the body recognised now is on earth united to the Head by the Holy Ghost come down here, but does union with Christ by the Holy Ghost cease when the saints all go up to meet the Lord? When they die they are individually with the Lord, but are lost, so to speak, not being *raised* to their *actual* connection with the body which is here, where as to personal place, the Holy Ghost now is. But supposing a living saint changed when Christ comes. Does he lose his union with the Head? Does the Holy Ghost as making him one with Him, and does he cease to be a member of the body? This I cannot think. The church is His body, and He is to be glorified in the church throughout all ages, world without end.

It would be a sad thought to me to cease to be a member of Christ, or that that should cease. He that is *joined to the Lord* is one Spirit. I insisted on the present actuality of the body largely from 1 Corinthians xi., "He hath set in the church." There are no healings in heaven. That the body is a present thing by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven is as clear in scripture as possible, and to give it up at any time is to give up Christ's care for His members, as a man of his own flesh.

But further, Ephesians i. 22, 23 is an abstract statement for me. Now, He has put all things under His feet. This we know is not accomplished. So it is as to calling and inheritance (vers. 4, 5, 11), it is what is in the mind of God, with a statement of what is already accomplished, as verses 13, 14, 20, 21, but both parts look at the mind and purpose of God—the hope of His calling and the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints; and then the Spirit gives the complete thing of the mind of God in verses 22 and 23, not merely what is now fulfilled. Is it not natural to hold this fast, that the thought of the body may not lose its importance by being only a temporary thing?

J. N. D.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

18. Q.—Would an evangelist, in preaching the Gospel, be free to say that there were those to whom he could not hold out any hope of mercy ; that is, of course, not taking into consideration rejecters of Christ ? “WICKLOW.”

A.—We certainly know of no ground in scripture for such a statement, and cannot understand any one who knows the *gospel* for *himself*, even thinking so. The declarations of scripture are too plain to allow of any such limitation. “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,” and “God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” open the door to *all*, and *unbelief* is the only thing that can put any without the pale of mercy. If God “would have *all* men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth,” upon the ground that there is “one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself for *all*,” how dare any one, speaking in His name, say that there are some to whom “he could not hold out any hope of mercy” ?

19. Q.—Can a “wicked person” excommunicate himself from the assembly, or does scripture shew any other course than the assembly putting away such a one ? W. T.

A.—The statement of scripture is plain : “Put away from among yourselves that wicked person” (1 Cor. v. 13) ; and such an one absenting himself from the assembly does not relieve saints from the solemn responsibility of openly clearing the Lord’s name from reproach, and proving themselves clear before God of the evil that had been amongst them in the person of the one who has left them. They have, too, to approve *themselves* “to be clear in this matter.” (2 Cor. vii. 11.)

20. Q.—How are we practically to wash one another’s feet ? S. A.

A.—We should say that the way to *practically* wash the feet of another would be to approach him in lowliness and love, and deal with his conscience by the word of God in such a way as to lead to self-judgment, so that whatever was wrong in his walk might be confessed and refrained from. To wash the feet of others we must ourselves be walking in communion with God, and have what is suited to *Him* before our minds.

C. W.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH, AND JUSTIFICATION OF LIFE.

(Continued from page 173.)

THE responsible creature, whether Jew or Gentile, brought in guilty before God, we learn that God's righteousness, witnessed by the law and the prophets (in the former by the sacrifices, in the latter by the predictions of blessing to be enjoyed in the future) was now manifested. God has set forth Christ Jesus as a mercy-seat through faith in His blood, for the shewing forth of His righteousness in the passing over the sins of Old Testament saints through divine forbearance, and for the shewing forth of His righteousness in the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of him who is of the faith of Jesus. God is seen then to be righteous in justifying ungodly ones, the blood of Christ being the ground of it, and Christ Himself set forth a mercy-seat through faith in His blood to shew it. Now if God can be righteous in justifying one ungodly person on such ground, He can be righteous in justifying any. Hence God's righteousness through faith of Jesus Christ is unto all* them that believe, for there is no difference. For all, whether Jews or Gentiles, have sinned, and they come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. All boasting is thus excluded, and the law at the same time established; the guilty one, when believing, being justified by faith apart from works of law. Now this way of acting opens the door of blessing to Gentiles, seeing it is one God who will justify the circumcision on the principle of (ἐκ) faith, and the uncircumcision through (διὰ) faith.

* The common text, supported by the uncials D E F G K L \aleph^3 , with the Clementine Vulg. and the Syriac, reads "unto all and upon all them that believe." On the other hand A B C P \aleph^1 omit "and upon all," with the Coptic and Armenian versions and the Codex Amiatinus. With this agree Lachmann, Tischendorf, Westcott, and Tregelles; Griesbach, Scholz and Alford viewing the omission as very probable. The context seems to favour it likewise, for the *all* spoken of are here said to be justified.

God's righteousness thus displayed, and His holiness fully maintained, we next learn how a person can share in this justification, illustrated, as regards the principle—that is, by faith (ἐκ πίστεως), not by, or from, works—in the history of Abraham recounted in Genesis xv. ; and, as regards the moral class who can participate in the blessings of it, in the history and words of David (Psa. xxxii.), followed by the testimony set forth, on the belief of which we are justified. (Chap. iv. 24, 25.) For it was not written for Abraham's sake alone that righteousness was reckoned, or imputed to him, but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on (ἐπί) Him, that is, put full confidence in Him, who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and raised for our justification.

In the third chapter, it should be noticed, we read of God's righteousness being manifested unto all them that believe. In the fourth chapter we read, not of God's righteousness, or of Christ's righteousness, but simply of righteousness being *imputed* by God to the believer, not a word however of its being *imparted*. Reckoning a man righteous is not imparting to him righteousness, but imputing it to him. We have nothing here of giving a man a righteousness, but of God reckoning a guilty one righteous before Him, when he believes on Him who has shewn Himself to be the God of resurrection, resting on God's testimony about the death and resurrection of His Son. To what has been done *for* us by the Lord Jesus Christ God points us here, not to anything done *in* us ; and the one who believes this testimony is justified from all things, from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses, has peace consequently with God, and boasts in hope of the glory of God, able meanwhile to boast in tribulations also, and to boast likewise in God through the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom he has received the reconciliation. Now these blessings just enumerated cannot, whilst we are on earth, be in their own line surpassed. And all this flows out from the atoning death of Christ, and from God justifying those who confide in Him

with reference to the beneficial results of the death and resurrection of His Son. As yet we have not read a word in the epistle of the walk, and condition, or state, of the believer, but only of his standing (chap. v. 2); and to that, and to the special blessings connected with it, we cannot, as we have said, add one iota. Justified by (ἐκ) faith, we have peace with God. And whether we read *we have* (ἔχομεν), or *let us have* (ἔχωμεν) peace, it makes no difference on this point. Peace with God flows to us by virtue of the Lord's atoning death and resurrection, consequent on our being justified by faith apart from works of law. Thus the present standing of the believer before the throne is perfect. And all is seen to rest simply on the atoning death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was raised for our justification, or for our justifying (διὰ τὴν δικαίωσιν ἡμῶν).

To the doctrine of justification by faith and its consequences the apostle elsewhere refers (1 Cor. vi. 11; 2 Cor. v. 21; Phil. iii.; Titus iii. 7), and more at length in Galatians ii. 15–iii. 14. But the teaching is nowhere so fully set forth as in Romans iii. 20–v. 11, concentrating the attention of the reader on what is told him about the Lord Jesus Christ, as the ground on which, when believed God can righteously justify ungodly ones.

St. Paul treats of justification as by faith, and not by works of law. As thus justified, all recurrence to the law to acquire a standing before the throne of God must clearly be given up. On this he insists in Galatians ii., contrasting in chapter iii. of that epistle law and faith; those on the principle of faith being blessed with faithful Abraham, whilst those on the principle of works of law are under a curse, for "by law no flesh is justified in the sight of God." (Gal. iii. 11.) Now this justification is completed once and for ever. "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," he writes to the Corinthians (1 Cor. vi. 11), reminding Titus of the same thing. (Chap. iii. 7.) Further, those thus justified have submitted themselves to the righteousness of God, which

Israel refused to do (Rom. x. 3); God being displayed as righteous in reckoning such righteous before Him. All the glory then of their justification is due to God; for that to which they had no title, and which they never could have procured, namely, a standing as righteous before the throne, is theirs, and theirs for ever who believe on Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. It was this which Paul gloried in—a righteousness which is from God (τὴν ἐκ Θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην), in contrast to any which he might have called his own (Phil. iii. 9), as the fruit of his acts. God reckoned him righteous. With this he was satisfied. He desired nothing else. Hence the believer's standing is seen to rest wholly on the merits of the blood of Christ, he enjoying it as having believed God's testimony to the death and resurrection of His Son. Such an one is justified, or reckoned righteous by, or on the principle of (ἐκ), faith.

But if this question is settled, and settled for ever, may such an one walk and act as he lists? Scripture condemns such an unholy principle, and insists by James on justification by, or on the principle of (ἐξ), works. Faith without works is dead. St. Paul has treated of justification by faith in connection with the believer's standing, St. James insists on justification by works in connection with the believer's walk. Paul points us to Abraham in Genesis xv., as an illustration of one justified by faith. James turns to the history of the same patriarch in Genesis xxii. for an illustration of one justified by works. This is helpful and instructive, as the order is suggestive. Abraham was justified by faith, when he believed God's word about his seed. God who reads the heart knew that His servant had believed Him, though no word was uttered by the patriarch on that occasion, that we read of. He was justified by works years afterwards, when he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar, the surrendering of his son to die, in whom were centred all his hopes for earth, evidencing the reality of his faith. "Thus," writes James, "the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteous-

ness." Faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith perfected. (James ii. 22, 23.) Works are needed, as evidences of the reality of faith which already exists. We cannot too stoutly maintain that. On the one hand we cannot too tenaciously maintain the doctrine of justification by faith. On the other we cannot too strongly insist on justification by works, yet not as the meritorious ground of our standing, which would be to depreciate the value of the atoning death of Christ, but as evidence of real faith in God's word about His Son. Both must be exemplified in the believer, as both were in Abraham, ever remembering that Abraham was justified by faith years before he was justified by works by the offering up of his son, by which, as James points out, the scripture of Genesis xv. 6 was fulfilled.

Mr. Sadler would insist on evidences of faith. In this he is right. Yet, while insisting on this, we must be careful not to weaken the doctrines of grace. The scripture teaching of the assurance of salvation is perfectly compatible with the most earnest exhortation as to our walk and ways. When it treats of the former it tells us of God's purpose for His saints, which must and will be carried out. When it deals with the latter, it is pressing on saints to be real, and to manifest the fruits of life in the soul. We are to make our calling and election sure, writes Peter (2 Peter i. 10); but it is a calling, and an election in which we already share. Yet, while God's word insists on this, there is not a loophole allowed for a doubt to enter the heart as to the present and everlasting salvation of all true believers on the Lord Jesus Christ. An illustration of this is furnished us in the Epistle to the Hebrews (chaps. iii., iv.), in which the saint's responsibility to keep on the road to the end is pressed on him in the strongest way. All were to press on, Paul included. Accordingly, when exhorting them to do this, the apostle says *we* and *us* (chap. iii. 6, 14; iv. 11); but when hinting at the possibility of any one turning out to be a Christian only in name, he changes the term to *any man* or *any of you*. (Chap. iii. 12; iv. 1, 11.) We will quote the

passages. "But Christ as a Son over His [that is, God's] house, whose house *are we*, if *we hold fast* the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end." "For *we are made* partakers of Christ, if *we hold* the beginning of *our* confidence steadfast unto the end." "*Let us labour* therefore to enter into that rest." So far he classes himself with them all. But warning such as might be mere professors, he adds, "lest *any man* fall after the same example of unbelief." Again, "Take heed lest there be in any of *you* an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." And, "Let us fear, lest a promise being left of entering into *his* [that is, God's] rest, any of *you* should seem to come short." One who knows he has everlasting life could not rightly talk of the possibility of losing it; but having it, he is to manifest it, because it is life. Of the abiding security of those who possess it the Lord has told us in John x. Such shall never perish (*ἀπόλωνται*), that is, there is no germ of destruction of that life within the believer, and no power from without shall pluck such from Christ's hand. This was the declaration of the Good Shepherd when on earth. And saints could and did know they were saved. John wrote, that they might know they had eternal life, who believe on the name of the Son of God. (1 John v. 13.) Peter wrote to those who had received the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls. (1 Peter i. 9.) And Paul says of those once Gentiles, "By grace ye are saved [*σῳσμένοι*], through faith." (Eph. ii. 8.) And the Judge Himself has declared, "He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life." (John v. 24.) Nothing, we should have thought, could be plainer than this.

But Mr. Sadler asserts that, though the members of the apostolical churches are all assumed to be "elect," yet they are not assumed to be sure of perseverance in grace, or of final acceptance. In proof of this he quotes (p. 186) 1 Peter i. 2, and contrasts it with 2 Peter i. 10. In the former they are addressed as elect, in the latter they are

exhorted to make their calling and election sure. In this there is no contradiction. The one who is chosen of God, or elect, will undoubtedly be saved. But is it anything inconsistent with this, that he should manifest by his life who and what he is? It is to do this that the apostle exhorts him. Life should be manifested. Antinomianism forms no part of scripture teaching. God does not only save from the justly deserved wrath, but He quickens. Hence the one who is saved should manifest the fruits of the divine nature in his ways down here. One might wonder at Mr. S. finding a difficulty, or resting an argument on these two verses to undermine the teaching of grace. But not Peter only, Paul also is pressed into the service, though with no more success. (p. 187.) "The Christians of the Roman church," he tells us, "are all of them in his [that is, Paul's] eyes the called of Jesus Christ, beloved of God, called to be saints, and yet to such persons the apostle deems it right to say, 'Thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee,' " &c. The apostle, we beg Mr. Sadler's pardon, says no such thing to Christians. He addresses, in Romans xi. 13-24, Gentiles in contrast to Jews, "I speak to you the Gentiles," warning them against abusing the privilege which is now theirs. A Christian is neither a Jew nor a Gentile (1 Cor. x. 32), whichever of these two he once was. Mr. S. confounds grace and privilege. We shall have to return to the teaching about the olive-tree further on, most important as it is in its place, but not to be applied as Mr. Sadler does in his work. Predestination, and indefectibility of grace are perfectly compatible with all that St. Paul and St. Peter taught.

But we are also told, that though "the apostolical Christians were all addressed 'as saved,' yet this salvation was in no case held to be final—always conditional. In one sense they were all apparently saved, or had been saved; in another they were 'being saved'; in a third sense, more frequently alluded to by far than the others, they had *yet* to be saved in the judgment day, or in the

day of the Lord Jesus." (p. 193.) Of course the salvation of the whole person is not yet completed, for we await that to be accomplished by the redemption of the body. (Rom. v. 9, 10; viii. 23; 1 Peter i. 5.) But to say that salvation is in no case held to be final, but always conditional, is to confound that which Peter so carefully distinguishes, the present and everlasting salvation of the soul, with the full and still future salvation of the whole person. (See 1 Peter i. 5, 9.) And surely nothing more definite could we have, than the statement already quoted from Ephesians ii. 5, 8, "By grace ye are saved (*σῶσμενοι*)."^{*} We call our reader's attention to the perfect tense here used by the apostle. Can it be conceived, that, one in Christ in the heavenlies now (Eph. ii. 6), may be shut out of heaven for ever by-and-by? In the face of this scripture, how can Mr. Sadler attempt to make good his assertion?

He tells us, "The Christians, to whom the apostles wrote their epistles, had been saved, for Christ by His death and resurrection had put the whole world into a salvable state. Each and every man's sin* was by His death fully atoned for; so that each man could, if he would, be made a partaker of the death and life of Christ." (p. 193.) Generally for the support of his statements, the author quotes scripture. With this practice we heartily agree. But in support of this astounding statement, that every man's sin has been atoned for, the author has quoted nothing. Indeed, there is nothing in the divine word to support it, but much that is against it. There is a confounding here between propitiation and substitution, both essential parts of atonement. Propitiation has been made for the whole world, as John writes. (1 John ii. 2.) Hence if God is righteous in saving one sinner, He can be equally righteous in saving all, if they will accept of His salvation. The blood on the mercy-seat has met the claims of

* The New Testament, in which the distinction between sin and sins is made plain, teaches differently from this. Sins, not sin, are atoned for. The acts of the nature are atoned for by the blood. The nature is dealt with by death.

"AN OPEN DOOR."

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God's holiness and righteousness. But substitution on the other hand has not been effected for the whole world, else all would be saved. This Isaiah liii. 11, 12; Matthew xx. 28; Hebrews ix. 28; 1 Peter ii. 24 teach us. The Lord Jesus bore the sins of *many*, or *our sins*, as wrote Peter, distinguishing those whom he addressed from the ungodly and impenitent Gentiles referred to in verse 12 of that same chapter. He gave Himself a ransom for many (*ἀντὶ πολλῶν*), Christ Himself tells us (Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45) when speaking of those who would benefit by His death. It was enough for all (*ὕπὲρ πάντων*), Paul tells us (1 Tim. ii. 6), but actually only for many (*ἀντὶ πολλῶν*). This limitation of the benefits of it to those only who will participate in them we meet with elsewhere. See Romans v. 18, 19, "For as by one offence upon all to condemnation, so by one act of righteousness upon all to justification of life." So far could the benefits extend. But all not receiving it we read, "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." To teach that the sins of all men have been atoned for, and yet all are not saved, is to depreciate the value of the atonement, and to require something more to ensure the sinner a perfect standing before the throne. C. E. S.

"AN OPEN DOOR."

"HE that hath the key of David: he that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth." Christ is not looking for strength in the saints; He enters into His own personal and peculiar service, and holds the "key" Himself; and *this* is our confidence. If raging billows rise in countries around us, and the preaching of the gospel seems to be forbidden, well, it is in His hand. I might desire that the gospel might be preached in a certain land, and the hindrances may seem to be too many and too great; but my comfort is to know that Christ has the *key*, and all the divine power of God at His disposal; and, as it is in John x., "To him the porter openeth," so that, when Jesus presented Himself, as in the Gospels, none could shut out His testimony.

All the powers of earth—the Pharisees, the lawyers, the chief priests, the governors, the Pilates and Herods (those foxes)—could not hinder one poor sheep from hearing the voice of the Good Shepherd in the days of His flesh; and so it is now, for Christ is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

This is our confidence in preaching the gospel; for, with all the liberty with which we are blessed in this highly-favoured country, I could not count upon a single year more, but for this simple promise—"I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it;" and I could go fearlessly into any country, whatever might be the outward circumstances, if I saw that the Lord had set before me an open door. Of course, we must wait the Lord's time to have the door opened, as we see in the case of Paul. He was forbidden to speak in Asia at one time, and then we find him there for three years afterwards, the Lord owning his labours there, so that all Asia—of which Ephesus, where he was gathering a church, was the capital—heard the word of God. Of course, we shall have to be content to lean in faith on the arm of Him who holds the key, and in *our patience* we shall possess our souls; for there will always be circumstances to exercise our faith, and God will allow these circumstances to arise, to prove to us that we cannot do without Him, for then it is we find that we have no strength, and that God answers our weakness according to *His own strength*, because He cannot fail to answer the faith He has given. "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." This word has often given me great confidence—"no man can shut it." This is such a blessed comfort, that if Christ has opened a door, *no* man, devil, or wicked spirit, can shut it; and although we have no strength, even to push the door open, it is opened for us. The whole church is weak, as weak as can be, and that in a bad sense; for what faith have we? We hear of a little faith. God shews us His power, as we have heard of in Madagascar; but where is the strength and energy of faith to be heard of amongst us?—J. N. D.

THE PERSONAL AND CORPORATE ACTIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

(Concluded from page 184.)

IV.

THE WALK OF SAINTS ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT.

“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit.”—EPHESIANS IV. 3.
“Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord, depart from iniquity.”—2 TIMOTHY II. 17.

OUR present subject is to examine and ascertain, in some measure, from scripture what our path is at the present time, and our responsibility in connection with the Holy Spirit's presence on earth, as members of the body of Christ, formed by His presence and baptism. May the blessed Lord guide us, as those who would say, “Shew me now thy way,” and “Give me grace to walk therein.”

First of all, then, we must examine the testimonies of scripture as to the state of ruin into which the professing church has fallen, and in which we ourselves are involved. God permitted the roots and germs of all this state to come out in the apostolic days, so that He might give us the testimony of His word as to it all, and mark a path for His own in the scene of confusion which exists around us. We cannot escape from it to go outside; nor, at the same time, does God force us to abide in a path where the conscience is outraged, and the word of God discarded, and practices are found which have no warrant from Him. He gives us a plain path, where we may obey His voice, and have the joy of His presence with us in our course while here.

It is striking and instructive to see that the epistle from which we have cited our text for this evening's lecture, was not written in a day when everything was in order, when the church of God was walking, in the first freshness of power and blessing, with Christ. If this was the case when it was written, we might have admired it, and thought of its perfection and beauty in days gone by; but we should have found no practical

value in it for our own path in days of weakness and failure and ruin. We see the wisdom of our God in giving us its teaching just when the days were darkest in apostolic times; when, as we read in Philippians (written at the same moment), "all were seeking their own, and not the things of Jesus Christ;" when "many walked," of whom the apostle had told them before, and had now to tell them even weeping, that they were "enemies to the cross of Christ; whose end was destruction, whose god was their belly, who mind earthly things." Such were the days when "Ephesians" was written: the aged apostle was in prison himself, and cut off from the work which he loved; all was rushing onward to ruin. It was then the time for God to bring forth by his means the most full and blessed unfolding ever given of the church of God. It was written in a day of ruin, as faith's provision for a day of ruin, until we all would come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to full-grown men—into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, that we might no more be "babes," &c. (Eph. iv. 13, 14.)

The gradual, but sure, decay had begun at once in the early church. Tares were sown amongst the wheat, and false persons were introduced from without, as Simon the sorcerer (Acts viii.); the enemy, too, had begun to sow evil and discord within. (See Acts v., vi.) This state of things is largely recognised in the various epistles. In Corinthians the wisdom of men and sectarianism were springing up, and moral evil had been allowed (chap. v.), and doctrinal evil was spreading fast. (1 Cor. xv.) The law had been introduced in Galatia; asceticism and philosophy had been added to the law in Colosse. There was a return to Judaism and ceremonies on all sides (Hebrews), and the presence of the Spirit forgotten. All this may be seen largely in the epistles. But when we come to Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy, these things were there, and recognised as current, and all those of Asia had turned away from Paul, though not yet, perhaps, from Christ. It is then that the Holy Spirit in the

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apostle forecasts the state of the "last days," which was then coming in. "In the last days perilous times would be there," and the state of nominal Christians would become like that of the heathen, as described in Romans i. 29-31, compared with 2 Timothy iii. 2-5, with the difference of "a form of godliness," or "piety," while they "denied the power thereof." From such the servant should "turn away."

This, then, was the state of the professing church which had been established on earth as the "pillar and ground of the truth." (2 Tim. iii. 15.) It was now the sphere where error and evil existed unchallenged.

We must now ask, What are God's principles, when the sphere set up by Him at any time in the earth became corrupted as this before us? We may even see that these principles were His before evil entered the scene, and were the true principles, unchanged by any circumstances, which ensued. They were "*separation*" and "*largeness*"—separation to God because He is holy; largeness of heart because He is gracious! We see this in paradise before man fell. He planted a garden in Eden, and separated it from the rest of the scene, for the man to dwell in, and dress it and keep it; yet from it flowed four rivers, to carry its blessings to the four quarters of the earth. So, when the world was judged, and again peopled, and divided into nations at Babel, God called a man out of it, separating him to Himself, because He was holy; yet, because He was gracious, He promised that "in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." So also in Israel; He brought them out of Egypt, that He might dwell among them, and His word was, "Thou shalt be holy with the Lord thy God." (Deut. xvii.) Yet they were to be the centre from which blessing should flow forth to the nations, who might there learn that He was God. "In Judah God was known; his name was great in Israel." In the church of God, too, the saints were not of the world, even as He was not of the world; yet the desire He expressed was, "that they all might be one, that the world may believe."

(John xvii.) These instances shew us the principles that should guide His own.

We see this illustrated in the day when Israel corrupted themselves, and, under Aaron, made the golden calf. Moses had gone up, to receive the law, to the top of Mount Sinai, when the people revolted against God, and returned to idolatry, out of which they had been redeemed. Moses came down with the tables of the law in his hands, and saw the calf and the dancing; but, with the blessed intelligence of one who was in spirit with God, he acts in a moment in a way that saves the honour of Jehovah, and spares the people. Had he kept the tables of the law outside the camp unbroken, he would have compromised the authority of the Lord. And had he entered the camp with them, the people would have to be cut off. So he broke the tables before the mount! He then returns to God, after the tribe of Levi had executed the discipline of God upon their brethren, earning their place as the priestly tribe. (Ex. xxxii.) Moses then prayed to the Lord to spare the people, or to blot him out of the book He had written. Nay, said the Lord, "Him that sinneth will I blot out of my book." Moses then returns to the desert, and while he waited to see what the Lord would do, and the people stripped themselves of their ornaments before the mount, Moses "took the tent, and pitched it *outside* the camp, *afar off* from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass that every one which sought the Lord *went out* unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp."

Here was the most glorious moment of all his history. The moment when he so apprehended God, and His holy nature, that, without even a command from Him, he does that which was suited to Him; and the cloudy pillar, emblem of His presence, came down, and spoke to Moses, as a man speaks with his friend! Here was separation to God, yet largeness of heart for His people, and for their true blessing.

We might trace through scripture many instances of

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this kind, which shew us that separation to Him is the true path for His own, when that which He had set up in blessing had corrupted its way in the earth. We see it in Israel separated from Egypt: Moses separating from Israel at the moment cited. The Nazarite—Samson, separated from Israel, when they were under the domination of the Philistines. David's men separated to him in his days of rejection. Jeremiah's directions to separate himself from the people to the Lord (Jer. xv.), that he might be God's mouth, to separate the precious from the vile. So the "mark" to be set upon them who sighed and cried for the abominations in Jerusalem. (Ezek. ix.) The Baptist separating the repentant remnant to Christ. The church separated from the nation at Pentecost. Paul separating the disciples from the others. (Acts xix.) The directions, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord," &c. (2 Cor. vi.) But when we turn to the Second Epistle to Timothy, we find this principle applied to our path in the simplest and most striking manner. The aged apostle turns to his own son in the faith, with his heart burdened with the sin in which the people of God now were involved; yet bright in the freshness of the courage needed to lift one above it all, and give the sense that God was above all the evil around. It is often the case that the soul gets under the power and sense of the evil to such a degree, that it becomes *occupied* with it, thus losing sight of God. This is a wrong state to drift into, and never will give power to surmount the evil in anywise. Grappling with the evils in the world, or the so-called christian world, is not our path. But while persuaded of their existence and power, the heart can turn to God, and find Him and His ways superior to the evil; and we are called to separate ourselves to Him.

This character of things occupies the greater part of the epistle. The Spirit of God recognises that there is no *ecclesiastical* recovery for the church of God, as a whole, to be looked for; while there always is *individual* recovery by the truth. He had been treating of the false

teaching of Hymenæus and Philetus, and such like, when he adds, "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, *The Lord knoweth them that are his. And let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.*" How refreshing to think that no amount of corruption had destroyed that sure foundation of God! There stood the everlasting truths, which never altered, though the house of God had enlarged itself to what he likens to "a great house," with "vessels of gold and of silver, of wood and of earth, some to honour, and some to dishonour," yet scattered abroad by the devices of men, and by the craft of the enemy, within that sphere were those who were Christ's. "The Lord knoweth them that are his," said one inscription of the seal of God! The eye of man could not single them out, nor even the eye of faith discern them. They may be like the seven thousand who had not bowed to the image of Baal in Elijah's day, whom the prophet had never discovered. Still, God knew them; they might be as the godly ones in the day when Israel's heart was as hard as an adamant-stone, when Ezekiel prophesied in vain; they were known of Him who knows all hearts, and He called to the executors of judgment in Jerusalem—"Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof," before judgment which would not permit of pity, fell on the rest. (Ezek. ix. 4.) God knew those in that day, those who were His; and He knows them now, as our passage in 2 Timothy ii. 19 testifies. This is the privilege of all who belong to Him.

But now he turns to the reverse of the seal, and reads the second inscription: "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." Here, then, is the way I may see those hidden ones of the Lord; they must be separate from evil to Him. Simple yet comprehensive step! Let the evil be moral, doctrinal, intellectual, or religious, the path is the same—to "depart from

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iniquity" is the responsibility of the saint who names the name of the Lord. Vessels of honour and of dishonour—precious and vile—may be there. The Hymenæus and Philetus may have to be condemned, but the true soul must "purge himself from these," that "he may be a vessel unto honour, sanctified [or, separated], and meet for the Master's use."

Let me remark as to that word, "purge." It is found but twice in the original tongue of the New Testament scriptures. The first place we find is in 1 Corinthians v. 7: "Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." This marked the responsibility of the whole church of God, set up on earth as "an unleavened lump." She was to maintain her place in this, and to "purge out" all that savoured of the old leaven—the evil which was then creeping in at Corinth, as this chapter shews. But she did not, as a whole, do this. She soon became indifferent to the evil, which soon, alas! became her characteristic, and not the holiness due to Christ. Now comes the second use of the word. The individual, finding himself in the midst of "a great house," filled with "vessels to honour and dishonour," was to "purge himself" from such, by standing apart from them, as from all this which dishonoured the Lord, in order to be a vessel unto honour for the Master's use.

But when a soul has taken this step, it might engender a Pharisaic spirit in him, in standing thus apart because of his Lord, and so we have next, "But follow righteousness, faith, love, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." He would find others who, like himself, had grace given to be separate to the Lord, and he was to walk with such, in holiness of conduct, and a pure heart likewise.

But this separation to the Lord has, so far, only a *negative* character. But this is the responsibility of the "house of God," now become like "a great house" around him. We want something more, therefore; we require a

positive ground of action for our souls in the midst of the scene. Here, then, comes in the never-changing truth of the unity of the body of Christ, of which he is a member. This abides here on earth in the midst of Christendom. It is within that sphere that the Holy Spirit maintains, in unbroken unity, the body of Christ. Granted that outwardly it is broken to fragments to our vision, and the members of that body are scattered in every section of the professing church; granted, too, that it is utterly impossible to restore it to its original state, that no skill or power can ever set it right again—all this is quite true; but then I am ever responsible to set *myself* to rights, before everything, with God. I am a member of Christ, and separate from evil; well, I am not the only one whom God has called so to act for Him, because He is holy. I find others also; we meet as His members to worship the Father, to remember our Lord; but it is *as* members of Christ, and as acting in the truth of that body of which we are members—we can be together—and on no other ground!—(I mean no other ground according to God.) We are thus in a breadth of truth which embraces every member of Christ on the face of the earth!

This is "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." We can neither keep, nor break, the unity of the body—that is kept by the Spirit Himself intact, spite of every failure of man. But we are called to "endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

What, then, is this unity? *It is the power and principle by which the saints are enabled to walk together in their proper relations in the body, and as members of Christ.* It may involve my *separation* from one member because he is attached in practice, or religiously, to that which will not stand the test of the word of God. It may call me to *walk with another* who is walking in godliness, and in its truth. I may find a true soul who sees the truth up to a certain point, but no farther; I can enjoy with such all that he enjoys in the unity of the

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Spirit. Suppose fresh light reaches his soul, and he refuses it, then we part! I must never weaken the path I am called to by compromise with him of the truth. All this involves the body of Christ; it is the ground of action, because the Spirit of God maintains it.

This unity, too, excludes individuality most fully. No one can take an isolated place. If he is called to stand alone in some locality because of the word of the Lord, it puts him in communion, and on common ground, all over the world, in other localities, with all who are walking in such a truth. It excludes individuality, too, when together with others; one might be tempted to act in independency of other members of Christ—to take action himself, not in communion with the rest. It throws us outside every system of man, too, but keeps us in that unity which is according to God!

Now here is the divine and *positive* foundation under our feet for this day of ruin. This is not merely a *negative* path. It is wide enough for all, because it embraces all in its breadth, whether they are there, or not. It is exclusive of evil from its midst, as known and accepted; to admit it would cause it to cease to be the unity of the Spirit. It is not merely the unity of Christians—which is the effort of the many to effect, often to the refusal of the truth of the body of Christ. How often do we see the effort to be together apart from its truth, merely as believers in the Lord. Men may make many unities, and attach Christ's name to them, and call it the church. God attaches unity to Christ, not Christ to unity! Then it must be true in nature to Him whose body it is; it must be practically holy and true. (Rev. iii. 7.)

Trial may come in, and the enemy seek to mar this effort of the faithful to act for God. Discipline, too, may have to be resorted to, to keep those thus gathered together true and right. When this is so, the action taken in one place in the Spirit, and in obedience to the word, governs all others, where the people of God elsewhere are thus acting in the truth. The Lord's table

being spread, as that in which we own the unity of the body of Christ (1 Cor. x. 16, 17) is in the midst of those gathered together in the name of Christ. (Matt. xviii.) One in communion at it in one part of the world, as with those who are endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit, is in communion with all, wherever they may be found. One ceasing to be in communion in one place, ceases in all. Thus individuality is impossible, apart from unity; or unity from individuality.

It is only in the church of God, or in its principle, we have both maintained. In popery we see unity, but no individuality; in other sects individuality, but no unity. In the unity of the Spirit we have both, and there only.

Then the cry of others is, "You want us to come to you, and hear the truth; why do you not come to us?" The question is most natural, but the answer is plain: We never can make wrong right by mixing with it; we desire your blessing; we desire that you who are not with us may act on what you are, as members of Christ, by one Spirit, and with us on the only divine platform on earth! You would be the first to blame us, did your conscience bow to the truth, for having weakened or falsified it by mingling with error, in order to win others to be with us. Your title is clear to be at the Lord's table with us, if you are a member of Christ (we assume that you are walking in uprightness of soul before God). We dare not ask other terms than this for your being in your true place. I have heard it has been said by others that we look for more—such as exacting promises that you go to no other gathering of Christians, and the like. This would be unintelligent in us in the strongest way, we would be making more than membership of Christ, and holiness of walk your title to your place. Your coming to help us to be faithful to the Lord should receive a hearty welcome from us in His name. Let us not suspect any other motive in those who come than our own desire, through grace, to do the same. Often have I seen souls come in all simplicity, who would be scared away

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had they been placed under a condition; for when they came, they found His presence there, and never left again! A soul finding itself *with Christ* would not likely seek to wander away again to other paths, even though it may be a pathway of reproach "outside the camp" with Him.

A word now, in conclusion, as to the place of those who are together, in these last days, in the truth. We sometimes hear of being "a testimony." I ask, To what? And I reply for all, We are a testimony to the present state of the church of God, not what it *was* once, but what it *is*. But suppose we are really thus a testimony to its failure, this involves much more than at first sight we would think. We must in such a case be as true in principle and practice as that which has failed! Though but a fragment of the whole, this must be really a true fragment. This will ever keep us lowly in our own eyes, and nothing in the sight of others. As long, therefore, as we are a testimony of this character we shall, by grace, never fail! The Lord alone will be our strength and our stay in days of ruin, and perilous times of the last days.

In the great sphere of the profession of Christianity on earth—the responsible church, or "house of God," where His one Spirit dwells and operates, there is a divine current in which the faithful will be found. In one of the great lakes, or inland seas, of Switzerland we find what will illustrate my meaning. One of the great European rivers runs into this inland sea at one extremity, and out at the other; but it is found that the current of the river is traceable all through the vast sheet of water. There are also, as a matter of course, the eddies and the back-water, which is near the current, and the dead water outside its influence. Thus it is in the professing house. There are those to be found in the current of the Spirit within the great professing body; there are others whose position would be near it, though not in the stream, but, as it were, in the eddies which are close at hand. There are others who have turned aside, and

been drawn into the back-water, and never seem to recover. Others, too, who are found in the dead-water, out of the reach of the current, or even of its influence. It becomes, therefore, a very real question for each—"Where am I?" "Am I like a chip, or a withered leaf, in the eddies, or in the back-water, or in the stream?" If in the last, we are carried along in that one path, in the freshness and energy of the one Spirit of God, in the truth of that one body of Christ, of which we are living members; faithful to Him who loves us, yet will-less and obedient in His hands, who can use for His own glory, and the blessing of others, the weakest vessel, if in the current of His Spirit, in the truth. F. G. P.

"THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN:" WHAT IS IT?

MY DEAR FRIEND,

A more complete study of Matthew xiii. will enable you to see that the "slight mistake" is yours, not mine.* No doubt, most of us have had the same idea with regard to "leaven" as that to which you have given expression. It arises from not understanding the true meaning of the term, "kingdom of heaven." When this is seized, all difficulty vanishes.

To what then does the term apply? To the condition of things during the absence of the King. Is this a condition of unmingled good? Alas! far from it. "An enemy" has been at work. He has introduced "leaven" into the "meal." He has sowed "tares" among the "wheat." Are "tares" good? Nay; they are false professors. Is "leaven" good? Nay; it is evil doctrine, evil principles, evil influence. The "meal" is good; the "wheat" is good; the "pearl" is good; the "treasure" is good; some of the "fish" are good. But there are bad and good in the kingdom—in the professing church—in Christendom. *Christianity* is like the beautiful snow as it descends in its purity from the clouds. *Christendom* is the odious and unsightly slush produced by the mixture of earth's pollutions with the pure material.

* This friend had written to object to the statement that "leaven is never applied to aught that is pure, holy, or good;" and referred to Matthew xiii. 33, to prove the unsoundness of the statement.

But we must not confound the church or assembly of God with the kingdom of heaven; or the body of Christ with Christendom. The most disastrous results flow from this confusion. It leads to the denial of all godly discipline in the assembly. We are told that the tares and the wheat are to grow together. True; but where? In the field. But is the field *the church*? Nay; the Lord distinctly tells us, "The field is *the world*." Are we to root up the tares? Nay; angels will do that by-and-by. But are we to suffer *known* tares in the assembly? God forbid! "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." (1 Cor. v.)

May I ask you to give Matthew xiii. your prayerful study? Come to it with your mind free from all your preconceived ideas, and Christendom's false teachings. Most of us have had to unlearn a lot, to unship a quantity of mere rubbish, in order to take in the pure and precious truth of God.

I am, dear friend, faithfully yours, C. H. M.

LETTERS AND EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF J. N. D. ON SUBJECTS OF GENERAL INTEREST.

He had been asked what was meant by the sentence in a tract of his own, "God will not be a mere director."

As a general truth we may surely look for guidance, and to be filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. What I said as to this, was not that God should not direct us, but that, as the general principle, it was not independent of spiritual understanding; that if I were directed right, even in every act as a Roman Catholic by his confessor, called their "director," I should lose by it; it would save me being in a spiritual state myself—though, surely, a more spiritual person might help me because he was so; that God did not mean our perception of His will to be independent of our spiritual state, though He can, of course, lead any at any given time. Psalm xxxii. speaks of this also. If our eye be single, our whole body shall be full of light. But this is always true: He makes everything work together for good to them that love Him. He overrules as well as rules.

I will suppose for a moment you were not led of Him in going to England, which I do not the least say, as I know nothing of it or your motives, but suppose the case. He makes you know what the world's giving you up is; He overrules it. Supposing you had had a tide of blessing, you would not have felt this in the same way, you would have tided it over the shoals at flood. I remember saying to

dear Captain —, that our giving up the world, and the world giving us up, were two very different things. It is the latter tries all the elements of self-importance, which lie much deeper rooted than we are aware. There may be some little sacrifice in giving it up, but we have a sufficient motive; but what motive for being despised? It is really our glory, for Christ was, but then He must be all, and that is saying a good deal. We are poor feeble creatures without a stable centre; what would be so has to be broken, and Christ takes its place. I do not speak of failure, but what we go through. He was the despised and rejected of men. Nor does He seek insensibility to it, but superiority over it, by His being all—and that is blessed, that only lasts. It is the production in us of what is eternal joy, and capacity for it. And now to your special inquiry more in detail. There are many points to consider.

He had been asked if we might not purpose (as Paul, in Acts xix. 21), in the spirit (after prayer) to go here or there, and do this or that.

First, I believe this casting on—dependent seeking His will spiritually—a privilege, though connected with the ruined state of the church. He cannot cease to guide us, or where should we be? But He may not, and does not, manifest His action with a fallen as with a fresh and nascent church. He never does so. "We see not our signs there is no more any prophet: neither is there among us any that knoweth how long." Yet Haggai says, "My Spirit remaineth among you." I believe faithfulness in such a time, special privilege. "Hast not denied my name" does not say much, but when this happens all around it is a great deal, and great grace to be kept. It cannot be expected, the "according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that *by them* thou mightest war a good warfare." You came out with a true heart to One who loved you, and seek souls for Him—all right, and great grace given to us; but there was no, "Separate me Barnabas and Paul," which, though present grace must, after all, sustain, still was a source of strength "by them." I do not believe it is any loss, but it is different, and he that has the secret of Christ, while he will not limit His power, yet will know the difference, and enter into it. "Thou hast a little strength," and such would be pillars when God built His temple. We find they were forbidden to go into Bithynia; sought to go into Mysia, but the Spirit suffered them not; they were forbidden to preach the word in Asia, and then, by a vision in a dream, were led into Macedonia. Now I would not the least deny that God can by His Holy Spirit suggest to us a special place of service. I do not doubt He may; but it is not an open manifestation as that which we here read of.

I repeat, I believe it is a privilege to be thus cast on the Lord's heart, if we only trust it; but it is a different thing we are cast on it; that there is imperfection in us, which affects this question, even an apostle had to learn this. A great door was opened at Troas, "but I

had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother," he leaves it In Macedonia "Our flesh had no rest, without were fightings, within were fears." He was sorry even he had written an inspired epistle, which really wrought as such with power in producing its effect, as in blessing to this day, but here there was trust. It is quite the contrary to the English translation, "causeth us to triumph;" the word means, "leads us in triumph," and the savour of Christ for life or death spread by him, whether at Troas or Macedonia. He trusted in Him who led him where He pleased, and that by his anxieties, as by His Spirit. He could not say he was right to leave Troas, and all was distress in Macedonia. It was love to the Corinthians, and God comforts them that are cast down; that is His way. And this is the picture I get of this great and noble heart, sent as he was openly by the Lord Himself and the Holy Ghost. He was a man, and must learn it, and that the power was of God; and so must dear —, perhaps as cast down, but any way as led about in triumph, for it is as true of you; God is as faithful as to you as He was to Paul.

But there is another point, we are such little ignorant things, that though we may have the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind, not of bondage and fear, still, as I said, things have to be over-ruled as well as ourselves guided. In the case you suppose (I supposed I was led after prayer to purpose visiting a certain person or persons, and on the way came across an anxious soul, and was much perplexed whether to stay with that one, or go on with my purposed visit to the other. Again, that if I go, and find the person away, am I to think I was not guided?) You do not find the man at home. This may have been just the right thing that you should have shewn the purpose and desire, and yet not have seen him, nor he received the visit, it was not the ripe moment for that. It was for seeking him. I admit were we perfect this would not be so. Again, He might have sent you on that road on purpose to meet the person on the way, and another day as good, or better, for the visit; perhaps he was not at home. I grant this shews imperfection, but not that there is no guidance. We should like to go always with a full, favourable wind, but this does not make a good sailor. It does tell us of weakness and imperfection, but that is something to learn, and dependence too. We cannot make a visit right without His hand.

But now take an example of where power was. Paul, apostle as he was, cannot succeed in persuading the church at Antioch to leave the Gentiles free. Where was his apostolic power? What a defeat! What a failure! He must go to Jerusalem. Now suppose he had succeeded: humanly speaking, two churches were started—one at Antioch, free; the other at Jerusalem, Jewish and circumcising Gentiles: but Jerusalem is forced by God to pronounce the Gentile free, and all goes right for the time. No doubt it was connected with imperfection and wretched ignorance of heart and prejudice, but it was divine grace and wisdom, God working in this imperfection

and prejudice, and overruling it, and Paul must take his place under this, like others.

We are not aware what poor creatures we are, and the wonderful grace which watches over, deals with, and uses such; and we have the treasure in an earthen vessel, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. (2 Cor. iv. 7.)

Thus the service we have to perform becomes also a process in ourselves, by which we have to learn ourselves and that all is of God, and our dependence on Him. This does not hinder our seeking to grow up into increased spiritual understanding, so as to be filled with the knowledge of His will; nor does it hinder the truth that the Spirit may guide us in details as to what we should do, and where we should go. Only, while God is Sovereign to do so in grace when He pleases, it does not separate this, as a general thing, from our spiritual state and singleness of eye, nor from a process in which we learn our own hearts; are weaned from self and the spirit of the world, and learn more complete dependence on God, and His gracious, tender faithfulness; only, that, after all, we are men, and feeble creatures, and He Sovereign, and the One who is to teach us. But surely, beloved brother, we may ever look to be guided by His eye, led by His Spirit suggesting the right thing to do, and place to go to, only that our state has a great deal to do with our ascertaining it. "The spiritual man discerneth all things."

And God is full of grace; Paul, if he could not succeed at Antioch, had a revelation to go up to Jerusalem. I know not that at this moment I have more to say to you, only that Paul (Acts xix.) was not, I believe, bound in the Spirit, but *in spirit*, his own. It was the overruling hand of God upon him, not the actual guidance of the Spirit of God. God so ordered it for His own divine purposes. Moreover, Paul was not going for testimony, but with collections for the saints.

J. N. D.

BELOVED BROTHER,

I was very glad to get your letter, and though I have let a long time slip without answering it, it was not want of interest in its contents, nor failure in thinking of you, but I have had a train of work which makes some letters, letters of leisure, where it is not necessity of answering, but just, on the contrary, interest in the work and in the labourer.

We go on through the toil of service, whereas good in Christ has to make its way, and make itself effectual by divine strength in the midst of evil and alienation from God, and, as to testimony, adapt itself to it. That was what was so beautiful in Christ. In heaven all is good. God is there, and only goodness and holiness, and nothing inconsistent with it. We cannot be simple, or want simplicity, there, for God fills everything, and we and all are what He would have us. It is an infinite "I am" of good. But Christ was something else. He was divine good, and infinite, but good adapting

itself, shewing itself infinite in being always itself, and yet adapting itself to all the wants, sorrows, miseries, sins, that were in this poor world. We get to God, get to the Father by it, because He has got to us. What a wonderful thought it is, to see Godhead emptying itself, thereby to prove itself love, as no angel could have known it—coming down as man even unto death, and to be made sin, that I might learn what God is in death, where sin had brought me; and absolute obedience in man, in what disobedience had brought us into; death, the way of life; the extreme of man in weakness, where (as to this world) it ended, the place where God is revealed and triumphant, and the power of Satan destroyed.

But the Christian redeemed by this, and according to this, has to be this good, express, walking in holiness, divine love in this world, by manifesting the life of Christ, and seeking the deliverance of souls. What a calling! and what a privilege! But, oh, how we do shrink into self-judgment if we compare ourselves with Him! We have to do it sometimes. God (as you speak in your letter) passes us through it when needed. We know there is no good thing in us, but to know the working of evil, which we always need at the beginning, and sometimes by the way, is another thing, overwhelming sometimes; I do not mean as to doubting His love, but as occupying us with self-vileness, instead of with His blessed love and Himself. But it is really put away in Christ, and hence, when we have, in a certain sense (that is, as to the need of real uprightness of heart) adequately judged ourselves, all the flood of His grace flows in again, and we can think of Him, and not of ourselves. There are no shallows then, but they are there, and there is still the danger (until long and deeply exercised) of having to go through it again. And it is a terrible thing to think of turning the eye off Christ, and on to what is vile, for self is vile. It is this that marks the "Fathers" in Christ. John has much additional to say to the "children" and "young men" when he repeats his warnings, but to the "fathers" he only says they have known Him that is from the beginning. That was their characteristic existence. How blessed it is! Oh, that we could walk so as to keep ourselves in the love of God! It is not knowing the Father, that was the children's place, the place of all, but Him that was from the beginning—Christ as manifested here.

I find the constant tendency even of work for the Lord, and an active mind, ever is to take us out of the presence of God, and nature is instantly up. I do not mean evil in the common sense, but what is not God, and the condition of my soul when God is there. There is a will and a right the heart claims (not wilfully), instead of adoring reciprocity and lowliness, with confidence and trust of heart. For God present puts us in our place, and Himself in His place in our hearts; and what confidence that gives, and how self is gone in joy! Our great affair is to keep in His presence; and the diligent soul shall be made fat. He that seeks, finds.

May the Lord give you and myself to labour on undistractedly.

It is not, through grace, in vain in the Lord. He does not give me as (I am thankful to say) you, present encouragement—I have no doubt my fault, and His wisdom—but I am content to be anything in His hand, and thankful to be anything. A servant is to serve where he is set, and I have been a good deal (and content to be it, though my heart might desire more direct work sometimes) a “hewer of wood” and “drawer of water” to the saints, but thankful to be allowed to be anything. The Lord be abundantly with you.

Affectionately yours in Christ, &c.,

J. N. D.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

21. Q. “All power *is given* unto me in heaven and earth,” the Lord says in the end of Matthew:—does this mean that as God He orders things down here, in the sense in which people often speak of a “higher power” overruling everything?

J. K.

A.—The quotation from Matthew has reference to the place of universal *authority* in heaven and earth *given* to the Lord Jesus as man; an authority He will share with His saints in the world to come. The “higher power,” or “overruling providence” of which people speak, is what attaches to God as Creator, and, of course, in this way the Lord Jesus, as being God, is ever acting; but this is not what is referred to here.

22. Q. Will you kindly explain the difference between “counsel,” “promise,” and “covenant”?

J. A.

A.—We should say that “counsel” (*βουλή*) means the formed purpose of the mind. Hence we read, that God will “manifest the counsels of the hearts” of men; and of “the counsel of his own will;” and of “the immutability of his counsel.” “Promise” (*ἐπαγγελία*) is the announcement of what is in the mind to another. So we read, that “God gave to Abraham by promise:” and “God made promise to Abraham”—He announced to him unconditionally and unasked, what was in His mind concerning him. “Covenant” (*διαθήκη*) goes further, and is the arrangement or disposition in favour of another of what is in the mind. And thus we read of “the covenant which God made with Abraham;” and “God gave him the covenant of circumcision.”

C. W.

REPLY TO AN ARTICLE IN THE *ZIONSBOTE* UPON "DARBYISM."

"Now if any man build upon this foundation [Jesus Christ] gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it..." (1 Cor. iii. 12, 13).

It is, although not a pleasant, at any rate an exceedingly easy task to answer a hostile attack when the opponent himself gives the answer. Such is the case with the article contained in the *Zionsbote* upon "Darbyism." The arguments of the writer are chiefly summed up in the statement of two antitheses, expressed in the words: "We say, Everything must be restored, as it was in the apostle's time; the Darbyites say, Never can a return be made to what existed at the time of the apostles." In his opinion everything must be revived in the church according to apostolic model; and his censure affects the so-called Darbyites, because they, instead of assenting to his conception, the rather maintain that, since the church has abandoned her first state and is in apostasy, according to the clearest and most unambiguous testimonies of the scriptures, she is not capable of restoration.

Then, after the writer has been somewhat zealous over the bad principles of the brethren he indicts, he finds occasion for the remark, which defeats his contention: "Moreover *nothing remains until the Lord comes*, but that every Christian take pains according to the best of his knowledge and conscience to ascertain and carry out the mind of Christ; but so that a relationship in the highest degree fraternal may obtain between the different church parties." In fact, every Christian who is unprejudiced and free from bias will be unable to close his eye to such contradictions. Is the meaning, then, of wishing to restore everything in the church as it was in the apostles' time—if the profession must be made—that at the end nothing remains but christian parties in whom every member has to ascertain and carry out the will of Christ according to the best of his knowledge and

conscience? Where, then, were such parties at the time of the apostles? Do they so much as bear the seal of apostolic recognition? Certainly not. As we know, Jewish prejudices threatened to split up the assembly at Antioch into two parties; but the wisdom of God prevented the deadly evil; and peace even and prosperity grew out of this very evil for the assembly at Jerusalem. (Acts xv.) In Corinth also church parties displayed their first germs; but apostolic power was present, and apostolic energy was exercised to restore divine order in the church. But where is now that energy of the apostles? Where is an assembly that sends its ministers into all communities, so that all can enjoy the blessed message? Neither is such an energy, nor such an assembly within the range of possibility in our days.

The restoration of the church according to apostolic mode, consequently, makes a previous restoration of apostles an obligatory necessity. As Christians will not recognise their inability to restore everything, they sink into the state of *laissez faire* in respect of the evil which they cannot remedy. But instead of a recognition of their own incapacity, to be willing to continue in a bad unscriptural condition, is in fact one of the saddest phenomena amongst Christians of our day. They refuse to bow in the dust and humbly to acknowledge, "We are to blame, we have abandoned the first state of the church and are unable to restore everything; God is faithful; we are to blame."

The writer must allow me to alter a word in his thesis; for without this alteration, the sentence is devoid of force and meaning. He says, "We must restore everything, as it was in the apostles' time." He ought to have said, not "we *must*," but "we *can*," restore everything. For if we cannot do it, our labour is useless. We know well—and the Lord be praised for it—that His grace is fully sufficient, just as much for our low state as for that of the apostles. But to what a degree the pretension of such Christians has reached who ascribe to themselves the ability to bring back into its old state whatever the

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power of the apostles wrought and set up, I leave to the judgment of the writer. Christians need apostolic power in order to be able to do apostolic works. They are able, by grace, to be faithful amidst the circumstances in which they are found, as the result of the continuous power of evil. They can abandon the evil, but as we have said, to be able to do apostolic works, they need apostolic power. Why do they not restore apostles? why not gifts? Why not prophets and miracles? In fact, to restore everything is a wide field! Where do we hear in our days words like those of Paul, of Timothy, and of Barnabas? Where is the power of the Spirit, which, in the days of the apostles, was so very active? Paul says, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." (Acts xx. 29.) Why such intimations for the days of his departure, if others could do everything which he had done?

The principles which the writer supposes to be scriptural only contribute to confound ideas still more; and they only betray too much how little people in general seek to inquire what *holy scripture* says upon God's assembly. It is clear that scripture knows only of a general assembly of God. Christians are regarded as members of the body of Christ. To be a member of *an* assembly is a thought of which one finds no trace in the word of God. And yet this thought forms the basis of the whole system to which the writer addresses himself. As shewn to us in 1 Corinthians xii., as well as in Ephesians iv. and in Romans xii., all gifts were introduced of God, not in one fixed and local, but in the *whole* assembly. Apollos ministered with his gift as teacher as well in Ephesus as also in Corinth, because this gift had been bestowed upon him, not for *an*, but for *the* assembly; consequently, for the whole body of Christ. But where do we find in our days anything like the condition portrayed in 1 Corinthians xii.? "Now, that was for apostolic times," our brethren will answer. But how can they then say, "We must restore everything as it was at the time of the apostles"? Will they then imitate only

outward forms? That the power cannot be imitated, no one will dare to combat; for to be able to exercise the power, one needs the power. But they have not even the form, for to be teacher of *an* assembly is not scriptural.

But how does it stand with the question of elders? Scripture teaches us that they were not elected by the assemblies. As we find in Acts xiv., Paul and Barnabas performed this election; and of Titus we know that he was sent back to Crete to institute elders. (Titus i. 5.) Who now might claim the right to do that for which the persons named were divinely authorised? Where is there now in our days a Paul and Barnabas, a Timothy and Titus? Moreover, now still comes the question, decisive of everything, whether it is in general the will of God to restore everything as it was at the time of the apostles. As we have said, a "*we must*" is without force and meaning, if it cannot be supported by a positive "*we can*." Therefore scripture must decide whether restoration is a thing allowed or required by God. We deny it. That "*we must*" is not scripture, and the writer has in general brought forward no passage for his assertion. He speaks of a command, but he assigns no command. Let us examine, then, the word of God, to see if it does not speak of the result of man's unfaithfulness in respect of the kingdom of God and His assembly upon the earth.

First of all, I would cast a hasty glance at the "parable of the tares." I find on the part of the writer—inasmuch as he brings forward some thoughts from a tract dealing with this parable—many words severe and injurious and accompanied by the remark, "How much may be said upon this fundamental principle!" But he ^{rather} ~~rather~~ gives another interpretation of that parable, nor does he combat the "singular principle" by the citation of any one passage. But all such shibboleths are powerless, if not founded upon the word of God. Let us take in hand therefore this alone unfailing word. The tares are sown by the devil where good seed has been sown by the Lord.

The subject is of course not the church itself, but the kingdom. The field is the world. But this parable is of great importance, if it be a question of the restoration of the good state of Christianity. The question of the servants, if they should root up the tares, the Lord negatives with the words: "Let both grow together until the harvest." A restoration of the earlier state is not prescribed, and consequently is also impossible. The judgment alone will deal with it.

But one might object—"Why do you not remain in the state church?" I answer: Because scripture knows of no state church, but only of "the church," and because it expressly says that in the last perilous days everything will demonstrate the ruin, and men have the form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. "From such turn away," says the apostle, and consequently by my following divine exhortation and turning away, I practise obedience, even if I remain alone. But why, since indeed everything is not to be restored, do you not remain alone? might be further said; and I produce in answer 2 Timothy ii., where I am taught that, since the Lord knows His own in spite of the confusion in the last days, I must not only keep from unrighteousness, but must also walk with "those who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart" (vers. 19-22), whilst at the same time I possess the precious and comforting promise, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. xviii. 20.) So saith the scripture. And if, now, I direct my course according to these divine directions, the pretension to wish to restore everything is no wise hidden therein; but, from personal obedience and with thankful heart, I make use of the instructions which God has given for the last days in His precious word.

Altogether, the passage quoted enlightens us clearly as to whether a restoration will find place in the last days. "But this know," says the apostle, "that in the last days perilous times shall come." (2 Tim. iii. 1.) Then follows (vers. 2-5) a picture of the sad state of Christianity, become

like heathenism. (Compare Rom. i. with 2 Tim. iii.) Will the church, then, not be roused again out of this state? No; it becomes worse and worse. (Ver. 13.) No trace is there of restoration. In 2 Thessalonians ii., we see that the apostasy comes, and the man of sin, the son of perdition, shall be revealed. (Ver. 3.) Will the apostasy have an end, or the man of sin be removed, by the renewed power of the gospel? By no means, Already in the time of the apostle the mystery of evil was at work. And this fire, glimmering in ashes, has developed "worse and worse," as the apostle foresaw, and will not be stayed until as soon as every hindrance is put out of the way, the "wicked one" shall be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming. (Vers. 7, 8.) Nowhere a thought of restoration.

Jude also teaches the same truth. In his letter we see that false brethren had crept in, of whom Enoch had prophesied: "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints...." (Ver. 14.) They go the way of Cain, give themselves for reward to the errors of Balaam, and perish in the gainsaying of Korah. (Ver. 11.) That is the character of the evil in the last days, which already had begun in the days of the apostles. For in 1 John ii. 18, we read, "Little children, it is the last time, and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." Already, then, as Peter teaches, had come the time of the judgment of God's house. (1 Peter iv. 17.) In short, everywhere we find witness to the apostasy, and nowhere a word of restoration, although already in the days of the apostles the principles of evil and of apostasy had penetrated into the church.

"Shall, then," one will perhaps ask, "the world not be filled by the knowledge of the Lord by the gospel of *grace*?" No. The gospel of the *kingdom* will indeed be preached amongst all nations, but then will the end come. (Matt. xxiv. 14.) "The *everlasting* gospel" will be sent to every nation and every kindred and every tongue,

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with the announcement: "Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come." (Rev. xiv. 6, 7.) Then follows the destruction of Babylon, and finally the appearing of the Son of man on the cloud. But will not then the world generally be filled with the knowledge of the Lord? By all means. But how? by the gospel of grace? Not at all. There are in holy scripture three passages in which mention is made of this subject: Numbers xiv. 21; Isaiah xi. 9; Habakkuk ii. 14. But none of these passages speaks of *grace*: all speak of judgment; and in Isaiah xxvi. 9, 10, it is said most precisely that the inhabitants of the earth will learn righteousness, when the judgments of God are in the earth, but that, though *favour* be shewn to the wicked, "they will not learn righteousness." The reader will also see in Isaiah xxv. 7-9, that at the time when the vail that is spread over all nations is removed, the resurrection has taken place, and the Jewish people is restored in blessing.

It is therefore a lack of spiritual understanding, and of nothing short of obedience, to desire to restore everything, since for such a work not only there is no command, but holy scripture teaches exactly the reverse. It is not obedience to content oneself with christian parties, because scripture condemns them; it is not obedience to form a so-called assembly, and to be a member of it, because scripture knows only of members of *the* assembly as the body of Christ, but not members of *an* assembly, calling itself so-and-so; it is not obedience to elect or appoint elders, because this was in the New Testament never the act of the assemblies; it is not obedience to institute an office of preachers, because scripture knows not of such an office, but speaks only of gifts, which God bestowed, in order to serve the whole church therewith. But it is obedience, to keep aloof from a Christianity which has the form of godliness but denies the power, because scripture in 2 Timothy iii. expressly exhorts us to that; and it is obedience to assemble ourselves with those who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart (2 Tim. ii.), and not to neglect our coming together, because scripture en-

joins it, and promises the precious and blessed presence of the Lord to all those who gather in His name.

Certainly a calm consideration of the word of God teaches us that the different communities which call themselves Independents, Baptists, &c., do not answer to the assemblies at the time of the apostles. For could the apostle indeed send to one of these assemblies an epistle addressed "To the assembly of God at N.," which of them would obtain the letter at the Post Office? If, on the other hand, I go no further than holy scripture allows me, I profess a principle which makes it a sacred duty for me to acknowledge as members of Christ all Christians—whether in the Baptist or Independent communities, or in the state church. And that I do with all my heart. I am fully convinced in respect of *church* questions they do not walk in paths marked out by the word of God, but that they are, notwithstanding, dear to the heart of the Lord; and I hope that in these lines I have said nothing whereby the heart of an upright brother could be wounded. If, nevertheless, it should be so, I beg beforehand for forgiveness.

The small space of these pages allowed of my briefly adducing, and by passages of scripture establishing, some elementary principles. It were to be wished that the writer of the article which occasioned this reply had, in like manner, fortified by the word of God the points he has brought in question. It does but remain for me to appeal to this word, alone infallible; and I hope that the brethren who heap so many charges upon us, will have recognised why we do not designate their path as the path of obedience. In my judgment, only a small measure of intelligence attaches to the pretension of desiring to restore everything as it was at the time of the apostles, to the recognition of something else than obedience. God has never laid down such a path. He does not improve the old man who has fallen, but introduces the "second man," and gives us a portion in His glory. He does not renew the Jews according to the old covenant, but we find, according to great patience, grace, and

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help, at the end judgment, in order afterwards to establish with them the new covenant upon the ground of grace. And in respect of the church we can say: What Christ has built for ever will endure for ever, what is divine and heavenly will be indestructible; but wood, hay, and stubble, wherewith man has built, must perish in the fire.

J. N. D.

“GATHERED TOGETHER UNTO MY NAME.”

MATTHEW XVIII. 20.

It is impossible to overrate the importance and blessedness of the ground given by the Lord to His people, during the present dispensation, in Matthew xviii. 20. But in order that its true import and scope may be apprehended, it is necessary to understand the circumstances in the Lord's own history that led up to it, and the position which He Himself now occupies, as exalted to the right hand of God in heaven.

In Matthew xii. the Lord's rejection by Israel is complete; and He pronounces His judgment on the nation in consequence. At the end of the chapter He breaks His *natural* connection with the people, and makes the principle of association with Himself, and thus of all blessing, that of obedience to the word of God, and this would be evidenced by doing the will, as He says, “of my Father who is in the heavens.” The bond would no longer be a visible and external one, such as it had previously been, but a moral and invisible one.

This principle involved an entire change in God's ways with man, and was in effect the passing from law to grace. Under law Jehovah came seeking fruit from Israel, as the vine of His vineyard, but found none, and moreover was Himself rejected. Grace now entered the field demanding nothing, but bringing with it that which would produce fruit. This was the personal ministry of Jesus, by which souls were saved and attracted to Himself.

Rejected by Israel, a rejection consummated at the cross, He lays aside, so to speak, His Messiahship, and takes the wider title of "the Son of man," and as "the Sower" goes forth to sow the seed of the word. This is grace taking with it that which produces fruit; and not now confining itself to Israel, but taking in the whole world as the field of its activities. This change introduces "the kingdom of the heavens;" the formation and mysteries of which we have unfolded in Matthew xiii. The similitudes of the kingdom are not our subject, and we merely remark that "the kingdoms of the heavens" supposes the King absent in heaven consequent upon His rejection by Israel, and hence its formation and character are in keeping with this fact.

In Matthew xvi. the Lord calls the Jews, headed up in their rulers, "a wicked and adulterous generation," and leaving them He goes with His disciples into the coasts of Cæsarea-Philippi. Alone with them there, He asks them what men generally thought and said about Him. The answers they gave shewed the general unbelief that was in men as to Him. Some said one thing, some said another. It was not the bold and fanatical rejection that characterised the scribes and Pharisees, but the indifference of men's hearts to Him that shewed all conscience towards God, as well as all true knowledge of God, to be wanting. He then asks His disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?" To this Peter replies, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Peter's answer gave evidence of a work of grace in his soul that went far beyond all that connected itself with the promises and prophecies that relate to Israel and the earth, and became the occasion for the Lord to disclose the counsels of God concerning the church. He replies, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in the heavens. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my assembly, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it." The Father had revealed to Peter the personal glory of His Son; a glory that far

exceeded that of the Messiah as the begotten Son of God in time, according to Psalm ii. He was "the Son of the *living* God"—the One who had life in Himself, against which all the power of Satan, as having the power of death, should not prevail. Resurrection would be the proof of this, and He would be "*declared* to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead" (Rom. i. 4), but Peter knew this already by the Father's sovereign revelation, and upon this knowledge of Himself, as Son of God according to the *divine* glory of His Person, Christ would build His "assembly." In this new building Peter should be a prominent stone; and, He adds, "I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of the heavens; and whatever thou mayest bind upon the earth shall be bound in the heavens; and whatsoever thou mayest loose on the earth shall be loosed in the heavens." Thus the assembly, which He Himself would build, and the "kingdom of the heavens," which Peter should open and administer, take the place of Israel on the earth.

The revelation concerning "the kingdom of the heavens," and "the assembly" closed all testimony to Himself as the Messiah—the Christ, and "from that time forth," we read, "began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." He thereupon teaches His disciples that if they would still be His disciples, and have part in the new order of things He had revealed to them, they must follow Him in His rejection by their nation, and if needs be suffer death as well. Their portion would be in heaven with Himself, and when He came as Son of Man in His glory He would reward them in accordance with their doings during His absence. To confirm them in their faith as to Himself, and the hopes He had given them, He gives some of them, as we learn in the next chapter, a revelation of Himself coming in His heavenly kingdom, again declaring to them, that as "the Son of Man," He must suffer death and rise

again before that kingdom could be His, or theirs with Him.

Occupied with this kingdom according to their own fleshy thoughts, and unheeding all He had been saying to them about His sufferings and the path that would lead to it, the disciples, in Matthew xviii. ask Him "who then is the greatest in the kingdom of the heavens?" Their inquiry, while revealing a sad moral state in themselves, gave the Lord the opportunity of unfolding the great principles that belong to this new order of things that had been revealed to them.

The instructions given relate to the kingdom and the assembly, the subjects specially referred to chapter xvi., and they suppose the Lord rejected by Israel and absent in heaven, with glory revealed in the intermediate chapter not yet to come.

He first declares the characteristics of the kingdom. Those composing it must bear a character suited to Him whose kingdom it was. For entrance into it, and for greatness in it, they must be as little children; weakness and helplessness characterise such. They cannot force their way through a hostile world; they are the objects of the care of another. Of Him who watches over the weak and helpless; "their angels," says the Lord, "do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." The followers of the absent king must be characterised by lowliness and dependence; and with this they must imitate their Father in heaven, who considers and receives the lowly and worthless, and whose will was not, "that one of these little ones should perish," and Christ Himself, the Son of Man, was come "to save that which was lost."

Another thing must also characterise them. As brethren they were to deal with one another in the spirit of grace. They were to pardon those that wronged them. God pardons those that have sinned against Him, and they were to do the same. In a word, they were to act as Christ had done; to represent Him during His absence as the witnesses for God on the earth. All this was

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individual, and acting in this way they would be the true children of the kingdom.

But *beside* their individual walk and testimony they had a corporate one as the assembly of Christ, and in *this* position they would *especially* represent Him on the earth. Israel, as having the throne and temple of God in their midst, being entirely set aside, the assembly takes the place of Israel on the earth. The government of God would henceforth be displayed in the assembly. Discipline would be exercised by it in Christ's name, and what it bound or loosed on earth would have the seal of heaven. Hence, when the individual exercise of grace was fruitless, and had to cease in the case of the one who wronged his brother, the assembly took up the matter, and declared the government of God with reference to the unrepentant brother, who was henceforth to be treated as a “heathen man” and “publican” by the one he had wronged.

In Matthew xvi., where the Lord first speaks of the assembly, He says He will *build* the assembly. The aspect of it there is that of the whole assembly, in its divine completeness and durability, as built upon Himself, the Son of the living God. It answers to Ephesians ii. 3, and 1 Peter ii. 4, 5. In *this* building Peter was a stone, and had *personally* given to him the keys of the kingdom, with the special power of binding and loosing—an authority which he could not, and did not, delegate to any; nor was he to have any successor, as far as the Lord's *words* go. The outcome of such a thought is popery, where man usurps the place of God. The apostle Paul took no such place, and, when writing to the Corinthians, he says, “To whom you forgive, also I forgive.” Not that the assembly were to forgive, because Paul had forgiven the man. If the assembly forgave, he forgave as acting with them.

In Matthew xviii. it is the disciples generally who are addressed, and the aspect of the assembly is that of those *gathered* unto Christ's *name*. It is not a statement as to the whole assembly on earth, but as to those locally, but truly, gathered to His name. Num-

bers and apostolic powers have nothing to say to this. Those truly gathered to His name, if only two or three, would have Himself in their midst. His authority was in them and with them in virtue of His presence. What they did in His name, on earth would be ratified in heaven. Moreover He was in their midst according to all His privileges with the Father, and if but two, so gathered to His name, in the spirit of unity and agreement, asked anything in His name it should be done for them, of His "Father who is in the heavens." His presence with them *thus* gathered would be as decisions, as well as their prayers, would have the sanction efficacious for intercession as for authority. Their de- and ear of heaven, because they had Jesus in their midst.

The being truly "gathered unto my name" *necessarily* involves the presence of Jesus in the midst of those so gathered, and this carries with it, for all time, the power to exercise authority in His name, and the efficaciousness of *united* prayer, when addressed to the Father in His name. No scattering of God's children, or ruin outwardly of the church, can invalidate the precious and holy position of responsibility and privilege, thus given by Christ to His people during His absence. We would remark that the Lord's teaching here gives ~~us~~^{no} indication that two saints, agreed about some request that they will make to the Father, can count upon the answer to that request because of their *simple agreement*. It is as being gathered to Christ's name as His assembly, and therefore having Him in their midst, that the promised answer hinges. To lose sight of this, is to falsify the entire position in which the Lord sets His people in association with Himself in this chapter.

The unity of the Spirit and the Lordship of Christ are thus bound up together with the blessed *fact*, not *promise*, that "where two or three are gathered unto my name, there *am I* in the midst of them." C. W.

(To be continued.)

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH, AND JUSTIFICATION OF LIFE.

(Continued from page 205.)

BUT we are turned by our author to scripture. He quotes 2 Timothy i. 9, and thus remarks on it: "Here the salvation is spoken of as preceding the calling even, and rightly so, for the work of salvation was fully wrought out by the death and resurrection of the Son of God; and as this was in the counsel of God a matter surely foreseen and foredetermined, the salvation is spoken of as accomplished, even before the sufferings, which purchased it, had actually been endured. Thus Zacharias prophesied that God 'hath raised up a mighty salvation for us,' and Simeon, when he was holding the infant Saviour in his arms exclaimed, 'Mine eyes have seen thy salvation.' So also when Christ came to the house of Zacchaeus, and delivered him from the bonds of his fraud and covetousness, it was said by Christ Himself, 'This day is salvation come to this house.'" We have let Mr. Sadler speak for himself, that the reader may see how he would endeavour to explain away an unmistakeable assertion of present, and in this sense final salvation. "The salvation," he says, "is spoken of as accomplished, before the sufferings which purchased it had been endured." We must give to this statement an unqualified denial. Paul is writing to Timothy, a disciple of Christ, and one of his own converts, years after the death of Christ on the cross, and speaks of the grace, not of the salvation, as given us in Christ before the world began; and rightly speaks of the salvation before the calling, not for the reason Mr. Sadler assigns, but because, as saved, Timothy was to act at all cost in harmony with the character of his calling, not shrinking from the most painful consequences of faithful testimony to the truth—the martyr's death if need be. But what about the references to Zacharias, Simeon, and the Lord in the house of Zacchaeus? Will they bear out the con-

struction attempted to be put on their words? Surely not. Zacharias shews, if we compare Luke i. 69 and 71, that God raising up a horn of salvation for them, and Israel being saved, are two different things. The presence of Christ in person, and the effects of His coming, are not the same thing. Salvation as a present soul blessing is New Testament doctrine, unknown to any of the saints before the first advent of Christ. And no one is said to be saved till he is saved. For salvation tells of deliverance from something, saved from or out of it, so the condition or danger in which the person was he is in no longer.

But Mr. S. on this subject has more to say (p. 194), "In several cases salvation is predicated of those who had been grafted into Christ in baptism. Our Lord had said, 'He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved,' and so says St. Paul after Him, 'By his mercy he saved us by the bath or font of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost;' the word λουτρόν used here signifying, not the act of washing, but the vessel in which the bath or washing takes place, rendering the reference to the rite of baptism absolutely certain; and St. Peter also enunciates the same thing, when he says, 'The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.' St. Paul also, in speaking of a part in the death and resurrection of Christ received by all Christians in baptism (Rom. vi.), implies that the power of the death and resurrection of Christ, that is, His salvation, had been made over to each one in his baptism." In these words there is hardly one statement which is really correct. No one ever was or is grafted into Christ in baptism. We are in Christ by the Holy Ghost given us (Rom. viii. 9), not by baptism. This last puts the baptised one into the company professedly of the Lord Jesus Christ who has died, inasmuch as he is thereby buried with Him by baptism unto death, being baptised unto His death. Now baptised unto (εἰς) Christ is not the same as being grafted into Him. All Israel at the Red Sea were

baptised unto (εἰς) Moses. (1 Cor. x. 2.) Were they grafted thereby into Moses?

Then to bear out his statement, Mr. Sadler refers to Mark xvi. 16; Titus iii. 5; 1 Peter iii. 21; Romans vi.; Acts ii. 37, 38, viii. 36, xxii. 16; John iii. 5. On these we would remark, that neither John iii. 5 nor Titus iii. 5 treat of the rite of baptism. John iii. 5 treats of the new birth, being born of water and of the Spirit, not of water only, nor of water by the Spirit. The Lord is speaking to Nicodemus of the way of life. Baptism puts us into the company of the Lord who has died. The way to enter the kingdom we learn in John iii. By baptism christian discipleship is professed. The Jews prided themselves on being, by natural generation, sons (υἱοὶ) of the kingdom. The Lord tells Nicodemus that no one enters into (εἰς) the kingdom, unless he is born of God by water and the Spirit. Now to enter into (εἰς) the kingdom is only predicated in the present dispensation of true believers. Many are found within the range of the kingdom who have never entered into it. Only those born again have entered into it. It is of entrance into it that the Lord here speaks (εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν). Now if John iii. 5 treats of baptism and its effects, all the baptised must thereby enter into the kingdom, that is, be really believers. But Mr. Sadler himself would repudiate that surely. Experience shews it is not the case.

To Titus iii. 5 we would next turn. There we learn God "hath saved us [that is, true Christians] by the washing of regeneration [παλιγγενεσία], and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Is baptism here spoken of? Mr. Sadler asserts it is; and that the term λουτρόν unmistakeably proves it. Unfortunately for this assertion, in the only other place where the word occurs in the New Testament, it does not refer to baptism, but as the passage explains (Eph. v. 26), to the word of God. No deduction in favour of the rite of baptism can then be drawn from the word λουτρόν, any more than from the word regeneration (παλιγγενεσία), which elsewhere is used of that new order of things which will be introduced when the Lord

comes to reign. (Matt. xix. 28.) That then of which Titus speaks is the washing which flows from the new birth, bringing a person now morally into harmony with the new order of things, which will be established when the kingdom is set up in power. Of this washing every one born of God is a subject, whether baptised or not. Of that washing Peter was a subject, just as much as Paul and every saint called out after Pentecost. Are we thinking lightly of baptism? By no means. We could not consistently with scripture teaching now accredit any one as professedly on christian ground if unbaptised, for how take the place openly of a disciple of Christ, unless one has been buried with Him by baptism unto death? Hence the Lord instituted this rite for all those who should believe on Him after His death and resurrection, but never mentions it till He had risen. (Mark xvi. 16.) As baptised unto (εἰς) Christ, we have put on Christ. (Gal. iii. 27.) In accordance with this Peter told the 3000, who were pricked in their hearts, to repent, and be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and they would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. So Paul was told by Ananias to be baptised. So too the company in the house of Cornelius were commanded by Peter to be baptised, after they had received the Holy Ghost; a clear proof that baptism does not ingraft into Christ, for these saints were in Christ already, and evidenced it, because they were partakers of the Holy Ghost. Baptism is most important in its place, when rightly understood.

But baptism saves, Mr. Sadler would remind us. (1 Pet. iii. 21.) Perfectly true. Yet it does not save the soul from the deserved judgment of God. Of this Peter, who alone speaks of its saving power, bears witness. Writing to the strangers of the dispersion in Asia Minor who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, with reference to the maintenance of a good conscience, he calls attention to baptism as saving them, not the putting away the filth of the flesh (that is, not an external washing), but the answer of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. We should ob-

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serve in this passage three things (1 Pet. iii. 14-32) : first, what is desired or the thing asked for (*ἐπερώτημα*), that is, the answer, is a good conscience, not a purged conscience. Now the former is dependent on the believer's walk and ways; the latter is derived from the knowledge of the value of the atoning blood of Christ. (Heb. ix. 14; x. 2.) Next, that it is by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, applied to the believer practically, that the good conscience is secured, and not by His atoning death, which is the ground of our standing before the throne. Hence, condition, or state, not standing, is that with which baptism here, as elsewhere, is connected. The person desires a good conscience. The thing desired (that is, the answer to his request), he gets by practically carrying out that which by baptism he has professed, namely, that he is a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence, the resurrection of the Lord is made prominent here. Thirdly, it should be noticed that the apostle, who had classed himself with those to whom he wrote, when treating of the beneficial results of Christ's death (ver. 18), as sharing also in them—"that he might bring *us* to God"—writes of baptism that it saves *you* (not *us*)—for so we should read the passage—they, not he, having been baptised with christian baptism. Now, if baptism saves in the sense Mr. Sadler would understand salvation, how comes it that, whilst the Lord commanded Peter, and others who were His disciples before the cross, to baptise, He made no provision for their being baptised? In truth they did not need it. But baptism saves, since, if what it speaks of is practically carried out—burial with Christ unto death—the person is saved from old associations and ways, as Noah and his sons were saved from all association with the evils of the antediluvian world. Saved by water, which was the instrument of death to others, they did not thereby receive soul-salvation. Noah surely possessed that before he entered the ark. Nor did they leave earth, but were brought into a new position on earth by passing through the flood in the ark. So Christians, by Christ's death applied to them practically

do not leave the scene in which they were personally, but are brought into a new position here on earth. With this teaching of Peter Paul agrees.

But let us hear Mr. Sadler: "St. Paul, also, in speaking of a part in the death and resurrection of Christ, received by all Christians in baptism (Rom. vi.), implies that the power of the death and resurrection of Christ (that is, His salvation) had been made over to each one in his baptism. . . . So that salvation, as a past act of God for the world, is connected with the accomplishment of that salvation in the death and resurrection of Christ; and the formal assignment of a part in this salvation to each individual, is connected by the sacred writers, not with a man's first exercising faith, but with his submission to receive holy baptism" (p. 195). It is true, "he that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved." (Mark xvi. 16.) No one who professed to believe after the cross was to be accredited as a disciple, unless he submitted to the rite of baptism. But the salvation of those who believed before the cross, and of those in the house of Cornelius, who received the gift of the Spirit (the proof they were saved before they were baptised), refute these statements. Cornelius and his friends believed, and, as believing, they received the fullest christian blessing, the gift of the Holy Ghost. Not a word had been spoken to them about Christian baptism. "Words whereby they should be saved" they were to hear from Peter; and they did, and believed them, God sealing them with the Holy Ghost, in token that they were saved. Mr. Sadler's theory, that "the grant of salvation is said to be made over to no one on his merely believing, no matter how sincere in his belief" (p. 195), is at variance with the history of Cornelius, and with God's ways in grace with the company in his house.

Nor will his reference to the teaching of Paul (Rom. vi.) help him. Paul never taught that all Christians were baptised, though he was; nor did he tell the Romans that the power of the death and resurrection of Christ (that is, His salvation) had been made over to each one in

his baptism. Mr. Sadler confounds state and standing. We have died to sin was Paul's doctrine, how shall we live any longer in it? But how is it we have died to sin? By baptism? No, but as being in Christ, who has died to sin. (Rom. vi. 9.) Every true Christian, whether baptised or not, has died to sin. Hence, to continue in sin that grace may abound would be an absurdity. How continue in that to which we have died? Why, then, is baptism introduced? To shew more plainly the absurdity of such a principle. We have died with Christ to sin, and by baptism profess to be disciples of Him who has died, buried with Him by baptism unto death. So the apostle, after asking, "How shall we who have died to sin live any longer therein?" adds, "Or (¶), know ye not, that so many of us as were baptised unto Christ Jesus, were baptised unto his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." As in Christ, we have died to sin. As baptised, we have been buried with Christ unto death. Our condition, then, as in Christ, and our professed position before God and man on earth, as baptised unto Christ's death, alike forbid the acceptance of such antinomian doctrine. Thus baptism, it will be seen, comes in as an additional reason to make patent the absurdity of such a conclusion.

But salvation, we are told, "is assumed to be a present state in the distinct sense of being a continuous, or progressive, thing, 'worked out' by him to God who vouchsafes it" (p. 196). We have only to remember the difference between the salvation of the soul and final deliverance of the whole person, so carefully distinguished in 1 Peter i. to see that the present salvation of the former is compatible with the working out the salvation of the latter. But the passages on which Mr. Sadler relies to throw doubt on present salvation, do not support his doctrine. Philippians ii. 12, when the whole verse is read, is plain enough. Salvation is there viewed (as always in that epistle) in the light of final deliverance. So the Philip-

pian saints, deprived of Paul's presence, had to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling; but—let the reader mark it—not by doubt or uncertainty, the apostle immediately adding, "for it is God that worketh in you the willing and the working, according to his good pleasure." Are we to suppose that God begins a work which he does not finish? Incredible that that should be. We are further told that the Greek phrase, οἱ σωζόμενοι, when rightly understood, unmistakeably favours Mr. Sadler's doctrine. Occurring in Luke xiii. 23; Acts ii. 47; 1 Cor. i. 18; 2 Cor. ii. 15, and nowhere else, it is plain, from its use in 1 Cor. i. 18, it cannot mean those who are being saved, in the sense for which it is quoted, since it is used there of Paul, and the Corinthian saints, who had, each and all of them, already received, and manifestly to all, the gift of the Holy Ghost. All such were saved. Their soul's salvation, which Mr. Sadler, by his translation of this term, "those being saved," would imply, still hung in the balance, was effected once and for ever, seeing they were sealed by the gift of the Spirit unto the day of redemption. In truth, the term, οἱ σωζόμενοι, describes a class—the saved—distinct from the οἱ ἀπολλύμενοι—the lost (2 Cor. ii. 15; iv. 3; 2 Thess. ii. 10), not their state as on the way to salvation.

C. E. S.

(To be continued.)

THE path of Jesus was *His own*. When man was bowed down in sorrow at the thought of death, He was lifted up in the sunshine of resurrection. But this sense of resurrection, though it gave this peculiar current to the thoughts of Jesus, left His heart still alive to the sorrows of others. For His was not *indifference*, but *elevation*. And such is the way of faith always. Jesus weeps with the weeping Mary and her company. His whole soul was in the sunshine of those deathless regions which lay far away from the tomb of Bethany; but it could visit *the valley* of tears, and weep there with those that wept. Such was the peculiar path of the spirit of Jesus. *Resurrection was everything to Him.*

J. G. B.

LETTERS AND EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF J. N. D. ON SUBJECTS OF GENERAL INTEREST.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I am anxious about a rumour I heard of your becoming doctor, and I am sure you will forgive my anxiety, for the Lord's sake and yours. . . . I look to the principle. Christ has ordained that they that preach the gospel should live of the gospel, and it is the clear *duty* of the church of God to aid those who are given up to the work. If a man can live by a trade he has already—all well. I have known a brother, an evangelist much blessed, who lived when, at a certain period of the year, the people, from work, could not get on week-day to meeting, and he, being a good watchmaker, mended all the watches in the country; the rest of the year was helped by brethren. This is all well. . . . But when I set about to learn a profession or trade, it is not merely the time, but Christ, and Christ's work, is put in a second place, and faith is set aside as to that, and the church encouraged in want of devotedness. All this seems to me evil. If you are not working for the Lord, your setting to do something would be perfectly right; but you are at the work, and it is saying, I fear—not in your heart, perhaps, but as testimony—I have put my hand to the plough, &c. I have never known but one case where a brother actually wanted; it was not known to brethren: a devoted pioneer, who pushed into unbroken ground in ——. He fed on nettle-tops, which they use much as spinach, not to give up an open door. The same man has been three times in prison. That was a bright testimony. I doubt you are quite there yet, and have been pinched, but so was Paul, and the Lord very soon came in to help them. It may seem easy to me, who want for nothing, to press this on others, but I honestly began by giving up everything, though, in point of fact, my faith was never tried in that way, as an uncle left me something before I was run out, or very soon after.

But I dread settling the principle, when a man is a labourer, that the church is not to take care that those who labour shall be honoured by being temporally cared for. No salary. A man is a servant, but free under Christ in his ministry, and the privilege of the church, as those at Philippi, is to be partakers of the grace by helping him who labours in it. It blocks up the path of simple, humble faith. A poor man has no difficulty; and it seems as if an educated person could take the blessed and honoured place of service to Christ; working when we can and are not occupied in the work, all well, as I said. But taking up a profession is really saying, I have laid down that of working for the Lord, trusting to Him that knows that we have need of those things.

I have not seen the Lord leave those who have given themselves up to work, trusting Him; and I have seen distress of spirit, and greatly

hindered usefulness in those who, through their wives or own hearts, have turned to other things to help wife or family here. A most beloved and able witness was saved from great injury to his own spirit and usefulness by its making him thoroughly miserable, and it did hinder him. There it was a wife's doing; but no matter what, the difficulties are what faith has to overcome. I am a very poor one for faith, but I am sure the Lord is sufficient, and that He will never fail us. He may try our faith, but He will meet it, and rejoice our hearts. . . . The gracious Lord guide and teach you.

Affectionately yours in Him,

1869.

J. N. D.

REMEMBER you are young at the work, and carry it on much before God; seek to be emptied of self, and see only the Lord and souls in it. You know if any real work is done He does it. Be much with God; do not suppose I say this to discourage you. If there is one desire upon my heart, after the blessing itself, it is that God would give and encourage true labourers to go between Him and souls, but this is what it must be, or, surely we have nothing to bring, nor, if not much with Him, any power if we know the truth; He is to be revealed, and He alone can do this, but when much with Him we always learn, and oh! to what profit, our own nothingness.

1861.

J. N. D.

DEAREST —,

It is a serious, though a most happy, thing, to undertake direct service—that is, a service which takes up all our time. I would there were many more really gifted by *love to souls*, and zeal for the Lord's glory, to lay themselves out in and for it. The mere fact of an inclination does not shew that we are called to it. I believe the surest sign is earnest love to souls, and intercourse, through the need of the heart, with Christ about it. I doubt not there is a pressure often of the Spirit of God which forces you out into it. Many may be most useful, giving up a portion of their time to it, who would not be giving up all, because they cannot fill up the measure of allotted service with Christ. On the other hand, men of much energy and zeal can serve and support themselves (witness Paul, and in his case even others), when one of less could not, who might be very useful, if given up to it. It is not the desire to speak, but *love* for souls, and for the building up of saints, which is the real moving spring of service. I know not how far this presses on you. I should be most glad to help you in scripture, as far as I am able. Constant application to it would suppose the Lord leading into it, and in your case, a wife and child have to be thought of. I have now coming to me for an hour three or four, twice a week, and probably shall soon have the whole of an evening generally free for this. I leave, of course, entirely to themselves the Lord's call to them. Those who come are more or less at the work, but, save one, and an ex-clergyman who is with me

for the moment, labour for their livelihood. I leave to, and cast entirely on, the Lord any further carrying out of it.

I shall, if you feel called to the work, be most glad to help you in reading. As to the reading on the Psalms, it would depend on many others besides me. Local ministrations, well supplied from Christ and the word, are greatly wanting, but that love and care for souls which cements and makes happy is an essential element in such service. Devotedness is the first grand question of all; would there were a thousandfold more of it! I should not be afraid of the Lord's taking care of people.

I trust you will weigh over before the Lord how far He calls you to this.

Affectionately yours in the Lord,

J. N. D.

VERY DEAR BROTHER,

Your letter calls for a serious examination. I suppose, as to the principle, that we are clear on one point, namely, that we are bought with a price, and that we are not our own—servants, blessed be God, in this poor ruined world, of the Lord, by His great grace; and if, besides the joy of being for ever with Him, there is one, it is that of being able to serve Him down here the little while we have for so doing, for it is only here that we can suffer with Him.

Then, the question arises as to what He calls us. For you, dear brother, if God has called you to the ministry of the word; or if it is only that your practical faith wavers before the difficulties of the path. You must remember that God tests faith; He never fails us, but He makes us feel our entire dependence upon Him. I see this in Paul. He had a thorn, he was often even hungry. He learnt to glory in his infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest upon him. But the result was, that he was instructed to be in abundance and in want; to be full, and to be hungry—"I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me." Without were conflicts, within were fears, and he gained the knowledge of God as the One who comforts those that are cast down. But he was able to say (not, who makes me triumph), but, who leads me in triumph; having missed the open door at Troas, being in great conflict with regard to Corinth, but able to say, in order to be a sweet savour of Christ wherever he was. The question of his call to the ministry was certain. If grace had not sustained him here, he could have returned, like John Mark (woe to him, as he always said, if he preached not, and he did so without his will (*ἄκων*), being sent assuredly of God). He could not doubt having been sent; the words of the Lord near Damascus, and the prophecy at Antioch, were positive.

Now, neither *our* mission, nor any part of the work of the Lord, has this distinctness. Our word is not confirmed by accompanying signs. This does not trouble one. It demands more of the heart's confidence—confidence in Christ, and that always does good. But it strengthens the heart greatly to be assured of it. Then, if there are

difficulties on the way, they are but difficulties to be overcome. If I have not this assurance in starting, it is a question if I am in my place; in any case, God can exercise us here for our good. Not only that, but when God has clearly called some one, either by the ardour of his faith, like Moses, or by any formal calling, like Paul, He can put him aside. Moses, during forty years, kept the sheep of his father-in-law; and at first Paul had not any active mission in order to reduce the carnal activity which might mix itself in his work with the activity purely from God, and to make him learn his entire dependence. It was Barnabas that put Saul anew to the work; then came the mission of Antioch. But the *heart* is in these cases always in the work, but retired with God in such a manner, that God has a larger place in the heart, and our labour is afterwards more directly with reference to him.

There, then, dear brother, is the question for you: Are you truly called to labour for the Lord, that is to say, to go about in His work, for we all ought to labour for Him? When we are, faith may fail; yes, but we are miserable if we abandon it, as Jeremiah said, when he did not wish to speak any more, "Thy word was as a fire in my bones." If it is only a fire that crackles in the thorns, it will soon be extinguished. But if you find that the Lord has entrusted you with His word, He has put it into your heart, not only for yourself, but for others. (Gal. i. 15, 16.) Then fear nothing; faith tested is faith strengthened; it is to have learnt your weakness, but to have learnt the faithfulness of God; His tender care, even in sending the difficulties, that we may be there with Him. And if you have the assurance that God has entrusted you with His word, do not be troubled if you are set aside for a time. One learns one's lack of courage—at least I have learnt it—but God takes account of what we are, gives us our thorn, that we may be humbled, and that we may feel that the strength and the work are of Him. No doubt we have to judge our want of courage. For my part, it is my greatest test—the want of aggressive courage, and the way in which I shrink back before the coarseness of the world. But there is the look towards God, who has pity for us.

Profit, then, by your present separation from the work to be much with Him. You will learn much inwardly in your incapacity to go forward, much of Himself, then more distinctly if God has really sent you, which gives great inward power in following out the work. But do not doubt His faithfulness.

It is 45 years that I have served Him since I left nationalism. Oh how ungrateful I should be if I did not testify to His faithfulness, and to His great and sweet and precious patience with His poor servant. It is a joy to me now to see others raised up to continue the work, and I hope better than I, for that can well be, though I by no means doubt of a special work in these last days. But the workman is another thing. I have been a labourer, God knows; but I have been more a hewer of wood and drawer of water for those who have more.

courage. But we are what God gives us and permits us to be. God is reviving His work in Europe, and evidently, which encourages us and comforts us, and gives in many respects an open door in spite of the evil, and often even by measure of the evil. . . .

Yours very affectionately,

J. N. D.

As a rule, reward is in the kingdom, "ten cities," &c. In Matthew xxv., ten and four talents being alike into "the joy of thy Lord." Fitness for heaven is not connected with progress in scripture. "He hath made us meet." It is natural to suppose greater spirituality is more capable of enjoying; but the object is so great after all, it eclipses us, and we must remember Christ is our life, and there, all else gone. Scripture, as far as I know, never speaks of spiritual capacity, or growth in it, to enjoy more. Here, surely, there is such a thing. When God is all in all, there is no such thing spoken of. God may have, in His eternal purposes, fitted for more or less, but, as scripture does not speak of it, I do not. Reward in the kingdom is clearly spoken of.

J. N. D.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

23. Q.—What is the teaching of Genesis xv. 9–17 ?

A.—The scene that these verses describe is God's answer to Abraham's inquiry with reference to the land that He had promised him, "whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" The teaching is plainly enough this, that the covenant that God made with Abraham was based on death, typically that of Christ, and the driving away of the birds by Abraham was the energy of faith that protected the sacrifice from defilement, as being the foundation upon which everything rested. Then in the deep sleep, with its horror of great darkness, Abraham enters in spirit into death, as an experience of soul through which all his seed, as father of the faithful, would have to pass before they would know God's deliverance for them based on Christ's death—the only way of blessing being death and resurrection. But beside in conscience passing through death in its terrifying power before peace is known, there is the subsequent "bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord." All this is learning death practically in its application to our own condition in the flesh, and has its type in Abraham's hour of great darkness. In verse 13 God tells Abraham, during his deep sleep, that after suffering for 400 years in the land of the stranger, his seed should be brought out with "great substance

into the land He had promised to them, but that while going through this trial of affliction, He Himself would be with them as a "furnace" of fire that would consume all in them unsuited to Himself, and as a "lamp" of light to guide them in the time of darkness, before the blessing came. This has had a partial fulfilment in Israel's history already, but it will have its full and final accomplishment during the time of "Jacob's trouble" before they possess the land under the new covenant. For us this answers to Hebrews xii. 29, and 1 Peter ii. 7. The furnace and lamp passing between the pieces of the victims, shews how God can be with His people in these characters, which is really pure blessing, as being with them according to all efficacy of Christ's death as meeting all questions of sin and judgment; and, with this, how in a covenant of death He binds Himself to the accomplishment of His promises.

24. Q.—What is the rod spoken of in Exodus iv. 2?

A.—The rod is the emblem of power, which having been first committed to man (Adam) has become in his hands Satanic. God reclaims this power, and puts it back into man's hands (here typically Christ), as His power for the blessing of His people, and the judgment of His enemies. To trace the history of this recovered rod, is most blessed and interesting.

25. Q.—What is to be learnt from Exodus xxxvii. 7: "Two cherubims of gold beaten out of one piece"? J. M. H.

A.—The cherubims are the emblem of the judicial power of God, and we first find them in Genesis iii. 21, where they are seen using the flaming sword of judgment against man, to keep him away from the tree of life, really from the presence of God Himself. Here they are the supporters of the throne of mercy, and God's claims in judgment against man having been satisfied by the blood, the judicial power of God is the shelter beneath which man can approach God, "and there," as God says to Moses, "will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two Cherubims." Beaten out of one piece of gold, means simply that the power is divine, and, though varied in display, exercised in the unity of the Godhead. The cherubims will have their full display in Christ by-and-by. "The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son . . . and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man.

C. W.

UNITY AND UNION.

WE think it may be useful to our readers, by the Lord's gracious help, to briefly develop from scripture itself the difference between unity and union. These terms, though springing from the same root, and in one sense running into one another, have not exactly the same meaning, nor can they be used interchangeably. To use them indiscriminately, at least, without defining by the context, the real difference of thought they represent, is a very real loss to souls, and hinders the intelligent communion of saints in the distinctive blessings that these terms respectively represent. We believe a very little sober reflection will make this plain.

We have no wish to dogmatise, but merely to put our thoughts before our readers, leaving them to decide from scripture how far they are in accordance with truth; our aim being edification and not controversy. The desire to build one another up in our most holy faith, fruit of the love that seeks to edify, carried into action will, we are quite sure, bear the marks of the infirmity and limitation that the earthen vessel ever displays, and where what God does by it is all His own, the imperfection and weakness being all the vessel's, plainly enough, too, there to keep it humble, and were it not that mercy were tasted in its ministry, would cause it to faint.

The difference between unity and union will, we think, at once strike the mind, if we exemplify them in connection with the common relationships of life. We speak of the *unity* of a family, and of the *union* between a man and his wife. It would not do to speak of the union of a father with his children, nor would it convey the full truth if we said a man and his wife lived in unity. In the first case there is community of life and nature, and there may or may not be family unity. In the second case it is not a question of community of life and nature, but of a bond between two distinct persons by which they are united the one to the other; a *union*

which cannot be broken, and yet they may not be living together in *unity*.

Applying, now, these distinctions to divine things—to the family of God, and the church of Christ—we shall find that in those scriptures where the saints are looked at in their *individual* relationships as children of God there is unity, but not union; while in those scriptures in which the *corporate* relationship of saints as the church, the body of Christ, is unfolded there is union, and unity is enjoined. That is to say, there is the unity of the family of God, where Christ is "the first born among many brethren;" and the unity of the church, where Christ is "the head of the body."

John unfolds the former, Paul the latter. John speaks of the family of God, but never of the church, and consequently we find *unity* in John, but no union. Paul speaks of the family of God as well as of the church, but specially of the latter; hence, while recognising the unity of saints as children of God, he dwells chiefly on the *union* of saints with Christ as members of His body, the church. We shall see this plainly enough if we turn to the scriptures themselves.

In John we have the Father and His Son revealed, and believers brought into relation with God as the Father, and with Christ as His brethren. "As many as received him to them gave he power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on his name." (Chap. i. 12.) "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God." (Chap. xx. 17.)

Then as to unity we read, "And one of them named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself; but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation, and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together

in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." (Chap. xi. 49-52.) From this scripture we learn that not only are the national salvation and unity of Israel secured by the cross, but that, in addition to individual salvation through the death of Jesus, the cross is the foundation on which the unity of the children of God as a *family* rests. This blessed effect of the cross in respect of unity must not be confounded with that spoken of in Ephesians ii. 16, "That he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." Here Jews and Gentiles are in question, and the cross is the basis of union and unity in the church, but to this we will refer again in its place.

The unity of the family is largely the subject of the intercourse and intercession of Jesus with His Father in chapter xvii., and He speaks of it in three distinct ways: 1st, He prays that the disciples, whom the Father had already given Him, might be so kept by the Father in His own name (as the Father) "that they may be one, as we" (ver. 11); this unity was to be of the same character as that which subsisted between the Father and the Son—"as we"—one thought, one purpose. 2ndly, He prays for "them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (Vers. 20, 21.) Here He desires that the unity of all believers as one family, in fellowship with the Father and the Son—"in us"—might be so displayed on earth that the world might believe that the Father had sent Him. 3rdly, He tells His Father, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me." (Vers. 22, 23.) The unity here is that of the saints as one family in heavenly glory, "perfect in one." The Father displayed in the Son, and the Son displayed in the many sons conformed to His

image in glory. (Compare Rom. viii. 19, 29.) Through this unity the world will *know* that the Father has sent the Son, and that those who had believed on Him were, as children, loved with the same love as Himself.

It is the unity of the family that is expressed in that first gathering together of believers after the Lord's resurrection. (John xx. 19.) They were assembled together as *His brethren* for the first time, redemption having been accomplished, and doubtless consequent upon the revelation of this relationship given them through the lips of Mary. He appears in their midst, fulfilling the prophetically announced desire of His own heart in Psalm xxii., "I will declare thy name unto my brethren," and it is as from the bosom of the family, so to speak, He sends them forth into the world on their mission of grace to sinners when He says, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

The assembling together of the disciples "with one accord" (Acts i. 14), subsequent to the Lord's ascension, but before the descent of the Holy Ghost, was also of this character, and the unity and communion so sweetly disclosed there is that of the family of God. It is all on the *individual* footing of saints before God as children "through faith in Christ Jesus."

Before turning to the second part of our subject, and passing from the writings of John to those of Paul, we think it will help to clear our ground if we look a little at what the Lord tells the disciples in John xiv. with reference to the mutual indwelling of Himself and the Father, and of Himself and them, the latter being consequent upon the coming of the Holy Ghost. In the minds of many this mutual indwelling of Christ and His saints is confounded with union, and no little loss to souls is the consequence, both in their communion, and their power for testimony. Now we believe a little quiet weighing in the mind of what is said on this subject in the chapter before us will shew the difference between the two, and, with this, the importance of realising the distinction. In verse 8 Philip asks the Lord to shew

them the Father; to this the Lord rejoins "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Phillip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father: and how sayest thou then, shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me he doeth the work. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me: or else believe for the very work's sake." Here we have the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son, and so manifested that in seeing the Son the Father was seen too; there was the most perfect identity of nature and being; an identity displayed in word and action. But would it be correct to say that the Father was united to the Son, or that the One was in union with the Other, as of two distinct persons united the one to the other, and acting in unity?

In verse 20, speaking of the Spirit of truth, the other Comforter, whom the Father should give them, and who should dwell *in* them, He says, "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." That is to say, that in the same manner as He dwelt in the Father and the Father in Him, so, when they possessed the Holy Ghost, they would know that they dwelt in Him, and He in them. As in the case of the Father ~~Himself~~, so there would be in theirs and Himself (as the Son dwelling in them and they in Him) the same identity of nature and being, and there ought to be the same display of it before the world, so that those who saw them should see Christ in them, as they saw the Father in the Son.

Now to speak of believers being united to, or in union with, the Son of God is just as out of place as to speak of the Son being united to the Father. It is a totally different thought, goes deeper, and is a more precious thought than union, unspeakably blessed as that is. *Union*, as we shall see, is with Christ, as a man in heavenly glory; indwelling is connected with God in His nature and being, and this is distinctly developed by John in his

first epistle, where he says (chap. iv. 12, 13), "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit," and (verse 16), "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." God's nature is love; and because the believer partakes of that nature, and has it shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost, is he united or in union with God? To ask the question is enough to shew how wrong and unscriptural the thought is.

John gives the *individual* relationships of the saints with the Father and the Son, with whom they have fellowship; and according to these relationships they have this fellowship with one another, in the light in which God dwells, in *unity*, but there is no *union* in John.

C. W.

(To be continued.)

UTTER RUIN THE GROUND OF COMPLETE BLESSING.

I BELIEVE that which greatly keeps us from the strength of our joy, is our ignorance of the utter ruin of man. Not merely should we be acquainted with the evil into which the ruin has brought us, but also with the ruin itself. The moment that this ruin came into the world, everything went wrong. Not only has man gone wrong, but all his activities have gone wrong also.

Now, Christ has provided for us a way wherein the activities of the *new man* have their exercise. This is our own proper and peculiar portion; to have the mind of Christ, and to be brought into fellowship with God. But for the enjoyment of this, it is essential that we should be introduced into a knowledge of the *complete apostasy* of our own natural will. The purpose of God for His children is, that they should be associated with Him in *His own joy*, and to this end we must know Him. Now, the main sorrow of Christ's life was man's

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ignorance of God. God was never understood; but the poor sinner understood Him much better than the self-righteous Pharisee. Jesus came forth from the bosom of the Father, having the knowledge of His mind, knowing that God loved the poor sinner; not merely the sinner's joy in being blest, but God's joy in blessing him; and this is the joy in which God would have us to be associated with Himself. Another most blessed truth is, that we should be associated with Christ in *His sufferings*, "That the trial of our faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter i. 7.)

The first departure of the believer from God, is a departure from the knowledge of his fulness in God and nearness to Him, his *conscious sonship with God*. If I am *one* with Christ, I must be *as* He is. If I have anything at all it must be what *He has*—what He is. There is no medium between being nothing in ourselves and being everything in Christ.

If I have no title of my own, if I am nothing but wretchedness in myself, and have no natural understanding of God's good-will to man, where is my claim? Therefore true humility is the knowing what I am *in Christ*. So the moment I say, I am not *as* Christ, I lose the knowledge of my glory *in Him*, and I stoop down to the flesh. This we see in John, when he fell down and worshipped the angel. Here was that voluntary humility and worshipping of angels which the Apostle warns us against. Had John remembered the glory he had in Christ he would not have done this; for "As he is, so are we in this world." (1 John iv. 17.)

J. N. D.

It is a good thing when fleshly energy comes out in a form that is easily read, if, indeed, it comes out at all.

G. V. W.

“GATHERED TOGETHER UNTO MY NAME.”

(Concluded from page 238.)

WE cannot be too simple in apprehending the true force of this being “gathered together unto my name,” as the presence of the Lord depends on *this*, and with His *presence* all the responsibility and blessing connected with it.

First, let it be clearly seen that it is no mere voluntary assembling together of believers, in however small a number; nor is His presence in the midst a promise which He fulfils because they gather in agreement or unity. The statement is that, “where two or three *are gathered* together unto my name, there *am* I in the midst of them.” That is, they are gathered by a power outside themselves, though their faith and willing answer of heart to that name doubtless go with that power. The very nature and essence of their position is that it is a divine one, formed and sustained by divine power.

The same sovereign grace and power that attach the individual soul to the name of Jesus for salvation and acceptance with the Father, are in exercise to bring those so saved and accepted together to that name; and we do well to remember that we are as helpless in ourselves as saints as we were as sinners. The grace that calls and saves, is the grace that gathers. Sweet is it for our souls to ponder over this, and to realise that the same blessed Lord Jesus who saves us, is the One who gathers us to His name, that He may take His place in the midst of those He has gathered. That the active agent in all this is the Holy Ghost, and that faith is in exercise guided by the word of God is all true, but the Lord is Himself the One that gathers as well as saves. He not only came “to seek and to save the lost,” but He died that He might “gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.” In Acts ii. 47 we read, “And the Lord added to the assembly daily, such as should be saved.” This double work of the Lord Jesus, of saving and gathering, man’s self-will and Satan’s malice alike seek to hinder.

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It is, we repeat, of immense importance to get clearly before the mind that it is the Lord Himself who gathers His people, and that Satan is always opposing *this* work by every device and energy of which he is capable. Nor is it a question here of salvation, but of delivering man from Satan's power and authority, as a present thing, so that God's kingdom is established here in this world, while Satan is still its god and prince.

When on earth the Lord plainly enough thus cast out Satan, and gathered those He delivered to Himself, and this conflict between Him and Satan we get very plainly set before us in Matthew xii. 22, 30. It is with reference to the setting up of God's kingdom, as opposed to Satan's, that He says, "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." Satan is not only a destroyer but a scatterer, and when he cannot destroy, for surely he cannot destroy either the Father's children or the Shepherd's sheep, he can scatter, and having scattered can keep scattered, though he cannot "scatter them out of Christ's hands."

Now Christ has not only bound the strong man, but by death He has completely annulled his power. He builds His assembly in the power of His own life as the risen Son of God beyond the power of death, and the gates of hades cannot prevail against it—the foundation of life in the souls of His people is beyond the reach of Satan's power; but besides this building of His assembly in divine life, He gathers His people to His own name as the expression of His power and authority as the King in heaven of God's kingdom now on earth. The assembly bears this character in Matthew xviii. The power and throne of God are there. The assembly (if only two or three gathered by the power of the Holy Ghost to His name) has, as we have seen, taken the place of Israel on the earth, and, as to the world, the "within" and "without" apply to it. The assembly binds and looses in Christ's name, He Himself, with all power in heaven and earth His, being present to give effect to all that is truly done in His name.

In other words, the Lord has been pleased to constitute the assembly, not as the body baptised with the Holy Ghost and united to the Head in heaven, but as locally gathered to His name, His court. There as Lord He presides in judgment. From this court there is no appeal, as His words, "Verily I say unto you," &c. make quite plain, and this gives all its significance to the expression, "tell it to the assembly."

It is of the greatest moment to see that all discipline in the church of God proceeds upon the ground laid by the Lord in this 18th of Matthew. That the apostle Paul so regarded it is beyond disproof, and when giving the assembly at Corinth directions as to how to deal with evil in their midst, he tells them, "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. v. 4), they were to put away the wicked person.

The ruin of the church, and the weakness and disorder that is all around, have not touched *this ground* of discipline. These hold as good in our days as in the days of the apostle, and it is plain in giving these instructions in Matthew, the Lord had in view this ruin, and attached the full power of His name as much to the two or three gathered unto His name in weakness at the close of the church's earthly history, as to the unbroken assembly gathered in apostolic power in Pentecostal days. Two or three gathered by His power unto His name, and guided by Himself through the Spirit in accordance with the written word, wield His power in all its length and breadth in discipline as much now as then. Resistance to their decisions is resistance to Himself. It is the independency and self-will of man, denying the "unity of the Spirit" and "the Lordship of Christ." It is the power of Satan declaring itself against the power of God; but those who in faith, with lowliness of soul and trueness of heart, however weak in themselves, truly act for Christ and His glory, have this blessed promise to rest upon, "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." (Rom. xxii. 20.)

C. W.

“AS THE LIGHT OF THE MORNING.”

JOHN XX.

DARK are the shadows ere cometh the waking,
Fair, hopeful dawn over valley and plain ;
Darker the gloom in the heart that was breaking
Over the tomb where its last hope was slain.

What of the form, ah ! so lately reposing
After the suffering, anguish and shame ?
What was the tomb to her vision disclosing ?
Nothing remain'd, to which love could lay claim.

Nothing ! O terrible blank to the tender,
Desolate heart that yet painfully long'd
Unto the casket devotion to render,
Reft of the treasure to which it belong'd.

Nothing but one mighty sorrow perturb'd her,
Darkness nor night-watch could keep her away ;
Not e'en the vision of angels disturb'd her,
Over her heart and mind love had such sway.

“Tell me” in utter absorption demanding,
“Where thou hast laid him,” who fill'd all her heart :
Ah ! how the One who beside her was standing,
Valued the love that had drawn her apart.

“Mary”—the morning, the morning was breaking,
Light flash'd upon her—“Rabboni,” she said :
Best wine of gladness ! the sweet word awaking,
Blessed pulsations of joy that was dead.

Spring-time had come, for the winter of sorrow
Fled at His presence—to gaze on His face
Bounded her life, her to-day, her to-morrow,
Fill'd with His sweetness, His mercy and grace.

Not as a wayfaring man now sojourning,
Home to the Father that loved Him to go ;
Her place with Him whither He was returning,
Blessed relationship therein to know.

M. A. W.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH, AND JUSTIFICATION OF LIFE.

(Concluded from page 246.)

IN fact, in treating of salvation as scripture teaches us about it, we have need to mark the context, to understand in what sense the sacred writer is treating of it. We shall be saved from wrath through Christ—that is future; but we know it because we are *now* justified by His blood. (Rom. v. 9.) Would any one aver that those now justified by the blood of Christ are in danger of everlasting perdition? We shall be saved by His life (that is, because He lives), and we know it, since we are already reconciled to God by the death of His Son. (Rom. v. 10.) Are any reconciled to God in danger of being lost, and that for ever? Does Mr. Sadler believe that? His teaching implies it. Then Timothy's salvation, we are told, is spoken of as in some sense conditional; and the scripture is quoted, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine, continue in them: for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. iv. 16.) Now it is no use to quote one scripture to neutralise another, unless by the former God has cancelled the latter. Timothy was directly told he was saved. (2 Tim. i. 9.) Paul distinctly taught present salvation. (Rom. vii. 24; Eph. ii. 5, 8; Titus iii. 5.) And the clue to that which may seem to some contradictory, Peter furnishes, as we have already remarked. Salvation is both a present blessing and a future one, according as the soul's salvation, or deliverance of the person out of all troubles, or from sin, is the subject in hand. But it is not true that "salvation is *now* assigned us, but is capable of being forfeited by us" (p. 200). Nor were the Israelites brought into a state of conditional salvation by their baptism into—rather unto—(εἰς) Moses, any more than that they were sustained in their state of salvation by the constant feeding on the manna (p. 204). "The Lord," we read, "saved Israel that day out of the hand

of the Egyptians," as He had promised. "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." (Ex. xiv. 14, 30.) The salvation was effected by divine power, not by baptism unto Moses. The people, as a people, were redeemed, though the mass of them never entered the land. We shall not understand the teaching of Israel's history, unless we distinguish the national salvation from the condition of the individuals amongst them. So, if all Israel had been cut off, except Moses and his family, the promise to Abraham would still have been fulfilled, the nation would not have perished. The confounding the fortunes of the nation with that of the individuals is a fruitful source of mistakes, as his remarks about the manna shew. The manna sustained the physical life of the individual, but did nothing for the nation, as such, nor could it even ward off the approach of death, as the Lord reminded the Jews: "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead." It did not sustain them in their state of salvation. The nation was elect and redeemed, but not every individual composing it.

Confusion indeed characterises the book. There is confusion as to the scripture teaching about the olive-tree and the vine-tree (pp. 16, 17, 36, 55, &c.); between the church and the kingdom (p. 33); between being under the new covenant, and our enjoying the blessings of it (p. 40); between God imputing righteousness to us, and God's righteousness (pp. 59, 64); between justification and cleansing (p. 43); between justification and forgiveness (p. 48); between justification and the receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost (p. 26); and between union with Christ and being in Christ, and Christ in us (pp. 21, 22, 50, 72), &c. We have said enough to indicate to any intelligent student of the word, if our statements are correct, what a mass of confusion, on important doctrinal points, there is in this book of 367 pages.

A few words on the two trees may be of use, as the teaching about them concerns us all. The teaching about the olive-tree treats of what is dispensational, Gentiles, as

such sharing in privileges to which once they were strangers. The teaching about the vine treats of true discipleship to produce fruitfulness for God. Israel and the Gentiles are concerned with the olive-tree, real saints and mere professors are illustrated by the vine. The root of the olive-tree is Abraham, the depositary of privileges on earth. The stem of the vine is Christ, by abiding in whom alone fruitfulness can be produced. From the branches of the vine fruitfulness is expected, whereas the branches of the olive-tree are viewed as partaking of the root and fatness of the tree. What the branches enjoy, is the teaching of the olive-tree; what the branches should be, is the teaching about the vine. The olive-tree is spoken of when Israel's rejection is the theme. The vine is brought in when fruitfulness for God on earth, and that during the Lord's absence, is insisted upon. To the olive-tree belong natural branches, which can be, and some of which have been, broken off, but yet may be grafted in again; meanwhile branches of a wild olive-tree have been grafted in in their stead. From the vine branches can be taken away, but there is no word of their being grafted in again, nor of any being substituted in their place.

Now how could we apply the olive-tree as a figure of the Lord Jesus Christ? How could we speak of natural branches of Christ, and of such, or any of them, being broken off for unbelief, and then, if repentant, being re-grafted in? Into what confusion do we get—to say the least of it—by such an interpretation, which must land us in one of two doctrinally false conclusions—either the denial of the spotless nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, or the denial of the consequences of the fall being shared in by all of Adam's race. How could there be unbelievers (for the branches are broken off because of unbelief), once naturally connected with Christ, as branches of a tree, partaking of its root and fatness? For the olive-tree, Mr. Sadler avers, is Christ. (P. 15.) Now all the natural branches of the olive-tree, it should be observed, are not broken

off. Then, if the teaching of Mr. Sadler is true as he expresses it, "the wondrous inherence in Christ by the Spirit, St. Paul sets forth under the figure of the olive-tree" (p. 55), there are those who, as born into this world, were always children of God. In a word, the common condition of all men by the fall is denied, and the need of the death of Christ for all is set aside, for people could be vitally connected with Christ apart from any work in the soul. Now Mr. Sadler would surely reject such conclusions, yet, according to his teaching about the olive-tree, such are the only conclusions which can be drawn. Inconsistent, too, he is in his teaching on this head, for he dwells on the thought of the graft, but omits to take into account the natural branches.

Then, as to the vine, his teaching is at fault. He dwells on being *in* the vine—only once mentioned by the Lord—but forgets to emphasise the *abiding* in Christ (pp. 16, 59), by which alone a branch can be fruitful. Being in the vine is not the same as being really in Christ, with which he confounds it. A branch in the vine, if unfruitful, will be taken away. The Lord Himself marks the importance of abiding in Him (John xv. 2), for the vine and the branches are the figure of the Lord and His disciples on earth, illustrating thereby how they can be fruitful, and how nothing short of that will satisfy the husbandman. Judas was a branch in the vine. Was he ever really in Christ? Further, there is no thought in the passage of transference into it, only of being cast out of it. Nor does the figure of the vine teach anything about union with Christ, as Mr. Sadler would suppose. The vine treats of the fruitfulness of saints. Union with Christ, which is by the Spirit dwelling in us, makes us members of His body, not branches of the vine. Union with Christ is not taught in John's Gospel.

Then justification is not the same as forgiveness (p. 48), as Acts xiii. 38, 39, which distinguishes them, clearly proves; nor is it synonymous with cleansing (p. 43), as 1 Corinthians vi. 11 shews; nor is it the reception of the Spirit of God, as Mr. Sadler asserts. (P. 26.) Justifica-

tion refers to the believer's standing before the throne. The gift of the Spirit is what he receives from God. Again, union with Christ, and being in Christ, and Christ in us (pp. 21, 22, 50, 72), are quite distinct lines of teaching, though they are effected for the believer by the gift of the Holy Ghost. The former—union with Christ—is truth connected with the church of God; the latter—the being in Christ, and Christ in the believer—is an essential part of the gospel of God, as the Epistle to the Romans demonstrates. As united to Christ (1 Cor. xii. 13; vi. 17), we are members of His body, and so members one of another. As in Christ, and Christ in us, we have died to sin and to the world, and He is in us by the Spirit. Now, unless we have these truths distinct in our minds, teaching about them must be confused.

But is there no such thing as justification of life? Assuredly there is, but it has not to do with the believer's standing before the throne. With this Mr. Sadler confounds it. "If justification," he writes, "be justification of life," &c. (P. 96.) Again, "Justification, if it be the bringing a man into Christ," &c. (P. 92.) Again, "He that hath the Son hath justification, because he that hath the Son hath life, and justification is justification of life." (P. 57.) Indeed, throughout this book the two, as the reader may see from the above quotations, are confounded. Now the believer's standing is treated of, and definitely settled, ere justification of life is even mentioned. "We have access," we read, "by our Lord Jesus Christ into this grace wherein we stand." (Rom. v. 2.) Here our standing is mentioned as settled on the ground of the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the believer being justified by God's grace (chap. iii. 24), on the principle of faith (chap. v. 1), and meritoriously by the blood of Christ. (Chap. v. 9.) With this, the first great section of the gospel of God, as set forth in the Romans, comes to a close. God's righteousness has been manifested in justifying the ungodly. How, then, should the justified one walk? and what is his condition in relation to sin, and to the law? On these questions the

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apostle next enters, thus carefully guarding against any antinomian tendencies which are to be found in the heart of man. This the second section of the gospel the Romans takes up, which commences at chapter v. 12, and continues to chapter viii. 11. Here, treating of the doctrine of headship of race, the truth of being in Christ, and results from it, are taken up, and explained, and in this part of the epistle the term, justification of life (*δικαίωσιν ζωῆς*), is met with.

Now this has to do with our condition, as in connection with the Head of the race—Christ Jesus. The believer's condition is, that he is in Christ who is risen from the dead. His standing rests solely on the ground of the atoning death of Christ, and of His resurrection. All that gives him a place in righteousness before the throne of God—and his standing is that—is provided for by the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, on his behalf. The teaching about his state, or condition, and walk, is another line of things, and is connected with, and rests on, his being in Christ, and the correlative truth of Christ in him. This flows from the gift of the Holy Ghost, without which he cannot be in Christ, nor Christ in him. (Rom. viii. 9.) The distinction between these parts of the gospel it is of great importance to understand. What gives peace to the conscience, peace with God, is the divine testimony to the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, as it directly concerns us. What can set free from the power of sin and the world, is truth connected with the believer's condition as in Christ, and Christ in him—the present condition of the Lord Jesus Christ as regards sin, He having died to it (Rom. vi. 10), being necessarily the condition of all those who are in Him. Thus the doctrine of headship, and the connection between the head and the race, come up; for the consequences of the act of obedience, or of disobedience, of the head affect every one ranged under that headship. So we read, "Therefore, as by one offence towards all men unto condemnation, so by one act of righteousness towards all men unto justification of life." Condemna-

tion was the consequence, in which all were involved by the one offence of Adam; justification of life, that is, a righteous title to live, the opposite to condemnation, is the consequence which can flow to all by virtue of the one act of obedience unto death of the Lord Jesus Christ. So far the principle. But all are not saved. Hence the word proceeds, "for as indeed by the disobedience of the one man the many have been constituted sinners, so also by the obedience of the one the many will be constituted righteous."

Justification of life, then, is stated as shewing the condition of the believer who is in Christ. It speaks of a condition in which he is, and not of his standing, nor indeed of a work in him, though closely connected with this last. But with Mr. Sadler all is confusion. Again, he writes that righteousness is not only *imputed*, but *imparted*, and this righteousness is Christ's righteousness which is ours; we partake of it because we partake of His nature. If we fall from Him we lose His righteousness. "His one righteousness is imputed to us, and imparted to us by one act of God, when we are first brought into Him, or when, after falling from Him, we are brought back again into Him." (P. 59.) Now Christ's righteousness is not imputed to us any more than God's righteousness, nor imparted to us either. God imputes to the believer righteousness, without works. But we read not of righteousness imparted, nor could the one righteousness of Christ (*δικαίωμα*, not *δικαιοσύνη*), that is, His one act of obedience, be imparted to any one. How impart to us the Lord's act of obedience unto death?

The apostle's teaching on all this is clear and simple, when we take note of the context. But into what confusion may we get, if we do not keep the question of the believer's standing, as justified from all things, and so having a righteous title to stand before the throne, distinct from the question of practical righteousness, and of the truth of being in Christ, and Christ in us! Mr. Sadler wants to press on us the importance of practical righteousness. We fully accept it. But we shall never

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promote practical righteousness in a scriptural way, which is the outflow of the divine nature within the believer, if we confound standing and state. We shall then be in danger of seeking to make good our standing by our state. What Mr. Sadler is anxious for—practical godliness—scripture insists upon. But to set the heart free for this, the believer must first know of his perfect and unalterable standing before the throne of God. It is in this order the gospel of God is presented to us. It is in this order we should present it to others. But this book, entitled, "*Justification of Life*," makes standing dependent on walk (p. 59), and so confounds the two. C. E. S.

EPHESIANS AND COLOSSIANS.

THERE is remarkable similarity in the Epistle to the Ephesians to that to the Colossians. I do not think it can be said rightly, it is higher ground, so to speak, in Ephesians to what we have in Colossians. It is this, the glory of the body, the church, as seated with Christ in heavenly places, accepted in the Beloved, is in Ephesians; while in Colossians it is the glory of the Head—Christ risen, and that which belongs to Him as the Risen One, and ours, as risen with Him. It does not say risen with Him *into* heavenly places, but rather risen out of a place of sin and death to have a part with Him in life and resurrection; out of darkness into God's marvellous light.

The practical consequence in Ephesians is, "Be ye followers of God as dear children, and walk in love as Christ;" in Colossians it is "Walk worthy of the Lord," that is, the affections being set upon things above, where Christ sitteth, we walk down here through this world, in it but not of it, and all our desire is to be going out to the laying up treasures where neither moth nor dust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

But, again, as to practical consequences. In Ephesians, in chapter i. it is, "Blessed with *all* spiritual blessings in Christ," "Accepted in the Beloved." In chapter ii., what we were, "Without Christ, having no hope and without

God in the world, but *now* in Christ Jesus ye who sometime *were* far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Then again we have told out the believer's rich, full blessing in Christ. What security? what a place? what a portion? Well may we say with a full heart, "*Blessed* be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed *us*."

But now, if we turn to chapter iv., we see what the believer is in himself, what his habits of old were as to walking, and what he has now to put on, and perhaps needing as to his walk such exhortations as these, "Wherefore putting away *lying*, speak every man truth with his neighbour," "Let him that *steals* steal no more," "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth." What a contrast the believer in himself—surrounded by infirmity, weakness, sin; in Christ—fully, gloriously, abidingly blessed! Cannot we well understand the force of what the Apostle, by the Spirit of God, gives, "Finally, my brethren, be *strong* in the Lord"? Do we not indeed need, if this is our weakness here, to be strengthened in Him? to be growing up into Him in all things.

Oh! that we could each say, "I *have* set the Lord always before me, because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." Do we not need to be more in prayer *with* watchfulness? To be seeking to grow in grace and the knowledge of Christ Jesus? To have God's word more as our meditation, and to find it a lamp to our feet and a light to our path?

When we think of the hope that is laid up for us, of the glory *ready* to be revealed, and we here in bodies of weakness, our resource can only be "Himself," who will yet change this body of humiliation and make it like unto His own body of glory. Let us seek *now* earnestly that grace and help for every time of need, and say to our souls, "Delight thyself in the Lord." "Finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord."

W. H. S.

LETTERS AND EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF J. N. D. ON SUBJECTS OF GENERAL INTEREST.

BELOVED BROTHER,

I know nothing of communion entered into with those from whom I was separated. Would to God this were restored, but it must be on true and solid ground. I could humble myself that it was lost, and not exclude those who could really enter on this ground, but I do not think that humbling ourselves that a thing is lost, is saying that it is there. The moment the meeting seemed to lose the character of humiliation, though keeping its form but that it was practically spent, and began in spirit to turn into intercession, it was closed. The whole thing, I believe, was blessed, though doubtless imperfect, and was, and will be, the channel of blessing. Instead of thinking, it puts me or any one who really entered it on false ground as to evil I am not personally mixed up with—I think, and feel distinctly, it puts me and them on *much truer ground*.

There is a ground taken by some that is simply this—Bethesda is wrong and we are righteous. This ground, though not doubting the least as to the evil at Bethesda, and which I feel clearer than ever as to, I reject altogether. I can quite understand difficulties as to the meeting, and in the fullest way respect conscience as to them. One beloved brother who felt them, came and took part; another who much desired it, and came, did not attend because he could not explain himself as to it. All this conscience, instead of blaming, I am thoroughly glad of and can understand, having had in it to seek to meet conscience, the difficulties felt, for I found them, though I think through grace, we found our way through them. It certainly met the common need, and there were twice the number of brethren I looked for. I fully trust there will be blessing. I believe grace was in action towards others, but I have no consciousness of having given up a single principle I hold. The ground taken by a very few I do *not* take. At any rate it has been so far light as to bring the thoughts of all hearts out. Kind love to the brethren.

Ever affectionately yours, J. N. D.

I feel that humiliation of self is a *primary* need of the soul, and the primary claim of God. To do it on the bare ground of righteousness, whatever particular evil I might judge, seems to me to deny it.

July, 1852.

DEAREST BROTHER,

I think you misapprehend the disturbance of mind, occasioned by the — meeting; one or two have felt and sought to produce it in others, but it has produced a great deal more peace than disturbance in the most, and I think did so only where people were absorbed by Bethesda; and as to that, without judging I trust, the Lord was a

little displaced by it. When I came over to England, I assembled the brethren at —, and told them I had done with it, and could not be for ever on questions, and desired to get on fresh with Christ, making a fresh start, and that I did not make myself responsible for what had been done in my absence. It might have been much wiser than what I should have done, but being away, I could not answer for it; and we have never been occupied with Bethesda since, only taking up every individual on Christian principles. Not that my or their principles were changed as to it the least. It was a clear ground of judgment when any case arose involving it.

And now as to the meeting. The real difference is that your mind (as was —) is much more absorbed with Bethesda than mine. You speak of parties and so on; my mind is quite off this ground. I believe that a testimony of God was confided to brethren in these latter days which they had to maintain in the unity of the Spirit God, I believe, has in no way given up this testimony, but I believe brethren, we all, have grievously failed in maintaining it, and God's glory in it. This was a ground for humiliation, let Bethesda, or Rome, or any other thing be what it may. As to confession, it was left to every one to acknowledge in his heart—aloud of course, if he thought right—his own part in the bringing in the evil. The meeting was for humiliation only, and that we might be in our right place before God.

As to the causes, I, of course, did not prescribe the confession of any. But they date long before the Bethesda affair. This was but a consequence, and it is just in owning ourselves the guilty party from previous failure, and thus getting right in our own place of humbleness before God, that He could help us as to any circumstances arisen since. To raise the question as to Bethesda as some have, as taking the clean place against the unclean, would have been to get out of our own proper place before God to take, in that by which God had chastened us, the place of righteousness.

Is it that my judgment is altered as to the cause of Bethesda? Not at all. But I am outside and beyond that question. I am upon my own evil before God—humbled because we have not maintained His glory. Each could in such case, if led to it, confess his own fault. It was an effect. The meeting was for humiliation. There were prayers that we might be led deeper into it, brought to know more fully our real place before God. Humiliation was the one object of the meeting. It was left to God to direct any particular confession.

The ground of the meeting you state might be blessed, is exactly what was taken, and I undoubtedly believe has been very greatly blessed. I look to its working effects individually, as God may own it. I think too, this character was preserved, and God's power distinctly shewn in that. *I have no old position whatever.*

When I left Ebrington Street, I stood alone. I walk with God's saints, where I believe they are walking on His principles; and so far from the meeting, putting me in the old position (save so far as it

was abstractedly of God), that in its effect, though in itself it had nothing to do with it, the only link, which unawares to me connected me with the old position, namely, my circular—I have withdrawn. I have no more to say to *Bethesda* than I have to Rome, and I feel that ground the happiest and the truest—no more, save as positive acts may give occasion to judgment.

As to the evil, I am on no different ground than I ever was. If a thing is wrong and contrary to Christ it remains so, and I am under the same obligation to abstain from it, and keep myself clear from it, and others if I can, as ever. These things do not change. I may add that evil doctrine was not the ground at any time of *my* dealing with Bethesda; and I should not, on the other hand, have invited any in evil doctrine. But I deny most strenuously that division, because of it, has been the cause of the evil results. It is here that we are upon totally different ground, and that the real question as to the meeting is. I do not consider the Bethesda matter—however sad their course, which I *quite think* the cause of the sad results, and hence mark their unfaithfulness—is the cause of what has arrived.

Now I am not denying in a certain measure the faithfulness; but I look upon Bethesda as a mere occasion in God's hands, for chastening us for our own previous unfaithfulness. Why did we fail rightly to judge and put away the evil? I admit brethren did. But how came this? Why did God permit them to be thus sifted by an evil they did not know how and had not wisdom and courage to deal with? Does God lightly, and for no cause, send such affliction and humiliation?

The incapacity of brethren was, to me, frightful and inconceivable, as regards Bethesda. I think, seeing their state, they went wrong, not because Bethesda was right, but because they meddled with it out of their place. I begged them not, and they would not hear me. I could as to this take clear ground from all; but I go much farther back, and bow myself first of all for letting the evil come in—failing myself—of which I consider all this but the chastisement.

When you speak of parties, and mutual humiliation, you are on a ground I know nothing about, and recognise nothing of whatever; because, as I said, you are occupied with Bethesda as the one question. I have nothing to say to it, nor the meeting, save so far as historically it had become the occasion of sorrow. Individuals were invited, there was nothing mutual in this question that I know of. The only thing was to hinder consciences being so embarrassed as to prevent their coming. Individuals really concerned in the testimony brethren ought to have borne, were welcomed there, provided they came to humble themselves, and did nothing to shock the conscience of brethren, when judgment as to Bethesda was distinctly resumed.

As to the conference. In the first place the — meeting is over. I should entirely decline mixing up with any conference, whatever effect it may produce. I decline having the conference which was at —, at —, that the — meeting might fully preserve

its own character. I should decline any ecclesiastical conference. If individual brethren wish either to open their hearts, or enquire even of the Lord what they ought to do, I have no objection. I shall take my part *in it*, if I can go on my own individual responsibility.

I do not at present feel led to promoting such. I prefer letting the humiliation produce its natural fruits; and it has in those who took part in it produced such already largely, and certainly manifested the state of hearts in a wonderful way. Humiliation was our right place before God, and whenever we get into our right place before God, He can bless, and delights to bless. It is possible a conference may have its place. It has seemed to me more the desire of anxious minds at present, than of those quietly led by the Spirit of God. Does He lead us to it, I have no kind of opposition, and can conceive a state of soul in which it might have a very useful place. Souls are on the move, but under God's hand their competency to settle things, I doubt. Forgive me, dear brother, if I think that at —, you have not adequately reached the just measure of want of confidence in your position.

Do I want you to doubt as to Bethesda or any evil? God forbid. Quiet godly certainty as to it, I believe to be of the last importance, and especially in these loose and uncertain days. Or do I wish you to doubt the competency of God to help and direct His Church were there but three met on earth? They may be a brighter testimony than 3000. But I cannot help thinking that there was a confidence in your own position, which does not reach the due extent of humiliation. Perhaps that arises partly from not having been mixed up with evil, which we who are older in this work have to mourn over. But so it is, there is an idea of competency to act with authority, (not to be separate from evil—all evil, which is quite right), which I doubt that you can make penally good before God. Used for His glory He will bear with, and bless you, and purge out what there is of pretension in it, but He cannot approve and sanction the thing itself.

I repeat, as to our present question, this may arise from your being never much in the position you have taken: a happy reason. Still it does not alter the great ground of the position brethren have to take before God. Brethren in general are quite outside these questions. I doubt that a conference, got up as you wish, would allay; I apprehend it would rather excite, at this moment, people's spirits, and much is passing at this moment that might impede its really occupying people's minds. They are occupied with other things. — is withdrawing his papers, and has written to some as to the spirit in which he took things up. — and — are meditating withdrawing their circular, and stating on what grounds, though I have no particulars, nor know whether they are decided. So that I should feel at this moment it would be the moment to wait awhile.

Further, I have made and know nothing of any compromise on anything, nor would not, on principle, on any moral subject whatever. Compromises are, in my judgment, always wrong. As I said,

the mind of — and yourself, and perhaps one or two others (for there are only one or two, and some of those that assisted) have not seized the positive object of the meeting, from being occupied with your own point of view. No one then thought or dreamed of a compromise; such a thought never crossed anybody's mind. But I do think the fault is in your position, not in that of the brethren who humbled themselves. I think there has been a tendency to an assumption of capacity of judgment, which God may own in its desire, but not in the wisdom of the position taken.

I thank you sincerely, beloved brother, for your letter, and as you see have answered openly and fully in all confidence. I quite believe the brethren who stayed away, did it from a motive of conscience and dread of compromising with evil, which I *entirely* respect, and rejoice it was in exercise. I do not think that humiliation and a sense of failure had an *adequate* place in their mind; but some brethren I particularly value had scruples; some got over them, others did not. I do not blame one, quite the contrary. Kindest love to the brethren.

Ever affectionately yours, beloved brother, J. N. D.

July, 1852.

DEAREST BROTHER,

Your letter gives little difficulty in answering, because as to its great principles it is quite what I feel myself, and I will add, as regards the — meeting, the difficulty of acting in the Lord's mind as to humiliation, and yet keeping clear of evil ourselves there, for that was the point that was so delicate a one as to succeeding in practice, that had I not felt guided of God, I should have felt it hopeless. And while I believe He graciously did help us, yet feeling it a very nice point to attain, not in principle but in practice, (with 150 people one could only, as to particular right, estimate of the position and individual acts, in the main trust God that we should be kept), and earnestly desiring there should be no practical loosening of any separation from evil, I could in no way be surprised if persons felt scruples or difficulties as to the point reached; and their jealousy as to committing themselves to any compromise with evil I heartily sympathised with. Our affair was not to arrange communion, but to avoid any communion with what could affect the conscience as defiled, and yet have the humiliation on the ground you state.

I now turn to the difficulty you mention, as to Bethesda being on the ground of Dissenters or the Establishment. This has been pressed much by persons who sought, while owning there was evil, to involve us again in looseness of fellowship with the principles of Bethesda. This is not your object at all, but your difficulty turns on the same point. But to me far graver considerations make a total and complete difference. There had been fellowship rightly or wrongly with Bethesda, and the first question was, was it to be continued? That is, people had been received, if they came thence, and brethren went there, received in like manner. Subsequently to this, persons holding

the most horrible doctrine as to Christ were received, inquiry refused, and the doctrine laid down and accepted by the body that no such inquiry should be. That is, they took as a body this position of unfaithfulness on foundation matters to Christ.

The Establishment has not done this; indifference to persons holding a false Christ, has never been proclaimed as its principle. Nor has any dissenting body that I know ever done so. This is the difference then to me, a grave positive sin against Christ, the body having accepted this as a principle. Where a dissenting body had done this, I would not receive its members, unless the individual were cleared of the sin. *Nor can I consent to set ecclesiastical faults, of judgment (however grave as regulating my conduct in connection with the unity of the body) on the same ground as positive indifference to what concerns the personal glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

An Independent goes ecclesiastically wrong; when he comes to me, though inconsistent, perhaps through want of conviction, he goes ecclesiastically right; but as to Christ's personal glory, and the foundation of union, he is perhaps as jealous as I am, and, it may be, more faithful. Supposing now Bethesda, unfaithful, for I am only shewing the difference of principle, supposing they are as regards the Person of the Lord Jesus, I am, in receiving one who forms part of it, acquiescing in this sin, which is in no sort cleared by his coming amongst us, but rather acquiesced in by us. Fidelity to the truth as to Christ's Person is in question in one case, and not in the other.

Now, this is a difference *all important*, which is *before all unity*, and at the foundation of all unity too. To hold unity independently of it, is to put the church—*i. e.* unity of men—in place of Christ, not to build it on Him. To me, this is as clear as the sun at noon-day, and I believe it to be a question of the *value we have for Christ*. If persons say we are now separated for good and have nothing whatever to say to Bethesda as being outside the pale of Christian unity, I should have no objection to examine each case, provided the sin in which they have been implicated, be inquired into and pressed, and continuance in it taken account of—in a word, that indifference to Christ be in no way accepted or acquiesced in. That is the whole matter with me; though I think there are other grave points in the Bethesda case, all fade to my mind before this.

I would not on any account have invited one whom I know to be in false doctrine to —; in one case when I feared it might be, I took particular pains to guard against any mixture with it. I do distinguish between persons actually deliberately guilty of the sin, and persons (though not knowing what to do, or prejudice or ecclesiastical difficulties) not cleared from ecclesiastical connection with it, though they would abhor it in itself. I certainly would not have invited a person I supposed to be deliberately and unrepentingly guilty of it. It was proposed to me to have it open to them, and I declined.

Two courses were open—excluding Bethesda as a body by name,

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or inviting individually on some well-known principle, (not of course on private choice). I first thought of the former, and finally acted on the latter, but in a way I believed to be effectual, and which was carried into effect on the same principle, which would not let in those who held to the sin. Without of course pretending that all was perfect on these points, still careful godly pains were taken to maintain the fear of God, and certainly our gracious God watched over the matter for us.

Some I might not shake hands with, others I should; I cannot lump all together in the same moral judgment. I see scripture teaches me in certain cases when I condemn, not to treat as an enemy but admonish as a brother. This is the ground I publicly took on returning to England. I believe I am on right ground, and I must deal with each case individually.

I have been interrupted and distracted in every possible way while writing this letter, but I trust I may have conveyed the point of my thought. If you have any difficulty, I am sure you will kindly write again. The whole question with me is, the real faithful maintaining, as far as in us is, the glory of the Lord Jesus, for its own sake and as the basis of union. Affectionately yours in the Lord, J. N. D.

August, 1852.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

26. Q.—What is taught by “the keys of the kingdom of heaven” which the Lord gave to Peter in Matthew xvi.? Have they anything to do with baptism and the house of God?

H. F.

A.—The thought conveyed by “the keys” is that of opening a door into a place. (See Judges iii. 25; Rev. ii. 18, ix. 1.) The place here in question is that of the kingdom of heaven—the sphere on earth where the authority or rule of heaven is owned. (Comp. Dan. iv. 26.) This answers to Christendom, where the name and authority of the Lord Jesus are acknowledged. While the Lord Jesus was on earth, the kingdom of heaven was only announced as “at hand;” but it was actually set up after His death, and consequent upon His ascension to the right hand of God in heaven. The *opening* of this kingdom the Lord committed to Peter, and there being “keys” given to him, instead of only a key, conveys the thought of the key being used twice, or of the door of the kingdom being opened more than once. This accords with the history of the setting up of the kingdom of heaven given us in

Acts. In the second chapter Peter used the key to admit the Gentiles, and in the tenth chapter to admit the Gentiles ; and from these two distinct epochs the door of the kingdom has been open alike to Jews and Gentiles. In both the instances referred to, the actual and visible means by which the Jew and Gentile respectively passed out of Judaism and out of Gentilism, and were admitted into the kingdom of heaven, was that of baptism.

Another aspect of Christendom is that of the house of God, or the sphere in which the Holy Ghost dwells ; and thus the kingdom of heaven—the sphere of the profession of Christ's name, and the house of God—the place where God in Spirit dwells, being co-extensive, baptism admits outwardly to both at the same time. In the one case the Lord Jesus is before the mind, as the King in heaven ; in the other, the Holy Ghost, as dwelling here on earth. This last must not be confounded with the action of the Holy Ghost as having baptised all true believers in the Lord Jesus into one body, united to Him as the Head in heaven ; the Lord Jesus is not King of the body, nor does the Holy Ghost dwell in the body.

The aspect of baptism as admitting into the sphere of Christian profession, must not be confounded with that spoken of in Colossians iii. 12, where it is the sign and expression of our death and resurrection with Christ, according to the power of God that raised Him from the dead, *vitally* laid hold of by faith in those who are baptised. The baptism is the same, but it is looked at in connection with the faith that truly lays hold of what the sign expresses.

C. W.

27. Q.—I have heard that Isaiah liii. 2 is a wrong translation—is this so ?

B. S.

A.—We do not know that the translation is wrong, but we have learned from competent authority that the construction of the Hebrew conveys the thought (contrary to the interpretation usually put upon it) that the "before him" refers to the Israelite, not to Jehovah ; the tender plant and the root out of the dry ground presenting to the natural eye weakness rather than strength of the arm of the Lord, and hence Christ was despised and rejected because of His seeming weakness and emptiness.

C. W.

UNITY AND UNION.

(*Concluded from page 258.*)

WE will turn now to the writings of the apostle Paul, where alone the doctrine of the church as the body of Christ is unfolded, and hence where, in addition to the thought of unity, we read of that of *union*. But before taking up the doctrine of the church, as Paul unfolds it, we will just note the fact that the church *began* with the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, consequent upon the ascension to glory of the Lord Jesus. This is given us in Acts ii., and where we read (ver. 47), "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

Another thing we would note, is, that it is against the church, as taking the place of Judaism, that Paul, before his conversion, was so bitter an opponent; and it is this fact that gives its peculiar significance to the manner of his conversion, and which coloured his entire life and service subsequently. He speaks thus of himself in Galatians i. 13, 14: "Ye have heard of my conversation in times past, in the Jews' religion, how that, beyond measure, I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it; and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." It is, too, in this connection he calls himself "the chief of sinners," and says he is not worthy "to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God." The thing that weighed so heavily on Paul's conscience was not the breach of the law, or his lost condition as a sinner in rebellion against God, where he could be on common ground with other sinners, but the special sin of persecuting the church of Christ. The gravity of this sin was consequent upon the intimate relation in which the church stood to Christ, and this Paul learnt at the moment of his conversion, and indeed it was in direct connection with this truth that his conversion took place. It is of all moment, in order to understand the special nature of Paul's ministry, to clearly apprehend this.

It was on his sanguinary mission to Damascus, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord (Acts ix.), that Paul saw that "light above the brightness of the sun," and heard from heaven those wondrous words that brought him to God and changed the entire course of his life, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" and to which, in answer to his inquiry, "Who art thou, Lord?" was added that touching and pregnant statement, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." It was here, at the very beginning of his christian career, that Paul learned that never-to-be-forgotten lesson, which entered into every subsequent thought and feeling of the apostle's heart, that the poor disciples of the rejected and crucified, but now risen, exalted, and glorious Jesus, were so *one* with Himself, that in touching them on earth, he touched Him in heaven. In that one short statement, the marvellous and weighty truth of the *union* of the church with Christ as its Head in heaven, was set, once and for ever, before the soul of Saul of Tarsus. His life and teachings are but the unfolding of this divine and blessed mystery, and his writings we will now briefly take up.

The essential difference between the writings of Paul and those of John, flows from this; that while John knew Jesus as a divine Person come to earth—"that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us" (1 John i. 2), through the knowledge of whom he had entered into life and relationship with God as the Father—Paul knew Him as a Man in *heavenly* glory. It was *there* Paul knew Him as his Saviour; *there* he learned the glories of His Person; *there* his heart had entered into that "love of Christ which passeth knowledge;" and *there* he learned the blessings, and the place of blessing, into which the believer in Jesus is brought. The kernel of John's doctrine is Jesus, the incarnate Son of God; the kernel of Paul's is Jesus, the risen Man in heavenly glory. For John, believers are children of the Father; for Paul, believers are members of Christ. Not that John did not know and own what

Paul taught, or that Paul did not delight in and give full place to all that John loved to dwell upon, but John's heart was full of the one, and Paul's of the other. The fountain was one, and Christ's fulness the source of both, but the channels were different, and each divinely fitted for the special ministry it was specially given to sustain; like the colours of the rainbow, distinct in themselves, but blending in beauteous harmony to form *one* arc of divine and heavenly radiancy.

John breaks out in holy ecstasy with, "Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" (1 John iii. 1.)

The anthem of Paul's heart is, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ!" And then, in deep and sober words, he tells us what and where we once were, and how we reached our present state of blessedness: "God," says he, "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 (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. ii. 4-6.)

The prayer of the apostle for believers, in the first chapter of this epistle, is based upon the fact, that saints are actually in possession of these blessings, and he asks, "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory," that they may *intelligently* enter into them, as well as know the exceeding greatness of the power that is in exercise towards them as believers in Christ, that power being the same by which God "wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenlies," and where He "gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body."

Christ, a Man exalted above everything in heavenly glory, with believers united to Him by the Holy Ghost to form His body, was that which *specially* occupied the heart, and called out the energies of the apostle Paul.

The Jewish system, by which men had been previously

in relationship with God, and of which he had, previous to his conversion, been so zealous an upholder, had, in the ways of God, and now in his own faith, given place to the church. That whole system, which shut Gentiles out from all blessing, and made Jews and Gentiles enemies one of another, had been abolished by Christ, who had died that He might destroy this enmity, and thus "make in himself of twain one new man," reconciling "both unto God in one body by the cross." It is in *this corporate* relationship of believers to Christ, as the church which is His body, that the thought of *union* comes in.

Thinking of himself as an individual, Paul can speak of "the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20); but when his thoughts are engaged with the relationship that subsists between Christ and *all* believers, he says, "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it," and that He "nourisheth and cherisheth" those that compose it as "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones;" comparing this to the union of a man with his wife, and quoting the words of Genesis ii., where, in connection with the original institution of marriage, it is said, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh," adding, "This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church." (Eph. v.)

In this epistle Paul develops the thought of union on the side of what the church is to Christ as His body, and of what He is towards it as the object of His own care; but we have another side of this blessed subject presented to us (1 Cor. xii.), where, in addition to the thought of the union between Christ and His saints as members of His body, we have that of the union between saints, and one another, as members of one body. The simile that he uses here is not that of the union between a man and his wife, but that of the connection subsisting between the various parts of the human body. He says, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is the Christ. For by one Spirit are we

all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free ; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many." He then develops, under this figure, the interdependence and mutual relationships in which believers stand one to another as members of this one body, and tells us that God has so formed the body, that there can be no schism in it, and "that the members should have the same care one of another," adding—so real is this union, and ever-acting is this interdependence—that "if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it ; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."

In *this* view of union all believers are one body by the one Spirit ; He animates and unites them one to another ; but, as such, they are, says the apostle, "the body of Christ, and members in particular." The conduct, then, of Christians one towards another, in all its bearings, is to be regulated by this blessed, living union, formed and sustained by that "one and selfsame Spirit." This union of saints as one body underlies all the apostle's exhortations as to their walk and conduct, and this comes out remarkably in the Epistle of Romans, where we should scarcely have looked for it, the subject set before us there being the position of man in his *individual* responsibility before God. He says, in chapter xii., verses 4, 5, when speaking of the relative duties of believers, "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office ; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

Very strikingly, too, does the apostle carry this thought of our union with Christ, as members of His body, into what is purely individual in its effects, where, when correcting the abuses to which believers can put their bodies, he says to the Corinthians (1 Cor. vi.), "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ ?" stating, as the ground of this, "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit."

The union of believers with Christ, as the risen and

exalted Man in heaven, Head of all principalities and power, is *the* subject of the Epistle to the Colossians, being brought forward there, to save saints from falling back under Judaism combined with human philosophy. He states, that all such retrograde steps flowed from "not holding the Head, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." (Chap. ii. 19.)

Brief and imperfect as our sketch of what Paul says on this subject has been, we think we have adduced enough from his writings to shew that *union* always carries with it the thought of the *corporate* relationship of saints to Christ as His body and His bride, and that to confound this with *indwelling* and with simple *unity*, which enter alone into our *individual* relationships as believers in Christ, is a very real hindrance to the soul's apprehension of divine truth.

C. W.

THE LESSONS OF THE AGES.

THE AGE OF LAW.

IN taking up the lessons of the dispensation of law, we must carefully distinguish two different and, in many respects, contrasted elements. As a trial of man, which, in the highest degree, it was, we have already seen it to be the working out (in a divine way, and therefore to a true result) of an experiment which was man's thought, not God's. God could not need to make an experiment. Man needed it, because he would not accept God's judgment, already pronounced before (as a fallen being) he had been tried at all, in the proper sense of trial; "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil, and that continually." God's way of acceptance for him had been, therefore, from the beginning by sacrifice, in which the death of a substitute covered the sinner before Him, closing his whole responsibility naturally in the place in which he stood as a creature.

The "way of Cain" was man's resistance to the verdict upon himself, and so to the way of grace proclaimed.

God then undertook to prove him, taking him on his own ground, and bidding him justify his own thoughts of himself by actual experiment.

But this is only the law on one side of it. It was what made it *law*, and gave its character to the whole dispensation. Yet underneath, and in spite of all this, God necessarily kept to, and maintained, His own way, and to the ear of faith told out, more and more, that way of His, although in "dark sayings," from which only Christianity has really lifted off the veil. Thus, and thus alone, a sacrificial worship was incorporated with the law, and circumcision, "a seal of the righteousness of faith," remained as the entrance into the new economy.

First, then, let us look at the law as law, and afterwards as a typical system.

As law, or the trial of man, we find him put into the most favourable circumstances possible for its reception. The ten commandments appeal, at the very outset, to the fact of the people having been brought out of the land of Egypt; it was He who had brought them out who bade them "have no other gods" before Him. He had made Himself known in such a way as to manifest Himself God over all gods, His power being put forth in their behalf, so as to bind them by the tie of gratitude to Himself. How could they dispute His authority, or doubt His love? His holiness, too, was declared in a variety of precepts, which, if burdensome as ceremonial, appealed even the more powerfully on that account to the very sense of the most careless-hearted. There were severest penalties for disobedience, but also rewards for obedience, of all that man's heart sinlessly could enjoy. The Providence of God was made apparent in continual miracles, by which their need in the wilderness was daily met. Who could doubt, and who refuse, the blessing of obedience to a law so given, and so sanctioned?

A wall of separation was built up between them and the nations round; and inside this enclosure the divinely-guarded people were to walk together, all evil and rebellion excluded, the course of the world here set right, all

ties of relationship combining their influence for good; duty not costing aught, but finding on every side its sweet, abundant recompense. Who (one would think) could stumble, and who could stray?

Surely the circumstances here were as favourable as possible to man's self-justification under this trial, if justify himself he could. If he failed now, how could he hope ever to succeed?

That he did fail, we all know—openly and utterly he failed, not merely by unbidden lusts, which his will refused and denied, but in conscious, deliberate disobedience, equal to his father, Adam's, and that before the tables of the law had come down to him out of the mount, into which Moses had gone up to receive them.

The first trial of law was over. Judgment took its course, although mercy, sovereign in its exercise, interposed to limit it. Again God took the people up, upon the intercession of Moses—type of a greater and an effectual Mediator. Man was ungodly, but was hope irrecoverably gone? Could not mercy avail for man in a mingled system from which man's works should at least not wholly be excluded?

Now this, in fact, is the great question under law rigidly enforced; it is easily allowed that man must fail, and be condemned. He does not love his neighbour as himself, still less love God with all his soul and strength. Is there nothing short of this that God can admit then? He can shew mercy; can He not abate something of this rigour, and give man opportunity to repent, and recover himself?

And this is the thought that underlies much that is mistaken for the gospel now. A new baptism may give it a christian name, and yet leave it unregenerate legalism after all. For this—only correcting some mistakes—is what the second giving of the law takes up. It is an old experiment, long since worked out, an anachronism in christian times. "The law is not of faith;" these are two opposite principles, which do not modify, but destroy, one another.

A second time the tables of the law are given to Israel; and now, along with this, God speaks of and declares the mercy which He surely has: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." It is the conjunction of these two things that creates the difficulty. We recognise the truth of both; but how shall they unite in the blessing of man? This doubt perplexes fatally all legal systems. How far will mercy extend, and where will righteousness draw the line beyond which it cannot pass? How shall we reconcile the day of grace and the day of judgment? The true answer is, that under law no reconciliation is at all possible. The experiment has been made, and the result proclaimed. It is of the law thus given the second time, and not the first, that the apostle asserts that it is the "ministration of death" and "of condemnation."

One serious mistake that has to be rectified here, is, that the law can be tolerant to a certain (undefined) measure of transgression. It is not so. It is not on legal ground that God "forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin." The *law* says, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." If on other ground—in this case, as ever, that of sacrifice—mercy can be extended, and even forgiveness, if man be permitted to cancel the old leaf, and turn over a new; yet the new must be kept unblotted, as the old was not. "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness," he must do "that which is *lawful* and right," to "save his soul alive." And thus the commandments, written the second time upon the tables of stone, though now by the mediator's hand, were identical with the first. Here the law cannot give way by a jot or a tittle, and therefore man's case is hopeless. The law is the ministration of condemnation only.

That was the foreseen issue, and the divine purpose in it, and God, to make that issue plain—that man might not, unless he would, be a moment deceived as to it—

lets Moses know, as the people's representative, that His face cannot be seen. He does indeed see the glory *after it has passed*—His back parts, not His face. God is unknown; there is no way to clear the guilty, and therefore none by which man may stand before Him.

Thus the law, in any form of it, is the "ministration of condemnation" only. That it was the "ministration of death" also, implies its power, not to produce holiness, but, as the apostle calls it, "the strength of sin." His experience of it: "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Forbidding lust, it aroused and manifested it. "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of lust"—thus "deceived me, and by it slew me."

Of this state of hopeless condemnation and evil, that *physical* death which God had annexed to disobedience at the first, was the outward expression and seal. In it man, made like the beasts that perish, passed out of the sphere of his natural responsibility and the scene for which he had been created, and passed out by the judgment of God, which cast, therefore, its awful shadow over all beyond death. The token of God's rejection of man as fallen is passed upon all men everywhere, with but one exception in the ages before Moses. Enoch had walked with God, and was not, for God took him. That made it only the plainer, if possible, what was its significance. It was actual sentence upon man for sin, and all men were under it as sentenced, not under probation.

If God, therefore, took up man to put him under probation, as in the law He manifestly did, He must needs *conditionally* remove the sentence under which he lay. "The man who doeth these things, shall live in them," meant, not that he should die, and go to heaven, as people almost universally interpret it, but the contrary; that he should recover the place from which Adam had fallen, and stay on earth. *Faith* in Abraham, indeed, looked forward to a better country, that is, an heavenly. But the law is not of faith, nor was Abraham under it. *Faith*,

owning man's hopelessness of ruin, was given in measure to prove the mystery of what, to all else, were God's dark sayings. To man, as man, resisting God's sentence upon himself, the law spoke, not of death, and a world beyond, which he might, as he listed, people with his own imaginings, but of the lifting off of the sentence under which he lay—of the way by which he could plead his title to exemption from it.

Thus the issue of the trial could not be in the least doubtful. Every grey hair convicted him as under law, ruined and hopeless. Every furrow on his brow was the confirmation of the old Adamic sentence upon himself personally; and the law, in this sense also, was the ministration of death, God using it to give distinct expression to what the fact itself should have graven upon men's consciences. It is this—so misunderstood as it is now—that gives the key to those expressions in the Psalms, and elsewhere, which materialism would pervert to its own purposes: "For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in hades"—it is not "the grave"—"who shall give thee thanks?"

God would have it so plain, that he might run that readeth it, that upon the ground of law, spite of God's mercy (which He surely has), man's case is hopeless. "By deeds of law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

Yet, God having declared His forgiveness of iniquity, transgression, and sin, the second trial by law could go on, as it did go on, for some eight hundred years, till the Babylonish captivity. Then the legal covenant really ended. The people were Lo Ammi, a sentence never yet recalled.

F. W. G.

(To be continued, the Lord willing.)

THE difference between learning sin in God's presence, and by falling into it is very great. One may feel sin very deeply, because one has committed it, but *this* never gives one God's sense of what sin is. The cross of Christ is the measure of sin in the sight of God. J. B. S.

“FAITH HEALING.”*

SOME months ago this question was put to me: “What do you think of this faith healing?” and I was requested to give my answer in writing. And, now, if the Lord has given me to discern the truth in this matter, I desire to give to His dear ones, who may be in need of a word on this subject, the benefit of all that the Lord has given me, with the prayer that He may use it to His own glory.

The answer to this question involves three points, which to me are increasingly important, as more and more the true character of the evil which is ere long to overwhelm Christendom comes out. In Revelation iii. 8 the Spirit says, “I know thy works: Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.” Here we have “an open door;” a “little strength;” and the “word” and the “name” of the Lord Jesus.

This really gives the position of the faithful remnant of the church for these days.

Firstly: the “open door.” Have we seen that? And have we taken our position as to that word?

Secondly: a “little strength.” Have we taken our position as to that?

To me, this involves a position outside all religious systems, and the acknowledgment of weakness and failure.

What then am I to do? The answer is in what follows. “Thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.” Are we doing this? Passing over verses 9 and 10 as touching other matter, we get in verse 11 a word which gives emphasis to verse 8 in a wonderful

* Though we cannot entirely agree with our brother in all of his interpretations of scripture, we give, according to his wish, his paper a place in our pages, believing, too, that much of what he seeks to enforce may be read with profit to many in these days of looseness, and human wilfulness and unscriptural activity.—Ed.

way, "Behold I come quickly, hold fast that which thou hast"—"*my word*" and "*my name*"—"that no man take thy crown." The crown is indicative of reward, simply, and the reward is gained or lost by holding fast, in the midst of weakness and failure by letting slip the word and name of the Lord Jesus. "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear!"

Now, the question at once presents itself in this form: What specific acts are we to look for, as expressed in the faithful remnant, which answer to this word, "thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name"? and what are we to look for as characterising the *not keeping* His word, and the denial of His name? Now, as to this last, the Spirit has taken pains to inform us, in what follows, namely, in the address to Laodicea. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot"—lukewarmness, indifference to Christ, and as to that which is so valuable in His sight, His "word" and "name." And then verse 17, the vain boast of self-satisfaction and self-importance. "Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing."

Do we not see this exemplified everywhere around us?

Surely, nothing but the very spirit of the thing itself could blind one's eyes to it. And this is what the Spirit said, and of which He speaks so emphatically in these verses, and which is so important a warning for us in these days.

Now, for the contrast: the specific acts characterising the faithful remnant. Do we find these anywhere? Are there any people anywhere who are characterised by holding fast *His word* and *His name* in the midst of confessed weakness? Shall we find them by these characteristics? and in what will they express it? Let us read from Matthew xviii. 15-20, where, as if providing for this very time in which we are living, we get, "For where two or three are gathered together in *my name*"—*gathered in His name*. Now, without confining it to this, would not so assembling be specially holding fast His name?—"there am I in the midst of them."

Then, let us look at another word, so intimately connected with this, "This do in remembrance of me."

Here we get the central point, so to speak, of many words of the Lord—"Thou hast kept my word." Let me illustrate. Take the dispensation committed to Moses. What was the central point around which everything clustered? Was it not redemption by blood? The blood-shedding of the paschal lamb? Could any Israelite be said to be keeping the commandments and ordinances of the Lord while this was kept out? (See Ex. xii. 1-14.) The passover feast was to be "the beginning of months" and the beginning of the year to them. . . "And this day shall be a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generation; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever." And in Numbers ix. 13, we get the death penalty attached to the non-observance of it. The passover feast, then, was clearly the central point around which all other services and ordinances clustered.

To begin the year without the passover, was to begin wrong. And to begin wrong was to go wrong, as one must start right in order to go right.

It was a redeemed people who were brought to God to serve Him, and the fact of that redemption by blood was of first and all importance, and not to be neglected, nor lost sight of. But we find that in this, as in everything, the Israelites were a failure, as the Books of Judges and of Kings bear witness. Now, to the point in hand. Was not the Lord's Supper, as recorded in the Gospels, given to the disciples to be the central point of this dispensation, as the passover had been of the Jews? And is it not the same practical truth, "*redemption by blood*," not as a yearly feast, but "as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

And how did the apostles understand these words, "as often," and "till he come"? They were so intimately associated in their thoughts, that we read at the close of the second chapter of Acts, "And they continued daily

with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house" (at home). And we find, as the work spread and went on, farther down in the history, in the Acts xx. 7, that which seems to shew that it was the settled practice of the church, under apostolic guidance, to meet for this on "the first day of the week." (Compare 1 Cor. xi. 25, 26.)

From these thoughts I am led to this conviction, that the faithful remnant will in these days be found holding fast these two things, in the midst of confessed weakness and failure. The word and the name of the Lord Jesus. The name, surely, carries with it the power and authority of His presence, in the midst, as a divine reality to faith. And His word brings to us, "This do in remembrance of me." His Person the rallying point; His table, the expression of obedience to His word. If this is not what is meant by the expression, "Thou hast kept my word and hast not denied my name," then, I confess, I do not know where to look for it.

If it is, and my heart bows to it, then I am prepared to detect the counterfeit; for surely Satan will have his counterfeit of this. And is not Laodicea what characterises it? Those who see truth enough to come out of system, while they have not conscience enough to take the right ground, but setting up for themselves in independency—which is surely Satan's ground—they take just so much of the truth as suits their conscience and their pleasure, while the separation from all that is of man, and faithfulness in that which is only of the Lord, is lightly esteemed. And it is not that the faithful ones have set themselves up as being right, and would unchristianize all others. This is Satan's insinuation to blind the eyes and discourage the hearts of the simple. But it is that the faithful hear the truth, see the truth, confess the truth, and desire, while confessing weakness and failure, to walk in the truth; and have conscience enough to regard His honour, and heart enough for that which is so precious to Him; and to be willing to abide the consequences, "the little while," "till he come."

To listen to the reasonings of one's own heart, or of others, is but to be deceived by the insinuations of Satan (Prov. xxviii. 26), and to be led astray; and the result will be to let slip His word, and deny His name, in the very presence of that stirring and awakening word, "Behold I come quickly, hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." But, it will be said, here are persons who have come out of system, very earnest and devoted Christians, living by faith, healing the sick, casting out devils, and doing wonderful works!

Yes, and we cannot deny their christian profession, their faith-healing, nor their wonderful works; but we may ask you to apply the test of Revelation iii. 7-11.

We may ask, Is this position that of the faithful? Are faith-healing institutions the confession of weakness and failure? And the publishing abroad? Does not that sound more like Laodicea? And as to the Lord's table? The holding fast "*His word*" and "*His name*"? What is their position? Equivocal, to say the least. A matter of convenience with some, or of pleasure with others—to suit themselves wherever they can—or of indifference; or of total neglect on the part of many. And we may ask, What about that faith which publishes abroad its works, while that sweet word, the dying request of our Lord, "This do in remembrance of me," is so lightly esteemed, and manifestly trifled with?

It is not a command, but a dying request. Which, think you, should have the most power over our hearts?

See that father! He gathers his family around his dying couch. To give them a few commandments? No! not a bit; but it may be a few words of exhortation with his dying request. So the blessed Lord has put into our hands the memorials of His dying love, saying, "This do in remembrance of me." Would not regard for "*His word*" and "*His name*" lead us to carefulness as to this?

Now it is possible for us to be very faithful and obedient in works *for the Lord*, while we may be all wrong as to faithfulness and obedience *to Him*. And this is just the difference between Laodicea and Philadelphia.

"FAITH HEALING."

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Look at that son! His father on leaving home gave him his work, but he, in the spirit of independency concludes there is other work more important. He labours hard, he does his work faithfully; he is working *for his father*, but he is not faithful and obedient *to his father*. Peter's zeal *for the Lord* led him to cut off the ear of the high priest's servant; and in his next step, to suit his own convenience, he denied His name. Is not this just what Christendom is coming to? And if we do not wish to be left to deny His name, ought we not to inquire whether our obedience is *for the Lord*, or to Him? Faithfulness and obedience *to Him*, leaves no room for self-will, nor self-pleasing in anything. We cannot even ask, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" but the answer comes back, "If I will . . . what is that to thee? Follow thou me." We see, then, that faithfulness consists, not in the amount and quality of work done, but in the "doing always those things that please him." We must begin with Himself, and go on with Himself. If we begin with ourselves, we shall go on with men in indifference as to His word and His name.

C. E. H.

(To be continued.)

WE are the present companions of a rejected, absent, unworldly Christ. We recognise the world around us (which has seen and hated Him and His Father, as the Lord Himself says) as morally incurable, awaiting the judgment of His coming day. We look to meet Him in the air, when the hour of His good pleasure to that end shall come; and when that is to be we know not. And we reckon upon returning with Him, first to the execution of judgment, and then to the sharing with Him, in manifestation, the glory of His dominion in the world to come. These things form and define the proper attitude of the saints of this dispensation. It is easy to apprehend this; but to realise it we need simple energetic faith in the power of the Holy Ghost. The faith that cherishes single-heartedness to Christ, and the love for Himself that ever keeps a welcome for Him in the heart.—J. G. B.

THE CHURCH IN A CITY.

THE question as to the assembly in a city, is one of much more importance than seems at first sight to attach to it. It is a question of the practical organisation of the church on earth, of whether the church heavenly (as in character she surely is), takes, or not, her place on earth as subject to laws imposed by earthly conditions. In a recent case of discipline, affecting many of us deeply, it is, perhaps, the scripture question most involved, and which involves most our judgment as to it. For these reasons it is that I should be glad to have a little space in "Words of Faith," to look at this matter simply in its relation to scripture, which, in my belief, is clear and simple enough about it.

The ground taken by many may be expressed in the brief way in a question which I borrow from a paper in your present volume. "If the scriptures do not speak of assemblies in a city, can we?" The practical conclusion is (though not that of the paper referred to), that supposing twenty-six assemblies in a city, each of these is but the twenty-sixth part of an assembly, and unable to act in matters of discipline, without the ascertained concurrence of the rest.

The texts may be first cited. The assembly in Jerusalem is spoken of in Acts viii. 1, xi. 22, xv. 4, 22; the assembly in Antioch, Acts xiii. 1, xiv. 27; in Ephesus, Acts xx. 17, Revelation ii. 1; Cenchrea, Romans xvi. 1; Corinth, 1 Corinthians i. 2, 2 Corinthians i. 1; the assembly of the Laodiceans, Colossians iv. 16, Revelation iii. 14, 1 Thessalonians i. 1, 2 Thessalonians i. 1; in Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Revelation ii. 8, 12, 18, iii. 1, 7.

On the other hand, we have the assemblies of Syria and Cilicia, Acts xv. 41; of Galatia, 1 Corinthians xvi. 1, Galatians i. 2; of Asia, 1 Corinthians xvi. 19, Revelation i. 11, &c.; Macedonia, 2 Corinthians viii. 1; Judea, Galatians i. 22; Laodiceans, Colossians iv. 16.

The general style of scripture is evident; assemblies of

a country or district; assembly in a city or town. There is one text, however, which seems an exception to the former usage. The editors in general, with the best manuscripts, read Acts ix. 31, "the *church* . . . throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria."* It has been urged, indeed, that this is "throughout," not "in"—an argument, I confess, I can make nothing of. The *general* usage is, however, plain.

The question is, Can we, or ought we, to find a doctrine in this manner of speech? Does it seem stated as doctrine? Apart from other considerations, is it safe to build upon what is, at most, an inference? And does not the undoubted doctrine of scripture forbid the inference?

In the first place, cannot the language used admit of being otherwise understood? It is easy to see that in many cities there might be actually but one assembly. In others, according to the need of the saints, the number of assemblies might vary at different times; and even where there were most, their proximity to one another, and free intercourse, with deep mutual interest, would weld the assemblies of a town or city into one practical whole, for all purposes, such as the history, or apostolical epistles in general, have in view. In this way, it seems to me, that an assembly in a city, assemblies in a wider range, would be natural enough, without involving at all the conclusions which have been drawn from this.

Let us inquire a little more precisely what these expressions, "assembly," and "assemblies," in themselves convey.

Plainly, the assembly of God is one, wherever found. There is but "one body," in which all baptised with the Holy Ghost are members; one house of God also; although it does not need now to consider this. "Assemblies" are simply the practical gatherings of this one assembly, unable, by reason of number and distance of location,

* The manuscripts are (among others), the Sinaitic, Alexandrian, Vatican, and Ephraemi; of versions, the Vulgate, Peschito, Coptic, Sahidic, Ethiopic, Armenian, &c. The opposing manuscripts, E., G., H. (Laudian, Boernerian, and Modena), are considered to be of date 600 A.D., ninth and tenth centuries.

actually to assemble in one place. They represent, therefore, in the various places in which they gather, the body itself, in which alone the individuals composing them are members. They are not separate organisations—the body is the only one. It is in every place, but the one body in fact, to which, therefore, attach the powers and responsibilities of this. The gatherings are only the local expression of the body, and have no privileges, functions, or responsibilities beside.

Now, in the view I am examining, the moment there are more gatherings than one in a city, these become no longer representatives of the body at large, nor even of that which is the representation. The practical representation of the church at large has ceased to be. *Nominally* it is the assembly of the assemblies—in *fact* it never assembles. And what, then, as to the power to bind or loose, which is the result of Christ's presence with two or three gathered to His name? Those who *actually* gather, in spite of His presence, can decide nothing—cannot bind or loose, or bind only themselves. The real decision which binds is that of an assembly which never assembles! or, by the concurrence of judgments, each by itself, powerless and inoperative!

What, then, makes void Christ's promise to His own, so that, although two or three gathered to His name shall have His presence, they shall not have the fruits of His presence? It is, we are told, the fact of their being gathered in a city! Two or three, gathered outside its limits, might do what two or three hundred within might not. What, then, is city or village in the church of God? What have the artificial terms of human government to do with defining for a kingdom not of this world?

If it be said, No; it is for the securing of unity; I ask, *Does* it secure, or even tend to secure? And I answer undoubtingly, It does the very reverse. Let us take as an example any ordinary case of discipline. All the elements necessary for the decision of it are in the gathering where it belongs. It is not a question of scripture which can be judged aright by any one, anywhere,

who is before God ; but one of facts and conduct, requiring investigation upon the spot, where the witnesses can be heard, and their trustworthiness tested. To carry it elsewhere—to try it again and again in different places—is only to throw suspicion upon the first judgment, and to occupy saints unnecessarily with evil not amongst them. This is not, and cannot be, of God. It does not make for holiness ; it cannot for unity. What really does this, is, to accept the judgment once given by those who have been in the place for it ; or, if question is rightly to be raised, to raise it there. That the need of ten or twenty decisions, instead of one, makes either for unity, or peace, or holiness, I believe it simply impossible to maintain.

If it be said again, that, in a case of this kind, there would be acceptance, doubtless, of the first decision, this is to give up the whole matter. It would be accepted, because of the realised competence of those first deciding, and the felt incompetency of others, or, at least, the uselessness of another trial ; and the same answer might equally be given in every case. It is not felt necessary, in the case of a gathering in a country village, to check or verify its decisions in the name of unity ; nay, it would be rightly thought the very opposite of this to do so. And this settles it conclusively as to gatherings in a town.

I repeat, that the local assemblies are but the expression locally of the assembly at large, which cannot actually assemble. The one assembly in a city, which is contended for, cannot be this expression, for *it* cannot assemble ; nor can the gatherings of which it is composed, if the functions of an assembly proper be denied them.

City or village is nothing in the church of God, nor can it avail to modify the processes of its discipline.

The thought of the one assembly in a city denies the guaranteed authority to bind or loose to two or three gathered to the Lord's name.

Its practical effect is not for holiness, peace, or unity, as the interests in which it has been so greatly pressed of late should convince us all.

F. W. G.

LETTERS AND EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF J. N. D. ON SUBJECTS OF GENERAL INTEREST.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Authority in the church is neither more nor less than the power of the Holy Ghost. There may be added at the beginning the apostles, as constituted companions of Jesus, and having directions from Him. But now this is simply the working of the Holy Ghost in the church. This may be in an individual according to the measure of power given to him, or it may be in the body; but it will always recognise the Holy Ghost in the body, and in all the members. This is most marked in the Epistles; they speak as to wise men, who have an unction from the Holy One. This is the whole matter; this once departed from, some mere arrangement takes its place, and the Holy Ghost is in principle—that is, in faith—set aside, and weakness is soon apparent. The kingdom of God is in power, but that power is known only to faith.

As to traditions, no one who has read the Greek Testament can for a moment doubt that this word is, in the New Testament, a doctrine delivered, not handed down, though this might sometimes be the character of what was delivered. Εἰς ὃν παρεδόθητε τύπον of Romans vi. makes this plain. So tradition, in the popular sense, is in contrast with scripture. But in the passage you refer to (2 Thess. ii. 15) it is either the direct word of prophecy in the church there, or the apostle's epistle: nothing handed down in the church is secured by subsequent authority. The saints were to keep the doctrine they had been taught—the body of saints.

Suppose I were to write to the body of saints in —, to hold fast what they had been taught, whether *viva voce*, or what I had written to them by letter, what would that have to say to the authority of the church or tradition of a subsequent era? Yet this is exactly the case, save that that teaching was divine and inspired, and therefore the exhortation had its peculiar place and weight: τὰς παραδόσεις ἃς ἐδιδάχθητε εἴτε, διὰ λόγου εἴτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν clearly shews παραδόσεις just to be a doctrine delivered. Nor do I see what the communication of what he had learned to faithful men, so as to form teachers, has to do with tradition. Nobody—unless they deny ministry—could gain-say this, and, as far as a man could be trusted as receiving it from St. Paul, it would, of course, have weight; but that is just the question. It was not authority, but a means of communicating truth. The confounding these two things is the generally unperceived sophism of Milner's "End of Controversy." "A rule of faith," he says, "or means of communicating Christ's religion, it must be plain," &c.; but these things are not the same. A mother does it to her babe, but she is not a rule of faith, perhaps does it perfectly,

rightly; but that alters nothing. Now here the apostle is directing the means of communicating truth to others, of course, as surely as he can, but not setting up either authority, or a rule of faith. When I had a dozen young men reading with me at Lausanne, I was doing this according to my ability. Was I dreaming of setting up authority, or a rule of faith, in them? Clearly not. The written word is clearly such, the moment we own it inspired.

The real question is, Is it addressed to all saints as possessing the Spirit, so as to use it? They are the church. Ministry may be a means of communicating, and a very precious one, as Ephesians iv., but they are never a rule, nor an authority. A rule must be an existing quantum of doctrine, but this no men are. That, as an authority, must be infallible, which none is but God. Infallible is not perfectly right. I may say what is absolutely right, but I am not infallible. Whenever the apostles spoke by inspiration, they uttered in revelation what was absolutely right from God, but this did not make *them* infallible. God is, because in His nature He never *can* say anything but what is right. When God spoke by them—as every true christian believes He did—they were absolutely right; but God remained the alone Infallible, who never could of Himself say anything wrong. This was not communicated to an apostle, since, if He did not speak by inspiration, he was as another man—more experienced, perhaps, but a man. Inspiration comes from the Infallible One, but does not render the inspired one infallible, but only perfectly right and divine in what he utters as inspired.

Further, I believe God will secure by His power that the truth shall not be lost in the church to the end. It may be only in an upright, godly few, as when almost all the professing church, and Pope Liberius among them, turned Arian. But this does not make the church infallible; but it does prove that God will keep His elect in vital, essential truth to the end. But being kept is not authority. I am persuaded I shall be kept in the truth for the end—sure of it—through grace; but this is not making me an infallible authority, it is just the opposite—I am subject to the truth. So the church, the elect saints, are subject to the truth always. They may have accompanying obscurities on many points, but they will never deny saving truth to the church; many foolish things may be brought in, and added, but it will not deny saving truth.

This the Council of Trent, and hence the Catholic body (I do not say every individual), have pretty much done. Hence the difference of the Establishment. The Prayer-book has added a mass of destructive, false, and superstitious errors, but the Articles in general, though obscurely, do not deny, but proclaim, saving truth. Hence the Galatians—Paul was afraid of; they were on the point of denying really the saving truth, though recovered. The Colossians were introducing superstitions which led to this, but they were not met exactly in the same way, as they were not denying justification by faith, for example, as the Galatians were well-nigh doing. But this

is saving subjection to the truth, not authority: and this is the real point of difference.

They say, with a law we must have an interpreting judge. God says, With my word I must have saving faith mixed—the heart must bow to it *itself*; another cannot do this. No one denies that one can help another according to his measure of the Spirit—that is, help spiritually the soul in reception; but this is not authority, it is ministry. The truth received has God's authority, and by the truth we are subject to Him. The word of God can have no authority to apply it, nor power either, but God Himself. Its whole object is to bring the soul and conscience into direct and immediate relationship with Himself. Interposed authority, as to conscience, sets aside God. There cannot be a judge with God's word, because Christ is (there may be discipline, and, in this sense, judgment, in which the whole body acts, but this is another question); but the whole point is the authority of God's word itself on the conscience: and mark, because God has said it, *discerning it such*, we set to our seal that God is true—not that the church is. The church it is that believes it, and thereby it is the church. So, "ye received it, not as the word of man, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe." The church does not judge about the word of God. The word of God judges it first as sinner, and then as saint. Whoever gets above this, gets into sin—is not a doer of the law, but a judge.

I do not enter here on the external part of the question, that the tradition, nor even the authority, is not to be found, though, *de facto*, many things are surely believed. It is clear that the local priest is not, though he may be a means of communicating. It is quite clear that the ponderous tomes of Councils are not a more clear, or accessible, or intelligible rule of faith than the living word. But the truth is, they are not agreed whether it resides in a Pope or Council, and this is serious. It will be said, certainly in both. But the Council of Constance deposed, and that of Basle set itself above, the Pope, and ended without him. Also there were two, and neither owned by the former. And yet more, the Church of Rome cannot pronounce with unanimity which are the general councils. There are (I trust my memory) nineteen, but they dispute as to the enumeration of them. What a difference from the pure word of God!

1846.

Yours affectionately,

J. N. D.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

It is very important to observe that Romanism does take infidel ground, and, to press this on their consciences, I have often done so in Ireland. God is competent to make men responsible by speaking *Himself*. This is a most important proposition, and this is the one they have to defend by His *own* testimony—that is, in their arguments there is a grand *πρῶτον ψεύδος*, namely, that the means of

communicating Christ's religion is the same thing as the rule of faith. This is a fundamental fallacy of Milner's "End of Controversy." A mother, a child may be the means of communicating Christ's religion, but they are not a rule of faith. These two things may be united, but they are in no way the same things. I suppose the book you have, however, is Wiseman's.

Now, I would take the bull by the horns, and say that there is no living, saving faith whatever, but that which is wrought by the operation of the word of God, received on His direct authority, without any warrant whatever. *If it is received on the authority of the church, it is not believing God.* The word of God *proves itself* to the conscience, and puts man by itself under the responsibility of crediting it, because God cannot speak without man's being bound to know and hear Him, for none speaks like Him. He may, in grace, use proofs, and confirmations, and witnesses, but man is bound to hear *Him*. God will prove that in the day of judgment; nay, the very heathen are *without excuse* on much lower ground. The reason is plain, too, *practically*. The word of God judges, and is not judged—"he is convinced of all, he is judged of all," and the secrets of his heart being revealed, he falls down, and confesses "that God is in you of a truth." That is not authority, but it is the only saving thing. A man does not want authority to know that a two-edged sword is sharp. A faith *founded* on miracles—though God vouchsafed this confirmation—is no saving faith at all; Jesus did not commit Himself to it (John ii.), He knew what was *in man*. But, then, in the corruption of the church, and its prevalent power, it may be a reason why none but those who receive the *love of the truth* should escape. But this power of the word by the Spirit, acting on, not judged by, man, supposes the unbeliever; all else is no faith at all. But the church has the Spirit and the word, and the spiritual man judges all things.

Here, then, I first take the ground, that the word of God received on authority is a rejection of God's testimony. If I receive an account of another because you put your name to it, it is because I do not believe the person who gives the account. God may providentially make it to be received where this genuine faith is not, but then it is not saving. To be saving, it must be faith in God: "He that hath received his testimony, has set to his seal that *God is true*;" he who demands the church's authority to receive it, *has not*. God may have used all manner of means of preserving, and even authenticating the testimony, and so He has in many, as we might expect, and I believe that the scriptures were committed to the church to keep—not to authorise, but to keep, as I keep a document safe. I give it no authority, it has its own. But I keep it safe. Now God, I believe, providentially, has done this. But then the Roman body has decidedly failed in this, because, in the Council of Trent—which is with them of divine authority—it has declared that to be scripture, which *declares itself not to be so*. That is, for

example, the Maccabees, which conclude by saying, If I have done well, it is as befits the subject; *if ill, it is according to my ability*. Now it is *profane* to suppose for an instant that that is the Holy Ghost's inditing. The Prologus Salvatus, indeed, of Jerome, generally prefixed to the Vulgate, declares that the Apocryphal books are not scripture. Many other passages from the Apocrypha could be adduced, such as that the offerings for the dead were for those dead in *mortal sin*; that there are three contrary accounts of the death of Antiochus; but I prefer the fact that one book of the Maccabees declares *it is not scripture*, as above. Moreover, it is well known that Sixtus V., acting under the authority of the Council of Trent, promulgated, as the only authentic word of God, an edition of the Vulgate, which was suppressed, because his successor, Clement, altered it in two thousand places. Five copies only of it are in existence. Clement's bears in appearance its name. It has been in no sense what the church ought to be—a faithful keeper of the "oracles of God committed" to it.

But, after all, clever as Mr. Wiseman is, it is a vicious circle he is in; he takes the scripture as an authentic book. This itself, then, he supposes may be done. But if authentic, in the first place, it is clearly inspired, as any one who reads it may see; that is, it gives us (to say the very least, for I think it goes further) an authentic account of the actual authoritative teaching of Paul, Peter, James, John, Jude, and of the Lord Himself. If this be so, I have no need of the church to receive its doctrine as divine. The authentic record of Christ's words and the apostles' teaching, gives me a divine instruction directly, which no reference to a *derivative* authority can set aside, because the body which would set aside, or call in question, the authority of that from which it derives, is not derivative from it at all. If it be, then, authentic, I have the original divine instructions which founded, formed, and guided the church *itself* at first. If it be not authority, then, to find that the church was founded proves nothing, for if not authentic, I do not know it is true. If I am to receive the church from it, I certainly can receive Christ's and all the apostles' words from it *directly*. But I may go further. If it be not inspired as well as authentic, and if I do not know it to be so, I have no inspired warrant, that is, no divine warrant for hearing the church at all. So that on this ground you cannot set up the authority of the church, without setting up previously the authority of scripture itself. The authenticity proves inspiration, or it gives no inspired authority for the church, and I hear all Christ's and the apostles' inspired words, as well as that as to the church. For if I receive something a person says, and not the rest, I receive none of it on his authority.

But, indeed, when I examine the point further, I find the authority of this authentic book shewing me plainly a church indeed established, that is, an assembly, but quite the contrary to the conclusion drawn from it. I find the test of being of God, as to doctrine, to be, hearing

the apostles themselves—"he that is of God, *heareth us*." But I have their authentic words in this book. I am not of God if I do not hear *them, themselves, as this guard against error*. When I turn to hearing the church, *I find not a word about doctrine at all*, but a case of discipline (any rules of which, according to Catholic doctrine, are not binding, unless where received, though decreed by a council, though they allege decrees on faith are. The discipline of the Council of Trent was not everywhere received). It is a question of wrong done, carried to two or three, and at last before the assembly, and if the wronging party will not mind the whole body, he may be avoided by the offended one as a heathen. Whereas, I find the scripture referred to as the security in perilous times, and the certainty of having received the doctrines from the apostles *personally*—"knowing of whom." I find the Lord (whose words all of us would bow to as divine) yet preferring, as to the medium of communication, the written word—"If they believe not his *writings*, how shall they believe my *words*?"—"they have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them."

Now, if we separate the rule of faith from the means of communicating Christ's religion—which last all admit may be, and is, fallible—(consequently the individual priest), where is their accessible rule? Is it in the Acts of nineteen Councils (and which are they? for you are aware that Romanists are not agreed which the nineteen are)—Acts in Latin, moreover, or in Greek? Where is this accessible rule of faith? And now, further, Romanists *are not agreed what the rule is*. Ultramontanes hold the Pope infallible—Cismontanes hold he is not. Many, as the Councils of Constance and Basle, hold that they had authority to act independent of a superior to the Pope. At the time of the former there were two Popes. The Council deposed them, and chose another, who (Martin V.) dissolved the Council. Is the Council of Constance a general council? If so, it has given an authority in matters of faith quite different from the papal advocates, and it acted on it, and deposed the popes; and yet, if it had not this authority, the whole succession of the popedom is founded on a schismatical act. However that may be, the authority in matter of faith Romanists are not agreed on; not only so, but these councils have decreed things against the Pope's authority, and he against theirs. The acts at Basle the Pope declared void after the departure of his legate, having transferred the Council elsewhere, though only a part left. But further, the Council of Chalcedon declared the equality of the Sees of Constantinople and Rome. This Pope Leo rejected.

Now, if a Roman Catholic says, I am not learned enough for all this; then I reply, Where is the simplicity and accessibleness of their rule of faith? For this is it. If you say, But I trust my priest, then you are on *confessedly fallible* ground. I had much rather trust, with God's help by the Spirit, the writings of Paul, and Peter, and John, &c., addressed to *all saints*—expressly so addressed.

How fallible this is you may suppose, when I tell you that, in the four standard Catechisms, published by the authority of different archbishops and bishops of Ireland, there are not the same lists of the seven deadly sins. But this is by the bye. But is not this a fearfully upsetting thing, that the moment I do turn to the Bible—take the Roman translation—I find it set aside all the cardinal points of Romanism.

For instance, there I read, There is no more oblation for sin. I am told by the highest authority of the Roman system that the Mass is a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead. Yet, take away this, and all Romanism falls. Again, There is one Mediator. Now the Roman system makes many, and, in fact, more referred to than to Christ. And it is in vain to say that it is only as praying. Their merits are positively acted on in the Missal, and the Virgin Mary is called upon to save us now, and at the hour of death. Nay, so far is this carried, that the confiteor, on which absolution is received, *leaves out Priest altogether*.

The inadequacy of the scriptures to give unity is a mere clap-trap. Has Rome produced it? Clearly not, unless by blood. Look at it from without. Authority, they say, was in the church from the beginning; if not, it is new, and good for nothing. Well, did it preserve unity? Witness the Greeks, Nestorians, Jacobites; earlier, the Nervatian system, Paulicians, Protestants; half professing Christendom at this moment is outside their unity. But their authority being alleged to be the original, effectual thing, it is clear, then, it has failed to prove it. They tried, by fire and blood, when Protestantism arose, but in half Europe in vain. Present facts, then, prove its inadequacy to this end. To say that it promotes unity among those subject to it, is merely what the smallest sect in Christendom would say too. I remember a poor Romanist telling me nine and thirty religions arose out of the Bible. I told him I supposed his did, or it was good for nothing, which he admitted; and I told him then there were forty. And really the argument is worth no more! Nothing can produce unity but the teaching and power of the Spirit of God.

Your second point is founded on the suspicion of communicating a rule. I close for the present. My letter has been unavoidably delayed since it was written. I will write again on any other point that strikes me in yours.

1846.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. N. D.

THE world is lying in wickedness, and the God of unity is the holy God. Separation, therefore, separation from evil, becomes the necessary and sole basis and principle; I do not say the power, of unity, for God must be the centre and power of that unity.

J. N. D.

PURGED WITH BLOOD.

HEBREWS IX.

“AND almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”

In the latter part of this text we find an exclusive and distinct proposition—that without shedding of blood there is no remission.

In the flaming sword, placed in the garden of Eden after man's disobedience, we find his positive exclusion from the presence of God; in our being out of paradise, we see the existing fact that we are in a state of exclusion from God; and the question now is, Have we any access to God—to that which is far above paradise?

It is not only that we are out of paradise, but that we stand in all the accumulation of our transgressions. In the first act of sin, we find that the will of man is disobedience to God; and every act of his since has been treasuring up revolt against the day of wrath.

When our conscience is awakened, we learn how productive of fruit our evil nature is, and whenever we see that all is gone (for innocency once lost, is lost for ever), then we find there is no competency in us to enter into association with God. That which was man's privilege in paradise has been lost, and we find ourselves, not only evil, but daily accumulating transgressions. And can we, then, enter into the place of God's holiness? This is the only true question. Let me ask you: Is there nothing your consciences own as needing remission? Murder and theft, &c., which are the consequences of the condition man is in through transgression, are owned by all as evil. The natural man may see the blessing of moral conduct, as giving happiness on earth, but can discern nothing beyond. But when we look within the veil, it is altogether another thing. Our not harming our neighbour may produce temporal happiness, but the revelation of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ awakens the mind to a new inquiry—its fitness for the presence of such

holiness; and this question is soon settled—we find it utterly impossible; it is not fitting us for happiness in the world as it is (that is not the question), but making us competent to be associated with Christ in the glory He is in when He appears. Does the world know anything about it? Is this what they look for? Do they not rather say it is presumption to think any can have association and fellowship with God? The world is a witness to itself that it presumes no such thing.

God's testimony is, "There is none righteous," "none that understand," and "none that seeketh after God." But suppose we have received an understanding to know Him that is true, then still the question is, How are we to stand in the presence of the glory? Can one in a sinful condition abide in His presence? Can we say we are fit to be partakers of the glory? There is nothing in the world fit for this. It is vain to plead the highest morality, or the most refined amiability; they are not the things to qualify us for heaven. We may find the character of evil all around; all are guilty, for all come short of the glory of God.

Now there must not only be a renewing, but a complete purging of the conscience. And I plead this, that without the shedding of blood there is no remission; all other ways are the efforts of man to depreciate the righteousness of God—the substitution of something instead of God's ways of salvation, which is most presumptuous, and subversive of the great testimony of God, that without the shedding of blood there is no remission. The accumulated sins of our evil nature must be put away. The Spirit of God can have no part but bringing us to the knowledge of the hatefulness of sin, and the necessity of the blood shed; and whenever the soul is awakened to what sin is in God's sight, there cannot be peace until the Spirit, which shews the necessity of holiness, and reveals that of God, thus teaches us that nothing but God's own efficient act can put away, by the shedding of the blood of Jesus, that which God testifies against. The shedding of the blood brings it to the actual power of

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death—the taking away of the life of Him whose life is given. And why? Because there is the forfeiture of life, and therefore the necessity of the life being given, the blood shed, to blot out the sin; and here we find Christ stepping in, and all the believer has entirely shut up in Christ, in whom we have a new nature, whereby we can delight in God, and not forgiveness only; and this is the consequence of the work of Christ alone, shedding His blood before God, offering His life as a ransom to God, presenting that which was adequate for the purpose, but without which there is no escaping the consequences of sin. “It pleased the Lord to bruise him.” The blood was shed, but it is manifested as His own voluntary act. At the same time His side is pierced, that we might have the act complete. This is presented to our faith as a thing requisite, and which could be done in no other way. Christ had no associate, no companion; but once alone, and for ever, the thing was done, and the revelation of it by God to the soul is salvation. This is a transaction between God and the Son; the thing done is the ground of remission of sins to every one who believes.

I have not peace in anything in which I take a part, but peace in that in which Christ acted alone. Man’s part in it was only stretching out the sinful hands which crucified Him, and this is all he had to do with it. Is it, I ask, by any act to be done now that peace is obtained? No; it is simply by the blood which has been shed, the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of His death, which can give peace through faith.

If once we see ourselves morally dead in trespasses and sins, and that without the full forfeit of life, there is no remission; we shall see, as regards the cleansing of the conscience, there is nothing but the blood for us. But who did this? It is the act of God, to provide Himself a Lamb, by the shedding of whose blood the conscience of those admitted into the holy presence of God is effectually purged.

Can you say paradise is lost, and disobedience and sin are here, and yet I shall force my way back to God?

What hope can those have who are not washed in the blood, taking a worse ground than that which excluded them from paradise (with thus accumulated sin upon them), treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and despising that blood which cleanses from all sin, counting it an unholy thing? He who seeks God's holiness, and passes by Jesus, going to God in his sins, passes by the blood, rejects the testimony of God, and despises Jesus.

J. N. D.

THE LESSONS OF THE AGES.

THE AGE OF LAW.

(Continued from page 291.)

As law simply, then, the Mosaic system was the complete and formal trial of man as man, all possible assistance being given him, and every motive, whether of self-interest or of gratitude to God, being brought to bear on him, the necessity of faith almost, as it might seem, set aside by repeated manifestations of Jehovah's presence and power, such as must force conviction upon all.

The issue of the trial, as foreseen and designed of God, was to bring out the perfect hopelessness of man's condition, as ungodly, and without strength, unable to stand before Him for a moment. But then, the truth of his helplessness exposed, the mercy of God could not permit his being left there, without the assurance of effectual help provided for him. In this way another element than that of law entered into the law, and the tabernacle and temple services, taking up the principles of circumcision and of sacrifice, of older date than law, incorporated there in a ritual of most striking character, which spread before the eye, opened to take it in, lessons of spiritual wisdom, which in our day we turn back to read with deeper interest and delight the more we know of them.

The language of type and parable God had used from the beginning. As yet He could not speak plainly of what, these bear abundant witness to, ever filled His heart. Unbelief in man had dammed back the living stream of

divine goodness, which was gathering behind the barrier all the while for its overflow. In the meanwhile, the Psalms—the very heart of the Old Testament—declare what faith could already realise of the blessedness of “the man whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.” Faith tasted and declared, as the apostle could take up such words afterwards, to shew, not the blessedness of keeping law, but of divine forgiveness. “It shall be forgiven him” was indeed said with perfect plainness, in connection with that shedding of blood for man, which testified at once of his utter failure, and of resource in God for his extremest need. It was not, and could not be, perfect peace or justification that could yet be preached or known, but a “forbearance,” of which none could predict the limits. Still, faith had here its argument, and, in fact, found ever its fullest confidence sustained.

Very striking it is, when once this dealing of God with faith is seen, how the very burdensomeness of the rigid ceremonial changes its character, and becomes only the urgency of an appeal to the conscience, which, if entertained, would open the way to the knowledge of the blessedness of which the psalmist speaks. These continual sacrifices, if they did indeed, as the apostle urges, by their frequent repetition proclaim their own insufficiency, nevertheless, by the very fact, became continual preachers, in the most personal way, to the men of Israel, of their ruin, and of its sole remedy, and how the constant shedding of blood would keep them in mind of that divine commentary: “For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.” (Lev. xvii. 11.)

How striking, too, that circumcision, which was clearly before the law, was expressly the only way by which even the Israelite born could claim Jehovah as his covenant God, or keep the memorial feast of national redemption! For, as the apostle says, it was “the seal of the righteousness of *faith*,” not law-keeping, as the covenant

of which it was the token was "of promise"—the promise of an "Almighty God," when in Abraham, almost a hundred years old, all natural hope was dead for ever. To walk before that Omnipotent God in confessed impotence, trusting and proving His power, was that to which he was called. As yet there was no law to saddle that with conditions; and in memory of this, in token of its abiding significance, the Gentile "stranger" could still be circumcised, with all his males, and keep the passover as an Israelite born.

How tender, too, the goodness which had provided that whoever of Abraham's seed should turn to the history of his forefather after the flesh, should find written there, and of this very depositary of all the promises, such plain, unambiguous words of divine testimony as these: "He believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." Of no other was this in the same way written. What hand inscribed it *there*, just when it should speak most plainly, and to those most in need? Just where, on the incoming of Christianity, I should be ready with its unmistakable testimony to the central principle of Christianity itself. Such is the prophetic character of the inspired word. The same presaging Spirit who dictated to *Peter*—in men's thoughts the first authority in the church—those two doctrines which are the death-blow of ritualism, new birth through the word of the gospel, and the common priesthood of all believers (1 Pet. i. 23-25, ii. 5-9), recorded by Moses, this testimony as to Abraham. Blessed be God for His infinitely precious word!

It was in connection with law that all the books of the Old Testament were given, and Israel, as is plain, were they to whom all was committed. It seems, therefore, here the place to speak briefly of their general character, as affected by this. There are certain things, at least, that one may indicate as of special importance, in view of many things round us at the present time.

In the first place, it was not yet the time for that "plainness of speech" which, as the apostle says, belongs

to Christianity. This we have already seen, but it is not superfluous to insist on it still further. The veil between man and God necessitated a veiled speech also—not, indeed, altogether impenetrable to faith, but requiring, in the words of Solomon, “to understand proverb and strange speech,* the words of the wise, and their *dark sayings*.” Even as to man himself, while his trial was yet going on, there could not be the full discovery of his condition. We have not yet the New Testament doctrine of “the flesh,” nor of new birth, although there was that which should have prepared an Israelitish teacher for the understanding of it when announced. Election was only yet national, not individual, and therefore to privilege only, not eternal life. Adoption, too, was national: the true children of God could not yet claim or know their place as such. No cry of “Abba, Father,” was, or could be, raised. The heirs differed not as yet from servants, being under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the Father. (Gal. iv.) As to all these things, there were preparatory utterances, and all the more as the ruin of man came out, therefore, in those prophetic books which fittingly closed the canon of the Old Testament.

Even the types had in them the character which the apostle ascribes to the law: “having a shadow of good things to come, but *not* the very image of the things.” The unrent veil, the repetition of the sacrifices, the successional priesthood, as he points out, had all this character. They were the necessary witnesses that the “law made nothing perfect,” that under it “the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest.” Of these was the intermediate priesthood of Aaron’s sons, which was the provision for a people unable themselves to draw near to God; which, with all else, the Judaising ritualism of the day copies, and maintains as christian. The apostle’s answer to it is, “By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost

* Not, as in the Authorised Version, “interpretation,” but “what *needs* interpretation.”

also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. 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 with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." (Heb. x. 14-22.) Sin put away, and distance from God removed, ritualism, in all its forms, becomes an impossibility.

In the second place, as the law dealt with man here and now, and did not relegate the issue of its own trial to another time and place, where its verdict could not be known by men in this life—the earth is that upon which man's attention is fixed, and that whether for judgment or reward. There are *hints* here also of the fuller truths which the New Testament unfolds; but manifestly there is no promise of heaven to the keeper of the law, nor even threat of hell—that is, of the lake of fire—to the transgressors of it. Judgment there is, and eternal judgment, but death is rather the stroke of it, the horror of this shadowing the eternity beyond. Job speaks of resurrection, and the prophets also, though in them it is only applied figuratively to national restoration; yet this shews they held it as admitted truth. Outside of the Old Testament, we learn from the Epistle to the Hebrews that the patriarchs expected "a better country, that is, a heavenly;" but we should not know it from Genesis. Faith penetrated, in some measure, it is clear, the "dark sayings," and found all not dark. A recognised body of truth was received by the Pharisees, which embraced not only resurrection for the just, but of the unjust also, and spoke, not merely of hades, but of gehenna also, the true "hell." This only makes more remarkable the constant style even of the prophets. The confounding of judgments upon the living, by which the earth will be rid of its destroyers, and prepared for blessing, with the judgment of the dead at the "great white throne," is one of

the errors under which annihilationism shelters itself most securely.

On the other hand, this earthly blessing, still further confused by Israel being (as commonly) interpreted to mean the church, has been by current "adventism" made to take the place of the true christian expectation of an inheritance in heaven. And this, too, has linked itself with annihilationism in its extremest and most materialistic forms. We must keep the standpoints of the Old and New Testaments—of Israel and the church, earthly and heavenly—clear in our minds, and there is no difficulty. "My kinsman according to the *flesh*," says the apostle, "to whom pertaineth the adoption and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the *promises*." (Rom. ix. 3, 4.) All of these for them *earthly* blessings. Christians are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in *heavenly* places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. i. 3.)

If this should seem at all to take the Old Testament away from us who belong to another dispensation, we must remember two things: first, that if it has not so directly to do with us, it has, most assuredly, with Christ no less on that account. His glories run through the whole; history, psalm, and prophecy are full of Him. But what reveals Him is ever of truest blessing for the soul. Oh to be simpler in taking in all this, in which the Father gives us communion with His own thoughts of His Son!

And then, when we look at the typical teaching, now fully for the first time disclosed, when even the things that happened to the favoured nation, and are recorded in their history, "happened to them for types," we find what is in the fullest way ours—"written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come." (1 Cor. x. 11.) How wonderful this! and how sad to think, on the one hand, of the disuse, on the other, of the reckless abuse, of that precious teaching!

We have now to look at the history of the age of law.

F. W. G.

“SCRIPTURE:

ITS INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY.”*

A PAMPHLET, bearing the above title, has recently been sent us, and the important subject it takes up is so simply and forcibly dealt with, that we should like to bring it before the notice of others, with the recommendation that they should obtain it, as we are sure they will peruse it with real profit and pleasure. It is a gracious and pointed answer to a recent apologist for holy scripture, and one, too, put forward as a champion of Christianity against infidelity.

The lectures on which the writer remarks were delivered with the purpose of conciliating the avowed enemies of revealed religion, and this really by surrendering the integrity of scripture, in order to reconcile its teachings with the assumptions of science, “falsely so called.”

It is one of the many attempts of the present age to yoke the Bible and science together as joint-revealers of God ; but the services of the one are to be purchased by a large surrender of what the other alone claims to be the authority for. Our lecturer tells us that the account of the “creation,” “the fall of man,” and the “deluge,” are not *necessarily* to be believed ; and that the Bible contains “the word of God,” but not the “words of God.” Moreover, that the writers of the New Testament claimed weight for their writings, “on account of their accuracy as eye-witnesses,” and not because they were the divinely inspired channels of what they record.

“These lectures,” the writer justly remarks in his Preface, “appear like dismantling and undermining the fortifications of Christianity, and this by one of its pro-

* “Scripture: its Inspiration and Authority,” with Remarks on Two Lectures, recently delivered in the Temperance Hall, Bristol, by the Rev. John Wilson, M.A., Head Master of Clifton College, entitled, “Why Men do not Believe the Bible.” By Alexander Craven Ord. BRISTOL: J. Fawn & Co., Queen’s Road. LONDON: Messrs. Nisbet & Co., Berners Street. Price Threepence.

fessed friends, in order to conciliate its enemies, who are only too ready to take advantage of such a mistake; whilst weak minds are disturbed, and the wavering induced to conclude, seeing the main prop and stay of Christianity surrendered, that it cannot be maintained in its integrity against all attacks. The warning, '*ne crede equidem*,' given to the Trojans, when, unconscious of their danger, they introduced into the citadel the Grecian horse, filled with armed foes, may well be repeated here. The object of these pages is to shew how dangerous in their nature, and how futile and unwarrantable are these concessions to the infidel, and thus Christians may be on their guard against receiving them, as well as that they may understand how firm is the foundation which the word of God affords as the basis of faith."

Every true believer in the Lord Jesus must feel the justice of these remarks, and agree with him, when he says, in taking up the lecturer's ground—that we have in the Bible "the word of God," but not "the words of God"—that, "if we have not what comes directly and immediately from God, we have no divine warrant for faith, nor is there guilt in the rejection of such a divine testimony. Faith is the reception of what God says, because He says it: He that hath received his testimony, hath set to his seal that *God is true*, for he whom God hath sent *speaketh the words of God*. (John iii. 33, 34.) He that is of God, heareth God's words. (John viii. 47.) He that rejecteth me, and heareth not *my words*, hath one that judgeth him: the *word* that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. (John xii. 48.) God's words are to have their weight in every soul; if received in faith, they bring salvation and eternal life (John vi. 68, 69); if rejected, it is at the peril of the rejecter, for how could God speak or address Himself to man, with evidence enough that He has done so, and the treatment of His word be matter of indifference?"

These are sober and seasonable words, and we again commend this pamphlet to our readers. C. W.

“FAITH HEALING.”

(Concluded from page 297.)

Now, as to faith-healing institutions and their pretensions, I find this objection, they are not according to the word. I will not say they do not heal in some cases, for I have reason to believe they do, though I have not met the cases, so that I could not speak from personal knowledge; but, so far as I understand the position which they take, and the ground which they occupy, it savours of Laodiceanism and Judaism. First, as we have seen, in looseness and indifference to Christ—His Person, His word, and His name: though they use His name freely, and are earnest and devoted, in that which they have chosen for themselves. But lest we should judge harshly, let us put this to the test by the word of God.

And first, What is the truth as to the privilege of the child of God according to James v. 13-16? “Is any afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church: and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

These people claim to act on verse 13. But mark this, the apostle does not say, Has any faith among you? let him open a house of healing. The word says, “Is any afflicted? let him pray.” This is where the work begins according to truth. And when through exercise of heart and conscience before God, he is led to call for the elders, he is on the ground of faith; and the anointing with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith, follow the faith of the person who at first began to pray over his affliction.

But mark another thing, “If he have committed sins,

they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed." And this brings in another and a very important point, for our consideration, as to whether the affliction and sickness is on account of sins allowed and unjudged as in 1 Corinthians xi. 29-32, or given as a preventive, as in 2 Corinthians xii. 7-9. And still another very important point in 1 John v. 14-16, shewing that though a person may have been brought to repentance, confession, and self-judgment, yet his sin (and so his sickness) is unto death, and no one led by the Spirit could pray for him, neither could such an one led by the Spirit call for the elders, much less go to a faith-healing institution.

And now, lest any should think I am opposing the truth of God as to the privilege of the child of God in this matter, let me say here, that there are cases of late occurrence, and well authenticated, where persons have been brought into deep exercise by their affliction, and have confessed their sin, and have been raised up according to James v. 14, 15. So that I fully believe in it as a practical truth of Christianity.

But we are told that there are other scriptures more than these which have been noted. As Mark xvi. 17, "And these signs shall follow them that believe." Now there is room for question, as to the practical application of this scripture at the present time; and for this reason: It was given to the eleven apostles in connection with the great commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," and which on the part of the eleven, and even of the twelve, after Matthias was chosen, was never fully carried out. Then God raised up Paul to do a further work, and in the ministry and epistles of Paul we get a complete answer; for we find the same signs following everywhere among the nations. But when failure has come in, and he is addressing the elders of Ephesus, he makes no mention of signs; and in his charge to Timothy and Titus, we find no mention of signs, until in 2 Thessalonians ii. 9; and here it is, after the working of Satan, with all signs and lying won-

ders." A most startling fact for our consideration in these days of pretension to apostolic gifts. (Compare also Rev. xvi. 12-14; Matt. vii. 21-23, xxiv. 24.) I give these references as shewing what is coming; and it is this looseness and indifference of Laodicea that prepares the way for it.

Just one more reference to this side of the question, and then we will look at the Judaistic side. In 1 Corinthians xii. 9, we get "to another gifts of healing by the same spirit." Here it is evidently the general statement of the truth, as to gifts in the church. That which the Lord gives in the beginning, and which might be continued "with signs following," as in Mark, but for the complete failure on the part of the church.

And now let us suppose that these "gifts," "with signs following," had continued until this day, in the midst of the failure and ruin of the church. What should we have had at this time? Rome, with all her arrogant pretension, proving her authority by miracles, "signs following;" the Greek church doing the same thing; and Protestantism, with its thousand factions and schisms, each setting up its claims, and bringing God in to sanction their heresies by miracles and "signs following." Can any one conceive of anything more terrible? Surely that would make God the author of confusion.

No! beloved reader; God is not the author of confusion in the church. How, then, comes it there? Is it not because man has never been willing to abide in God's order, but is continually introducing his own will and way, and thus departing from God and the truth? Yes, surely, man has proved over and over again in the church, as well as out of it, that he is but a failure, a complete ruin, and that he ruins everything he touches. God's work is perfect; His way is also perfect; His order in the church in the beginning was perfect; but who can find it now?

When man departs from God's way, as pointed out in His word, and by the guiding of His Spirit, he goes at his own charges. Satan may help him to work miracles; God never does.

Finally. This thing savours of Judaism. Quotations are taken from Old Testament scriptures as authority for faith-healing, namely, Exodus xv. 26, xxiii. 25 ; Deuteronomy v. 15, and others ; and it is claimed that God wants us to be well, and to have healthy bodies—and to support this notion, the promises given under the law are brought in ; promises which were conditional, and which Israel never enjoyed because of their failure.

And it is claimed that, through keeping the law, we may claim those promises ; and hence we find that, in many cases, this faith-healing is based upon a system of perfectionism, the outcome of man's will, in perverting Christianity by bringing in law-keeping—the error of the Galatians.

Christianity never promises health nor length of days. It comes from heaven, and is in no sense a human invention, but a divine power come into a world under judgment to man, as condemned already, to save him out of it. And in Christ, God's provision is so complete that it saves to the uttermost all who come to God by Him.

And it is an immense comfort that, while we cannot claim exemption *from disease*, nor miraculous healing of *disease*, yet we can count on Him who cares for us with an infinite love, and will never leave nor forsake, and will give sickness or health just in the measure and character suited to our need.

And as could be said of Israel, notwithstanding all this sad failure, "*In all their affliction he was afflicted.*" How much more can it be said, "If God be for us, who can be against us ? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ?"

But let us not forget ; Adam must go out of Eden, because a sinner could not abide in God's presence. Israelites must suffer affliction, because of their own failure ; and the church comes under the same governmental dealing. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 7), and "The same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." (1 Pet. v. 9.)

One thought more, and it is this: If there was ever a man who could claim exemption from affliction on the ground of faithfulness, was not the apostle Paul that man? But did he? Please tell us wherein? He tells us of one great affliction for which he besought the Lord thrice that it might be taken from him, but it could not. He tells us of Epaphroditus being sick, and nigh unto death, but this is no evidence that he healed him: though he did heal the sick in many cases no doubt. He leaves Trophimus at Miletum sick. (2 Tim. iv. 20.) And why did he not heal Timothy, instead of telling him "to take a little wine for his oft infirmity?" Simply because the Holy Ghost did not lead him in that way.

So that we have need to be watchful against Satan's wiles, and careful to test all these pretensions with the word of God, lest in our zeal to get rid of some affliction, we accept deliverance at the instigation of Satan. The blessed Lord would not make bread of stones to feed Himself, much less would He do it at the instigation of Satan. Better to be sick, than to be healed by Satanic agency; for I hesitate not to say, that all clairvoyant and medium-healing is by Satanic agency, and I know not how much more. As to myself, I must see God acknowledged, Christ exalted, His word and His name bowed to and kept, then I can believe in healing power, where the faith is given, *not simply to a man to heal*, but also to the one who is exercised in a godly way according to James v. 13.

And now we see that the ground upon which these pretensions are based is not tenable, for it is the ignoring of our true state before God. Sin is here; failure is ours; ruin and confusion have come in, and it becomes us to confess it.

May the Lord give us eyes to see; ears to hear; and hearts to understand and obey; and above all may we endeavour in everything to follow after the things that please Him, who has said, "Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast that thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

C. E. H.

LETTERS AND EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF J. N. D. ON SUBJECTS OF GENERAL INTEREST.

VERY DEAR BROTHER,

On beginning your letter, I soon thought that you had met these false teachers of whom you speak. It is true that we are only sealed by the Holy Spirit after having believed. But it is not then that we are born of God. If the presence of the Holy Spirit were life, every Christian would be an incarnation of the Holy Spirit. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit that we have of God. Being born of God is another thing. We have not received, as to the state in which we find ourselves, the state purposed for us in the counsels of God; but we have all subjectively to be able to enjoy it. We have, undoubtedly, eternal life. When it is said, This is the promise that He has made us, it is no question of whether we have it or have it not, but, what is the promise of God? But the testimony of God is, that He has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son, has life; and he who has not the Son, has not life. Christ is eternal life come down from the Father. Life eternal is indeed spoken of as at the end (Rom. vi.), because eternal life, such as God means by it in His fixed purpose, is in the glory, when we shall be like Christ, but we are already quickened. John v. 24: he has life, he is *passed* from death unto life, and the hour had come already. (Ver. 25; also John iii. 36.) We are bound to reckon that we are alive unto God by Jesus Christ. I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, but it is no longer I that live, but Christ who liveth in me. When we were dead, He quickened us with Christ. We are seated only in Christ, and it is according to the power that worketh in us. God does not quicken in heaven wicked people who arrive there dead in sin! and the soul is not in the grave with the body. That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life." (John vi.) And here it is by faith, and down here; he who eateth of this bread shall live eternally; if one does not eat it, one has not life in oneself. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." That is to say, resurrection is another thing; he has life, and made sure to him for eternity; he will be raised up at the last day. He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. Nothing appears to me clearer than the doctrine of the word on this subject, under various forms; born of the Spirit, quickened by Christ, by faith in receiving Him as bread of life.

It ought to make the believer perfectly assured on this point. "He who has the Son, has life." Christ is my life. The gift of the Spirit is quite another thing—the seal of faith. After having believed, I have been sealed. We are sons of God, by faith in Christ Jesus, and *because we are sons*, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son

into the heart, crying, Abba, Father. Another question, if this faith is of me, or of God—which I by no means doubt—in me, but in that which grace has wrought in me. "He who has established us with you in Christ, and who has anointed us, is God." Grace by faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. (Eph. ii. 8.) I know well it is said that that does not agree grammatically with faith; be it so, but not with grace either; and to say that grace is not of ourselves is nonsense, for grace means of another, yet one might say to oneself, without doubt, But faith is on our part, as is said: this is why the apostle asserts, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. As to the rest, it is another question. One is a child, born of God before being sealed. Of His own will He begat us by the word of truth, that we might be as firstfruits of His creatures. God has begotten us of His own will. One does not beget oneself. One does not believe in a life communicated, when one does not believe that it is grace that communicates it. Wesleyans do not believe in a real life communicated. A result is produced by the operation of the Spirit, and this result can disappear and re-appear. He who is born of God, having received this life, inasmuch as born of God, sinneth not; the wicked one also toucheth him not. In this life there is no sin, within it is the divine seed. There is no allurements for it in the things that Satan presents. As for deliverance, and the seal of the Holy Spirit, it is not only having life that delivers me; it is, indeed, the Spirit of life in Jesus Christ that has set me free—further proof that I have life—but there is also redemption and the Holy Spirit.

Here is the order of these things as I see them in the word. The well-beloved Saviour died for my sins; I believe it by grace, and I possess the remission of sins. (I may have had life before, by faith in His Person, without understanding the efficacy of His death.) Thereupon, being washed in the blood of Jesus, I am sealed by the Holy Spirit. Then there is strength and liberty, as in the Old Testament the leper was washed with water, then he was sprinkled with blood, and then anointed with oil. So says Peter, Be baptised for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Thus, with Cornelius, as soon as Peter spoke of the remission of sins by Jesus, the Holy Spirit descended on those who heard. We also find it in Romans v. There is liberty. But for a solid state of soul, there is another truth necessary—that we *have died* with Christ. It is no longer a question of sins, but of the old man—not of what we have done, but of what we are as children of Adam. That begins with Romans v. 19: "By the disobedience of *one*," it is said, we "are constituted sinners." But having died with Christ, I am no longer in the flesh; not only are the sins of the old man blotted out, but I am in a new position—I am in Christ, instead of being in Adam. There, there is no condemnation. Then he shews the state—what that means, the law of the Spirit, &c.; and then, what the law could not do, because it was weak through the flesh, God, in sending His Son in the likeness of flesh of sin, and (as a sacrifice) for sin, has con-

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demned sin in the flesh; but it is in death that this has taken place. Thus condemned, it exists no longer for faith. I can say so, because Christ risen having become my life, I recognise no longer the flesh as living, since He has really died for me, He who only is my life; I do not recognise the flesh; His death is valid for me to this result. (Chap. vi. 10, 11.)

One arrives at it by the experimental knowledge that no good exists in me, then that sin in me is not I, but that it is too strong for me. Having learnt it, redemption and the power of the Spirit deliver me, and I know that I am in Christ. The apostle, in order to give it all its force, recounts this experience as made under the law (and it is always legal). It may be made after having learnt the remission of sins. I have life, then, very really as soon as I believe, as I receive Christ, and I shall never perish—a sheep quickened by Christ, never to be plucked out of His hand; for again John x. demonstrates it. I am made free by redemption, and the power of the Spirit of God, by whom I am sealed by virtue of this redemption, and I reckon myself for dead as to the flesh.

Yours very affectionately,

J. N. D.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Sealing on the new birth is a mistake in principle—it leaves out the sprinkling with blood for forgiveness. I know of no ground for delay, save knowing this. (See Acts ii. 38; x. 43, 44.) As to eternal life, in the full sense of it, it is Christ Himself, and that revealed as Man in glory. (1 John v. 20.) But its essence is divine life in the Person of Christ. (1 John v. 11, 12.) In Him was life, and that life He has in manhood. (John v. 26.) But this has a double character; the Son quickens as Son (ver. 21), and then we are, when dead in sins, quickened together with Christ; in one, as the Son of God, a divine Person; in the other, as a dead man, whom God raises. Now life and incorruptibility were brought to light by the gospel. For eternal life was manifested in the Person of the Son, and, when He was risen and glorified, shone out in its new, full character in man. If we be risen with Christ, when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with Him in glory. Now, till He came, this never was displayed, nor, according to God's full purpose in man, till He was glorified. But I have no doubt the Old Testament saints were quickened, and they will be glorified. Still, it was as much in Christ humbled, as in Christ glorified. 1 John i. was before the world, and that is its essence, only now brought to light in connection with the incorruptibility of the body in resurrection (or changed), a spiritual body. Paul never speaks of it as ours* now, that I remember—John does, for he always speaks of things in their essence. But it comes in the knowledge of the Father sending the Son, and Jesus Christ, as so sent of Him; and the Father, Son, and

* He does say, Christ lives in me, and Christ our life.

life come in the Son, and the Father revealed in Him, runs all through John's teaching, connecting us with Him in life. (1 John iv. 9; v. 11, 12.) *We live, but Christ is our life.* But the revelation of the Father in the Son, and that as giving eternal life in Him, is the essence of John's doctrine along, with propitiation and forgiveness in his epistle, not in his gospel. But it is not necessary that it should be in the heavenly glory to be eternal life, but redemption through Christ is. In Matthew xxv. they go away into life everlasting. The places in the Old Testament where it is spoken of, are, Psalm cxxxiii. and Daniel xii. The essence is Christ as life, but in its full thought as to us, is being like Him in glory. But there is quickening by Him as Son, and being quickened and raised with Him, in both cases life; in the latter known in heavenly glory as the result. God has reserved some better thing for us, but the Old Testament saints will be perfected with us. No one who has not life can have to say to God really.

The Pharisees had got hold of the expression, as they had of resurrection. But the Lord goes down to the ground they were upon: If thou wilt enter into life, [keep] God's commandment. But in the Lord's unfolding the subject in John vi., you find having eternal life as a present thing—as constantly in John—but directly connected, four times over, with His raising us in the last day. Its full development is in the sphere it came from, and in the power of Him who has it in connection with man, and so, immortality [incorruptibility] the body brought in. Nor, though they have it down here, is this shut out from the final result in Matthew xxv., Daniel xii., and Psalm cxxxiii. You cannot separate eternal life and new birth, but though the essence of divine life is there, yet eternal life in Christ as Man; and, finally in glory, as accomplished in Christ glorified, does go further than being quickened. It is the gospel which has brought it to light.

Affectionately yours in the Lord,

J. N. D.

The moral subjective effect was produced by being quickened—obedience, dependence, reference of heart to God, delight in His will. Hence the saint now can delight in the Psalms, though there is no knowledge of the Father.

1881.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

It has been a good while now since I have exchanged a line with you; and, in fact, I have been laid up, so that I could do, for some time, little or nothing—entirely down, so that I did not know whether I should be raised up at all again. It is now near three months that I have been unable to pass the night stretched in my bed—at first, not at all. Now I sit up in bed about a third of the night, but I sleep rather better than lying down. All this of the poor body, but it makes its being left, if not glorified, nearer to us. God may give higher apprehensions of the joys before us, and if all

be not habitually and honestly purged before God, there may be exercises of conscience, even if we know the remedy. I hardly came so near to going away as that; but I was surprised, in at least looking it in the face, how little difference there was; Christ with me for the way, and Christ at the end for full and perfect joy. It is a difference to go. It is what is eternal, but faith is not sight. But the word is ever precious which brings what is of God, and God Himself, to us, in the power of His own Spirit, and so as from Himself, and this gives it a peculiar and blessed character. Soon it will be better still; not from Himself, but Himself. But it is suited to us here, just like Christ Himself, which is of God, and heavenly, but suited to us here, with a divine flexibility which suits itself to all circumstances and to everything that is in our hearts, but to take us up where it comes from.

I have written a tract on the "Sealing of the Spirit." I felt its being muddled, as it was, a good deal, and this was the case everywhere; it was a sign of the state of souls. But dear ——— was never, I think, clear; I have often told him so, never really out of Romans vii. But how many are there! Yet very many take for granted they are out of it, while full, perfect, simple redemption is not really known. Ask, not in Palestine, but in Boston and New York, what it is to have no more conscience of sins, and they cannot tell; and then "God for us" is not known. This side, in the public teaching, was wanting at the Reformation. They saw Christ's work meeting our need before God, but "God so loved" was hardly a part of their gospel; on assurance they largely insisted, indeed, justifying faith was, to them, the personal appropriation of Christ's work in an assuring way. It was not sufficiently the object of faith, though it was there, but the state of the soul. But when it pleases God to do so, He works with very imperfect truth, provided it be Christ; it is one of the present difficulties. At the first, full truth flowed from the centre, and drew souls up to it; now it works where all is confusion, to bring in divine order and faith through the word—I mean order as to the truth. But I close. In general, throughout the country, there is a real appetite for the word—a happy sign—and brethren are blessed. In some parts of London, though there is nothing outward, the effect of local troubles remains. But the Lord loves His church, and does not cease His care for it. Nothing will fail of His purposed grace. Peace be with you, dear brother, and constant guidance, keeping near enough to hear His voice through grace.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

1881.

J. N. D.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I have been thinking of your answer in "Words of Faith" (October) to a question on Isaiah liii. 2. I cannot conceive how any understand "before him" of any other than Jehovah.

1st, Spiritually, John xii. seems to forbid any other interpretation. Who at all understood the Lord? The *disciples* certainly did not, and taking "him" of an Israelite, obliges one to give a wrong answer to the prophet's question in verse 1.

2nd, I see nothing in either the Hebrew as it stands, or in the most approved commentaries upon it, that supports what you were told. An English reader, to go no farther, might well ask, What then is meant by the "For" at the beginning of verse 2?

Yours affectionately,

E. E. W.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I don't like criticising, but I was somewhat troubled at your answer, No. 27 in the October "Words of Faith." No other translation of Isaiah liii. 2 than the ordinary one is possible, that is to be a *translation*. For I do not call the twisting of a passage to suit theological views a "translation" at all. The simple antecedent to "him" is "Jehovah," *and nothing else*. The idea of making it refer to "Who," which is what the contrary interpretation supposes, is simply preposterous, contrary to all grammar and sense. And besides this, does not Romans x. 16 prove clearly that the meaning of "*Who hath believed . . . ?*" is that "*None did believe,*" as indeed verses 3 to 6 go on to state? "*He hath concluded all in unbelief.*"

The miracle of a tender sapling growing out of a *dry* ground was unheeded by man; there was no grandeur, no imposing height, no outstretched branches like the trees in the garden of God (Ezek. xxxi.), no delightful shade by rivers of waters, such things as the world seeks after, led on in folly by Satan down to everlasting destruction in the pit. Here, God alone appreciates the wonder, the shoot full of sap, green *before Him*, that did not draw its vigour from the utter barrenness around, and wanted no moisture to keep it green. Its power was in

itself, wholly divine yet perfectly human, a root out of a dry ground growing up in this poor world, a desert indeed as God saw it. "No man knows the Son but the Father." Man seeks the well-watered Eden, with all its glory, greatness, envy, jealousy, noise and bustle—the world as Satan has made it for man, after he was driven out of God's paradise—the Eden he has made for himself, in which God is to have no right nor portion. But, to see God's beautiful green tree, ever fresh in its beauty, yet come down to the intelligence of a child, small and tender in all its quiet glory—beside us here, so to speak—we must go into the desert; and surely to *know* Him, we must *live* there. What depths of moral instruction for us! How it explains Paul's earthly path in Philippians ii., iii., and 2 Corinthians iv.!

It is a solemn question for our souls in connection with Christ: What are we looking at, what seeking for, what interested in? The Eden of Ezekiel xxxi., or the desert ground of Isaiah liii. 2?

Yours very affectionately,

W. J. L.

DEAR BROTHER,

Kindly allow me a brief remark upon Isaiah liii. 2, as it bears upon a paper of mine in your first volume. Delitzsch's competence as a Hebraist will not be doubted. He translates: "And he sprang up like a layer-shoot before him," and adds—

"The suffix of **לפני** cannot refer to the subject of the interrogative sentence, as Kahn and Hofmann suppose, for the answer to the 'who' there is 'no one;' it relates to Jehovah, by which it is immediately preceded."

I only quote this because of the question of Hebrew; but it is really not at all that. The English has never been disputed, I think. And there is no antecedent to "him," but Jehovah.

Affectionately ever,

F. W. G.

A.—Having very slight knowledge ourselves of Hebrew, and therefore not feeling able to give a competent opinion upon the question raised in connection with our answer to the inquiry put to us with reference to Isaiah liii. 2, we think it best to give the above correspondence without comment, leaving it to our readers to weigh it all before the Lord for themselves. We merely add that on one occasion we put the matter in question before J. N. D., and he carefully examined

the Hebrew, and then said that there was nothing in the Hebrew to tell to whom the "him" applied. He remarked he had hitherto applied it to Jehovah, but that the question was worth weighing, and he was not himself prepared to decide it.

C. W.

28. Q.—What is the difference between *δεήσις*, *ἐντεύξις*, and *προσευχή* ?

J. B. S., *Sligo*.

A.—*δεήσις*, derived from *δέομαι*, meaning "to beg," "to entreat as one in need," is properly *supplication*, and is thus uniformly rendered in the new translation; it is the presentation of need to God with earnestness. *ἐντεύξις* is address to another in personal confidence, hence presenting petitions and intercessions; Paul enjoins that "*intercessions* and thanksgiving be made for all men." (1 Tim. ii. 1.) *προσευχή* alone is properly *prayer*, as that which is exclusively addressed to God—invoking His aid according to His will; thus the temple is called "the house of prayer," *οἶκος προσευχῆς*. (Matt. xxi. 13.) Prayer is the fitting attitude of the creature before God as dependent, hence "men ought always to *pray*, and not to faint." (Luke xviii. 1.) The three words are grouped together in the passage in 1 Timothy already referred to—"supplications [*δεήσεις*], prayers [*προσευχάς*], intercessions [*ἐντεύξεις*], and thanksgiving."

C. W.

ERRATA.—Vol. I., page 280, 5th line from the bottom, for "*but* from enemies" read "*not* from enemies." Last line same page, for "1880" read "1877." Vol. II., page 228, 7th line from the bottom, for "rather" read "neither." Page 238, transpose 12th and 13th lines from the top. The same page, 13th line from the bottom, for "gives *us* indication" read "gives *no* indication." Page 257, 14th line from the bottom, for "Father Himself" read "Father *and* Himself."

London: G. Morrish, 20, Paternoster Square, E.C.