

“WORDS OF TRUTH,”

Eecl. xii. 10.

THE ENTRANCE OF THY WORDS GIVETH LIGHT: IT GIVETH UNDERSTANDING
UNTO THE SIMPLE.”—Ps. cxix. 30.

VOL. V.

LONDON:

ROBERT L. ALLAN, 15 PATERNOSTER ROW;

AND 75 SAUCHIEHALL STREET, GLASGOW.

EDINBURGH: J. S. ROBERTSON, 52 COCKBURN STREET.

DUBLIN TRACT DEPOT, 13 WESTLAND ROW.

BOSTON, U.S.: F. G. BROWN, 3 TREMONT ROW

1870.

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WORDS OF TRUTH.

“WHEN WE WERE IN THE FLESH.”

ROM. vii.

It is very striking the experimental shape which the truth of this chapter takes in the heart. In the fifth verse we read, “When we were in the flesh.” This is the conscious experience of a Christian, speaking of that which is now a wholly past state. Do we speak in the past tense thus? If not, the soul is not yet enjoying the liberty of grace. Very sincere and honest no doubt—and the more honest and sincere the more difficult to say it—but still grace—the full, free grace of God is not yet known.

We never do say this till we find the flesh so bad, that we are *glad* to be done with it. Then we find we are delivered from it and free. Then I have a right to say, “It is not I.” Very difficult to say it—but we have got to learn to do so. When looked at as a child of Adam it *is* “I;” and I never can be *capable* of saying “’tis not I,” until “I” is discovered to be so bad that I am glad to have done with “I;” and to say “not I, but Christ liveth in me.” (Gal. ii. 20.) God could not *allow* me to say it, until I had thoroughly judged, not merely what I had done, but what *I am*. While this process is going on in the heart there is bitter experience, I do not say conflict, because of the sense of sin which it hates; but it can never get deliverance until it is simply conscious that it is bad, and *never can be better*: “That *in me*,” (mark that —“*in me*,”) that is, in my flesh, dwelleth *no good thing*.”

Are you *ever* looking for good in yourself? or have you given yourself up as wholly bad; and yet that you have in your heart the conscious title to say to the evil you find there, “’Tis not I”? It is a very *solemn* thing to say; but your whole condition and liberty as a Christian depends upon it—the whole unfolding of what belongs to you as a Christian, because

the only thing that belongs to a man in the *flesh* is judgment—"it shall die"!

People settle down in the experience of the seventh chapter of Romans, and accept it as a proper Christian state. They don't look for more. It shows how little souls have got deliverance. I do not say they have not *forgiveness*. But here it is no question of forgiveness—there is no forgiveness for an evil *power*, or evil *nature*. God does not "forgive" it, He delivers you from it. The cry is, "Who shall deliver me"—make me free from it? Then the answer comes, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Man in the flesh, as a child of Adam, wants two things—the forgiveness of the sins which he committed *in* that state; and also deliverance *out* of that state, and to get into a *new state*. For man the judgment will be according to the deeds done in his body, whether good or bad. Now, as Christians, we find that we are forgiven our *sins* for which Christ died; and not only this, but that our old man is crucified *with Him* that the *body of sin* might be destroyed. God has turned to the *tree*, and says, "The *tree* is bad." Then He deals with it in Christ, in judgment, not merely its fruit. Then He shows the source of life to us—Christ Himself—after He has put ALL away!

The truth of dead and risen with Christ is the basis of the whole Christian condition. Then we can hold the Cross to the flesh, and bring this truth practically to bear on every movement of it. But if we seek to do this *before* we know this deliverance, and by faith to know that we are "dead," it only results in the discovery of the evil which obliges us in the end to accept the fact, that for faith and for God we are dead, and to be very glad to find it is so.

Have you got this wonderful deliverance, beloved friends? How can you be at rest from self if it is not so? How can you expect to be able to contemplate the cross where that deliverance was wrought, if you have it not? There is *nothing* like the cross. In a sense it surpasses the *glory*. In *it* we shall be with Christ; there, He was *alone*! There is no scene that in moral glory ever will be like the depth of what it was—what He was there! We cannot think too much of it, and the more we get on in spirituality the more we shall appreciate what it was. He could speak of it even as a new motive for His Father to love Him—"Therefore doth my Father love me." All that God is morally, was

brought out there. His *righteousness* might have swept away every sinner; but there was no *love* in that. In the cross you have both. Divine righteousness against the sin, and infinite love to the sinner. Divine majesty made good in the cross—God glorified fully—and that is the reason why we are going to get the glory of God, and going to be in it; for Christ glorified God there. "I have glorified thee on the earth . . . now glorify thou me with thyself." Then we find "whom he justified, them he also glorified." The cross shows the power and wisdom of God, and shows, too, the moral nature and Being of Him who has accomplished it all in love!

Have you fear when you think of the judgment seat of Christ? You ought to have no fear. 'Tis righteousness that sets you there; and as we stand there we shall have to say, I am "the righteousness of God in him." Your soul is happy when you think of His grace and love coming to you in your sins; and yet when you turn your eye on judgment you are uneasy. There is no consistency in that. It shows that your soul is not brought into the consciousness of being the righteousness of God in Him. You cannot have that consciousness until Christ is everything to you; and if He be everything, *you must be nothing*.

But to return. When we are in earnest in looking for this deliverance, we discover the working of an evil nature in us. But there is another nature too, and because it is born of God it hates the sin. Then the question arises in our soul, not, Who will forgive? but, Who will deliver me? This is quite another thing. I may have many exercises before I learn that it is not what I have *done*, but what I *am* that is in question. A deeply humbling one to the heart, but a thing that is needed to be learned.

A soul walking with God may be happy, or unhappy, as he is conscious of forgiveness of sins; but it is a very different thing to be occupied with what *Christ is before God*. Very different to say, "Christ died for my sins as a child of Adam," and to say, "I am in Christ, as a child of God; not by Christ dying for my sins, but by my dying with Christ, and God giving me a place with Him." Of course you must learn the matter of forgiveness of sins first. It is the first thing needed by the conscience. Blessed to know that *they* are all put away. If your sins were not put away on the cross, they never can be put away. Don't talk of future sins. You ought not to

think of sinning in the future, because there is grace enough to keep you from sinning. But all our sins were future when Christ bore them.

When I get this deliverance I learn another thing. I learn that I died with Him! The law has power over a man as long as he lives; but I have died. The gaoler did not die, but the prisoner died. You can't charge a dead man with sin. The law was the measure of man's righteousness, as also of his responsibility. If you loved God with all your heart, and your neighbour as yourself, and had no evil lust, you would be righteous before God. But flesh “is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Have *you* been loving *yourself*, or *God*, with all your heart, to-day? You say, “O, but I am incapable of that.” That's exactly it! Not only do I find it so experimentally, but I have positive *scripture*, where God says that “they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” This “I”; *God* has said it can't. Then I don't speak of it getting better, but when I get deliverance from it I find it can only “serve the law of sin.” Till you are brought to a knowledge of this by that self-judgment which decides absolutely *with God* as to this “I,” you never will get solid peace with Him. As long as ever you see yourself as a child of Adam before God, you cannot. But in Christ you find your history ended in the cross. Not only that He drank the cup of wrath, but that He is become my very life. I learn then that I have a totally new place; alive to God, connected with Him who is raised from the dead.

In chap. viii. “There is no condemnation,” because I am in Christ—not in the flesh—not merely washed with the blood—though that is the foundation of all. I find, then, sin working in me, torturing me, and rightly so; but I am entitled to say “It is no more I.” I am entitled to reckon myself dead, because the Holy One stood in my place and died for me. In the beginning of this chapter (viii.) you get the believer's condition with God; but in the beginning of chapter v., it is a blessed and lovely presentation of what God is in all the fulness of His heart for the sinner.

Now, in virtue of this redemption that is in Christ, I have got this blessed liberty, and I am as white as snow—cleansed by His precious blood—then the Holy Ghost can dwell in me, *because* I am clean. He quickened me when a mere sinner. He dwells in me because I am a child! “Because ye are sons,

God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." This was not to make me a son, but *because I am* one already. When sons, when clean, the Holy Spirit dwells in you, as a testimony to the value of the blood of Christ; and the power of this blessed liberty, in this position, as well as the earnest of all that is to come. Practically, all blessing is assured to us through Him. Hence, we are not to grieve "the *Holy* Spirit of God whereby we are sealed." He is the spring of our liberty, and joy, and present power of worship, as of every present blessing, as well as of our being present witnesses for Christ. He is the witness that Christ is gone up on high; and as a consequence He sent down the Comforter. Then I know I am in Him, and Christ in me. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." (John xiv. 20.)

Do *you* know this, beloved friends? Can you say as a present thing, "I know that I am in Christ, and Christ in me"? If so you are walking on earth with your affections up there, where your life is. Alive in this world to be sure, but what comes out practically is the life of Christ. Sadly short we fall of this, indeed. How little the bearing about in the body His dying, founded on reckoning ourselves dead—(Romans vi.; 2 Cor. iv.)—dead to the world, dead to sin, dead to the law by the body of Christ? Looking for His coming with joy and gladness; Christ "all and in all" to us, whether for life or for death. Then we can say, "Come, Lord Jesus," as those who wait for God's Son from heaven to complete fully in glory what he has made ours in His grace.

FRAGMENTS.

IF you never thought of doing anything unless it was God's will that you should do it, how three-fourths of your life would disappear!

We want faith in order to lose our fortune and to forgive; but it is coming out of the society of man, and entering into that of God!

A man is always "under law" when he refers his acceptance to his own state of soul,

THE POWER OF NEGATIVE TESTIMONY.

WE have numerous instances in Scripture of those who, with noble faith, stood forth in the face of numerous adversaries to testify for God and triumphed; such as Moses, when single-handed, he came down from the presence of God from Mount Sinai, and, in splendid zeal for his Master's glory, stood in the gate of the camp and said,—“Who is on the Lord's side?” Or such as Elijah, who, when iniquity had reached its culminating point in Israel, confronted all the prophets of the groves, and the prophets of Baal, and received at God's hand a magnificent answer to his faith and courage.

Instances such as these may well be termed “Positive Testimony.” For in the energy of the Spirit they stood forth, and were victorious in whatever circumstances they were placed.

There is, however, another character of testimony that the Word of God unfolds to us, which, I think, may not unsuitably be termed, “Negative,” seeing it is rather *the refusal* to take part in anything that is not of God, than a positive triumph over the enemies of God. In it faith may not be exhibited in so bold a character. But yet a faith that is very precious to the Lord; and what He surely has a right to expect from each of us. We may not have the energy of a Gideon, or a Paul, to push our “pound” in the world, and gain ten pounds “by trading;”—but the feeblest and the weakest may, by refusing to consent to the ways of the “world which lieth in the wicked one,” (1 John v. 19,) give our money to “the bank,” that when He comes He may receive the same with usury. (Luke xix. 11-27.)

Let us ponder for a little on a few of the many instances in Scripture, as to the nature and power of “Negative Testimony.”

We have noticed the testimony of Elijah in the face of the worshippers of Baal.

Cotemporaneously with him, we find honourable mention made of “Seven thousand in Israel; all the knees which have *not* bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath *not* kissed him, (1 Kings xix. 18.) It was a time when iniquity abounded. Ahab was on the throne of Israel, and “did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him.”—He had married the daughter of Ethbaal, King of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal and worshipped him; and as if to put a crowning point to the wickedness of that

time, the Spirit of God records that in his days, Jericho, the city of the curse, was rebuilt, and Joshua's prophecy concerning it accomplished, (1 Kings xvi. 34; Joshua vi. 26.)

The altar of Baal was conspicuous in the idol's temple which Ahab had built in the royal city, and the prophets of the Lord were at the mercy of a ruthless queen; while Jezebel's table was the resort of the votaries of Baal. The altar of the Lord likewise was broken down.

At such a time as this, the Lord turns with satisfaction to the seven thousand who had not joined the crowd of Baal worshippers, nor rendered the customary sign of homage to a Gentile idol.

The king, the queen, the court, the people, all had gone aside from the worship of Jehovah, but yet these seven thousand—the perfect number—maintained their place of negative testimony, and consented not to a false religion, or the apostacy of a corrupt people. I do not say they had the magnificent energy of Elijah; but their quiet unpretending patient testimony against the current evil of the day, had its own weight in the sight of God, and carried its own power, and more important still, it went up as a sweet savour to the Lord, who had “reserved” them to Himself; He was glorified in them.

Let us now turn to another scene—Jeremiah in his 15th chapter says, (verses 16 and 17,) “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts. I sat *not* in the assembly of mockers, *nor* rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand: for thou hast filled me with indignation.”

The scene is laid in *Judah* now. Israel had passed into captivity; and the Lord's long-suffering in sending to them “messengers, rising up betimes and sending,” had almost come to an end with respect to Judah also. And yet, though the sin of the people was such, that the Lord had nothing for *them* but “the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy” (chap. xv. 3), He has still a solitary witness, who having esteemed the words of Jehovah's mouth “more than his necessary food;” and conscious that he still bore the name of the Lord God of Hosts, would *not* sit in the assembly of the mockers, *nor* share their joy while all was in confusion and idolatry around.

Filled with indignation at the apostacy, he sat alone (yet "not alone"), and maintained his place of *negative testimony* against the nation that had so sadly fallen from its place as Jehovah's witness to the nations around.

God was glorified in Jeremiah, though Jeremiah was "in derision daily;" mocked of "every one;" put in the stocks; cast into a prison and a dungeon. The Spirit of God takes pleasure in recording that he sat not in the assembly of mockers, nor rejoiced; that he sat alone because of God's hand.

Another scene now passes before us. Both Judah and Israel had gone into captivity, and the palace of the King of Babylon had become the abode of certain of Israel's children, princes of the house of David.

It was not now the voluntary idolatry of an apostate people that tested the faith of those whose hearts still beat true to Jehovah, but the enforced homage under pain of a cruel death to an image of gold which the king had set up in the plains of Dura.

Forgetful of the "God of heaven" that had placed all things under his control (chap. ii. 37, 38), he had, perhaps in imitation of what he had seen in his vision, made an universal centre of worship, and thus, independently of God, sought to exercise a universal control over the religious feelings of his subjects on pain of instant death.

Most refreshing is it to turn aside from this sad scene of Gentile apostacy (another testimony to the universal ruin of man), and witness the faithfulness of the "children" who would *not* obey the mandate of the king.

In vain the musical instruments sounded; in vain the Chaldeans accused, or the king threatened: "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are *not* careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, Oh king; but if not, be it known unto thee, Oh king, that we will *not* serve thy gods, *nor* worship the golden image which thou has set up" (chap. iii. 16-18), was their answer; and they preferred the burning fiery furnace to a breach of the first commandment of Jehovah.

Surely there was a power in testimony such as this; not perhaps with the "positive" character attaching to it as when Daniel "prayed and gave thanks before his God," with "*windows open towards Jerusalem,*" in defiance of the

restriction recorded in chap. vi. But God was unquestionably glorified in this, the *negative testimony* of these three faithful children of Judah.

The book of Esther affords us still another instance of this character of testimony. The second monarchy—the breast and arms of silver—had succeeded the kingdom of Babylon—the head of gold—and the King Ahasuerus “reigned from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces.” While Haman, a descendant of Amalek—the inveterate enemy of God’s people (Gen. xxv. 22, xxxvi. 12, Exodus xvii. 16, 1 Sam. xv. 33), was the king’s prime minister. At this time a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, of the tribe of Benjamin, sat in the gate of Shushan the palace. Now the king had specially commanded that all his subjects should bow and reverence Haman, in professed subjection to the man whom the king delighted to honour. “But Mordecai bowed *not*, *nor* did him reverence.”

Great as the king was, and vast as were his dominions, Mordecai yet remembered that his obedience to the king must be subservient to what he owed to the Lord; and he absolutely refused to do honour to the hereditary enemy of his people; still, though in disgrace, the people of Jehovah.

Twelve months the prime minister cast the lot, and then obtained the king’s favour and consent to destroy the whole race of the Jews. The decree was written and the posts sent out, with the sentence that they should be slain; but still the faithful Mordecai retained his place of *negative testimony* for the God of Israel.

I do not dwell upon the story, beautiful though it is, of his fasting and prayer; of how Esther was encouraged by his faith; and the people were delivered, and their enemies slain. But I desire to show how that the Lord’s glory was accomplished by the patient testimony of His servant, who preferred death to disobedience, to what, although not an actual command, he well knew, was the general tenor of the mind of God.

Let us now briefly turn to the standard set up for the instruction of the Jewish remnant in the latter days. (Ps. i. 1.) “Blessed is the man that walketh *not* in the counsel of the ungodly, *nor* standeth in the way of sinners, *nor* sitteth in the seat of the scornful.”

Here again do we find the same principle—only *One* has

as yet fulfilled it, but He went far beyond it, for, as we know, the path of Christ went far beyond even this. But still God expects that in the latter days there will be those to whom the *counsel* of the ungodly will have no charm—to whom the sinner's *way* will be the way of death—and to whom the scornful's *seat* will be a place that leads to "judgment."

We cannot question that in "the time of Jacob's trouble," God will have an "elect" people who will occupy the place of *negative testimony*, and accomplish, by refusing to consent to the evil around them, His purposes of glory in their walk and conversation.

But meantime the Church of God is instructed to occupy the same position, and in the touching epistle that shines pre-eminent among the seven to the Churches, we find the same privilege entrusted to us, and the same responsibility impressed upon us, at which we have briefly glanced, in the various scenes that have come before us.

"To the angel of the Church in Philadelphia write,—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; 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." (Rev. iii. 7, 8.) Here again we find that *negative testimony* obtains honourable mention from the Lord.

We are but a "feeble folk," (Prov. xxx. 26; Neh. iv. 2;) but the Lord is pleased to recognise us as walking in obedience to His word, (John xvii. 6,) and as not denying that precious name by which He has unfolded Himself to us, (for a name is the expression of what He is,) as the Holy One that is intensely separate from evil, and the True One that is of necessity the contrary of everything that is false and hypocritical.

He has bestowed a life, "which after God is created in truthful righteousness and holiness," (Eph. iv. 24,) upon us; and it is our privilege to follow the instincts of that life, sustained by the Holy Ghost, in refusing association with everything that is contrary to Him who is holy and true.

The corruption of Thyatira may surround us—the deadness of Sardis may be side by side with us; and our feeble

testimony may produce the nauseous lukewarmness of Laodicea, but be it ours, with that true love which abides in the light, (1 John ii. 10,) to patiently and yet scrupulously reject everything that savours either of unholiness or falsehood, as contrary to His name!

The hereditary and successional religionists may, and will, assert their claims; but, "gathered to His name," we must *not* disgrace, but in quiet dependence on Him, maintain our place of *negative testimony* until He comes, the crown of our hopes, who shall bring us to a place where we shall exchange our position of utter weakness, for one of perfect strength; and where we shall go no more out, who are cast out now; and where we shall be publicly owned as His, who are now scarce allowed to belong to Him; and where our association with Him here will meet its full reward in absolute association with Him there. He has said, "I come quickly;" our hearts respond, "Amen. Even so, Come, Lord Jesus!"

D. T. G.

THE DOVE IN THE CLEFT OF THE ROCK.

My heart has found a place of rest,
So sacred, and so sweet,
There she has built herself a nest,
And safe is her retreat.

A weary dove! the vulture's prey!
She had not where to fly—
Her foe pursuing night and day,
She drop't her wing, to die.

But as she sank, the Lord of love
Stretched forth His hand, and laid
Within His breast the fluttered dove,
And all her trembling stayed.

She folds her wing, and seeks no more
Another cleft to hide.
Here is her safety, here her store,
Her all by love supplied.

And when the angry tempests rise,
They only serve to teach
The sheltered dove, the more to prize
That rock they fail to reach.

Lord, 'tis enough, Thyself shall be
My spirit's peace and stay,
Till from the storm Thou callest me
To God's own rest for aye.

THOUGHTS ON SACRIFICES—No. 3.

"REDEMPTION BY BLOOD."—Exodus xii.

As we read in the Book of Exodus of the institution of the Passover, we meet for the first time with blood in connection with sacrifice, and we learn the value of redemption.

God's wrath was to be poured out on the Egyptians, but Israel were to be sheltered from it. In the land, at the very moment of the divine visitation, they were to be exempted from its desolating power. The angel of death would be busy around them, but they would be secure, and would know it also, from all risk of his entrance into their dwellings. God had announced, by Moses to Pharaoh the hour of the terrible judgment (xi.), and to Israel the day when it would take effect. (xii.) Midnight, when all would naturally be asleep, was the appointed hour for Pharaoh and the Egyptians to feel the weight of God's arm. On the 14th day of Nisan the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt would take place.

Twice before had God signally interposed to rescue His people from a judgment impending over the ungodly. He saved Noah in the ark, and drew Lot out of Sodom. Now He would manifest something different, viz., the security of His people in the midst of judgment, by virtue of the blood of the lamb. Noah and his family entered into a hiding-place of God's appointment, shut in by the Lord before the windows of heaven were opened. Lot and his two daughters were drawn outside the area about to be visited by the fiery rain. But Israel remained in their dwellings, their abode for two hundred years, awaiting in confidence the passage through Egypt of the Lord and the angel of death.

What gave them this confidence? Of Noah God had said that he was righteous. Lot, too, was righteous, as Peter testifies. But what of Israel? They were defiled with the idolatries of Egypt, (Ezekiel xx. 6-8) and in heart and practice were no better than their oppressors. As to righteousness they had none. As to hope of deliverance from anything they could plead in extenuation of their sins there was none. But God's righteousness, as faithful to His promise, was manifested, and the obedience of faith was exemplified, as the people sprinkled the blood outside on the lintel and the two side posts. It was a new position in which they found themselves. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had proved the

faithfulness of God, but had never waited in the scene of His judgment, assured that it would not fall on them. This Israel did, resting on the word of the Lord.

“I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment. I am the Lord.” (xii. 12.) They knew then what would take place. Neither man nor beast would be exempt. God was visiting Egypt in anger and sore displeasure, and the very beasts would feel the consequences of man’s sin. A terrible hour it surely was for all who realised it. All ranks of Egyptians would feel it, and neither the power nor wealth of Pharaoh could avert the death of his first-born; nor the miseries already endured by the captive in the dungeon avail to spare his child. For when God executes judgment on man neither human power can successfully resist the blow, nor worldly wealth purchase immunity from its visitation, nor previous suffering mitigate the severity of the stroke. The captive in the dungeon must participate with the king in the punishment God awards to man. It is well to remember this, for men are prone to forget it, hoping that suffering on earth may be pleaded as a set-off against the endurance of the just judgment of God. It was not so in the day of Egypt, it will not be so in the day of the Lord.

But whilst the king and the captive must feel the anger of God, there were those who would be sheltered from it, but sheltered by blood. Accordingly one marked feature in this history is the prominence given to the blood, here for the first time spoken of in connection with a sacrifice. The blood of Abel had cried to God for vengeance against Cain; and the blood of any man, whether killed by his fellow or a beast, God would surely require. In these cases the blood shed claimed vengeance on the slayer, but in the paschal rite it exempted from divine wrath all who took shelter behind it. “The blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are, and when I see the blood I will pass over you.” Such was God’s promise to Israel, and that all should know how to sprinkle the blood on the house Moses was directed to say, “Ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side-posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. For the

Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians ; and when He seeth the blood upon the lintel and on the two side-posts the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you." (xii. 22, 23.) All then for Israel depended on the blood, and that outside the house. It was the blood the Lord would look for, and the blood would be the only barrier against the entrance of the destroyer. Had any in Israel sat within, saying they believed what Moses had said, yet refused to sprinkle the blood as directed, the destroying angel would have found his way to the first-born of that family. Assent to the truth without a corresponding action was valueless to ward off the blow. Had any one sprinkled the blood inside instead of outside, the Angel of Death would have made known his presence within that house, for man had no choice left him as to what he would do. He had to obey implicitly the command of the Lord by Moses, and await in confidence the result. The blood God was to look at, not man. It was a new method of escape, but a sure one, a plan which man had not devised, but God ; for the judgment to be averted was the judgment of God.

So all Israel were preserved from the loss of their first-born. With unerring precision did the destroyer pass through the land, entering each house inhabited by the Egyptians, and notifying by the death of the first-born the fulfilment of the word of the God of Israel. Every house of the children of Israel the Lord passed over, for the blood outside showed clearly who were within. What a picture of security have we here, as with closed doors the household awaited the visitation of God. For what were they doing? Cowering from fear? Praying for deliverance? Very different was their occupation, for they were eating of that lamb whose blood had been sprinkled on the door-posts. To revel in the prospect of impending desolation, uncertain of deliverance, is the act of a fool ; but to eat when divine wrath is to be poured out, knowing it will not reach one, becomes the man of faith! This Israel were doing, for God's word was their authority; and, observe, it was not *their* estimate of the blood which barred the entrance of the destroyer, "When I see the blood," etc., the Lord had said. Which of them could value it aright? Who amongst them knew what it spoke of? Had their security depended on their apprehension of its value, in common with the Egyptians, must they have been

found lamenting their bereavement of their first-born. We know what they doubtless did not, to whose sacrifice it looked forward; but which of the sons of men can even now fully appreciate the value of the blood of God's Son? As they were sheltered because they acted as directed, apart from the question of their appreciation of the value of the blood, so with souls now. To wait till we can fully estimate it, will be to wait for ever; but to be saved at all, to be saved for ever; to be saved now there is needed only the obedience of faith. Beautifully simple is all this, and the position of the children of Israel on that night is a clear illustration of the principle of salvation by faith. The immediate object of faith is now different, but the principle is the same; they rested on the blood of the paschal lamb—we rest on the precious blood of Christ.

And this leads us to another point. They were delivered, but there was more than deliverance—they were redeemed. Deliverance may be often repeated, Redemption once settled is a question which can never be re-opened. Past deliverances afford no sure ground for expecting future ones. Israel's past history illustrates this. The captivity of the Ark by the Philistines, and the long continued exile of Israel from their land, alike prove this. But, if redeemed once, they are redeemed for ever; and on that ground can count on that final deliverance which will one day take place.

The saints of old understood something of redemption. In the darkest hour of Israel's history in the wilderness, Moses pleaded with God for the people He had redeemed: "O, Lord God, destroy not thy people and thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed," &c. (Deut. ix. 26.) In the height of David's glory he reminds God that Israel are His redeemed people, "Thy people Israel didst thou make thine own people for ever; and thou Lord becamest their God." (1 Chron. xvii. 22.) He felt the everlasting security which redemption by blood afforded, and the special position in which they stood to God. "Thy people," "Thine inheritance." Conscious of the weakness of the returned remnant, Nehemiah takes up the same plea, (i. 10) as he prays in Shushan for those in trouble at Jerusalem. Jeremiah, whilst prophesying of Judah's captivity, looked forward to their final restoration, assigning as the reason for his confidence, "for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he." (Jer. xxxi.

10, 11.) He knew for himself the value of redemption; but writing by the Spirit's direction, he announced to the Gentiles, in the time of Israel's humiliation, the future in store for that people they were about to trample on and oppress. These instances show us how those of old understood it.

Let us turn now to Ps. lxxiv. 1, 2, to learn how the people in a future day will make use of it: "Remember thy congregation which thou hast purchased of old; the rod of thine inheritance which thou hast redeemed; this Mount Zion wherein thou hast dwelt." Governmental dealing with the people can take place, but it is only governmental, because atonement has been made, and they are redeemed. The consequences of their wilfulness and sin they must feel, for God cannot overlook the iniquity of His people; but an end to chastisement will surely arrive, because He has purchased them to be His people for ever, nothing being more sure on earth than this, that redemption once accomplished stands good for ever.

Believers in apostolic times recognised this. (Ephes. i. 7, Col. i. 14, 1 Peter i. 18.) Why should souls be ignorant of it now? Redemption by blood can never be undone, because the blood poured out can never be taken back. The transaction is irrevocable, the standing acquired by it unimpeachable.

Two points more must be briefly noticed. Whilst redemption places the subjects of it on ground of unchallengeable security, it makes them at once strangers where formerly they were at home. The people eat the passover, but with girded loins, sandalled feet, and staff in hand. In haste did they partake of it, ready to march forth at a moment's notice. Strangership was now their position in Egypt—which for so many years had been their home. Their very attitude, whilst feeding on the lamb, proclaimed the altered condition in which they found themselves. The link with Egypt of two hundred years duration, was snapped at once, and they marched that very night from Rameses to Succoth, with their wives, their children, their cattle, their substance, even all that they had, "with the dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up with their clothes upon their shoulders." But owning themselves to be strangers in Egypt, they learned what it was to be the Lord's people. They went out, but He went before them,

They marched along, because the Lord had brought them out. They were His as redeemed, and He charged Himself with the providing of all they wanted by the way. "The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night." How altered was their condition now! Lately slaves, now free; pilgrims and strangers in the only land they had ever known as home, with no symbols among them of earthly majesty to rally round, so long associated in their minds only with oppression, but preceded by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, those sure marks of God's presence with them, they started on the road to the land of their inheritance. Redemption by blood they learned was a glorious reality.

The lesson they learned has to be learned still. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." (Rom. i. 18.) As surely as the threatened blow fell on the first-born of the Egyptians, so surely will God's wrath be poured out on all who are not sheltered from it. He revealed the former by Moses, He has reminded us of the latter by Paul. Similar then as the position of man is now to that of the Egyptians before that fourteenth day of Nisan, being forewarned of the coming judgment; similar too is the manner of escape. By the blood of the lamb alone was there deliverance then, by the blood of God's Lamb is there deliverance now. But there is a difference to be noted. Moses told Pharaoh and his princes of the stroke that would fall on them, but did not, as in the previous plague of the hail, offer any of them an opportunity of escaping it.

To Israel he announced the judgment, but with it he disclosed the divine plan of exemption from its infliction, as it is now declared to all in the gospel. And greater interests are at stake now than then. The death of one's first born is a grievous blow, but the everlasting ruin of one's soul is a more awful calamity. That men should be saved from this last, God has spoken, and pointing all to the blood of the Lamb, tells us, that He "gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish; but have everlasting life."

I SAMUEL I-VII.

THE inspired histories become typical, or parabolical, by the simplest *necessity*. Because, *God* acting in them, He must act according to His own counsels. And then, the fragments of history which we get, (introducing God as they do,) necessarily become so many revelations, more or less full, more or less distinct, of God's way, of the purposes of His grace, of the operations of His Spirit, of the doings of His hand, and of the *mode* of bringing His purposes to pass.

Man being in action also, exposes Himself in various ways, as God being in action, reveals Himself.

This may prepare us to find parables in histories; and in other words, parts of the divine way in the pieces of history which we get in the inspired Book.

Now, I have thought this, in connection with 1 Sam. i—vii., which form the first part of 1 Samuel; and it is a very complete piece in itself.

Man is here exposed; but God in the ways and counsels of His grace, and in the operations of His Spirit, is also revealed.

Man is exposed, first, in Peninnah—confidence or pride in fleshly advantages, (a common principle of corrupt nature), betrays itself in her. She provokes Hannah weak in the flesh—in the spirit of Hagar and Ishmael.—Man is exposed next in the camp of Israel. Confidence in fleshly or carnal ordinances in spite of a bad conscience and evil practices (another common principle of corrupt nature), betrays itself there. They bring the Ark into the battle. (Chap. iv.) I say not how man betrays himself in the sons of Eli; that is evident enough. But even in the saint, in Eli, the easiness that conferred with flesh and blood, and did not take counsel with the will of God only, (common enough with us all) betrays itself in him.

In these ways man is here exposing himself. But God is revealed. He enters this scene of action, and He cannot but enter it consistently with Himself, and this of necessity reveals Him.

He takes up the weak thing—He visits Hannah. This is a great principle with Him. To be sure it is in a world that has departed from Him in pride—for while He *blesses* us, He must *humble* us, leaving us no room or occasion to boast.

His Spirit in Hannah celebrates this; as His Spirit afterwards in Samuel forms a vessel or quickens a vessel, the very

opposite of the proud and confident Peninnah. Samuel is all *meekness* in the presence of Eli—Peninnah had been all *haughtiness* in the presence of Hannah (chap. iii.)—different ways in which they used their several advantages.

Then, His Anointed one, the true Ark, has some of the deepest mysteries in His history, brought out in type here. The Ark which symbolises Him is a *captive*, but a *conqueror* also in the place of its captivity (c. v. 6.) This is Christ dead and risen.

Then, in the last place, the *divine* way of blessing is traced in chap. vii.; Samuel the vessel and witness of the Spirit, instructs the people in this way. It is the very contradiction of the *human* way. We saw that in chap. iv., there man will trust in an ordinance, a carnal piece of religiousness, a rudiment of the world; and that, too, in the midst of his practical uncleanness. Man will be *religious* and *worldly*, *religious* and *polluted*, at the same time. But God's way, witnessed and taught by Samuel, is the way of *faith* and *righteousness*. Samuel requires of them to be honest with the Lord, by putting away the strange gods. He then will have them in the place of good-for-nothing ones, like water spilt on the ground—then on their cry he pleads the bloody sacrifice, and then God, answering the sacrifice with deliverance, he raises the pillar that tells how the Lord Himself had done it all for His people.

Here the witness for God instructs the camp in God's way, which leads them to blessing—for they take that way in the obedience of faith.

PRAYING FOR OTHERS.

As to your question about praying for others, and the experience or gain which we derive from doing so, even though our prayers are not answered immediately:—

In the first place, praying for others can only happily follow in a heart at rest about itself, and knowing in itself the value of the desires which it expresses for another. It could not be true or happy in praying otherwise. Secondly, if I am praying for another, according to the will of God, and in current with the Spirit, I must receive from association, fellowship with the Spirit, the effect and influence of His society. It is not whether my prayer is successful, I have been in company with the Spirit of Christ in the prayer,

and my own soul is invigorated by the very passage of His thought through my mind. I cannot have His desire for another awakened in me, but by His Spirit, and elaborated there, I am sensible, on account of it, of the strength and bliss which belong to Him whose thought and desire is passing through my heart and mind; and this true spiritual desire will be accomplished according to God—that is, according to His mind, not after man's judgment. Therefore, when a simple spiritual desire is awakened, and occupies your heart touching any of His people, you are not only invigorated by the stream of divine thought passing through you, but you may rest assured that God will effectuate it in some way, but in a way manifestly of Himself.

I am always thankful when I remember any, as I believe, and feel my Lord thinks of them: (what good is anything else?) may we abound therein; we should, if the Lord be our strength, and the armour is *on!* (Eph. vi.)

THE COMING GLORY.

Higher than the highest heaven
 High! high up above!
 Jesus crown'd with glory sitteth
 The God of truth and love.
 Still though the wilderness we tread,
 "A little while" we wait,
 Jesus, our loving Lord will come
 To ope the prison gate.

Then, while He tarries, may we walk
 With thoughts fixed on our home;
 Remember His kind gracious word,
 "Occupy till I come":—
 That glorious home where we shall soon
 Be gathered safely all;
 Not one be wanting in that day,
 When trumpet-tongued He'll call.

Who can the wondrous glories trace,
 Of that bright promised home?
 Where we shall then with Jesus sit
 The partners of His throne.
 The Comforter still with us there,
 The Father's gracious smile,
 And the "Lamb slain" for sinners saved,
 Lighting the scene divine.

A. M. H.

THE NEW MAN.

COL. III.

Most of the exhortations, as to walk and conduct for the Christian, in the New Testament, after redemption is accomplished, are founded on the fact that he is "dead and risen with Christ;" and thus associated with Him who is in heaven, while walking here below upon earth; his affections set upon things above, and so is to bring forth fruit to God. He is risen with Christ, but is always seen in Colossians as walking here below on earth, with a hope laid up for him in heaven.

In Ephesians he is looked upon as "in Christ" in heaven. Here it is only a hope. (c. i. 5.) Associated in heart and affections with Jesus who is gone up there, but walking himself on earth, and thus a fruitful pathway all the way through.

This truth of his being thus "dead and risen" with Christ, detects all and everything that is of the "old man" in us. We have been delivered judicially from the old man; and, as risen with Christ who has borne our sins, we are associated with Him who is our life, in heavenly places. It is founded on what you get in Gal. ii. 20, "I am crucified with Christ"—the old man—all that I had done, and all that I was as a sinner has been clean swept away before God and for faith in the Cross; "nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me"—He has become my life. As a sinner once, I had to do with God. Well—what then? The precious blood of Christ cleansed me from all sin—cleansed me so perfectly that God says, He will never remember my sins again. (Heb. x. 17.) So perfectly has this been done, that unless God denied Himself, and the work of Christ, He can never charge them on me again. I shall be raised, or changed, and set in glory consequent upon the perfection of this work, and when I am raised, it will be in the likeness of Christ. It will be too late then to judge whether I am meet for heaven or not; or whether my sins are put away or not; for I shall then be like Him! "When he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." (1 Jno. iii. 2.)

God has not merely saved us through Christ, but has given us a place with Him. We have the Holy Ghost now, as an earnest of all we possess in Him. We know that all the guilt we should have had to answer for to Him as Judge, He has first come and cleared away as a Saviour! Well; a

man learns that he is cleansed in God's sight; but he wants more; he wants deliverance, too. That, God has given us also in Christ. It is this want which is expressed in the cry, "O wretched man that I am, who shall"—not, forgive, or, cleanse—but, "deliver me?" In Rom. vi. he has to reckon himself dead—to believe that as Christ died to sin when He had to do with it on the cross, so has he died to sin; and that he has now but to live to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. In Col. ii. iii. he goes further. He has died *with Christ*, and has been quickened together *with Him*, and all his trespasses forgiven—all left behind in that order of things into which Christ entered in death for sin. He has borne them, and died and cleared them away—died to the whole thing—He went down to the "lower parts of the earth," where sin had brought man under the power of death. He is raised from the dead; and God has taken us up; quickened us together with Christ, having forgiven us all trespasses. We have died *with Him*—and have deliverance from the evil nature. We "Have put off the old man, and put on the new," as in Christ risen from the dead; a total change by a new nature, not of "*the flesh*," but of *the man*; the flesh remains the same. He is not now in "Adam," but in "Christ." Christ is his life. By dying for us He has cleared away all that stood against us, and now He lives in us. He put away when He came in grace, what He would have to judge when He came in glory! and He has associated us with Himself after having done so. "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

We thus have deliverance from the *sense* of sin as well as from its *power*: and this by reckoning ourselves dead, Christ having died and delivered us. We had natural life from Adam, and now Christ lives in us—the true "I." Thus, all that Christ has done God has appropriated to the Christian. We have *died to sin* because He has; we are dead, because we have died with Him; Christ is risen, and we are risen with Him; Christ is hid in God, our life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ shall appear, we shall appear with Him, and be like Him. Thus the debts I had contracted as a poor sinner are all cleared away; and He has taken me into partnership with Himself, having done so, so that all that is His is mine. His peace is mine—His joy—His place—His glory—all mine! It is not, then, as the world gives, He has given to me. It is generous if it loves much. It gives little

if it loves little; but it *loses* what it gives—not He! He brings us into His own possessions, and glory, and joy, that we may enjoy them with Him. We can now say, “As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” (1 Cor. xv. 48, 49.) We have this life in a poor, feeble vessel, surely—but we *have* it! We can say distinctly, We belong to *up there!* Christ has gone up as a man. Down here we have to get our hearts exercised, and be strengthened to patience, and pulled to pieces: tried and tested, and the like: and good for us it is so. He desires to do us good in our latter end.

The Apostle now (v. 5) turns to the consequences of all this. He begins with grosser things. He does not allow that we have a *life* down here at all, but *members* to mortify—the gross sins which bring down the wrath of God on the children of unbelief, in the which once we lived as having our life in them. He is not content with that, but adds, But ye *also* put off all these—the things which spring up in the heart—after which I have no lust: “Anger, wrath, malice,” &c., all because of having put off the old man. “*Seeing that ye have put off* the old man with his deeds.” Then you have put on the new, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him, *i.e.*, after God. You know God now that you are a Christian; He is holiness, and love, righteousness, grace—you go and be the same. Walk worthy of Him, by a spiritual apprehension of what He is; not worthy of Adam, but of Christ. “Be perfect even *as* (not “with;” we are that in Christ) your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” God loved you as an enemy—you go and do the same. Where can I learn what is worthy of God? In Christ. He gave Himself up *for* us, who were unworthy, to God who was worthy. He “is all and in all;” everything to us; and in all as life and power. We get this brought out in Gal. ii. 20. “Christ lives in me”—He is *in* all. “I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me;” He is an object which governs all in the heart.

Does He, beloved friends, govern all the motives of our hearts? If not, He is *not* all! He is grace, and life, and strength as in us. There may be failure, and, alas, there is; but the Christian gives it no quarter, or excuses himself. Mind he does not say, He ought to be in all. Nay, He says

He *is* there. "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness;" and, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." (Rom. viii. 9, 10.) You say you are a Christian. Well, if so, Christ is in you, and He should be seen in your ways.

Now we get the practical "putting on." You have put off the old man with his deeds. Put on, therefore, "as the elect of God": not, "that you may be;" but "as" such. As I say to my child, "I look to you to walk *as* my child." Presumption! some one will say. *Why, he tells me to do it!* Is that presumption? If a child does not know he is his father's child, do you suppose he can walk as such? We never can walk as God's children till we know we are such. God puts us in the relationship, and then tells us to walk as elect, holy and beloved; and we shall never walk worthy of Him till we do so. It is where God would have us walk, and, beloved friends, *because it's true!* I am a poor worm in myself, but elect of God, holy and beloved; and God asks me to walk in it because He loves me, and would have me enjoy it! Christ was all this before Him in the fullest sense: Elect—holy—beloved; and He has brought us into all the blessedness of His own peace with God. Now, He gave Himself up; do you do the same? It takes me far beyond the law. Love me and I'll love you, was what it proposed. But here is the giving up of self, and loving others when they do not so!

The world rejoices, dear friends, when it sees a Christian fall—when he does not live out what it hates; and that is "Christ!" "Over all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness." It binds all together with the divine nature. "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts;" and, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly:" and all this after the "putting off"—after a right condition of heart with God. It is not to be content that I am saved, merely; or not immoral in my ways. But Christ expects the heart to listen and attend to all He has to say. As if He said, "I have spent myself to bring you there, and I expect you to enjoy it and live in it, for my glory." He has called us friends. Do you believe Christ is dealing with you as a friend?

Beloved friends, if I am to set my affections on things above, I must know what is there, and who is there. It is Christ? That makes me unworldly, and nothing else will.

It is His joy to make me happy here in His love. By and bye He will come forth in the glory to serve and make us happy there. Is that the thought you have of Christ? We are babes, indeed, in the way we enjoy it; but a babe can know its mother's love! He looks for our hearts to respond to His.

Now we get conduct in the pathway. “Whatsoever ye do, in *word* or *deed*, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” One thing governs the heart; it is a simple rule, but reaches the spring of everything—“Are you doing it in the name of the Lord Jesus?” Well? “Giving thanks to God, and the Father by Him.”

It is the complete picture of the expression of the life of Christ—the new man—in us here below, from the sinner walking and living in sin—then as dead and risen with Christ, and all sins put away, and the new man put on; the word of Christ dwelling in us richly, and all, in word or deed, done in His name. He is done with Adam, and to him Christ is all! Then the results and consequences of all this in practice here. The *flesh* is unchanged, and remains; but there is an intrinsic change in the *man* by a nature suited to God who has produced it, and caused it to spring up in his heart.

The Lord give His people, for whom He has spent Himself, to walk in the power of this new life, with the eye upon Him, for His own name's sake. Amen.

“A DOOR OPENED IN HEAVEN.”

REV. iv, v.

THE connection of the first verse of chapter iv. with the addresses to the Seven Churches is most significant.

A door is opened in heaven to John, and he sees the throne of God in government, when everything is according to God's mind. John's spirit had been troubled by the display of the utter failure in testimony just witnessed in the churches. He had seen the Lord walking amidst the golden candlesticks, investigating their condition, and all is entire failure; so that their end is such that Christ will spue them out of His mouth. What grace, at a moment like this, to open to the tried heart of the prophet a door into heaven, and to show the poor saint of God—tempest-tossed amid the rack and ruin of all which God has set up in the hands of man—a

scene prefatory to the coming day of glory, where no failure can come.

And such is the comfort of the child of God who walks in communion with God. He is shown the purpose of God in heaven, and though he may scarcely know how to steer his course amid the waves and storms as they grow more and more tempestuous around him, the Spirit of God carries his heart into a scene where no evil or failure can come. Whatever the church may be now, God will set a throne in heaven, and one will sit thereon, displaying the glory of God's government, where not even the spray of the storm can be dashed! This is the stay of the heart. If the Church is all in confusion and disorder, God shows His saints, for their comfort, that even now the government is in the hands of One who sits upon the throne. The display of glory here is dispensational and governmental—Jehovah-Elohim-Shaddai—in connection with creation, as the One for whose pleasure all things are and were created.

Yet I am sure that a heart touched by sovereign grace will not fail to discern Jesus in the scene as the One by whom all things are upheld; and though the eleventh verse is still unfulfilled, for creation is anything but an answer to God's pleasure, being under the permitted rule of Satan except as by Providence, all things are overruled; yet Jesus is the sustainer of what was created for the Divine pleasure. And He will, in a new heavens and a new earth, bring all things into subjection to Him who sits upon the throne.

There is wonderful grace in not only comforting the poor saint of God, by His own individual portion. But in revealing to such, God's mind and purpose about everything in heaven and earth.

The fifth chapter unfolds redemption. It is not the question then who Jesus is, but what He is! and for the comfort of the saints, the heavenly drama is shown. John in a mortal body is a picture of the weakness of the present condition of the saints in communion with God. Though in heaven, John displays his foolishness, and weeps much. The saint carrying about with him a body of sin and death, always displays his foolishness in God's presence; but be it so! all the grace of God is shown forth in this scene, for the comfort of John's heart. Why should John weep at what man is? Had he forgotten there was a Man who was worthy? He shows his bewilderment in God's presence, and weeps much;

because he had forgotten the Lamb who was worthy to take the book and to open the seven seals thereof. And mark, it is not only His personal worthiness, but the redeemed worship Him in new song, and declare His worthiness because He was slain, and had redeemed them to God by His blood. This is His worthiness. He has glorified God in shedding His blood for us. He has not been contented to abide alone. He has redeemed us unto God by his blood, and we shall reign with Him.

Lower down in the chapter, the countless multitude of angels celebrate His praise, but they are lower down in another sense too. An angel cannot speak of Him as the One “who loved me, and gave himself for me.” They praise Him for what He is to the saints. As the servants at the welcome of the prodigal son, they praise the master for what they learn him to be as a father, in his welcome of his long lost son ; but this does not change their position, they are still the servants.

Then John hears every creature in heaven and in earth, and under the earth, taking up the praise. This is anticipative, but it was given to John to know it beforehand for the comfort of our hearts. As Peter could say, who had been with the Lord in the holy mountain; he had seen the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; but in point of fact that day is future, though for his especial comfort he had a vision thereof. And so it is with John. It is the grand result before his eye, as sample and pledge of what it will be when the blessed One shall have risen up from His Father's throne to banish from the wide universe the adversary, and no place will be left for Satan in the scene God had created for His glory.

What grace of our God to show us this glorious future, when all the mind in heaven and earth shall be one in worshipping Him who sits upon the throne, and in adoring the Lamb.

And now for a practical word. Do you know this mind of heaven, the mind of God? Yes, for as Christians you have the mind of Christ; (1 Cor. ii. 16) but whether you are displaying it in your everyday life is quite another thing.

If I look around upon professing Christians, and ask whether they are displaying the mind of heaven, alas, I must answer, **Anything but that.** I see professing Christians seeking their own good things down here; laying up for themselves

treasures upon earth, and in no sense waiting for God's Son from heaven.

Let me then ask you. Is the Lamb the centre of your heart? This is the mind of heaven. If so, you will not seek your joys now. You will say, I wait for the Son of God from heaven for my portion; and as for trouble, you will not be striving to get out of it. You will take it as a pilgrim does the rough roads on his journey home.

Neither joy nor trouble will engage the heart that is centred upon Christ. Such in spirit wait for the scene of this chapter to end their sorrows and bring in their joy.

A READING ON THE PSALMS.*

Book i: Ps. i—xli.

IN the Psalms you will find that which is a common principle of prophecy:—The writer expresses his own circumstances and feelings, and yet the prophecy reaches beyond to the future. Just as in Isaiah, where Sennacherib's invasion is recorded, you find what really goes on to the invasion of the Assyrian in the last days.

The First and Second Psalms are part of a series ending with the Eighth; but they are distinct in themselves, and give the general idea of the whole book, so that they form a kind of preface or introduction to the whole Book of Psalms.

The difference between these Psalms is taken up in the second part of Isaiah's prophecy, after the typical history of Hezekiah in chs. xxxvi.—xxxix. The First Psalm answers to Isaiah, chs. xl.—xlviii.; the Second Psalm to Isaiah xlix.—lvii. Both series in Isaiah go on the ground that it is only a remnant of the people whom God would recognise; and both end with the blessing of this remnant, and with the declaration that "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

The former division in Isaiah takes up the question of Jehovah and Idols, and the remnant's obedience to the law and trust in Jehovah. This answers to Ps. i.

In the latter division, commencing at ch. xlix., Christ takes the place of Israel as Jehovah's servant, and the remnant is distinguished by their reception of Christ. This answers to Ps. ii.

In Ps. i. it is the description of the remnant's character,

* London, Oct., 1868.

and so we have them meditating in the law of Jehovah. In Ps. ii. it is Christ, and we have the nation rejecting Him.

Is it the crucifixion in Ps. ii?

We are really in the last days. Peter quotes its beginning (Acts iv.), and applies it to Israel for their rejection of Christ; but in the Old Testament Church-time is dropped out—thus from the fourth verse the Psalm leaps over all the time from the crucifixion to the Millennium. There we have the *Adonai* sitting in the heavens. He shall laugh at them, and have them in derision.

It is the same principle as we see in Luke iv., where the Lord quotes Isaiah lxi. 1, 2. He stops in the middle of the verse, because the end is vengeance at the second coming. In ch. i. of John's Gospel we see Nathanael owning the Lord as Son of God, and King of Israel, according to His Messianic glory in Ps. ii.; and the Lord says, "You shall see greater things than these;" and in the last verse He takes the glory of the Son of Man, according to Ps. viii. It should be "Henceforth ye shall see," &c.; not "Hereafter:" the moment Christ was on earth, there was an adequate object for heaven to open upon; the angels ascend and descend upon the Son of Man. The Eighth Ps. is quoted by Paul in Eph. i., 1 Cor. xv., and Heb. ii., to show that He, as "Son of Man," is set over all things which God has made. "Son of Man" is a wider title than "Christ." You will find in Matt. xvi. that the Lord tells His disciples not to say He is "The Christ," for He was about to suffer as "Son of Man." (See Luke ix. 20-22.)

After having the preface to the whole book in Ps. i. ii., we have, from Ps. iii.—viii., the position of the godly remnant consequent thereon, and their different exercises in sorrow and suffering while the Messiah is rejected.

Who are the wicked in Ps. i.?

The ungodly Jews.

In Ps. iii.—vii. you see the godly remnant in three distinguishing characters or positions; Confidence; Personal righteousness; and Guilty, though obeying the word all the time.

1. You get confidence in God through all their trials, as in Ps. iii.

2. Personal righteousness, so that they can appeal to God as the God of my righteousness, as in Ps. iv.

3. Guilty, and so deprecating God's anger, as in Ps. vi.,

“O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger,” for they know they deserve it. But sins are not acknowledged and confessed until Ps. xxv., when atonement has come in and laid the ground for it in Ps. xxii.

Ps. viii. closes the series: and the Son of Man is set over all the works of God's hands. It is the language of the now delivered remnant.

What is the difference between Jehovah and Adonai?

Adonai is Lordship; Jehovah is perpetuity, the covenant name with Israel. The One who was, and is, and is to come. The Originator and the Fulfiller of the promises.

In Ps. ix. x. we have the historical statements of the circumstances of the Remnant in the last days in the land. Here we find the judgment of the heathen, and God is known in Israel by the judgment He executes. In Ps. x. we have the description of the wicked, “Lurking in the secret places of the villages,” &c. The wicked man is the character of Antichrist. Sometimes in the Psalms it is plural, and sometimes it is characteristic, and sometimes it rises up to Antichrist personally. In Ps. x. 18 it is characteristic.

From Ps. xi.—xv. we have the thoughts and feelings of the Remnant, when in the circumstances of Ps. ix. and x. This is a general principle in the Psalms. We have a Psalm or Psalms describing a certain condition of things, and then a series of Psalms following, which bring out the feelings and exercises of the Remnant consequent thereon.

In Ps. xiv. we have the Atheist. Here the evil has reached its climax in God's sight. Ps. xv. is the character of the righteous, and describes who the person is who shall ascend into the Hill of the Lord, when the Lord shall have established the seat of His righteous power in Zion.

In Ps. xvi. and xvii. we have the two great principles that characterise the remnant: confidence and personal righteousness. Here we have Christ Himself. These Psalms form part of a series, but the distinction between this series and the previous one is that here we have the connection of Christ Himself with the remnant. Ps. xvi. is Christ's confidence in God as man: “In thee do I put my trust;” the Psalm closes with the fruit of trust, in enjoying God Himself: “In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” Ps. xvii. is personal righteousness, and it ends with the fruit of

righteousness in being like Him: "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." Christians *are* like Him now (1 Jno. iv. 17), also they *shall be* when they see Him as He is (1 Jno. iii. 2). They have both.

What does Hades mean in Ps. xvi. ?

Hades means anything you please out of this world. In Greek it means "unseen." Heaven was not revealed until Christ went there, though the existence of the soul after death was known. David says of his child, "I shall go to him," It is he and the separate soul together. Samuel says to Saul, "Thou shalt be with me," but as to where they went, all was unknown, invisible, dark. They did not know where they went. The thief on the cross first threw light upon it. Christ revealed the happy state in which he should be with Him, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." In Ps. xvi. 10, we see that the soul and the body go to different and distinct places.*

In Psalm xvii. we see the world given to the wicked. It is the principle brought out and answered in Dives and Lazarus in a future state. "Thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented."

Ps. xviii. We have here the sufferings of the Messiah the central ground of all the history of Israel from Egypt to the glory in the Millennium. His death is the ground for God's dealings in grace with them. They were delivered from Egypt on the ground of Christ's sufferings. The Passover, the Red Sea, &c., were all figures of it. And this principle is true of every saved soul from Abel downwards. No doubt, when David wrote the Psalm, he was feeling it all in his own circumstances; but this is, as we have seen, a common principle in prophecy, and especially so in the Psalms.

This Psalm celebrates especially Jehovah Himself, the Deliverer, and still declares the speaker's dependence on Him. This is the thesis of the Psalm. It then, as is the usual form of the Psalms, goes through all the circumstances, which lead the soul up to what is celebrated in the first verse or verses. In *vv.* 4, 5, Christ is seen, the sorrows of death compassing Him, and the floods of ungodly men besetting Him. In *v.* 6 you have the cry to Jehovah; then in *vv.* 7-16 you get Israel delivered from Egypt, and brought through the Red Sea, through Messiah's suffer

* Till the Resurrection.—ED.

ings, though doubtless these are spoken of in a mysterious form. In *v.* 17-27 we have Christ as God's Israel, perfect in trial, and the value of this towards the remnant's godliness; and then from *v.* 28, to the end, the coming in of power in deliverance to Christ, and through Him to Israel in the last days. In *v.* 43, He is the Head of the heathen, so that we get to the Millennium. In *v.* 44, all come and submit, "yield feigned obedience," as in the margin, they tell lies; it is power subduing, but not faith.

Who speaks in *ver.* 20?

The language is only true essentially of Christ; and yet from the last verse we know it is David who speaks, as also from 2 Sam. xxii. 1, where we find the occasion on which it was composed.

Ps. xix. takes up the two testimonies of God. His works in Creation, and His Word.* Creation is a witness to God; only as sin has come in and marred the earth, we have only the *heavens* mentioned as declaring the glory of God. The law is a witness to Jehovah.

Ps. xx. We have the third testimony here, in Christ, who is God's witness, in the day of His distress, the object of the remnant's sympathy as the dependent One, and of their trust as the exalted King.

Ps. xxi. We have an exalted Christ, the answer to Ps. xx. in terms. Thus we have had the testimony of Creation, of the Law, and of Israel, and now the testimony of Christ completes all the testimonies of God.

Up till now we have men against Him in His sufferings, but in Ps. xxii. we have God judging sin in His Person in atonement; consequently we have no judgment on man, but a tide of blessing flowing out, first to the remnant, then to all Israel, then to the ends of the earth, and lastly to those born in the Millennium. In *v.* 22 you have John xx., when Christ declares His Father's name to His brethren; and then you have Him in *v.* 25, praising in the great congregation of Israel.

Ps. xxiii. The result of Ps. xxii. is that the sheep are taken care of.

Can we look upon Christ here as one of the sheep?

No; but He goes before them in the path of dependence and confidence in Jehovah, and thus He puts Himself among them. But the Psalm speaks of the remnant, though

* The "Law" or "Doctrine of Jehovah."—ED.

Christ entered into their place of dependence, taking Jehovah as His Shepherd.

In Ps. xxiv. we have Christ taking His place of glory in the temple on earth, and owned there as Jehovah.

In Ps. xxv.—xxxix. Christ having made atonement, we have the state and feelings of the remnant in respect of this work and its results, which have been brought out in Ps. xxii.—xxiv.

Is Ps. xl. the same view of the sufferings as Ps. xxii.?

It takes in a wider range, and shows the root of it all in the eternal counsels. "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God."

In Ps. xxv. Israel can confess their sins, because atonement has been made. Here it is the general truth of their sinfulness. In Ps. li. it is the confession of blood-guiltiness, owning their guilt in the rejection and death of Christ. It is not that they *know* atonement for their deliverance and peace; this will not be, till they *see* Him, and *look* upon Him whom they have pierced; but they can confess sins, because atonement has been made, without the personal comfort resulting from the fact of its application to themselves being known. But Ps. xl. is Christ Himself in the most distinct way. It is taken up in Hebrews x. Here it is not the fact of His sufferings in atonement that is before us, but the counsel and will of God which He has accomplished therein.

In Ps. xli. "Blessed is the man that understandeth (not considereth) the poor;" in contrast with the pretensions of the proud. Christ takes this place of the poor and needy in v. 17 of Ps. xl. Christ is really the poor man here, but not exclusively. In Ps. xli., blessed is the one who recognises those in such a state. In Amos ii. 6, the judgment falls upon Israel, because of their conduct towards the poor. Zech. xi. takes this up definitely, and Christ takes up the poor of the flock. It is our place. I don't know how far we realize it, though we have hymns written for the poor of the flock. It is just what it ought to be with us: v. 9 is true of Christ. There it is speaking practically of Judas, but not only of him, for in the Psalms we are in the last days; so in v. 1, it is not only Christ, but all the poor of the flock.

In the first Psalm it is, Blessed is the man who keeps the law; this book ends with "Blessed is he that understandeth the poor"! The two things that characterize Israel. They are blessed in doing it.

In Ps. i. we have the blessing in loving God. Ps. xli. in loving one's neighbour. In this book, it is the remnant and Christ *both* rejected, but the remnant is not cast out of Jerusalem. It is only the Jews in this book, and not Israel. The ten tribes do not come in till the Third book. The two sticks in Ezekiel represent—the one, the house of Judah and the children of Israel his companions; the other, the stick of Ephraim, and *all* the house of Israel, his companions. So that the Jewish remnant includes the children of Israel, who came up with the two tribes at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. We find, in Luke ii., Anna was of the tribe of Aser, and Elizabeth was of the daughters of Aaron.

We have now come to the end of the first Book of Psalms.

JUDGMENT AND GOVERNMENT.

It is very important for newly born souls to distinguish clearly between Judgment and Government. The moment I accept the truth of my condition as a poor sinner before God, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, I am entitled to know that there is no condemnation for me; for the very simple reason, that the Word of God tells me that the condemnation due to me has been already borne by my blessed substitute Jesus, and God has cleared me from all my guilt because of the work of Christ. "He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me," says the Lord, "hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life." (John v. 24.) "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," says the Holy Ghost. (Romans viii. 1.) "Herein is love with us (margin) made perfect," says the same infallible witness (1 John iv. 17,) "that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world."

The same Christ that died for us, and "bare our sins in his own body on the tree," (1 Pet. ii. 24) has risen from the dead, and has imparted to us His own life (1 John, v. 11). He is the one to whom all judgment has been committed. (John v. 22.) He cannot therefore condemn us, for in doing so, He must judge His own work—His own life—Himself. We can boldly say, "who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth,—who is he that condemneth?" (Romans viii. 33, 34.) And moreover when the dead stand before God in that awfully solemn

day of the great white throne, to receive for the things done in the body, we shall have been for more than a thousand years in glory, in the image of our Lord; and seated with Him on His throne, reigning with Him (Rev. xx. 4, 6,) ourselves judges. (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.)

The weakest babe in Christ has no need of uneasiness on that score, but may rejoice in the fullest sense of liberty from condemnation.

Quite distinct from this is the Father's government of His child. This is confined to this present scene, as it says, in 1 Peter i. 17, "And if ye call on the Father, who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning *here* in fear," &c. The moment I become a child of God I become subject to my Father's *government*, and a more tender, loving, and yet faithful Parent could not be. He knows the difficulties of His child; He knows that he has the flesh in him to contend with—the evil nature that never can be better. Flesh and Spirit are there, and the tendencies of the two are precisely opposite. (Gal. v. 17.) "The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," (Rom. viii. 2) delighting to do the will of God, and the natural man still seeking its own will. He has given me the Spirit that I may walk in the Spirit, and not fulfil the lusts of the flesh; but if failure comes, and, alas, it does, "for in many things we offend all," He deals with me as His child, using, if it be needed, and in love to me, His rod. Thus, though there is no condemnation for me in the world to come, it is well for me to remember that my Father expects from me a walk *here* consistent with His own holiness, and does not permit to go unnoticed any indulgence or outbreak of the flesh that still is in me. A word applied by the Spirit to the conscience may be sufficient at times to produce self-judgment, and restore communion. At times it may be needful to apply the rod, and this the more severely, the deeper the giving way to flesh. In such case humiliation and confession will alone avail to restore intercourse between the erring child and its Father.

May we then, who are Christ's, and who have ceased to fear the judgment after death, seeing Christ was once offered to bear our sins (Heb. ix. 27, 28), endeavour so to walk in the fear of our holy Father, keeping our old man in the place of death, and never taking the eye off our glorified Saviour, that we may ever have His voice speaking to us in communion and

joy and encouragement, and not need the rod in love to bring us to repentance. "Happy is the man," says the Proverb (xxviii. 14), "that feareth alway." D. T. G.

ON THE STUDY OF SCRIPTURE.

THE first and main point is to regard Scripture as a whole, with one great purpose of God pervading it; so that, whenever one reads, one should feel that this part is contributing to the grand object. If the object of Scripture as a whole be misunderstood, then all the subsequent learning must be defective and powerless to a great degree, because I am not consciously instructed in keeping with its own mind and aim.

Here so many pious souls lose or miss the energy of the Word. It does, through God's grace in it, help their piety, but there is little power to walk according to God's mind, because God's mind in His Word is not known. They are like flowers kept alive in water, or like animals in youth excluded from light—they have never developed as they ought. Early, sound instruction is therefore of great importance. Much of the time of Christians brought up in the theological schools, is spent in unlearning the defective and false definitions that they adopted from man's commentaries on God's Word.

The first thing, then, is to ascertain the one great subject of Scripture, to the expression and development of which the whole, without interruption, conspires. The next, that in reading it you be convinced of its plenary inspiration, and because of this, that you note every word and ascertain its meaning, which is best done by writing down the word, and seeing then the use you make of it. It is the *habit* of this that is so useful. Next, reading distinct books at a time, and seeking for the leading idea or aim of the book, which is easy enough, though perhaps not so easily sustained through all parts of the book; to be able to connect all the parts like a dissected map is very helpful.

Another mode of acquiring a knowledge of Scripture is taking a subject and seeing how it is exemplified in different parts by different aspects and different characters. This gives great power in the practical application of Scripture.

Lastly, I believe the soul acquires a colour and a tone from reading Scripture *ad libitum*. If you are in trouble, or sorrow, or conflict, it is wonderful the effect that reading

Scripture will have on you; you are carried into its mind and current almost unknown to yourself. It is change of air and scene—the best restorative power to the moral invalid; and, I need not add, the better you understand the first point—*i.e.*, the grand aim of Scripture—the more strength you imbibe from reading it, even in a desultory way.

SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

“G.”—Does Isaiah xlix. 9, 10, apply to Jews or Gentiles?

A.—I believe it applies to the Jews. The chapter gives you a complete history of Christ, replacing Israel on earth as Jehovah's servant, from the womb of the Virgin to the throne of the kingdom. In ver. 4, 5, the Spirit of Christ makes the lament that He had spent His strength in vain, Israel would not be gathered by her Messiah! This brought forth those touching words (Matt. xxiii. 37), “How often would I have gathered thee,” &c., as the moment of His city's rejection of her King drew forth those tears, which, though they came from human eyes, took their spring in the heart of God.

The answer of God comes to His plaint in the sixth and following verses. It *was* a light thing the gathering of Israel compared with the new and wondrous work He should accomplish—not now *gathering* a little nation, but *shining forth* as the light to the Gentiles, to make known God's salvation to the ends of the earth. Strictly this is Christ here, yet to show how, when Christ is spoken of in the Old Testament, the Church is seen in Him, though not revealed then; Paul uses this passage in Acts xiii. 47, applying it to Christ's members, and intelligently taking as a command what he had gathered from the spirit of the word. In ver. 7, He is there looked upon as a rejected Christ—despised of man, and abhorred of His own people; but kings and princes would yet worship Him, because of the faithfulness of Jehovah who would choose Him. In verses 8 and 10 He is given as a covenant to the people, *i. e.*, Israel; to bring in the earthly blessing; to set free captive Israel—“Prisoners of hope”—Zech. ix. 11, 12—and open the prison doors to those who are bound. Thus the true Shepherd of Israel feeds His now gathered flock which would hunger and thirst no more. How analogous is the language of Rev. vii. 16, 17, which the elder in heaven uses as to those who had come out of

the great tribulation, and were marked and prepared for blessing below in the millennial earth.

The prophecy of the chapter runs on to the gathering of the tribes of Israel from the north and west, and from the land of Sinim (China), and the judgment on their oppressors.

Q.—What are “Governments” in 1 Cor. xii. 28?

A.—This word is found only here in the New Testament. He is speaking of members of the body set in the assembly. Those thus designated would be gifted to guide and direct the assembly, as a pilot does his ship in her dangers and difficulties. It might be by the word of wisdom, in the application of divine intelligence to those things through which she had to pass; or the word of knowledge, &c., as in verse 8. The thought is guidance rather than rule. The latter would be by office-bearers, *i.e.* elders. Here the thought is gifts, or spiritual manifestations in the body of Christ.

Q.—How do you explain the *apparent* contradiction in Numbers xxiii. 19, and Exodus xxxii. 14?

A.—The context decides the use of the word, and meaning of the sentence. In the latter “*Jehovah*,” moved at the touching intercession of Moses, “felt compassion for” the people who had merited His judgments.

In the former, “*God*” is not man that He should lie, or the Son of Man that He should repent. Here the meaning is simply as it stands. His unalterable counsels are as unchangeable as His own nature.

The word is similar in both cases, but bears the meanings given to it, and the context decides that which is most applicable. In the one case it is *Jehovah* in government, whose thought of cutting off *part* of the nation and making of Moses (the faithful remnant) a great nation (Ex. xxxii. 10), is turned at the intercession of Moses. In the other it is God in purpose, which is unchangeable.

Q.—Why is the baptism of the Holy Ghost (Matt. iii. 11), referred to so early in the gospels?

A.—John Baptist, in announcing *Jehovah-Messiah* to His people in Matthew’s gospel, brings His two advents together whether in grace or judgment. This was suited to His gospel’ because He has, as *Messiah*, to do with both. Luke iii. 16’ also speaks of the two great actions, because as *Son of Man*

the character in which Luke presents Him, He has to do with judgment as well as grace and suffering. Mark i. 8, and John i. 33, both omit that of "fire;" the former having to do with His *then* service on earth, and present service of grace with His servants—not with judgment. John only speaks of His baptizing with the Holy Ghost as connected with His revelation in grace of the Father. The thought, in presenting it so early in the gospels, is rather the *person* who was to do it, in contrast to His fore-runner, who baptized with water unto repentance, &c. We know it was not accomplished until Acts ii., on the day of Pentecost with the Jews; and Acts x., subsequently with the Gentiles. See Acts i. 5, where only that of the Holy Ghost is named; not that of the fire of judgment, which will take place at His second advent, with the world. Also Acts xi. 15, 16, where the Gentiles are connected with this baptism. (See also 1 Cor. xii. 13.)

Q.—What is to "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God?" (Col. iv. 12.)

A.—Epaphras' prayer was the echo of the apostle's, as one may say. (See chap. i. 9, and ii. 1-3.) Paul had never seen the Colossians, but had heard of them through Epaphras. He could thank God as to what he had heard of them; (chap. i. 3, &c.) but he could agonize in prayer for them, that they might know more of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; thus to walk worthy of the Lord. That they might know, too, the mystery of Christ and the Church; or, as he terms it here, "The mystery of God, wherein are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Conversion only was not sufficient in Paul's mind, and Epaphras had learned this, and his prayer (chap. iv. 12) took its tone from his lesson and from Paul.

THE LORD'S DEATH.

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come." 1 Cor. xi. 26.

Lord Jesus, gathered in Thy name
(E'en as the Scripture saith),
We to the universe proclaim
One mystery : Thy Death.

Free, in a scene that knows Thee not :
One Spirit, Lord, with Thee.
We turn to Calvary, Thy spot
Of blood-bought victory.

Dark centre of the world ! yet bright
 With glory from above !
 There floats the banner "God is Light,"
 Reversed with "God is Love."

There the severity of God
 Triumphant we behold ;
 There, too, His goodness shines abroad
 In characters of gold.

There, Saviour, bearest Thou the wrath
 Of God on us that lay ;
 There disappeared Thy wondrous path,
 Through darkness into day.

There to the lowest depths, in grace,
 Alone Thou didst descend :
 There, while Thy God did hide His face,
 Of sin Thou mad'st an end.

Great Author Thou of life, the tomb
 Had not a claim on Thee,
 And yet, "three days and nights," its gloom
 Thy prison-house must be.

"Let there be light," God said again,
 And all the God-head rays
 Shone from Thy Person to maintain
 Eternally Thy praise.

The Light of Life, we see Thee now,
 Lord Jesus, where Thou art :
 Time's diadems around Thy brow ;
 Our names upon Thy heart.

The broken loaf, the cup we share,
 Thy flesh, Thy blood express ;
 Thy body, Lord, discerning there,
 Thy precious name we bless.

Thanks unto God, Thy God and ours,
 With heart and voice we give ;
 Adore Thy Father, Lord, as ours,
 Because through Thee we live.

Called in "one body" to declare
 Our fellowship with Thee,
 Lord, Thy rejection would we share
 Till we Thy glory see.

Thine own,—we reckon all things loss,
 Yea, to our latest breath,
 That we may glory in Thy cross,
 Anoint Thee in Thy Death !

MEPHIBOSHETH, OR THE KINDNESS OF GOD.

MEN are very slow in comprehending the character of God. Even if they accept a salvation, they do not often find the God in all His own blessedness, who gives the salvation, and reveals Himself in it. He always gives in consistency with Himself. It is very helpful for us to see that the majesty of the throne of God, and all that might be called the severer attributes of His character, do not lose, but gain by the salvation of a sinner.

Parts of His ways, however, such as His government, are more developed in the Old Testament than in the New; for in the Old it was God governing, in the New it is God saving. Both in governing and saving He is perfectly harmonious. He is just, and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus. "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Our chapter opens with a display of the grace of David's heart just after a beautiful narration (in part a prophecy)—2 Sam. vii.)—of the promises of God to him and to his successors. Then (chap. viii.) we have the victories of David over, and the subjugation of the surrounding nations; and lastly, comes the ordering of his own government and household. All this must be done before he has leisure to think of other matters, and now his heart turns to his old intimacies with the house of Saul. "Is there not yet any of the house of Saul that I may shew the kindness of God to him?" That is, deal with them as God has dealt with me; for he had been dealt with in the richest and fullest grace. God had taken him from the sheepecotes and made him king over His own people Israel. He had brought down the self-willed Saul, and set up David, the man after His own heart, in his stead.

Is it not certain that Jesus, raised up to God's throne in glory, has, ere this took place, settled the whole question of sin in God's favour? That by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus the throne of God is firmly settled, and, to speak after the manner of men, He is at leisure in perfect consistency with His own majesty, to show mercy to sinners? Had not sin disorganized everything? Was not Adam a traitor to his trust when he, or rather Eve, beguiled by the serpent in the garden of Eden, ate the forbidden fruit and so fell, and did not the whole creation become subject to

vanity with him? (Rom. viii.) Did not sin enter, and death by sin? How was all this to be effectually remedied? How were the rights of the Creator to be met by this breach in the creature? Was sin a light matter? Upon what basis shall the throne of God stand? Could grace reign on the part of God towards man, without a suitable adjustment of His claims on man as a sinner? How were God's rights and a sinner's salvation to be reconciled? Let us proceed with our history.

David was, we say, at leisure, God having firmly set him on the throne to think of mercy. There was no longer danger in so doing. He hears of this poor lame man, a grandson of Saul; he was a long way from Jerusalem, in the more northern parts of the land, hiding himself away from a just fear, perhaps, of the wrath of the king, as sinners ignorant of the gospel do in these days. David sends and fetches him from Lo-debar, said to mean "no pasture." There is finding and fetching grace. Poor Mephibosheth had neither the means to come, for he was lame, nor the mind, for he could only suppose antipathy on the part of David to him. But David sends and brings him right up to the city of solemnities into his presence, and calls him by name. "Art thou Mephibosheth?" This poor man came without claim or title to be noticed, nay, as rather expecting sentence of death. He could only fall on his face and do reverence. Is it thus with you, my poor sinful friend? Have you realized your condition if called upon by God in such words as, "Who art thou?" or "Where art thou?" Have you, like Mephibosheth, lost all claim to be thought anything? Have you yet realized the fact that although once by the title of your forefather, an heir of Eden, you are now an outcast, and cannot upon any claims of your own win a place there again? Do you know that your existence, as by the old nature, is forfeited? Now, how did David, out of the mercy and grace that was in his ownheart act to Mephibosheth? Did he begin with reviling his grandfather, Saul, or by looking suspiciously upon him as a plotter against his throne? No; his words were, "Fear not, for I will surely shew thee kindness, . . . and will restore thee all the land of Saul, thy father." Is not this the way in which God deals, nay, *must* deal with a sinner if He is to gain that sinner's heart? The attitude of Mephibosheth upon the ground before him showed that he had accepted the place of

abasement, and there was nothing now but to show him mercy. But this was not all. It was something to have all the property of his house restored to him. This might have contented Mephibosheth, but it did not content David. He must have this adopted child always before him, and so whilst Ziba was to take care of all his land, and till it for him, David must have him to eat bread before him at his table continually. Was not all this according to David's heart?

Oh! my poor friend, are these your thoughts about the love of God? Do you know that He wishes to restore you back to more than the place which your father Adam had before he fell, and which he forfeited in that fall? He lost his position before God, and death, too, came in. By the reception of Christ you get more than a restoration; you get life and righteousness—the life an eternal life, and the righteousness a standing before God in the person of Christ. This is the way in which God would begin with you. He does not ask anything from you. In fact, you are a beggar—you have nothing to offer. But in the greatness of His love, and because of the work of Christ, which has harmonized all His attributes, He is able thus, in consistency with all His perfections, to give you every thing you need, and more than you lost in Adam. He bestows everything according to the love which He has to that Son who died, and whom He has raised from the dead. But more than this, not satisfied with restoring you to His image, He would have you very near Him, and where you may be acquainted with all His counsels, as Mephibosheth must have heard everything that went on at David's table. Less would satisfy us, but less will not satisfy Him. So there David and Mephibosheth sat day by day; the one looking with delight at the object of his mercy, the other wondering at that grace which, finding him so low, had raised him so high.

But it was also true that all this time Mephibosheth was lame on both his feet, and knew it—until the day of his death he was lame. Yet he still enjoyed the king's presence, and ate of all the good things at his table.

Dear reader, can you apply this history to yourself? In your natural state, is it not a fact that you are "far off" from God? But I can affirm that, notwithstanding that you are "alienated in your mind by wicked works," His heart is towards you. Has His love in the gospel yet found

you out? Have you received the message of pardon and the gift of righteousness yet from His hand? It is through death that Christ has reached the throne—"The throne is established by righteousness." The sword that awoke against Him (Zech. xiii. 7) when it was a question of sin on the cross, is now sheathed, and the favour of God is extended to all those who believe on Him. Nay, we are made the righteousness of God in Him! All that you have to put down is your own stubborn heart, and to accept the position of a "dead dog." Moreover, do you believe that you may enter into the presence of God and realize your acceptance, and yet feel sin as Mephibosheth felt his lame feet? Oh, how often sinners stumble at this! They refuse to believe their sins forgiven, because they still feel sin in their members, as if the lame feet of Mephibosheth made his presence at the king's table less real! Oh! my reader, the Holy Ghost has been sent down from the ascended Christ, with the very same truthful realities to be made known to us, with sin still in us (1 John i. 8), which we shall enjoy in glorified bodies when Jesus Himself comes to fetch us. They are made known to us by the Holy Ghost, for our full enjoyment and food *now*, according to grace, as they will be hereafter in a state of glory.

Oh! may you have the will to come for pardon, righteousness, and eternal life at the hands of Jesus, and be received into His household by faith, as you will hereafter be personally received into glory.—W. W.

"A MERCIFUL AND FAITHFUL HIGH PRIEST."

(HEB. ii.)

I WISH to bring a little before you what Scripture tells us of the Priesthood of Christ; and still more the way He is in the presence of God for us.

The first four verses of this Chapter refer to the previous one. The Apostleship of Christ as sent into the world—the Word of God spoken by the Son—The High Priest of our profession. It impresses upon us the importance of taking heed to the Word spoken by Him: to neglect it were eternal ruin.

But He is the Priest as gone up on high. He came down to manifest God to man. He is gone up to represent man

before God—believers of course—“those who come unto God by him.” He is a Man on high, taking part with all that we are—sinlessly of course—in all that God has produced in us. When we speak of *taking* part, it shows that He had no part naturally. He *took* up the seed of Abraham.

Here Scripture speaks at once of (what is never lost sight of in the Gospel) “the world to come.” That new state of things under Christ. As Adam had all put under his dominion—(Genesis i. 28) He lost this headship too—so all is to be put in subjection under man’s feet, *i.e.*, Christ’s feet as man. As yet “we see not all things put under him; but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.” God has set Him in the highest place, when He had been in humiliation in the lowest. The very fact of His having been humbled and obedient in it, is His title to exaltation. “Being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and . . . became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. *Wherefore* God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.’ (Phil. ii.) There I get the man of God’s purpose. Adam was the man of God’s creation in *responsibility*—Christ is the man of God’s *purpose*. All promises were to Him as the seed of the woman, there were none to Adam. Christ was to destroy all the power of the enemy, and to bring man by redemption into God’s purpose when he had entirely failed. Thus we are brought in by grace as sharers in what He inherits as the man of God’s counsel.

We do not see our place with Him until we see how He is raised above all creation. The first reason is because He was the Creator of it all; the second, because He was the Son; and the third, because he was the man of the counsel and purpose of God.

“He took not up angels”—most glorious of beings who are kept of God—witnesses of God’s preserving grace and mercy; ministers to do His pleasure—holy angels. They are not named at the creation, but as spectators. “The sons of God shouted for joy.” But they were not the vessels of God’s purpose—man was to be that. And that the whole thing might be of God, man having gone down below all creatures—below the brutes in that sense—for man is lower

than a worm in the degradation of his own lusts and his forgetfulness of God. He has sunk down into the lowest state of wretchedness, and misery, and sin. Christ comes down to take him up in that kind of love which had no motive but what is in God, and the misery of its object. He gave His son, in whom he delighted, for those who were children of wrath. "He took not up angels, but the seed of Abraham." It makes nothing of us, because it is the very character of God's love to take up the sinner.

A holy being, delighting in God, is a thing we can understand ; but there is nothing more extraordinary, when we come to look at men—even Christians—degraded in sin, (for flesh is no better in the Christian if he allows it to act,) and in all the weakness and degradation of a brute, and to find such a being put into all the blessedness of the Son of God. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." The heart sinks down with shame when we think of what we are, and what we have been, and when we contemplate the grace that has so dealt for and with us ! Yet God would display all His ways, nay, Himself ! and this Blessed One takes us up in our failure, weakness, temptation, and sin too, as a merciful and faithful High Priest—the One who will be before us in everything, leader even in our praises. "In the midst of the church (assembly) will I sing praise unto thee !" He leads up all our praises to His Father, and in the ages to come He is going to show "the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus !"

I get to learn the manifold wisdom of God when I find myself connected with fallen man on one side, and with the Son of God on the other. I *must* get an absolute and complete redemption, entirely and totally taken out of the condition in which man was under judgment, and an introduction into another in Christ ; so that God loves me as He loves His Son ! And then my greatest blessedness is to find out every instant of my life my absolute dependence on His grace. If I forget it for a moment I sink back practically into all that I was—I was an independent sinner, now I am a dependent saint ! With flesh still in me while here, and every sort of temptation, and all that gives me those necessary exercises of heart in passing through things here, I am *forced* to lean upon this grace. I learn all I am, and at the same time, through mercy, I learn all the blessed grace of Christ

Himself, when I am thoroughly exercised and humbled, so that God can let the flood of His goodness flow in on my heart. I find that I have got Christ before God instead of my sins; that He is there an advocate with the Father, who has been the propitiation for me. He is my righteousness. Then comes all I have got to pass through.

If the condition of my heart is such that I know Christ as my righteousness in the presence of God, I have nothing to think about on that matter—the question of sin is a settled one, and I have nothing to have experience about then, (I have joy to be sure in the thought of this, and I have to bless God for it); but I know that I am introduced into a totally new thing, and this makes the riddle of my state. It makes my heart be exercised as to how far I am daily living in this new condition, and how far I am living in the old. You may do both (though not at the same moment) if you are not watchful; but if you are walking in the new, you are walking *in the Spirit*, and it is of all importance to see that I am not only walking *rightly*, but *in the Spirit*.

If you are doing so, He is showing you what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man. You realise yourself as united by the Holy Ghost to the Head of this new creation; you are conscious that you belong to it, to the very centre and Head of it, "of His flesh and of His bones." The Holy Ghost takes of the things of Christ, and shows them to us—reveals Him to us. It is the Spirit, not of bondage, but of adoption, and I, a child, and an heir of God, and joint-heir with Christ, I get into all the scene of glory which is His in the heavens, and in the earth; and I *know* "the things that are freely given to me of God." I live in them, set my heart upon them, them alone, because it is where Christ is!

I belong to all this scene consciously thus; but as a poor earthen vessel, and God's *plan* has always been to make us *find* our place in those things, by leading us through the wilderness, where we are thoroughly tried and tested. We are no longer in Egypt; we have passed the Red Sea on our way to Canaan, (we *are* there *now* as to title and privileges too,) but not actually come to it yet. We are running the race—present in the body, absent from the Lord. We have not got to the rest yet, and we have to *labour* to enter into it; and in our own strength to seek to do this were to labour into misfortune and wretchedness.

When God visited Israel in Egypt, He said not a word about the wilderness. His *purpose* was to bring them to Canaan. His *plan* was to teach them in the wilderness. So with us. His *purpose* was to bring us to heaven when He placed His Son there: His *plan* is that we should pass through all the exercises of heart down here that we may discern good and evil; and yet more, to learn that God "withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous;" and we ought not to withdraw our eyes from Him!

This takes many shapes in the soul. Discipline working by the power of the Spirit of God in us, which produces that energy of heart which says, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. iii.) This, too, in an Epistle where sin is not mentioned, and flesh only to say that we have no confidence in it. The intents and purposes of the heart are all right, the eye is single, and the whole body full of light. Opposition is a different thing to a man who had this.

Who had such energy and singleness of eye as Paul? One sinks with shame to think of him in contrast to ourselves, and he has to get a thorn in the flesh; something to oppose and thwart him in his energy. Why? That the power of Christ might rest upon him! He must be *brought* into a furnace, and he glories in infirmities. Then, My grace, my strength, is sufficient, Paul, for you! You must be a dependent man, a weak man. Ah, says Paul, "When I am weak, then am I strong." Human energy was a striking quality in Paul, but he must have a dependent heart on Christ. Do I not find in Philippians a dependent heart? In Corinthians, "Without were fightings, within were fears." No comfort, no rest of spirit. You must get cast down, Paul, and then I will come and comfort you.

It is the plan of God to bring us into the wilderness, where everything in our hearts is tried. Where He suffers us to hunger and feeds us with manna that we knew not, &c., that we may know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. That was the way the Lord Jesus Christ lived.

Do you walk as practically living by every word of God, beloved friends? or, do you walk in the counsels of your own hearts? Do you not live a greater part of your lives in your

own thoughts? Can you say, The Word of God bids me do this and nothing more? What blessed grace it is to us that we should have every movement of our lives, our inward ways, all governed by the Word of God. That is Divine wisdom.

Living by the Word of God my flesh gets thwarted. If I listen to flesh I sin, and lose my communion with God. My heart condemns me, and my confidence is gone. My heart gets away from Him, and unless *instantly* restored there is a disinclination to return to communion with God. The flesh has got to possession. What are you to do now? There I get an advocate with the Father. He recalls my soul. But this is not the special subject of Hebrews. There it is that there *is* grace to help in time of need, that failure may not come.

When I am near God I judge myself, I can say, “It is not I; It was I, but it is not so now.” And I condemn it and judge it. But I must first know that I am with God, and God for and with me, for this. I must be living in proper Christian life in order to have Christ sustaining me—helping me in my praises, in my infirmities and failures too, but helping me *out of them*. A poor feeble creature, with a treasure in an earthen vessel. Christ has seen to the righteousness which I needed there, and now He ministers the grace I want down here. My eyes then look “straight on” in the energy of the Spirit of God. This is one part of the Christian’s life.

But besides this, I find opposition from Satan too. I belong to God’s army—I have to fight God’s battles. The land belongs to God, but the Canaanite is there still. This is “Joshua-work,” and I must know that I have passed the Jordan—dead and risen with Christ. That I have put off the old man, and put on the new, and thus that Christ’s death has been applied practically to all in myself. I have to reckon myself dead; to bear about in my body, the dying of Jesus. All the movements of flesh have been brought under the power of the Cross, and crushed and broken. There is no real entrance into the land, no real looking back at Christ’s death until the heart is thus really circumcised. We have been put into heavenly places that we may walk according to it. Heaven is thus in our hearts while we are going through the wilderness. You do not want the armour for the wilderness; you want it for your conflict with Satan’s

power. You are with Satan in heavenly places—with God in the wilderness. Wonderful paradox! But Christ is there on high, a High Priest, close to God, so that I am always conscious of a throne of grace, and help in time of need. He thus brings down grace; brings down heaven.

O what blessing! The very things that I have to dread in myself, and rightly too, as those which separate me from God, these things bring God to me! He is a High Priest that can be “touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” He has passed through the difficulties and trials Himself, and is now a Man in the presence of God; not in them now, but He knows all that I am in. He can understand and enter into them not only as God, but as Man. He can understand what your heart goes through.

The Lord give us to be faithful in the exercise of our hearts; to learn to be soldiers, but with an exercised, sifted heart—one that knows itself—the spirit of self broken—the remains of self detected from day to day. That grace working in us thus, we shall find Christ the portion of our hearts yet more and more.

THOUGHTS ON SACRIFICES—No. IV.

THE SIN OFFERING.

As we trace out different aspects of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, typified in the offerings of old, we discover different features and phases, which unfold themselves to the heart subject to God's word, like the different features of the landscape, which open out as we pass through beautiful scenery. At every turn something fresh strikes the eye, but each point, as it discovers itself to the diligent observer of the scene, is found to be in harmony with the rest, and really needful to make the whole complete. Without it we should feel there was a want, when all the salient points of the landscape had passed before us in due order. And as the great Architect of the universe has arranged the whole in beautiful order, which His creatures, the more they search into it the more they admire and find delight in it, so He, who knows the end from the beginning, alone knew beforehand how He would glorify Himself through the death of His Son, and therefore could alone by the Spirit so direct the saints of old in their worship as to bring out at different epochs, yet in perfect order, the varying features of that one perfect sacrifice “Which taketh away the sin of the world.”

These remarks are suggested by noticing the difference in the manner of presenting the sacrifices in the book of Exodus and in the book of Leviticus. In Exodus these are mentioned which concern, directly or indirectly, the congregation of Israel as a whole. The Passover, the ratification of the covenant at Sinai, the daily burnt offerings, had to do directly with all Israel; whilst the sacrifices offered up at the consecration of Aaron and his sons on their individual behalf, indirectly concerned the whole congregation, because needful ere the people could avail themselves of a divinely appointed and duly consecrated priesthood. In Leviticus we have something else, for there we read how the Lord provided for the wishes and wants of individuals. Gracious surely was this. God thought of individuals whilst He charged Himself with the welfare and daily sustenance of the whole congregation in the wilderness. Was any man's heart filled with a sense of God's goodness?—He provided the way by which he might give vent to it. Was any one bowed down under a sense of sin?—God revealed the plan by which he might be delivered from it. He would have His redeemed people to be at ease before Him. None need be straitened from an overwhelming sense of His favours—none need be overcome by the weight of his guilt. Joy of heart could be expressed, as the offerer approached the brazen altar with his burnt offering or peace offering; and there, at the same altar, the sinner could find relief as he witnessed the priest busied with his sin-offering or trespass-offering, "It shall be accepted for him, to make atonement for him," was God's mind about the burnt offering; "It shall be forgiven him" was Jehovah's gracious declaration annexed to the law of the sin-offering and trespass-offering. Not that the blood of bulls, or of goats, could take away sins, or lay the ground on which man could have communion with his Creator; but this blood spake to God (however ignorant the offerer may have been of it) of that precious blood, the blood of His own Son, to be shed on the cross for the glorifying of the Father and the forgiveness and the justification of the sinner.

Redeemed by blood in Egypt, the people learn at Sinai that no sin could be passed over by Jehovah, God of Hosts. Holy and righteous He was, and must ever act in accordance with His nature. What man might have been inclined to pass over or excuse, that He must take notice of. But whilst all would acknowledge that a glaring trespass could

not be passed over in silence, God would teach the people that sins done in ignorance, when remembered, must be noticed, and the appointed sacrifice offered up. Where then was the need, if so inclined, to palliate or pass over as of no moment, an act of sin for which Jehovah had provided for the offender's forgiveness? How could they, if they had any just conception of God's omniscience or holiness, suppose He had not seen it, or imagined it needed no atonement? But a consciousness of sin, and its deserts, without any knowledge of the sacrifice must only drive a soul to despair; whilst a knowledge of the way of forgiveness or the necessity of a sacrifice, would maintain in the soul a sense of God's holiness, and impart to the sinner a knowledge of His grace.

For a trespass offering the animal to be brought was the same for all (v. 14—vi. 7.) For one class of sin offerings the Lord took knowledge of the ability of the offerer (v. 1-13), and for another class the measure of his responsibility (iv). If the offender was unable to bring anything out of the flock, he might draw near with two turtle doves or two young pigeons. If unable to meet the expense of the birds he might offer the tenth part of an ephah of flour. Where the sin consisted in doing anything through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord which ought not to be done, for the anointed priest, if he sinned according to the sin of the people, and for the whole congregation, a young bullock was to be offered up; for a ruler, a kid of the goats, a male was the appointed sacrifice; whilst for any of the common people, a female, a kid of the goats, or a lamb of the flock was the animal prescribed. None could select for himself what he would bring. God decided what was the suited offering, and each must conform to what He had enjoined. How could it be otherwise? The sin was against Him; the creature had acted contrary to the command of the Creator, to God therefore alone belonged the right of saying what should be offered up for the sinner to have the sense of forgiveness. But though for different classes different sacrifices were enjoined, in each case death must come in, and the blood be poured out in all. Nothing less than this could do—"The wages of sin is death." The death of the Substitute must, then, take place, whether the sinner had offended through ignorance or not. Without shedding of blood is no remission; so the blood was shed, and placed where the offerer had his standing. How clearly this speaks

of the sacrifice of Christ, needed for each and all, whilst it tells us of the difference of standing of the anointed priests and the ruler or common person dispensationally before God (iv. 7, 17, 18, 25, 30).

The proper victim selected, unblemished in person, the sinner drew near to the appointed place and killed it; then the priest dealt with its blood, and burnt the fat and the kidneys on the altar of burnt-offering. Till death had taken place the priestly service could not begin—for the priest's work had to do with the altar and the blood. The animal slain, the priest took of the blood, and sprinkled it before the Lord—before the vail of the sanctuary, putting some of it on the horns of the altar of sweet incense within the tabernacle, or on the horns of the altar of burnt-offering in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation, and in both cases poured out the rest at the bottom of the altar of burnt-offering. What sacrifice this prefigured all may understand. As the burnt-offering and peace-offering, the other offerings in which death took place, typified the Lord Jesus who died on the cross, so did the victims offered up as sin-offerings or trespass-offerings. Those typified the Lord as He was in Himself, these latter what He was made for us. And in these sin-offerings we have a double aspect of the sacrifice—viz., the intrinsic holiness and fragrance of the true Victim, and God's judgment on sin; for besides the death and the blood we have mention of the fat of the inwards, and the ultimate disposal of the carcase. In common with the peace-offering, the fat of the inwards was burnt on the altar of burnt-offering (iv. 31); but, differing from the ordinance of the peace-offering, the carcase was wholly consumed by the priests, independent of the offerer. The blood spoke of the life of the great sacrifice poured out to make atonement for sinners; the fat of the inwards spoke of the will, which in man's case, as evidenced by the offering, had not been subject to God; but in His case, whom we have here presented in type, was always subject to His Father. "I do always those things which please Him" was His word when on earth. This, then, which typified His will wholly surrendered to the Father, was burnt on the altar for a sweet savour unto the Lord (iv. 31); for whatever spoke of Christ as He was in Himself must have been a sweet savour to the Father. But that which spoke of Him as made sin for us was differently treated, being

either burnt without the camp or consumed by the ministering priest and the males of the priesthood.

The victim, then, identified with the sinner by the laying of his hands on its head was never seen by him again. If he had sought for it he could not have found it, nor could the question of that particular sin have been re-opened; for the death of the animal had taken place, and its blood been duly dealt with. How carefully did God thus provide that the sinner's conscience should be at rest about the sin. This is God's way, and He would signify to the soul what can be effected by sacrifice. By the burning of the carcase by fire, God's judgment on sin was expressed, the fire of His wrath having fallen on it; but burnt outside the camp, it also typified Him who, "that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." (Heb. xiii. 12) So, when sacrifices shall again be offered up with acceptance on God's altar at Jerusalem, the carcase of the sin-offering will be "burnt in the appointed place outside the sanctuary." Outside the camp, outside the gate, outside the sanctuary, speak of the heinousness of sin in God's eyes; but the holy character of the flesh (for it was most holy) tells of the untarnishable holiness of *the* sin-offering; and as God showed what sin was before Him, He also manifested, by the injunctions about the flesh, the holy nature of the antitype. If the flesh was eaten it could only be eaten in the holy place, or, as Numbers xviii. 10, expresses it, in the most holy place—"Whosoever toucheth the flesh thereof shall be holy;" "All the males among the priests shall eat thereof: it is most holy." And none but the males of the priests could eat of it, for it was the work of a priest alone to put away for ever out of sight the sin now identified with the victim.

The sacrifice rightly offered up, the sinner could turn away from the altar, and retrace his steps to his tent. But how did he return? With his heart full of hopes of forgiveness, or buoyed up with the consciousness that he had done all he could to make amends? Would that satisfy the conscience? His conscience told him he had offended against God; nothing short, then, of God's assurance of forgiveness could satisfy him, and meet the requirements of the case. But that the offerer had, yet mark how he got it: not from man, not even from the priest, but from God Himself. He could leave the altar with the words, "It shall be forgiven

him," sounding in his ears, and awakening a response of thanksgiving from his heart; for they were the words of Jehovah Himself on behalf of this poor sinful creature. The priest could not make more sure what Jehovah had promised; all that he could do was to reiterate the words as God's revelation, "it shall be forgiven him." Thus the sinner was brought to the Word of God, and thereon was to rest on a rock, which nothing could shake. He had not to wait till the morrow to know it, for it depended on the offering up of the sacrifice; yet these gracious words were not forthcoming till the blood had been rightly dealt with, and the fat of the inwards, with the two kidneys, had been burnt at the altar for a sweet savour. Had it been otherwise, it might have been assumed that forgiveness was based on something connected with the offerer. But the words were recorded only after all had been spoken of that was to be done, that the sinner might learn his forgiveness was based on atonement by blood, and on that only. As soon as all had been done according to the law, these words could be taken by the sinner as Jehovah's declaration to the burdened heart. He who formed the heart knew what it wanted, and would meet that want as soon as He righteously could.

This is always God's way; and never do we read of man being authorised to absolve another from his sins as before God. When it is a question of acceptance before God, or restoration of soul, He speaks by His word to the sinner, and bestows forgiveness as from Himself. A fellow-creature might tell him of it, and minister to his need, but could not bestow forgiveness, or absolve him from his sins. As priests we can intercede for one another (1 John v. 16; James v. 16), that the hand of God in government may be removed from the offender. The assembly in any one place, or those (if only two or three, Matt. xviii. 19, 20,) acting as becomes the assembly, can forgive the sin which has called for discipline, and receive the sinner back to the table (2 Cor. ii. 10); but the question between the soul and God He reserves to Himself—"Who can forgive sins but God only?" stand good still. Thus the Lord appeared to Peter after He rose from the dead, but alone; afterwards He publicly commissioned him to feed His sheep. This distinction between discipline on earth and the soul's restoration to communion with God not being observed, much confusion has in consequence arisen, and men have arrogated to themselves, and

assumed the power of transmitting to others an authority which no priest under the Mosaic economy ever exercised, nor the apostles in the New Testament ever claimed. There is the outward dealing with an individual in the exercise or remission of discipline, and there is the inward dealing of God with the heart. This last must always come first, if the assembly are to act in accordance with God's mind; and what they do is to be ratified in heaven. God deals with the heart, and imparts the sense of forgiveness, consequent on confession of the sin; the assembly deals in discipline, consequent on the failure of the individual to judge himself (Matt. xviii.), and the remission of discipline, if rightly done, only takes place when preceded by restoration of the soul to communion with God. In the sin-offering we have the latter brought out—God's assurance to the sinner of forgiveness. In the cleansing of the leper we have an instance of the former; the reception, again, to the enjoyment of all rights on earth of the redeemed people, when the individual has been cleansed from that which defiled. This has the character of discipline remitted—the former of sins forgiven.—C. E. S.

NOTICES OF COMING GLORIES.

WERE we, if I may so speak, to go in upon the field of the New Testament scriptures, and gather up fragments of the glories of coming days, we should find them, I do not say lying there profusely, but still we should find them there, and we should find at least a handful to feed upon.

There is no one writing that digests this subject, but coming glories shine out here and there in the midst of other thoughts, when different subjects of present interest to the saints are under consideration.

We know that in the coming days of the kingdom there will be both the earthly and heavenly departments, and also connection and intercourse between them. We see notices of each of these in different parts of the four gospels. Thus, the Lord entered the city of the daughter of Zion as her King. All that was needed to set Him forth in that glory for a moment waited on Him. The ass and its owner, the palm branches and hosannahs, the whole material and mind of the scene aided in giving us a sample of the days of the King of Israel. The Greeks are presented as coming up to

see the King in his beauty, and in this we get another sight of His further glories.

All this, however, was simply and entirely *earthly*. No glimpse of heaven appears. It is Messiah in His place on earth; King in Zion, accepting the homage of the nations.

On the holy mount glory shines again. But it is another glory—not earthly but heavenly. It is the light of bodies of glory that shines there; samples of the transfigured, translated saints of God in company with their Lord in heavenly places.

But, as I may say, on either side of them, another place is seen; the *earth* in the persons of Peter, James, and John; the *higher heavens*, or, as it is called, “the excellent glory,” in the voice that breaks forth upon the scene.

This is something very fine, and very comprehensive. We have coming millennial days finely and largely anticipated here. We have notices of the *heavens* and of the *earth* in their separate places, and then of the connections, and medium, and intercourse which is to be established between them. That, while there will be a higher heaven, an excellent glory, a Father’s house, unrevealed to sight, there will be also a people in flesh and blood on the earth; a display of heavenly glory in the sight of the earthly people, and intercourse maintained between the translated saints and them. The throne and the footstool shall be but different parts of one great system.

This is a fine anticipation of coming days. The Lord again intimates “the excellent glory,” under the title of the “Father’s house” in John xiv., letting us know that it is a wealthy place, a many-mansioned house, the dwelling of the family, the homestead in the realms of the highest glory.

Thus, we are gathering fragments.

But further. These are distant scenes. There are nearer scenes also thrown open to our sight in these same scriptures of the New Testament.

We have the spirit of the Lord himself before resurrection taken to and by the Father, in Luke xxiii.; and then we have the glorified body of the Lord after resurrection, translated to heaven in Luke xxiv.

We have instructions as to ourselves in each of these things. We are taught to know that should we die, as Jesus died, before the day of resurrection, *our spirits* will be received by Him in paradise or heaven. Luke xxiii. 43;

Acts vii. 59; 2 Cor. v. 8; Phil. i. 23, teach us this. And should we live till the day of resurrection, we are taught to know that we shall then be glorified and translated in company with those saints who have already died and gone in spirit to Jesus. 1 Cor. xv. 42—54 witness this; as also 1 Thess. iv. 14-17.

But, further still. After this translation certain and divine scenes are disclosed to us. The heaven that is set for the *execution of judgment on this present evil, revolted world*, is opened to our sight in Rev. iv., and actions which take their course, while that heaven continues, are presented to us in the progress of the same book. But in turn judgment is all executed, and then succeeds the heavens set for the ministration of government of the "world to come," or the millennial earth; this is apparent to our sight in Rev. xx., xxi., xxii.

But even further still. The world that is to be the scene of righteousness under the heavenly sceptre of the glorified Lord and His saints will have its end. The heaven set for the ministration of government will have fulfilled its course, as well as the heaven set for the judgment; and then we get another scene of glory opened to our view. There is the Great White Throne trying everything; and then the new heavens and the new earth introduced by the judgment of this Great White Throne; as the millennial heavens and earth had been introduced by the judgment executed under the heaven from the throne of Rev. iv.

Here the series of glories end. Various scenes and regions have thus unfolded themselves to us in their different characters; but we are to see them, and learn what they severally are, by taking up notions of them here and there throughout the New Testament scriptures from beginning to end; to glean in that fruitful field; to gather up fragments which lie there; left there by the hand of Him who is preparing for the feast-days of eternity.

And had we but a heart for the feast itself we should occupy ourselves more diligently and joyfully in this gathering up a kind of gleaning that goes before the harvest. But we fail in affection. We are wanting in desire. Present interests divert the heart and do not allow the eye, and the thought, and the hope to tarry where notices of coming glories shine!

SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

"C.H."—What is to "grieve" and to "quench" the Spirit of God?

A.—The allowance of flesh in the least degree in a Christian is to grieve the Spirit of God by which he has been sealed until the day of redemption. (Eph. iv. 30.) What a motive to holiness is the fact—true of every believer—that the Holy Spirit of God dwells in him! He may, alas, grieve Him in many ways. Rejection of light which God has given; worldliness; in fact everything that has not Christ for its motive and object must grieve God's Spirit—hinder our growth and communion.

To quench the Spirit (1 Thes. v. 19) is to hinder His free action in the members of Christ in the assembly. While there are special permanent gifts in the Church, (Eph. iv. 11) there are also the "joints and bands," which work effectually in the measure of every part, and by which the Body of Christ increases. If they are hindered in true spiritual service—a single word for instance—the Spirit of God is quenched.

There are dangers to be avoided on both sides, specially by those who seek to walk in the truth of the Church of God. On one side the danger is, that because there is liberty "that all may learn and all may be comforted," there may be the undervaluing of special ministry, which is a permanent thing as long as the Church of God is here. On the other, there is the danger of quenching the Spirit in the various helps, and joints, and bands by which nourishment is ministered in the body of Christ, by putting special ministry in the place of the free action of the Holy Ghost in the members of Christ; both are to be cherished, and the most spiritual are those who will value all that God gives.

The following verses (1 Thess. v. 20, 21) show that it is ministry the apostle has in his mind. While in verse 12 he exhorts them to own those who labour amongst them and esteem them highly in love for their work's sake; in verses 19-21 they were not to quench the Spirit in any, but at the same time to "prove all things" which were said, and "hold fast that which was good."

“ IT WAS MEET THAT WE SHOULD MAKE MERRY, AND BE GLAD.”

Hark ! these sounds of joy and mirth,
Telling of a heavenly birth ;
Hark ! these long triumphant chords,
Triumph more than earth affords ;
Say, what may the meaning be
Of such untold ecstasy ?

Wouldst thou know the secret spring
Of this gladsome revelling ?
Find it in a Father's heart,
From a son no more to part ;
Find it in the sweet surprise
Echoing welcome through the skies.

Lonely wanderer no more,
Exiled on a distant shore ;
“ Lost ” and “ dead ” but yesterday ;
“ Found,” “ alive,” at home to-day ;—
Is't not meet that there should be
Sound of gladdest minstrelsy ?

Holy Father ! long above
Didst Thou wait to shew Thy love ;
Justice, holiness, and power,
All of these have had their hour :
But Thy love, though sometimes seen,
Manifested had not been.

Now the Father's heart of ⁷grace,
Seen at length in Jesus' face ;
Father's arms are opened wide,--
Prodigals are reconciled ;
And *of right* there now may be,
Feast, and robe, and revelry !

Heaven's vaults and arches ring
With the praise the angels bring ;
Countless myriads adore,
Of His grace the wondrous store ;
But the Father's heart must prove
All the joy of conqu'ring love.

Give us hearts, Thou Blessed One,
To Thy love and grace to own,
That in us for Thee may be
Springs of truest sympathy ;
We Thy holy joy would share,
We would have our portion there.

Every wanderer homeward bound,
Every “ piece of money ” found,
Every “ sheep ” within the fold,
Is to Thee a joy untold ;
We would “ friends and neighbours ” be,
When Thou say'st, “ Rejoice with me.”—R. H. M.

“IN CHRIST.”

Ephesians i.

I WOULD take up in measure one special subject I have in my mind in reading this chapter—the *place* in which God has set us. I would first remark, this epistle has this distinct difference from Romans: it begins with the counsels of God; Romans begins with what man is, takes him up as a sinner, in the condition of man, and shows how God has met that condition by the blood of Christ. The question had been, how can a man be just with God? Romans shows that man is a sinner, and it shows also how in the gospel God's righteousness meets man's sin. In Ephesians, the apostle begins with the counsels of God, and therefore he can open out far more fully what the blessings of the children of God are. Consequently, the Epistle to the Romans as to doctrine takes the fact of Christ's death and resurrection, in virtue of which man is justified; here, in addition, he not only dwells on Christ's ascension, but shows that the Holy Ghost has come, and unites us with Christ as members of His body, which is not found in the doctrinal part of Romans at all.

In Ephesians you get the unfolding of God's whole thought towards man, in view of His own glory, but nothing of justification. Man is looked at as a new creation, and does not want to be justified; he is looked at in Romans as *living* in sins, needing justification. Here he is looked at as “*dead* in sins,” and the largeness and fulness of the blessing is brought out. It is not so much what we need, as the blessedness of God towards us, and it does give in a wonderful way the place we are given “in Christ.”

I will go through it a little. We shall see while we get this place with God, it is by His “calling”—God's “calling.” When he speaks of the “calling” it is without any unfolding of the future; when he speaks of the “inheritance” he does look on to the future, and the Holy Ghost is given to us meanwhile as the earnest of the inheritance.

We read in some hymns of the “earnest of His love,” but you do not get it in scripture. “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us,” (Rom. v. 5.) We *are* objects of His love. We have nothing of the inheritance now, so we have the earnest of it, the presence of the Holy Ghost in us, “sheds abroad the love of God” (it is God there) “in our hearts.” We know it by

the Spirit given to us, it is "shed abroad" now, but we shall enjoy it more when we are done with these poor earthen vessels, which will not be till we dwell in the Father's house.

The apostle speaks of the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. Another thing he adds in his prayer is, that we should understand that the same power wrought in putting us, who believe, into our place with God in Christ, as He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. It is the same mighty power. We were dead in sins, Christ has died for us—the holy, blessed, sinless One. We might have tasted death in sin, He tasted it in grace. The mighty power of God takes us up and puts us in heavenly places in Him; therefore he looks at us as an entirely new creation. The exceeding greatness of His power wrought in raising Christ from the dead. We were lying in sins, Christ comes to die for us in grace; and the same mighty power takes us up, quickens us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We *shall* be *with* Him, but we *are* now *in* Him.

Turning to the beginning of the chapter, we get the "calling," and then the "inheritance" in the end. Nothing can be more blessed than the way he unfolds the place into which the Christian is brought. Looking at the Lord Jesus Christ, He has a double character: He is perfect Man before God, but the Son with the Father, and He puts us into the same place with Him. After the resurrection He says to Mary Magdalene, Go tell my brethren "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." I have accomplished redemption, and have brought you to the same place as myself. She thought He was going to bring the Kingdom, but He says, no, do not touch me, "I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren," &c. This is the first time He calls them brethren. It was the literal accomplishment of Psalm xxii. 21, 22, "Thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns: I will declare thy name unto my brethren." He tells Mary to declare it now in virtue of His having accomplished redemption. He drank the cup of wrath for us: He had to go through it all, and drink it Himself; and having done so, He can bring us into the place He now has Himself. He now having glorified God perfectly, having come as a Man and wrought redemption, can bring many sons to glory, and gives us in that

sense His own place. "God over all" cannot be given, of course, but there is no *communicable* blessing He does not share with us.

The more you search Scripture, the more you find that it is not only blessedly true that we are saved *through* Christ, but blessed *with* Christ—that is the essence of what is in His heart. The world can give generously when it pleases, but it never gives all the blessings and privileges that it has—it gives little if it loves little, much if it loves much, but it is not so with the Lord, He gives us His peace. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you." (Jno. xiv. 27.) He gives us His own joy, "That they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." (Jno. xvii. 13.) His own glory, "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them." (Jno. xvii. 22.) His own words, "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me" (Jno. xvii. 8); and His own love, "I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." (Jno. xvii. 26.)

Whether you take one or other He shares it with us, and gives us a place with God and the Father. "My Father and your Father, my God and your God." "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." We are predestinated "to be conformed to the image of his Son;" and "we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

The nearer you are to Him the more you will adore Him. If I am near a man I shall soon find out his weakness, but the nearer you are to God the more you find out His greatness, and that makes nothing of you; and therefore you need never be afraid of being near to God, as if you would be puffed up by it; believe me you will there soon find out your own littleness. People say, "It is not well to be always on the mount," but it is a great mistake; when *there* we never think of ourselves at all. Paul was not puffed up when he was in the third heaven, but when he came down the thorn was sent to keep him from being so. We may be puffed up if we talk of the experience we had while near the Lord, but not while we experience it; poor wretched flesh will puff itself up about anything!

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus

Christ," he adds, "who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." I pass rapidly over this just to give the general idea upon it. You cannot get more than this; it is the fullest and highest blessing you can ever get; the highest kind of spiritual blessing, in the highest place. "Blessed," characterizes it, not among angels but "in Christ." "With *all* spiritual blessings." Not *some*. We are blessed with *all in Christ*. God is shewing the exceeding riches of His grace. How? In His kindness towards us. That is the way, shewing that He is exceeding rich in mercy, and He must act in a way worthy of Himself. That now unto angels and principalities might be known by means of the church the manifold wisdom of God. It is *in us*, and to the glory of God *by us*. (2 Cor. i. 20.) That, we find, is the uniform language of the Holy Ghost, taking up all the saints, "*by us*."

Then he takes these two names, the *God* and *Father*, of our Lord Jesus Christ, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." That is God's character and nature—in the blessing, perfect blessing, "holy, blameless in love," a nature capable in its nature of enjoying God. If I am according to God, I have no need of a conscience, I am in the presence of God, and have perfect delight in Him. The apostle does not speak here of the future, but of the calling—our place *now*; we are poor earthen vessels, but that is our place before God.

Take Christ Himself, that was what He was down here as a Man, He is now at God's right hand, and we are brought into this place in grace—it is His place—it is ours in the mind of God. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself." He might have servants, but here you find another element in it. He is a Father, and He wills to have sons; shewing that the perfectness of His love was not satisfied till He brings us in as sons. That is the calling—His calling—God's calling. He has a double character as God and as Father, I get the love of His nature, He delights in what is holy, and without blame before Him in love. I get the two characters, one a nature that delights in what He has made me, and the other that it is "the good pleasure of his will," we not only are united to Christ, but objects of His love as sons.

You get a character of election here which is very import-

ant to know. Suppose, for a moment, that God was to take ten people out of this room now, it would be just as sovereign as if He had chosen them before the foundation of the world; but the whole expression shews that we were chosen in the thoughts of God before the world existed. "He hath chosen us (individually) in him before the foundation of the world," that gives a character to it. There we see the true character of the saints of God—the mind of God concerning us, before even the world was. Under law this was not known, but now the previous thoughts of God come out; and the apostle speaks of "The hope of eternal life which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began, but hath, in due times manifested his word through preaching." (Titus i. 2, 3).

This is the heavenly calling, the saints are not merely a people in the world—not even as Israel, but they are totally unworldly, they are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, and have nothing to say to the world at all. "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." This He does, taking our hearts and faith out of it; "while we look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. iv. 18).

"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." (2 Tim. i. 9.) "To the praise of the glory of his grace." God's thought about us is according to "the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved," the expression being the stamp of God's mind, He hath chosen to have us in the beloved, and He has made us accepted in Him. What a place that is; not merely among angels, but in Christ the eternal Son of whom He said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" I am accepted in Him, and therefore He says, "that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them and I in them."

This is hard to believe, you say—well, I can understand that, if you take your own thoughts and not God's. Faith takes God's thoughts not its own. He hath not spared His own Son but gave Him up for us all. I am silent before such love, and believe it! If we were to talk of such grace and such glory of ourselves I should say it was simply madness,

but when I get Christ I can look at God's love, and measure it by Him. The glory I can partake of with Him in grace, the cross I never could. There is more in the cross than in the glory—there is that in the cross which the blessed Son of God alone could do to glorify God. It stands alone, the moment that is done, anything is credible, the moment you get the Son of God dying on the cross, the rest is but the natural consequence.

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace." Now the apostle comes back to the point, and tells us the result. We first get the counsels of God ; if I speak of them they bring out His own thoughts "the praise of the glory of his grace." Now we get the fact of how we are brought into the blessing "according to the riches of his grace." I can believe in the glory of His grace, because I believe in the riches of His grace ; it could do anything!

There we have redemption according to the intention and purpose of God—we have it, remember that, it is not a thing to talk of only, we have it in these poor earthen vessels : my place with God is not the effect of my sin, but the effect of Christ's redemption. God has dealt with my sins on the cross, the very things He would have had to judge and condemn in us, at the throne of judgment, He has judged in Christ at the cross. Christ gave Himself for me, and I now wait for Him to receive me to Himself.

Then He speaks of "the redemption of the purchased possession." Having put us in this place of acceptance, having adopted us as children, He can now treat us as friends. "He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence." "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will." He is telling us His intention about us—and more than that, about *Christ*—"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him."

I know no more wonderful words in scripture than those the Lord spoke to His disciples : "If ye loved me ye would rejoice, because I go unto my Father." He expected them to be interested in His happiness, He tells them how He came down in grace to give them a place with Himself, and He looks for their delight in His happiness. The Son of Man was going through toil and suffering and anguish, that

He might give us His place in glory. O, what a thought, that it should be given to such as we are! We have poor, wretched, cold hearts to get into it. He tells us the consequence here: "He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his will." His counsels now are, "To gather together all things in Christ." This is the ground the apostle takes in Col. i. 16: "All things were created by him and for him;" He has become a Man, and associates us with Himself. "He is the head of the body," and God will put everything under Him. He has title as Creator and as Heir, and there is nothing that is not put under Him, except the Father. It is the purpose and intention of God to put us in this blessed place: "We are joint heirs with him;" "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance." We have not an atom of it yet; but we shall have it with Him.

"That we should be to the praise of his glory." "He will come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." When He takes the inheritance, we shall be glorified with Him. The whole universe, when filled with glory, will belong to Him, "That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ."

"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 that holy Spirit of promise." This is, not merely being born of God, but sealed with the Spirit—a totally different thing; and you cannot be in heaven without it. You do not necessarily receive the Holy Ghost when born of God. Who is born of God? An unbeliever, an unconverted man, a sinner in his sins. Is God going to seal an unbeliever? No; he has to be born again. A converted man has to be sealed. The Comforter was promised to those who were clean through the word Jesus had spoken to them.

Take the blessed Son of God Himself; the Holy Ghost was seen to come down upon Him who was truly Man, and truly God. The Father sealed Him by the public testimony given by the Holy Ghost coming upon Him as a man. "He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him," and it "anointed" him "with power," (Acts x. 38.)

Be clear about this: how it is I am sealed? I am first quickened—the word of God reaches my conscience. I get a little hope, and I say, "make a servant of me, only let me in, any corner will do me, if I can only get in, I am not

worthy of a good place." But "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," and I could then stand in His presence. At first it was, if I could only get in, if He only makes a servant of me. There is no knowledge of redemption, there, if you are thinking of your fitness, and if you get the least light you will see that if you are to be dealt with at all, as to what you are, you had better stay out, for you have no corner at all.

When did the Prodigal then say, "Make me as one of thy hired servants"? when he was quickened and converted, and *set off* to his father; but not when he *met* Him. It brings him to his father in his rags, and it brings us to a point—we see what God is to a sinner in his rags. The son does not say it, but he confesses his sins. Quite right. He does not say, make me a servant, it would be shameful to say it then, when he gets what never was his before, "the best robe." My sins are gone, I get my place consequent upon what He is for me, not what I am for Him. If I have never met God at all, I may say I wonder how He will receive me; but I have met God in Christ, and he has accepted me in the beloved.

Mark the consequence of this: it is through the blood of Christ which has glorified God, it is not that I am only quickened and sometimes hope because He is good, or fear because I am bad; I have the value of the blood of Christ upon me in the eye of God, and the effect of it is the Holy Ghost can come down and dwell in us, because we are as clean as the blood of Christ can make us! In the Old Testament the leper was washed with water, typical of the washing of water by the word; afterward he was sprinkled with blood, then anointed with oil, *i.e.*, the Holy Ghost. When I believe, or having believed, I am sealed. "Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost?" It is one of the characteristics of the Christian state. It is the ministration of righteousness and the ministration of the Spirit. "This spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." But He is glorified now, and has sent the Holy Ghost, and it is the seal of that in my heart.

Again, take Galatians—"Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made

under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons, and because ye are sons God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father, wherefore thou art not more a servant but a son, and if a son then an heir of God through Christ.” (Gal. iii. 26 ; iv. 4-7). “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. 21, 22).

While a man might be born of God he requires what will make him spotless and righteous before God ; and when he has got that, he is sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise. He has Christ for him in God’s presence, by whom He has been *redeemed*, and the Holy Ghost in him by whom he has been *sealed*! Paul asks the disciples at Ephesus, “Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?” (Acts xix. 2.) If quickening was sealing, they had, of course. How could he say, “Have ye received the Holy Ghost,” if quickening was the same thing? It is consequent on the efficacy of the blood. “Know ye not that your bodies”—not your hearts—“are the temple of the Holy Ghost?” How can you go and connect them with sin, if so? How did you get the Spirit? By giving up all trust in yourself, and being justified by faith in the Person and work of Christ; there is no question about that. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty ;” “Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”

We are justified by faith, through the redemption God has wrought for us in Christ, of which the Spirit is the earnest and the seal. I know the value of it, and thus I know my relationship to God. He has “predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself.” “At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” (John xiv. 20.)

Do you all know it, beloved friends? I address myself to those who love the Lord. Can you say, I am accepted in the beloved—I know my place before God? You have it, then, from the lips of Christ Himself—“At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” Do not let anything dim it, beloved ; do not let any pretence of humility lead you to say, “Make me a hired servant.” You wrong God if you say it. The prodigal

said it *before* he met his father; it would be a shame to say it *after*; it would be robbing his father of the grace in which he was acting. Could he have taken him into his house in such a position? No; he must come in with the dignity of his father on him!

Have you, though humbled as to yourself, the consciousness of your dignity, have you bowed to the sovereign love and grace of God? Do not talk to me of your state, it varies in each of us. I speak of the ground we are all on, "Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children." That is the ground. "Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost?" How can you use them for sin if so? This gives the greatest possible power for conduct. I expect you to go through the world as a child of God—as one whose body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. As you would say to your child, "you must not do such a thing *because you are my child.*" There are other motives, "ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body." (1 Cor. vi. 20.)

We know this blessed truth that when Christ went up on high He sent the Comforter down, that is the difference between our state and the state of Old Testament saints. The veil was not rent then; the way into the holiest of all was not made manifest; now we have boldness to enter through the veil. "We have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear, but we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father." Whoever claims fear and uncertainty as to the love and favour of God, is doubting the efficacy and distrusting the love that caused Him to give His Son, and caused His Son to die upon the cross. "Hereby perceive we the love, because he laid down his life for us." (1 John iii. 16.) You cannot believe it without saying, doubtless, "But I am such a sinner." That makes the love the more wonderful. What did He give Him for? Was it for your virtues? What part had you and I in the accomplishment of Christ's work upon the cross? As to the fact, *our sins.* That was all the part we had as to the work that saves us, the only part we could have. And therefore it is all grace, full, blessed, and holy grace. God could not bear the sins, and He *put them away* according to His holiness, but He did not *put us away*; thus I am in His presence not merely cleansed, but He has sent the Holy Ghost to dwell in me.

He is the earnest of the inheritance, "after that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." The Spirit was acting in Old Testament times, but till after the cross there was only the *promise* that He would pour it out, not only that He *had* done so. When Christ had gone up on high as a Man at the right hand of God, the Holy Ghost came down, to dwell in those who believe. The Comforter came down, so that the gospel is the ministration of the Spirit as well as the ministration of righteousness. He is the seal that God puts upon us until the redemption of the purchased possession.

His counsels concerning us were "to the praise of the glory of his grace," now the earnest of our inheritance is "unto the praise of his glory." He desires in his prayer, addressed to the *God* of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, that we may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead—and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We know we are in Him and He in us, if so, I say if you are in Him, He is in you, now let me *see* Christ, and not anything but Christ in you! "Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ," the world ought to read Christ in us, graven in our hearts, just as they read the ten commandments written and engraved on stones—for that is the comparison. Let us live Christ. Blessed, joyful is the heart that knows Him, it has conflict with self, with Satan, and with the world, plenty of conflict, and the more faithful we are, the more we shall have, but it has the conflict along with God, with Him we have peace!

The Lord give us to see that when we were proved bad, God proved Himself good, and good according to the majesty and holiness of Himself. The best thing He had was given to the vilest thing in the world. He "was manifest in these last times for you, who by Him do believe in God that raised Him up from the dead and gave Him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God." (1 Pet. i. 21.) What I know about God is, that He gave His Son to die for a poor wretch like me! It is His view of the blood; not mine, that gives me peace, His estimate not my own; God's

estimate in righteousness. The God I have offended is satisfied—not one of us values it as we ought—God does! We see what sovereign grace can do for creatures like us, making us joint-heirs with Christ. How can we talk of such a thing? Looking at myself I would call it folly—madness! But when I look at Him, I see the one who is God's delight in glory, I get the fruit of God's dealings with Him and that explains it. "He will come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."

We have the consciousness that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost. The Lord keep you, and make you most watchful never to dishonour God, nor to put a slur upon the efficacy of Christ's blood, by thinking that God could allow of anything like sin resting upon you:—for His name's sake.

"THAT I MAY KNOW HIM."

PHILIPPIANS iii. -10.

To know Thee—Oh! my Saviour,
 My longing soul's desire
 Is daily of Thy beauty
 More knowledge to acquire.
 To see Thee, as the "risen One,"
 Sitting at God's right hand,
My death in Thee, *my* life in Thee,
 With power to understand.

To know Thee, in Thy sorrows,
 And grieve for *all Thy* woe,
 To shrink not from partaking
 Thy sufferings here below.
 But bless Thee that Thou countest me
 Worthy to bear the cross,
 Sent in the love of Him for whom
 I count all else but dross.

To know Thee, in Thy dying,
 To give my dead soul breath,
 And ever to be praying
 "Conform me to Thy death."
 Thus would I know Thee, blessed Lord,
 In all Thy wondrous worth,
 And seek to follow in Thy steps
 Till called away from earth.

THE LAMB IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE.

REV. IV. 1-6; v. 6-14.

ONE is almost afraid to say anything about such a scene as this, lest one should detract from its glory, and hinder our own joy in contemplating it. My one thought about it this morning is that which forms our link with the scene, Beloved. It is nothing less than He who is the central object of it all, the one around whom we are gathered. In reading chap. iv., you cannot fail to feel, that in all the glory of it—wonderful as it is—there is a lack, something wanting to fix the heart. John finds in it no home object; but this lack is more than filled up in chap. v., when we get for the first time the *centre* of all these circles of glory. “In the midst of the throne, and of the four living creatures, and of the elders, stood a lamb.” They said to John, “behold the lion,” and he looked, and beheld a lamb! yes, and a “*Lamb as slain.*” John recognizes in Him, the very One he had known, and loved on earth. His first sight of Him in heaven, is in the same character, too, as that which had first attracted him away from all else, to follow Jesus on earth.

It was at the testimony of the Baptist, “Behold the *Lamb of God,*” that his two disciples dropped off from him, and followed Jesus. Peter we know was one of them, and I have no doubt the nameless one was John himself, for he avoids mentioning himself in writing the gospel. Jesus hears the question, Master, where dwellest thou? and replied “Come and see.” They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day. Precious union with the heart of God, that found all its delight in that lowly One on earth. And now John sees this same Lamb in heaven, as slain. That linked him with the scene, and us, too, beloved.

It is true we have in these chapters our own place, and I need hardly say we are not there yet; but, the Lamb in the midst of it all, is the sum and substance of all our blessing. He has redeemed us by His blood. All in heaven fall down before Him, and worship; but *we* lead the song. We are able to say, as angels cannot, “Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast *redeemed us* to God by thy blood.”

Here around His table we have the same object before us; the same occupation, worship. In John iii. 35-36, we find how this brings us into communion with the Father. “The Father loveth the Son.” All His delight is in the Son; and in this we have common thoughts with Him, for He has

become the object of our delight too. All the Father's counsels are for Him. When once He is put forth, everything is decided in reference to Him. This is the connection of ver. 36, "He that believeth," &c. Those who honour the Son by believing on Him, the Father will bless; those who do not, the wrath of God abides on them. Thus we see He was the Father's object upon earth, as in Rev. v., we find He is in heaven.

John xii. gives us a new centre of attraction; yet the same Jesus. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." It is the cross; there He was lifted up between the earth and heaven; to be the centre to which everything that is of God on earth must flow. But further, He is exalted to the Father's right hand. It is there that we know Him, Heb. ii. 6-9 (read), made a little lower than the angels; now crowned with glory and honour. The day is coming, when all things shall be put in subjection under Him. But "we see not yet all things put under him, but (as we gaze into the open heaven) *we see Jesus.*"

Ephes. i. connects *us* with Him there. He is head over all things to His church, which is His body. When He ascended, the Holy Ghost came down to earth; was it that the object of the Father's interest was changed? Had the Holy Ghost come down to take the place of Christ on earth, or to be a new centre for our hearts? Oh, no, beloved! The Holy Spirit is here to associate us with them there, and to lead up our hearts unto constant occupation with Him to unfold all His perfections to us, that we may love Him better and count Him to be the alone worthy one in heaven or earth of our adoration.

Now we are prepared for such a word as Heb. xiii. 13, "Let us go forth *unto him*, without the camp." The camp was the earthly system of religion, once ordained by God, but now set aside; we are to go forth to Him, and that will necessarily lead us *outside* all that is recognized among men as religion—all accredited systems. For as truly as He is the centre and gathering point in heaven, so truly is He the only divine centre and gathering point on earth; and to follow Him *must* take us outside all that is owned by men.

2 Thess. ii. is deeply interesting from this point of view. "We beseech by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *our gathering together unto him.*" Impossible that He should come, and we not be gathered to Him! His place always

decides ours. If He is "outside the camp," we MUST go forth unto Him. If He comes, we MUST be gathered to Him. When He moves, we move. When He moves from the throne on which He sits, to the air, we move from the earth to the air—our new gathering point, where He is coming to take us back with Him to the Father's house. Think what the Father's house will be! The home of such a heart as Christ's! where all His divine affections flow out, and are fully answered. That is where He is going to take us to, where He is at home! Oh, beloved, truly our blessing and joy will be full then.

It is the same people who are now gathered round the Lamb on earth—their object the same—their occupation the same. The difference is, that then the worship will be unrestrained, unhindered by the flesh; in the full energy of the Spirit of God. Now we have so often to mourn over failure—to grieve that our hearts are so slow to lay hold of what is before us. Then, blessed be God, there will be no failure to mourn over—nothing to turn us aside from absorbing occupation with Christ.

J. A. T.

A READING ON THE PSALMS.

Book ii : Psalms xlii.—lxxii.

Psalm xlii. commences the Second Book. The Remnant in this Book is seen as cast out of Jerusalem, hence "God" is the name used by the Remnant instead of the covenant name "Jehovah;" except where the Psalm speaks of the future, and then we find "Jehovah." Hence we do not find Christ personally in this Book, as we did in the last.

May we not apply parts of this Psalm to Christ?

Only by analogy, and then it would apply only to the last days of His ministry out of Jerusalem, when He left Judæa, and went away again beyond Jordan, where John at first baptized. (John x. 40, xi. 54, and xii. 36). It is not His sufferings that we have here, we have had that in Ps. xxii. It is the Remnant cast out. "I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God." (v. 4).

Ps. xliii. The Remnant is in this Psalm in the midst of hostile Israel.

Ps. xliv. Is the cry of Israel, that is in the Remnant, when cast out.

Ps. xlv. Here the Spirit introduces the Messiah, coming in glory and power, taking the throne in judgment.

Ps. xlvi. Consequently the Remnant say, now that Messiah is come, "God is our refuge and strength." He, whom they had looked at abstractedly as God, is become their covenant God, and they can say, "The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." God is in the midst of her, and He is Jehovah of hosts.

We may notice a beautiful progress in these Psalms. In Ps. xlii. the remnant first say, *v. 5*, "I shall yet praise him for the help of *his* countenance," and at the end of the Psalm, "I shall yet praise him, who is the health of *my* countenance." The light of God's countenance shining upon him makes his own face shine.

Ps. xlvii. Messiah being come, and as Jehovah becoming their refuge, they look for the bright results of God's glory on the earth, in subduing the nations under them.

Ps. xlviii. Zion is set up now, and becomes the praise of all the earth, and the kings that assembled together against her are troubled and haste away.

Remark a beautiful progress in this Psalm. In Ps. xlii. They remember when cast out of Jerusalem, how they used to go "To the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday." In this Psalm they are there. In Psalm xliii. 3, they cry, "O send out thy light and thy truth, let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles;" now they say, in *v. 9*, "We have thought of Thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple." Again in Ps. xlv. 1, they say, "We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old." Now in *v. 8*, their language is, "As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts; in the city of our God."

Ps. xlix. This Psalm is a kind of divine commentary on it all; showing that men have been set up and put down, just as God pleases. Human power cannot redeem from death, the pride of this world is nothing. This Psalm gives us the putting down of man; all that he is in honour death lays hold of.

What is the meaning of *v. 8*. "The redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever"?

That man cannot redeem from death. He must "give it

up as a bad job," as we say, and there is an end of it—"it ceaseth for ever."

Do we get resurrection in *v.* 15?

The preservation is left vague here. The immediate hope would be of preserving life, but it would meet those that might be slain with the fullest and securest hope.

But does not God redeeming the soul from the power of the grave imply resurrection?

No; you may redeem, by hindering from death, or bringing up from it. The saint is preserved on earth, it is not heaven.

Ps. l. God summons all the people to judgment, when He comes.

Ps. li. Here we have the Remnant taking upon themselves the sin of the nation in rejecting Christ and putting Him to death. It is the confession of blood-guiltiness.

Ps. lii.—lxvii. Is a series, containing general principles expressed by the Remnant consequent upon the circumstances they are in, in Ps. li. Towards the end, we see that they are getting out of their difficulties; so in Ps. lxv. they are going to Zion, and praise is waiting for their God there. In Ps. lxvi. they are let in, and they begin to praise.

In Ps. lxvii. blessing stretches out to every one else, though here it is prophetic only.

Ps. lxviii. Christ is ascended, and is going to dwell amongst them as Jehovah. Paul stops halfway in quoting *v.* 18 in Eph. iv. Here we have gifts for the rebellious also, *i. e.* for Israel, that the Lord God might dwell among them. *v.* 24-29, we find that their Processions are restored. The people are really established.

Ps. lxix. Here we have the sufferings of the Lord as the foundation of all the blessing. They are Christ's sorrows from the beginning to the end of His glory: *v.* 5 is Christ, as the High Priest, confessing the sins of the people on the day of atonement. He is taking the Remnant's place.

What does it mean, "Then I restored that which I took not away"?

Why, that Christ is taking the place of others! We should all have been lost if Christ had not taken these words into His mouth. The sufferings of Christ are the foundation of all the blessings in the Psalms.

Do we have the atonement here?

The Psalm does not take up that view of the sufferings.

We have had that in Ps. xxii.; but though we have not the atonement here, we get that which made atonement, and the Psalm ends with the glory and blessing of Israel.

Ps. lxx. You get back from the glory of Israel to the poor man; in Ps. lxxi. it is the poor man still. Then in Ps. lxxii. we have Christ as Son of David in His Solomon character, looked at in His reign of glory.

What is the force of v. 15? "Prayer also shall be made for him continually?"

They are aspirations, the whole Psalm is prophetic. Ps. viii. goes out wider, for there Christ is Son of man. Here He is Son of David, and so the Psalm ends, for when David's Son reigns in glory, David's prayers are ended.

Why is Son of Jesse added? Because Christ was David's Son after the flesh.

This book gives us the Remnant driven out of Jerusalem, and in the end their rest anticipatively and prophetically under Messiah as Son of David. We have their condition as driven out in the first part, and at the end, their rest under Messiah.

HOW GOD "WEANS" THE SOUL.

THE time of weaning is one of great suffering to the soul, but a very necessary time; no one learns true independence of infant helps, until it is weaned. It is surprising how many *nurses* we have, and it is just in proportion as we attain strength to get on without any of them, that our age or advance in Christian life is determined. I believe most of us are going through a process of "weaning," and, What is it for? Simply, that in our given strength, we might be able to depend on God, without the support of that which betokened our personal feebleness.

The suffering of weaning arises from the deprivation of something with which we connected the blessings of life, and this evidently may occur in many ways. Satan, no doubt, thought Job could not be weaned, for he said to God, "Touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face" (Job i. 11); but Job *was* weaned. The soul is weaned when it worships God, and prays for others. I cannot worship unless my soul is engaged with God; I cannot pray for others if I am occupied with myself, and the loss of any of my channels of comfort. God must wean us!

Oh! what days and nights of bitter soul-tears are shed while the soul is being weaned from some long-enjoyed mercy. Is it that our God would not indulge us? Is it that He who gave His Son would deny us anything? No; but He must wean us, or we shall never know what it is to depend on *Him apart from any human or natural intervention!*

Paul, no doubt, often spoke of having no confidence in the flesh, but it was in the prison at Rome that he felt he was entirely weaned. For any soul who has marked its own progress from the moment of deprivation until he was weaned—that is, until he was resting in God, and independent of his loss—can tell the momentary lulls and the rapidly succeeding agonies which marked the desperate, dark tunnel, until he reached the light and joy of God’s presence. Oh! how He pities us in all this anguish. He cannot give in, or relax His hand, but He furnishes us with many lamps to modify the chill and darkness of our subterranean travel.

Let me just notice, that if we have learned the love of God evangelically, and not historically (*i.e.*, experimentally), we shall be more distressed the greater our knowledge of His love, than if we knew less of it—for we are disappointed with God. God’s love can only display itself fully in its own sphere. If I have learned the righteousness on which it is based, I shall better understand how much it must correct and subdue in me, before it can enjoy itself with me. If I judge myself in the light of His love, I must see how much I need to be weaned.

“HIS DELIGHT.” Prov. viii.

“Unto you, believers, he is the preciousness.” 1 Pet. ii.

Precious, O Son of God, Thou art,
Resting in love the Father’s heart
 Ever brings forth for Thee;
Before His works His power employ,
Before He plans, Thou art His joy,
 The same eternally!

Precious to Him when here on earth,
The lonely stranger at Thy birth
 Thou dost in grace become;
In man’s cold heart no place hast Thou,
Yet unto Thee His angels bow—
 The First-begotten One.

And when Thou standest here alone,
 Refused by all that is Thine own,
 To Him how precious still !
 When He, Thy God, no man can see,
 The Father is declared by Thee,
 Who dost His bosom fill !

And when with the repentant band,
 In lowly grace He sees Thee stand,
 Bowing to own His claims,
 Oh, how His heart delights in Thee !
 " Beloved Son," He claimeth Thee,
 And His own joy proclaims !

When in obedience unto death
 Thou dost send forth Thy latest breath,
 And dost Thy life lay down,
 A new delight His heart doth fill,
 Thy preciousness increaseth still
 And weareth now its crown !

Joy fills the heaven where Thou art,
 The oil of gladness is Thy part,
 Thy God exalteth Thee ;
 His full delight its course doth run,
 With glory, His beloved Son,
 His own hand crowneth Thee !

In Thee for ever God doth rest,
 For ever with Thee men are blest ;
 The Lamb their light shall be !
 In heaven and earth made new again,
 Thou, the delight of God and men !
 The same eternally !

FRAGMENTS.

FEARS, founded on your own badness, disturbing and hindering your peace with God, are as senseless as trust in your own goodness, as giving a ground of peace.

There is no communion in conscience. In it I am alone. So are you. In order to communion I must have nothing to settle with conscience. A purged conscience is the basis of communion.

In order to have practical power I must not only have the thing, but know that I have it. Suppose a man possessed all the wealth of India, and did not know he had it, it is practically useless to him.

DAVID, JOAB, AND THE WOMAN OF TEKOAII.

(2 SAM. XIV.)

THE heart of God in its love towards sinners, is sometimes shown in the Old Testament through incidents connected with the person (David especially) who sat on Israel's throne. Because the person who sat there, might be said during that time of a theocracy, to represent God, and therefore to exhibit His ways. We are told in the opening of our chapter, that "Joab perceived that the king's heart was towards Absalom." This Joab was a famous general, and a kind of prime-minister of David. His affection for David, and as a statesman, his sense of the dignity of the throne were qualities about evenly balanced in his character. Eventually he failed in the matter of Adonijah's rebellion, but that is not our point just now.

On the present occasion the sorrow that he saw on David's countenance (xiii. 37, 39) determined him to attempt a reconciliation for Absalom, without a due equivalent for his sin; that is, without the death of a victim, and by his artifice he committed David to a great mistake; nevertheless the account itself claims our notice, for whilst wanting in some of the truths for a sinner's salvation, it brings out, in illustration, in a very marked way, the concern of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, about our miserable condition at a distance from Him, as Absalom was from David. Absalom had murdered his brother Amnon (although under some provocation) in cold blood, and on that account had fled his country. Whilst thus banished, the heart of him that was on the throne yearned for him; and Joab was able, through the means of the woman of Tekoah, to draw out his thoughts, and eventually to carry out his will towards his banished one. It was he who had to go down to the very place of Absalom's abode, in order to bring him back.

Joab induces a wise woman of Tekoah—a town perhaps famous for producing a class of mourners who wailed at funerals, (Jer. ix. 17) to feign herself to be one, and by a supposed case of her own misery, to bring out the fulness of David's heart. First, she puts the quarrel (*vv.* 5, 6, 7,) between her two sons in language so equivocal, that you could not say which of them was the aggressor, so as to remind David in the mildest form of the quarrel between Absalom and Amnon; and she gets him so far to betray his

feelings, as to give a reply rather in her favour, "Go to thine house and I will give charge concerning thee," (v. 8.) As instructed by Joab, this uncertain answer will not suffice, so she at once takes the daring course of seeming to wish that the dignity of the throne in the punishment of an offender should be more thought of than her distress. "O King," she says, "the iniquity be on me and on my father's house, (v. 9) and the king and his throne be guiltless." She succeeds so perfectly, that she draws out an answer entirely in her favour, "The king said whosoever saith ought unto thee, bring him to me, and he shall not touch thee any more." Emboldened now, she alludes to that dread law in Israel, whereby the revenger of blood might destroy a murderer wherever he was found, save in a city of refuge, (Num. xxxv. 9.) "Let the king remember the Lord thy God, (notice, it was after the death of Uriah) that thou wouldst not suffer the revengers of blood to destroy any more, lest they destroy my son," to which speech she gets the immediate answer, "As the Lord liveth there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth." Thus cunningly had she committed the king, and now it was easy for her to bring the case of Absalom before him; but not before David had discovered that the hand of Joab had been in it all. So we see how the three minds fitted in together, Joab's with the woman of Tekoah's; the woman of Tekoah's with David's; and David's again with Joab's; all were in accord to bring this rebel back. It was in the counsel of the three that he should be restored; but one in particular had to go down, "Go therefore," said David to Joab, "bring the young man Absalom again." "So Joab arose and went to Gesbur," out of his own country into another, "and brought Absalom to Jerusalem."

Dear reader, do you perceive in this history, that you are the Absalom—the sinner—in rebellion against God, dwelling a long way off in a land of darkness and the shadow of death. You are, alas! that I should have to tell you so, nothing less than a murderer in God's estimate. Is it not written that "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer," and have you never given hatred a place in your heart? what does He say about your inner man, whose eyes are "As a flame of fire," and who is going to judge "The secrets of men by Jesus Christ"? (Rom. ii.) But more than this, this world is yet held guilty of the death of Christ: The men that sentenced that "Just one" are called "Betrayers and murderers," and it

is just your natural heart, dear reader, which is, like the Jews in Christ's time, averse to everything that speaks of God, and afraid of coming to the light, because its deeds are evil. Yes, an unbeliever is guilty of the blood of God's own Son, and will yet have to answer for it. He is convicted of sin because he does not believe on Jesus. (John xvi. 9.)

Do you know, dear reader, that notwithstanding this, these are plans and counsels for your benefit, which only want your assent. Did Absalom refuse to be reconciled? Was he not glad to return to Jerusalem? The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are concerned for you. The heart of the Father is in your favour; the Holy Ghost is the Exponent of His will; and the Son efficiently carries it out. But this Old Testament picture gives but a feeble idea of the present aspect of things. Joab on this occasion could not bring Absalom beyond his own house. (v. 24.) There was after all uneasiness in David's mind—he could not fall upon his son's neck and kiss him—could bring forth no best robe, nor sit down with him to the fatted calf. The reconciliation too, such as it was, wrought no improvement in Absalom's mind, for he set on fire his benefactor's field of barley. (v. 30.) It was reconciliation without blood, which neither suited the throne nor changed the heart of the one brought back after such sort. Absalom was not altered in character or demeanour by such a reconciliation. But now the entire mystery has been cleared up—the Son of God has become Man, and died. The atonement is made, and sinners brought back by Him, in His resurrection, come right up to the Father's house; nay, are accepted in His acceptance (Eph. i.), and with Him have access to the Father. Christ met the sinner's case where he was, in the place of death and in His own resurrection brings him up to the throne.

The woman of Tekoah, who disappears from the scene when she had elicited the condition of David's heart, towards his banished one, for she had no direct intercourse with Absalom, re-appears in Luke xv., still under the figure of a woman picking up the piece of silver, having the image and superscription of its heavenly origin, and precious to its owner, though lost in the dust and dirt of the world. It was a parable of the time of Christ's incarnation, and beautiful as it is, still needed that blessed word "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." It is that "Spirit of God," who at the first "moved upon the face of the waters." One

of those who said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," and who, dimly seen in the Old Testament, now shines brightly forth in full relief as the revealer of God's full salvation to us, and the revelation of His counsels from all eternity on our behalf. Faintly traceable in His ways to us in the Old Testament, He has now, since the ascension of Christ, come down to make good the full revelation of the Father by the Son. He is down here as the revealer of the Father's will to us, and dweller in the Church for ever!

Oh, dear reader, is not this wonderful! How can you reject the message, brought down by the Holy Ghost, of a full salvation? He did not come down from heaven till Christ's arrival there with the marks of redemption on His hands and His side. Reader! it is a salvation for you! Your condemnation will be sealed upon the rejection of it. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation."

W. W.

NOTES ON PHILIPPIANS III.

As Christians we are called to walk *through* the world by faith, in the things unseen and outside of it. Walking by faith really tests the state of the heart; for "The things that are seen are temporal;" but "The things that are not seen are eternal."

In Phil. ii. we find Christ coming down here, and as Man His path is the opposite of Adam's, who sought to exalt himself. Jesus humbled Himself, and became "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." He was made in the likeness of men—took upon Him the form of a servant—and, as Man, was the pattern of graciousness and obedience. The Son of God alone could do this. It is the business of the creature to *keep* his first estate. Though Son of God, His elevation never destroyed the sensibility of His heart to all around; He felt everything a great deal the more; but He felt it for others.

You never find Christ *governed* by the circumstances through which He was obliged to pass, but always *moved* by them. At Nain He meets the widow who had lost her only son—He is touched with compassion—touched by the circumstances, and He acted divinely in them.

As we advance in the divine life we never find it is stoical insensibility—indifference to the sorrow and trial of circum-

stances through which we pass ourselves, or those through which others are passing. There are links which bind the church of God together in divine communion. You see these features come out in Paul and Epaphroditus in chap. ii. These bonds in the church of God will be the expression of divine grace in the midst of circumstances which affect other people. We have to cultivate this more than we do. The power of Satan may have been in that sickness of Epaphroditus; but God was above it in mercy. We see these links of heart of the apostle entering into his epistles, except in Galatians when their hearts were getting away from the foundation. There we find even no salutations.

In Phil. iii. we get the energy of that life which carries people *clean out of the world*. To walk well, we must have the characteristics of both chapters ii. and iii. If you see a person with one of these characteristics, without the other, it runs into carnality. The one is *divine life coming down into the circumstances* (chap. ii.); the other, *divine glory carrying you clean out of the circumstances* (chap. iii.)

The more we go on; the more we have to say to the Christianity of the world, or what the world calls such, the more we find that the testimony of Paul and of John is dropped in the professing Church. If a Christian is a person who has died with Christ, and is risen with Christ, he has nothing to do with this world at all, but to walk by faith through it and out of it. Hence we speak of heavenly things—"our conversation is in heaven." Our position in Christ *now*, is all but dropped in its true testimony. Hear the apostle in another scripture, "Why, as though *living* in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" (Col. ii. 20.) "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." (Rom. viii. 9.) "Ye are dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world." (Col. ii. 20.) It is very easy to say I am a *religious man*, but that is quite different to saying I am *dead with Christ*, and I am alive through Him, because that sets aside all thought of being a *religious man*. I must now walk as a son of God.

After Paul's decease the church ceased to be heavenly, because it ceased to count itself as dead with Christ, and as risen with Him. Consequently the state of the christian was not "Worshipping God in the Spirit." To see people building up the flesh again, and giving it a place was what broke his heart.

Paul shows how if any one could boast in the flesh he could. A fleshly religion did not require man to be spiritual at all. He might be devoted in a certain sense in truth, and yet be the enemy of Christ. Paul was so himself! After all this Paul could say of himself, in a restricted sense, for it was true, that he was the *chief* of sinners! He found fully the fact that the mind of the flesh was enmity against God. The Cross came and told of flesh, that there was no *good* thing in it. Then he says, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee." Had *He* a right to say so—He who came to reveal the Father?

Do you think *you* can reveal God better than He could? Can you go into the world and say, It is to declare Him? Do you believe that at the Cross God tried His last means with man, and found the world wholly against God? Do you think Christ could link you now with any thing in this world? You know He could not.—How far has *your heart* taken up the Cross, and said, "I believe that the Son of God is rejected from this world; and, what is more, that it was *my flesh did it!*" Then you have "no confidence" in it. In the Cross is seen the excessive expression of enmity of the flesh against God; yet where the hatred and wickedness of man rose up and met God in goodness and grace, it was the occasion by which God gave expression to all the grace and love that was in His heart! You say "I am a poor sinner and Christ died for my sins."—True. That is where you learned love—the forgiveness of sins you were guilty of in the flesh." True. But He has taken you out of the flesh, and brought you into the place of God's child "in Christ," so that it can be said of you now, "As is the heavenly so are they also that are heavenly"—not now a child-of-Adam place, but that of a child of God.

Then, again, you can say to the world, If you want to know where my life is, it is "Hid with Christ in God." It shows how completely I am associated with the Lord Jesus Christ; and when He shall appear, I shall appear with Him in glory, for He is my life. It is put in a very striking way, and so I am to set my "affections on things above." I am in the body still, and have to go through the world, but if I look at my life, it is hid with Christ. Then you *ought* to seek to glorify Christ—in short, you ought to do *nothing else*.

An object before a man gives him energy. What mad-

ness, then, to let anything dim our sight. You can then say, "That I may know him." Is it your earnest desire to get acquainted with Him? Are you running on to that? Is Christ so your object that you are desiring to know Him? You are going to be with Him for ever—would you not like then, to know the perfect display of all that God is in a Man?—to know what governed His heart when in the world? No human mind can get at it, but the humble heart feeds on Him, and grows like Him!

Are you getting more acquainted, then, with what will make you happy for ever in heaven? or are you feeding on what shuts Christ out? What is hidden in your heart? is the whole question. You say, "Oh! it is Christ who is at the bottom of my heart." It must be so, or you are not a Christian at all; but *what is there between* that and your outward walk? The news of the day—your business—things around? Not a bit of Christ comes out in them. Your heart is the highway of the things you meet with through the day.

The kind of joy that He had, *necessarily* involved sorrow in the world—it was the activity of love passing through everything here that caused it the deepest sorrow. Have we the same *kind* of feeling? Do we know in any sense in that way, what it is to have fellowship with Christ's sufferings; yet along with it all a positive *joy* from God? We know very little of outward suffering. "If we suffer with him we shall reign with him." It is not suffering *for*, but with. Love shows itself by being absolutely governed by a single object—it leads that way. Yes, but you say it will cost me my life. Very well, I say, I must go that way, my business is to win Christ. I have seen Him in glory—I must have Him. Just as Christ, "For the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame." My heart is so identifying itself with Christ—so conscious of divine favour as a present thing resting upon me—that when the wicked are in their graves I am gone to be with Christ, and to be like Him for ever! Having "Borne the image of the earthy;" I have gone to "bear the image of the heavenly."

In Romans we are looked at as "dead to sin"—not "risen," but "alive to God." In Colossians a step farther, we are "dead with Christ," and "risen with Him." In Ephesians a step farther still, "Quickened together with Christ"—"raised up together." Seated together in Christ in

the heavenlies. We have got into a new state; and we have to say, that is my place as a child of God; and I never can rest till I get there. I am not thinking of being like innocent Adam, but like the glorified Christ—I shall be when I see Him. A man sees a lamp at the end of a long straight path, and every step he takes towards it, the better he sees it; and so the nearer we come to Christ the more we see Him in all His brightness; but we are not actually at the end of the path. When we are we shall be conformed to the image of the Son, that He may be the first born among many brethren.

Redemption is a settled thing. I am redeemed out of the whole Adam condition; I have passed the Red Sea; and not only was the blood upon the door post, but I am brought out of Egypt with Him. Are you with Him? I have a great deal to learn to humble one, but I am with God! God says of Israel, "It is a stiff-necked people;" and that is the very reason Moses gave God as why He should go with them. So you may make it your plea and say, "Oh God, go with me; I never can be better; Thou must go with me!" The Holy Ghost has come down and united you with a risen and glorified Christ. This is actual practical power. Then you are down here, and your hearts will be tried and sifted; but it is *because* you are with God. You have got the key to it all now. You want to know distinctly and clearly that flesh can never be with God; *it* crucified Christ, and it *won't have God*—and *God won't have it!* Reckon yourself dead then; treat yourself as dead. You have a *right* to do it—it is the foundation of all your liberty and joy. If a converted man walks in the flesh, or seeks to have religiously to do with God in his flesh, he has a perpetual burden where God lays none.

We find in John iv., "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Jesus says this to the outcasts; for He had left Judea where flesh had been in connection with God in a religious sense. Now true worship was to be in the Spirit: and if you are not there, you may confess your sins, but you are not worshipping God. Could you follow Christ in the praises He, as Man, is capable of singing now? He says, "In the midst of the congregation will I sing praise unto thee:" the praises of redemption accomplished—of righteousness made good—of God made known. In this He had the first place, as in every thing. You say you cannot—but you are going to

take a place at a *little distance from Christ*. Yes, but remember, you have no place at all unless Christ gives you one. If you think you have, you are keeping up some of the rags of your own righteousness. You have *no place*, or you have *Christ's place*, and God has given us that. Have you learnt His place? He puts the best robe on the prodigal, and makes the whole house sing. God does not say, "My prodigal is come back," but, "My son." It is the Father's glory to have him back. The question is, Is my heart *at home* in my Father's house? Is it at rest there? "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you,"—the heart knows it, and it has to go through the world and get sifted and tested day by day; but it is at home with God. It looks for a city—*the rest of God*. It is waiting for Christ till He shall come to take us to Himself. Blessed to have *hold* of the fact that I have died with Christ, "Nevertheless I live;" and that "by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." I am with God, and I know Him, and so I can ask Him to go with me: just because I am such a poor thing. Does your heart trust God who spared not His own Son? then you say, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Keep your eye fixed on Him, and thus you will be able through grace to walk with Him—following hard after Him, you will find His right hand upholding you. He gives us, in His grace, to have our hearts identified with His interests; and He is not ashamed to call us brethren.

Let us, then, be "Like unto men that wait for their Lord," that when He comes we may open to Him immediately. "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching." He will "Make them sit down to meat," and will "gird himself," and "come forth and serve them!"

FRAGMENTS.

PETER got strength by learning he had none!

IF Christ's love is not filling my heart, I will go to some vanity in a shop to satisfy it!

THOUGHTS ON SACRIFICES, No. V.

DISCIPLINE AND RESTORATION TO COMMUNION (Levit. xiii. xiv.)
"COMMAND the children of Israel that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead. Both male and female shall ye put out, without the camp shall ye put them, that they defile not their camps, in the midst whereof I dwell." (Numb. v. 2, 3) Relationships however close, and friendships however strong, could raise no plea on which disobedience to this command might be justified. "Without the camp," spoke of the divinely-appointed place for such, "shall ye put them," expressed the responsibility which rested on all to act aright; and none could excuse themselves from submission to this order, who shared in the privileges belonging to that nation. To the nations around them, God gave no such injunction; for none but Israel stood before Him on the ground of redemption, and in none but Israel could it be said He dwelt. His presence among them necessitated the removal of the unclean; their position as redeemed involved prompt obedience to the word. "How unnatural," it might have been said, "thus to act against members of one's family;" "How uncharitable to put outside the camp ones dearest bosom-friend;" "A merciful God could never require such an act to be done in His name." Such thoughts as these might have passed through many a mind, and the natural man might have endorsed them as correct; but the one taught of God would see they were wrong. Jehovah had spoken, and He must be obeyed. Claims of kindred and affection must give way before the paramount claims of His holiness.

Deeply solemn was this matter. Certainty, therefore, as to the case was to be arrived at, before the terrible sentence went forth against the individual, or even the garment, or the house; but when the case was clear, no word in mitigation or extenuation could be received. How the disease had been contracted, by wilful or accidental contact, was nothing; its hated presence had been manifested, and judgment must accordingly take its course. The priest saw and pronounced sentence, and forthwith it had to take effect; but, till he could pronounce with certainty, the case was watched. In doubtful cases, after seven days' confinement, the individual, or garment, or house was examined again. If the plague on the man or in the garment had not spread,

another week's confinement was ordered, and the garment was washed. If, after this, the plague was found to be known by the marks given of it in God's word, the awful words pronounced by the priest, "it is a leprosy," betokened the cessation of further forbearance. The man was put outside the camp, and the garment was burnt in the fire. In the case of the house, the diseased stones were taken out, new ones put in their place, and the house plastered with new mortar. If, after that, the disease still manifested its presence, the whole house was to be pulled down, and its stones, timber, and mortar be carried forth outside the city into an unclean place. Thus most careful was the priest to be, that none should be excluded from the camp who ought to be in it, and none be kept inside who ought to be put forth; for with the priest, as having the mind of God, rested the duty of pronouncing that sentence against which we read of no appeal.

But what, it might be asked, was there in the leprosy which drew forth such stringent regulations. It was a contagious disease, committing frightful ravages, destroying by slow degrees and in a loathsome manner the body of its victim. Is this all that we see in it? Were these laws concerning it mere sanitary regulations for the bodily welfare of that large encampment, and quarantine directions as it were for the people when settled in their land? Doubtless there was that in them, but there was more, as the sacrifices to be offered up when the house was clean, or the leper was to be received back, clearly set forth. Leprosy betokened the working of the flesh. In the case of the man it might be an old sore breaking out afresh (xiii. 2), or a new one for the first time displaying itself. But it was the working of evil within which thus manifested itself, and, whilst it continued to work, the man was unclean. When, however, he was covered all over with the disease, the priest pronounced him clean. "It is all turned white; he is clean." The evil within had worked itself out; its activity had ceased. He was clean. The leprosy in the house broke out in the stones thereof (xiv. 40), typical, it would seem, of evil in an assembly, and was connected with the dwelling of the people in the land (34). Leprosy in a garment, that which wraps round the individual, typified something evil in the circumstances in which the man might be moving. This might occur in the wilderness, or in the land. At all cost, the evil must be got

rid of; yet nothing more was to be destroyed than was needful to attain that end. But, if the cutting out of the diseased part, and the washing of the garment, sufficed not to arrest the plague, the whole garment must be burnt; so, if need be, all one's surroundings must be got rid of, by the individual getting out of the circumstances in which he has been involved. In this there was something analogous to the dealing with the house, the diseased stones being first taken out, their places supplied with fresh ones, and the whole plastered anew with mortar, if possible thereby to avert the destruction of the whole building; but should that measure prove ineffectual, the disease having spread among stones hitherto free from it, the whole house had to go—the priest pulled it down. Now, as the garment typifies circumstances surrounding us, and the house an assembly of believers, we can see why, for the cleansing of the garment, washing was ordered without sacrifices; and why, for the cleansing of the house, sacrifices must be offered up. And, whilst the sacrifices the leper had to bring were more numerous than those offered up for the house—as both represented God's people cleansed, either an individual or an assembly—we can understand why there were sacrifices common to both, having reference to the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

There God's grace manifests itself. Had the laws concerning leprosy stopped with the injunction for excluding the leper from the camp, and for shutting up the house, God's holiness would have been cared for; but the individual or house must have been left in perpetual and irremediable uncleanness. Such, however, was not His mind. No compromise could be admitted between holiness and defilement, but He worked that the leprosy should be removed and the individual reinstated into all the privileges of God's redeemed people. These chapters then illustrate the exercise of discipline on the people of God. It is not the sinner in his natural distance from God that we have before us, for we meet first with the man inside the camp, but put out of it, whilst the leprosy was working in him. It might have been an old leprosy breaking out afresh, or the plague appearing for the first time. Outside the camp must then be his place, though he had his tent inside it all the time (xiv. 8), till the priest was satisfied he was healed, and all the rites connected with his cleansing had been duly performed. For the garment

and for the house there was a provision for the plague proving removable ; for the individual we read of, nothing of the kind. " All the days wherein the plague shall be in him, he shall be defiled," was God's provision for the preservation of the camp from uncleanness, whilst the opening word of the following chapter speaks of the days of his cleansing. There might be special cases for which there would be no cure, *e. g.*, Gehazi, Uzziah ; but none could sit down in an ordinary way and say their case was helpless. And who healed him ? Physicians will not do it. The priest, too, in this was powerless. God must deal personally with the leper and effect it ; for observe the sacrifice was to be offered up *after* the priest was satisfied he was healed, and not in order to heal him. " Offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them," (Mark i. 44.) How the leper was healed is not stated, that was a matter between him and God, as it must always be in what we believe leprosy to pre-figure. Restoration of the soul with God must precede the restoration to one's place in the assembly. But restoration of the soul with God is a private matter between the soul and God, restoration to the assembly, as to the camp, is public and before all. The priest pronounces the leper clean, after he saw God had healed him, as he had pronounced him unclean when the evil of the flesh was working. He pronounced on his state, but could not alter it, but God could. So the leper, shunned by his fellow-men, as he cried, " Unclean, unclean," found an eye resting on him whilst outside the camp, and a heart occupied with him unceasingly. For God was working for his healing.

Healed in mercy, he had to show himself to the priest ; and now he has to feel keenly his helpless condition, induced by the leprosy. As yet he is outside the camp, and the priest must go out to him. He knew he was healed, else the priest's inspection would be of no avail ; but the mere fact of his having been healed by God did not give him the right to re-enter the camp of Israel. It is well to see this—a rule which still holds good in the government of the assembly of God on earth. There is the secret intercourse between God and the soul, and there is the public acknowledgment of having judged oneself, and the owning before all the only ground on which one can stand in the assembly. This is shadowed out in the action and in the sacrifices which the leper brought. On the first day we read in his sacrifices

what the standing is, and the identification with Him who has died and is risen. On the eighth day we see typified the acknowledgment of failure in walk, and re-consecration, as it were, afresh to the service of Him who died for us on the cross. Sovereign grace can restore, as sovereign power healed the leper; but only on the ground of sacrifice was there then, and is there now, a road for outward reinstalment into the place and privileges of the redeemed company.

The priest, satisfied that he was healed, commanded to be taken for him that was to be cleansed two birds, alive and clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop. One bird having been killed over running water, the other was dipped in its blood with the cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop, and the individual was sprinkled with blood seven times, after which the living bird was let loose into the open field. To the cleansed leper this may have been a mysterious rite—even the priest may not have been able to interpret it—but to us it has a language, and its voice is one of no uncertain sound. It speaks of death and resurrection—even of His who died and rose again, and of the application of that death in power to the soul by the Holy Ghost through the word. The living bird became identified, by dipping it in the blood and water, with the one which had died; and, flying away from the scene of the death of its fellow, shadowed forth the Lord's resurrection from the dead. The cedar wood and hyssop seem to be emblematic of the products of nature—comprising, as the two ends of a long chain, all that grows on the earth (see 1 Kings iv. 33); the scarlet is an emblem of the glory of the world. All that was of nature, and the glory of the world, he was to view dipped in the blood of the slain bird; as now, what answers to these emblems, should be viewed through the medium of the cross. The cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet were not destroyed, but they appeared, when dipped in the blood and water, in a new light: so should it be with us. That death as a practical truth, when forgotten, must be brought home afresh to the soul in power. So nature has been allowed to work where death should practically have been known; that failure must be judged, and the soul, reminded of it, confess the need of the Lord's death and resurrection first, and the need, too, of their application to its walk on earth.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

GODLY SENSIBILITIES, WITHOUT GODLY ENERGY.

GENESIS xxvii.

WHAT moral illustrations that beautiful book of Genesis does afford us; what a variety of character is exhibited for our warning and instruction. Isaac takes his place in the midst of these characters thus produced and presented—and for a saint we get in him but a poor sample. He had godly *sensibilities* as well as human, amiable, virtues, but he had not godly *energy*. He reminds us of Jehoshaphat in other days. Jehoshaphat had godly sensibilities, but he failed in godly energy. Through vanity he failed; he joined affinity with Ahab, and had not strength to refuse to go to the battle with him. But still he had sensibilities in his soul that were spiritual and of divine workmanship—for in the midst of the prophets of Baal he was not satisfied. He had a witness within that this would not do, and he asked, “Were there not beside a prophet of the Lord.” But strange and humbling to tell it, he would still go to the battle in company with the very Ahab who had thus wounded the spiritual sensibilities that stirred in his soul, and who had thus in infidel revolt from the God of Israel consulted the prophets of Baal. (2 Chron. xviii.)

This was terrible—but this was that king Jehoshaphat.

Isaac, so, on this occasion had his sensibilities, but not his corresponding energies. It was not through vanity, as did Jehoshaphat, that he failed—it was rather through a general relaxed moral tone of soul, that sought ease and indulgence, but while Isaac, with a godly mind, could grieve over Esau's marriage with a daughter of Heth, one of the people of the land, yet, that very Esau is Isaac's object, and keeps and holds the dearest affections of his heart, so that Isaac cannot give himself back for God. He is answered by an earlier Ahab, though the witness within tells him that it is an Ahab that is doing it. He would fain help the profane Esau to a blessing, as Jehoshaphat would help the idolatrous Ahab to the victory.

What sights are these—and what lessons and warnings to our souls.

THE HISTORY OF EVENTS AND EXERCISES.

THE deeper and more varied the exercise, the more peculiar is the expression, *i. e.*, the result indicates the nature of the foundry where it has been wrought.

For every Christian there are two divisions of his history—the history of events, and that of exercises—the history of events is easily written and remembered, though the events themselves be not often easily explained, nor ever truly explained, if the history of the exercises which preceded and accompanied them is not known. To every conscientious soul there is some exercise preceding and accompanying every event; though continually one is more occupied with the mere event than with the education offered to the soul in connection with it. The exercise is properly speaking to prepare one for the event. The Psalms celebrate events; but they detail also the exercises which prepared the souls for the events.

I believe it is healthy for the soul to be exercised, not knowing possibly what is coming; but I do not think it helpful or happy for a soul to go back and dwell, like an aged man, on the feelings of his youth. I think we ought to be able to celebrate the *results* of our exercises, and not reproduce them as if fruitless, for if they have had their proper fruit, they have laid the basis for larger and fuller development of the divine nature in us. We are unprepared for events, if we have no exercises. We are often surprised at some unusual exercise, and it is some subsequent event, (*i. e.* some occurrence, trial, &c.) which explains to us the value of the exercise, which was intended to engage us so with the Lord, that when the event occurred, we might meet it in His grace. Jacob's wrestling was his exercise, it was to prepare him for meeting his brother Esau. If Jacob had not been so unsubdued, his lameness would not afterwards have been so constantly felt; yet it was a blessed time for him—not to be talked of afterwards to promote feelings of self-importance—but to establish his faith in God, who had thus in spite of himself strengthened him for an emergency. The whale's belly was the place and time of exercise for Jonah; learning God there in His absolute mercy and power—he was prepared for the service appointed for him; he only dwells on the exercise as declaring how by it he was led in a state of mind suited to his calling, which was the fruit of it, and to abide

in the fruit of the exercise, and not in the mere operation of it, is the only true place of blessing.

I do not believe any exercises are objectless. Job did not understand the exercises through which his soul in terrible bitterness passed; we have the benefit of his history, and therefore we may say that from whatever cause, ignorance as with him; unbelief as with Jacob; wilfulness as with Jonah; self-corruption as with David and Peter—they always prepare us for another scene or event, and our blessing is to dwell on what they prepare us for, rather than on the conflict we went through, ere we reached the dry land, or the morning dawned upon us.

SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

“R. P.”—What is the difference between the bitter experience of Rom. vii. 14-24; and the conflict of flesh and the Spirit as in Gal. v.? How am I to know in which state I am? Do not both come to the same wretched experience in the end, if in the conflict the flesh gets the upper hand?

A.—First; there is no proper *Christian* conflict in scripture but that of Eph. vi. 12.; this is fighting God’s battles against Satan’s power. Rom. vii. is not *conflict* but *experience*; not the experience of a person at the time of his feeling its bitterness, but that of a delivered man, who narrates what he felt when learning his powerlessness against the sinful nature he had discovered, and the sad evil of the flesh in which dwelt no good thing. As a man who had floundered in a morass, and found every plunge putting him deeper, drops his hands and cries out for a deliverer, who comes and pulls him out and sets him free. The delivered one turns round to thank his deliverer and tell him, now at peace, what he felt when there. He had too much to think of when there, now he relates it on solid ground. So it is experience before deliverance, told by a delivered man. Gal. v. states the fact of the two antagonistic principles—flesh and Spirit—in their contrariety one to the other. Not necessarily conflict. Because walking in the Spirit we are above the influences of flesh, and do not fulfil its lusts.

In Rom. vii. the soul looks back to the struggle before deliverance. In Gal. v. it is the two principles which remain in the delivered man.

When you are referring your acceptance with God to your own state in anywise, you are still under law. By which I mean your responsibility as a child of Adam; not necessarily the law of Sinai: and your experience is then that of Rom. vii. You have not yet bowed to the injunction, "Reckon yourself dead;" and you are consequently not free from the power of the evil nature which harrasses you. You reply, how can I reckon myself dead, when I feel I am alive? I reply, you *never* will "feel" yourself dead! but you must "reckon" it so, and accept God's word as more true than your experience and thoughts. Then you will be able to say, "Yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me."

Souls go through this painful process (Rom. vii.) in order to discover the hopeless evil of the flesh—"That in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no *good* thing." It is bitter to discover right desires and strivings after God and good, and after *all* to be led captive to an evil "I," so that you hate what you do, and the evil nature is your master, and you do what you hate. These experiences do not set you free, but bring you to the discovery of how evil the flesh is, and that even the possession of a new nature gives you *no power!* Then you are forced to say, "Who will deliver?" "Who," brings in another, and your eye is turned off yourself to Him and you are free! In Christ, God has condemned sin in the flesh when He was a sacrifice for it. (Rom. viii. 3.)

The "flesh" in the delivered one is unchanged; he learns growingly the total depravity of his nature. But there is a new "I;" Christ is his life, and the Spirit of God dwells in his body; and there is power in Christ to subdue the evil, by engaging his heart with Christ. The very evil he finds in himself becomes an occasion of communion with Him who has borne its judgment, that He may be delivered from its workings. He does not seek to subdue it himself—that were to labour into sorrow and failure, and recognize *himself* again. He keeps His eye on Christ, and lives by another, and the evil which would spring up if his eye were averted is subdued, and the power of Christ rests upon his weakness, and he can glory in it because of the power of Christ. He never receives intrinsic strength, that would be to take away the joy of living by Christ, and thus an unbroken engagement is needed for victory, and the subjugation of self. He walks in the Spirit and does not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

“A. L. O. C.” What is the difference between Matt. xvi. 19; and xviii. 18? Does the first refer to salvation in connection with the bringing in of the members to be added to the Church; and the second to the discipline of the Assembly? Or, do they both refer anticipatively to discipline?

A :—The first refers to the administration committed personally to Peter, with reference to the “*Kingdom of the heavens.*” The second to disciples—“Two or three” gathered together in Christ’s name, and connected with the “*Assembly;*” and valid at any time for two or three thus gathered.

In both cases it is “*whatsoever*”—thus not referring solely to persons; though slightly differing in form of expression.

To Peter was given—and to him alone of the Twelve—the administration of the kingdom of the heavens, brought in in its “mysteries” (c. xiii.), and commencing at the ascension of the Lord. This power he used, as the first great division of Acts testifies (chs. i-xii). He directed the choice of Matthias, Acts i.; he opened the door to the Jews, Acts ii.; he bound Ananias’ and Sapphira’s sin on them, Acts v.; was chief in directing the choice of deacons, Acts vi; discerned Simon the sorcerer’s state; and with John communicated the Holy Ghost, in Acts viii. He opened the door to the Gentiles, Acts x.; he was one of the chiefest speakers in the conference about the law, in Acts xv., &c. *Whatsoever* he did under heaven’s authority, heaven ratified. Though Peter did not do all heaven did, for all that! This authority and commission was given to none of the apostles but him, and it ended there. This administration was *continued* to none.

The passage in Matt. xviii. 18 is authority to the “assembly,” and applicable to any “assembly” which scripture authorises, though consisting of only two or three. It is *continued* to such. There is no individual authority in it at all. For making requests, and acting under heaven’s authority, the Lord was in the midst, and gave validity to what they did; though, like Peter, heaven might do, and did, a great deal more than the assembly.

It is of much importance to distinguish between the “Kingdom of the heavens,” of which the “keys” were committed to Peter; and the “Church” which Christ builds. It has been remarked that “men do not build with keys,” and the Church is built.

"IN THE MIDST OF THE CHURCH."

ALL the path the saints are treading,
 Trodden by the Son of God :—
 All the feelings they are feeling,
 Felt by Him upon the road ;
 All the darkness and the sorrow,
 All around and all within ;
 All the joy and all the triumph,
 He passed through, apart from sin.

Issuing in resurrection,
 Passing onward to the throne ;
 Having suffered all the judgment,
 Borne the storm of wrath alone ;
 He is able thus to succour
 Those who tread the burning sand,
 Pressing on to resurrection,
 And the seat at God's right hand.

Now He praises,—for the darkness
 And the sorrow all are passed ;
 His, the earnest of our issue,
 We must reach the goal at last.
 Yes, He praises! grace recounting
 All the path already trod,—
 We associated with Him —
 God, our Father and our God.

Join the singing that He leadeth,
 Loud to God our voices raise ;
 Every step that we have trodden,
 Is a triumph of His grace :
 Whether joys, or whether trial,
 All can only work for good,
 For He holdeth all, who loves us,
 And hath bought us with His blood.

It is finished ! It is finished !
 Who can tell redemption's worth ?
 He who knows it leads the singing, —
 Full the joy, as fierce the wrath !
 Taken up in resurrection,
 Desert ways rehearsed above,
 Tell the power of God's salvation,
 And His never ending love.

J. W. T.

“ And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come : and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”
 (Rev. xxii. 17.)

CHRIST'S ABSENCE AND RETURN; THE HOLY GHOST'S PRESENCE.

THERE are three things that seem to me chiefly to give character to the Christian's path on earth, and to form him in it:—The Lord Jesus is not here; the Holy Ghost is here; and, lastly, the Lord Jesus is coming again.

Now before ever the presence or absence of anyone can be anything to me, I must first have learned to know them; and if I have learned to know one that has drawn out my heart to himself and become everything to me, his presence or absence is of the greatest possible moment to me, and gives its whole complexion to my life. Now I ask my own heart, and yours, beloved, How far has the Lord Jesus become known to us, so as that His absence tells upon us, and affects the whole scene of our path through the world? Have we learned to know Him well enough to miss Him? It is a solemn question involving so much for the heart of Christ in us; and I feel must deeply humble each one of us before Him. At times, perhaps, some of us may have known what it is to feel His absence as that of the one we love; but, oh, how quickly He is forgotten again, and the blank scarcely felt at all. Is this, beloved, as it should be? Why is it thus with any who know Him?

But I fear that the truth is, that few of us have the person of the Lord Jesus Himself sufficiently before our hearts. I am not now raising the question whether you and I know His work,—or rather the benefits resulting to us from it. You know your sins are forgiven. You know that your peace is made. But do you know the *One* that has accomplished all for you? Has His love—displayed in what He has done for you—led you on to such a knowledge of Himself, as has made Him everything to you? “Unto you therefore which believe he is the preciousness.” (1 Pet. ii. 7.)

It may well humble us in reading the Gospels, to find how hearts there were attracted to Christ for what they found in Him, when they could have known so little of Him or of His work, compared with what we might know.

Look at the two disciples in John i.—John the Baptist's eye marked Jesus as He walked—he is filled with the sight, and cries as though involuntarily, “Behold the Lamb of God!” The Spirit of God bears home to the hearts of two

of his disciples these precious words. It bursts in upon them what Christ was, and at once detaches them from all else, even from their religious teacher, (often the hardest link to break,) by attaching them to Him. "And they followed Jesus!"

But the Son of Man had not where to lay His head in the world that was all His own. It had rejected Him; will it make any difference to them? "They abode with him that day," casting in their lot with the One that had now become their all. Precious unison with the heart of God that found all its delight in that lowly One. Well does the Holy Ghost take care to record the very hour of the day on which, in the midst of the heartless rejection of the world, two hearts, found that in Jesus which attracted them away from every other object.

Look again at Mary at the sepulchre in John xx. "The disciples went away again to their own home," but Mary had no home for her heart where Jesus was not. "She stood without at the sepulchre weeping." She wept because she could not find the dead body of her Lord. Your intelligence might readily rebuke her tears: but there is something more precious to Christ than intelligence, and that is a heart that loves Him. The tears told Him of one that loved Him on earth, and missed Him now that He was dead, or that she knew not where to find Him. All her affections were about that spot where they had laid Him. Bright heavenly visions are seen; angels are at the tomb; but what are they to one who has known Christ—they can but say, "Woman, why weepest thou?"

Beloved, what place has *our* risen Lord revealed to us now from the glory where He is, with its light, shed back on all that He has done, in our hearts? He is gone from the earth, where we are still. Do we miss Him? Not that I would undervalue intelligence. Only intelligence of Christ risen could have dried Mary's tears. But do our hearts and consciences keep pace with our intelligence? Yet there is a necessary condition of being able to love Christ, and, therefore, miss Him here; and that connected with intelligence of what He has done for us. It is that we should be free to be occupied with Him. Now, this would be impossible if there was still a question as to our interests for eternity to be settled with God. But even when Christ is known as the one that has borne our sins

and put them away, there is still a deeper need, in order that the heart should be set fully free for Christ; namely, that we should know how God has dealt with the nature of sin within.

Christ has not only "loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood;" "God hath made him sin for us, who knew no sin;" so that He has there executed judgment on *all that I am*, as well as upon all that I have done. He has judged *me*, condemned and crucified *me*. Thus, in the cross of Christ a full end has been made before God for the believer of "sin in the flesh." He can say, "I am crucified with Christ." (Gal. ii. 20) Until he sees this there will be inevitably the attempt to improve and make something of the flesh; but this is impossible, and the result is, that the more sincere the effort the more intense the wretchedness. "Oh, wretched man that I am," may then lead on, through the Lord's mercy, to the cry of "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But until I see that the first man is gone from before God in the judgment of the cross, and that I am now in the second Man—Christ risen out from that judgment—the flesh still in me, but I am no longer in the flesh—self is still the object, and not Christ.

So blessed and perfect is the way that God delivers us from all that would otherwise come in between us and Christ, that the affections may be free to go out after Him. All *my need* being more than met by Christ, I may now be occupied in learning of the One that has met it. He has loved and given Himself for us, and now counts upon our hearts for Himself.

Hear Him in John xiv., "Yet a *little* while I am with you Let not your hearts be troubled." Oh, beloved, has His absence ever caused us a tear? It is in the measure we have known the sorrow of His absence that we can enter into the provisions He has made for our comfort while He is away—opening the Father's house to us; with the promise of His coming, and of the Holy Ghost being given to throw us into that wondrous circle of Divine intimacy, that we may know Him as we never could have known Him on earth.

And this is just the significance He gives His Supper in 1 Cor. xi. 23, 26. Listen to the voice that, speaking to Paul from the glory, tells us what we are to Him even there. "This do in remembrance of me." He cannot bear

to be forgotten by those He loves on earth to the end. Worthless hearts, we may say truly. Yes ; but Jesus cares for them—He has died to make them His, and counts on our remembrance of Him—giving us only that that may be the sweet expression of it. If the Supper of the Lord means anything, then, as we partake of it, it means this—that we love Him, and miss Him in the world that has cast Him out. He invests it with just this character Himself : “ For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord’s death till he come.”

It is the weeds of the Church’s mourning in a scene that has been desolated for her by the death of Christ, and in which she finds no rest for her heart, only lingering round the spot where His Cross and grave expresses its heart towards Him. We know Him by faith in the glory, and have rest in communion with Him there : but this only makes the earth’s rejection of Him more keenly felt, and the cross, that by which the world is crucified to us, and we unto the world, as we turn to our path through it. “ Away with him, away with him ; crucify him, crucify him,” rings in our ears. It is the judgment of the world ; and the links that connected us with it are broken. The Cross, the death of Christ, henceforth characterizes the one that loves Him. We call in our hearts from the blighted scene, and get away in spirit as far as possible from it, only seeking more complete identification with Him in His rejection, as the best and brightest portion He could give us in such a world. It is not the attainment of an advanced Christian, but what Christ looks for from every heart that knows Him.

Well—He is gone ; and the opened heavens shew Him to us, to whom the earth refused a place, raised as Man to the highest point of heavenly glory. And this in consequence of having glorified God on earth as to every question of sin, so that He is able to give us a place with Himself there. But for a little while we tread the scene of *His rejection* ; yet not to be left comfortless in the desolation of it.

This brings us to the second thing that forms the Christian’s path. *God the Holy Ghost is here.* And if we have challenged our hearts as to the effect of the *absence of Christ* upon them, it becomes us now solemnly to ask, What sense have we of the *presence of the Holy Ghost*, that other Comforter? I am not now speaking of the *work* of the Holy

Ghost in quickening souls, but of the presence of a Divine Person here, of whom Jesus said, "The world cannot receive him, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you and *shall be in you.*" (John xiv. 17.) This is consequent upon the glory of the Son of Man at the right hand of God; for before His ascension it could only be said—"the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified:" (John vii. 35) and the Holy Ghost's presence in the world ever since has been the witness of that glory.

What an important bearing this truth must have upon our path, beloved. The Lord has even said, "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)

But, oh, how sad it is to find that for the most part Christians scarcely know whether there be any Holy Ghost, as for any practical recognition of His being here. Thousands of sincere people pray for Him to come, as though the Lord had forgotten His promise these eighteen hundred years—or else that He be not taken from them, as if He had been unfaithful to it, now that He has sent Him—"He shall abide with you for ever."

Beloved, what sense have we in our souls of the presence of God, the Holy Ghost—of One that links us with Christ where He is? "At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you"—making the scene of the glory our familiar dwelling-place, if the Cross has desolated the earth for us. Of One who at the same time binds Himself up with our every interest here, making our joys and sorrows His own—Himself the power of the voice of praise or sweet melody of the heart; or, on the other hand, of the scarce uttered sigh of infirmity and need, which is nevertheless His intercession for us.

Of One who, uniting us to the Lord in glory, makes our very bodies on earth His temple, the seal of God marking us already in Him—the earnest of all that is yet before us; of One who is the first fruits of that glory, that makes the *desert* more real as we pass along to it, groaning within ourselves as we wait the adoption, the redemption of our body.

Of One who nevertheless is the power of the life we have from God, rising up to its source and level in Him, so as even now to be within us a well of living water, springing

up to everlasting life, of which, as we drink, we never thirst again.

The power, too, of the overflow of the joy that goes up to the Father in the worship that He seeks; while there are yet out of the abundance of it "rivers" flowing out in the desert.

Oh, beloved, is it a reality with us that the Holy Spirit has come down to this earth, and dwells within us? He brought us the sweet tidings of the One that is gone, that has won our hearts for Him. He now takes of the things of Christ, and shows them to us, that He may engage us more deeply with Him every moment. He has not come to supplant Christ in our hearts, to present another object to them, but to absorb them with *the One* we have.

Could you tarry "ten days" in the scene from which He calls you away to such an One? Oh, beloved, had we even the decision of Rebecca for Isaac, not a moment longer could we consent to a tie holding its power to connect us with a place where He is not. We will go to the One whom, having not seen, we love; albeit the desert lies between. But the Holy Ghost will keep us sweet company by the way, be it short or long—never ceasing, if we only let Him, to occupy us with Christ.

Thus it is that the Lord has shut us up to Him for comfort. How far is this practically so with us—all comfort in Jesus' absence flowing from the Holy Ghost's presence with us? How sad when we think how often we grieve Him, and thus hinder all enjoyment of this rich provision of our Lord's love. Too often all positive testimony of Christ to us is hindered by our allowance of the flesh; and the Holy Ghost has to turn to negative this, and thus days and weeks are lost never to be recalled.

Oh, beloved! let us keep watch that our eye may be fixed on Christ, that our ear be only open to His voice, that our outward ways may manifest Him; the inward movements of the heart that they be formed by His word, lest we lightly grieve the blessed Spirit that dwells within us, and so hinder the whole power of our present blessing.

Then, again, if we pass from individual blessing—flowing from the presence and action of the Holy Ghost—there is "The house of God," "In whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit." (Ephesians ii. 22.) Committed to man to build (1 Corinthians iii.) he has terribly

failed in it, and admitted all kinds of corruption; but God, in long-suffering, lingers in it still by His Spirit on earth, although a man must purge himself from all that is unsuited to His presence to enjoy it. But, looking deeper with God, in the midst of the outward profession, there is that which is still more precious, and which is out of man's reach to mar: there is the body of Christ constituted by the Holy Ghost. "For by one Spirit have we all been baptized into one body, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Corinthians xii. 13.) Such is the bond that unites all saints upon earth with their Head in heaven and one with another, in spite of all that by which Satan has for a little time apparently divided them. But is it only given us to know this for privilege and joy? Surely, beloved! such a truth has its practical responsibilities, and to these we are summoned in Ephesians iv. 1-3. How far have we owned them, and thrown all that we have, and are, by His grace, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Few may be found with heart and courage for such a path, apart from all that disowns it, in the varied unities of man; but the Lord Himself will be there, with the two or three that are gathered to His name. What more could we need for joy to the full till we see Him face to face?

Nor has He left us without the ministry needed by us till then. Tongues and miracles, manifestations of the Spirit's presence to them that believe not, may be gone; but all that is most precious and requisite for the saints remains, for the Holy Ghost is still here "dividing to every man severally as he will."

Again, I ask, do we own Him in all this, or are we still consenting to what man has substituted in room of the Holy Ghost?

But I pass on from a subject of wide bearing and range on our walk as Christians, to speak of that which is given us to fix our hearts in hope and expectation—the coming of our Lord Jesus. It is linked with all that we have seen as to the effect upon us of His absence, and the presence of the Holy Ghost. In the measure in which we *miss* Him we shall long for Him to come again: and the Holy Ghost revealing Him to us from where He is, only makes Him more necessary to us, and therefore more missed in the place of His rejection. Besides, He dwells in us to bring us into the

consciousness of present relationship with Him as His body, His bride, and to form our affections according to it. Has Christ loved her, and given Himself for her? Is she the all-absorbing interest of His heart even though He must be away? Has He put off the kingdom and possession of all things in heaven and earth that He may possess her heart—now calling her into His own path of rejection, but by-and-bye to share His throne, and crown, and kingdom? Does the Holy Ghost dwell in our hearts to be the power of our consciousness that we are all this and more than words can tell to Him? And is His absence nothing to us? Is His long tarrying nothing to us? Oh, beloved, “the Spirit and the bride say, come.” If He waits, He prays that our hearts may be directed into *His patience*. But He closes the Book of God with the promise—the last words that were meant to ring in our ears, and have such sweetness to our hearts, and sustain us while we wait for Him—“Surely I come quickly.” It was not for us to say “quickly,” though we felt it; but He knew it and said, “quickly.” Oh, has He had the deep longing response from us that He puts upon our lips—“Even so come, Lord Jesus!”

Do we miss Him on the earth? He counts on it. Listen—“I will come again and receive you unto *myself*, that *where I am*, there ye may be also.” He misses us in the heavens. But it shall not be always so—“Father I will,” and it is the word of one whose will none dare gainsay, “that those also whom thou hast given me be *with me* where I am.” Ah! it was not in mercy only that He saved us, it was in love, that must have us now *for Himself*, and *with Him* for ever! He *cares* to have us with Himself! Who could have conceived such a thing—after all our faithlessness and treachery of heart, and constant backsliding and denial of Him! Oh, if we only *believed* His love and the place He has given us in it, there must be a response in us: and this is the spring and power of the hope of His coming.

See, too, how blessedly it takes us out of the earth and its objects, interests, and hopes—keeps us, as waiting, loose to all that out of which the One for whom we wait comes to take us.

The object of our hope, too, has an immensely formative power over us, even if it be in earthly things. How important, then, that He should be ever brightly before our eyes, as the one only hope we have. Then shall we not only hold

the doctrine of it, but be "Like unto men that wait for their Lord."

Nor will it be to fold our hands in sloth and indolence; but, as really waiting for Him, we shall be alive to all His interests here, finding it our solace in His absence, that we have something to be doing for Him—something in which we can express our love. And it will not be *anything* we take into our heads to do, but we shall be seeking out *the thing that suits His heart, to spend, and be spent in it.*

How precious to the Lord to find one thus employed on earth. He looks from the glory for such as love Him, and comes and manifests Himself to them. Do we not hear Him say, "This do in remembrance of me," and again, "Ye do shew forth the Lord's death till he come." "Is it not as though He said, "Do they miss me," "Do they long for me to come again." Oh, beloved, what answer do our hearts give to the challenges of His love?

J. A. T.

EXTRACT: BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER.

1 Cor. x.

BAPTISM and the Lord's Supper are for the wilderness. One introduces into the wilderness, but it is Christ's death, not mine only. I thereon reckon myself dead as a consequence; planted in baptism in the likeness of His. But we have not in Romans *resurrection* with Him; and even when we have, as I think we must say in Colossians ii., no ascension, no Canaan.

As the one brings into, the other sustains in the wilderness. So we show forth Christ's death till He come. I am on the earth, but in the consciousness of being a member of the one body, which implies union with Christ; but it is on earth I celebrate it, not in heaven; *i.e.*, not as being there myself. I look at the humiliation as over with Him, but remember Him in it. Our *service* in it is simply owning the preciousness of His death till He come. Our *state* is in resurrection, but we are occupied, and celebrate His having been once down here, and show forth His death. The question is, Where are we when we celebrate it? In the wilderness,

A READING ON THE PSALMS.

(BOOK III.; PSALMS LXXIII.-LXXXIX.)

IN this book the general interests of Israel are in view in connection with the house of David.

The house of David is distinct from Israel. Israel had failed in responsibility, and Israel was gone, as Israel, before David's time. In the opening of the 1st book of Samuel you will see that the *priesthood*, which was the relationship between the people and God, had utterly failed, the Ark of the Covenant falls into the hands of the Philistines, and "I-chabod" is the sentence pronounced upon the people. Then we have *prophecy*, which is a sovereign way of God's interposition to recall to relationship with Himself.

The history of David is grace working in power in a sovereign way, to bring in blessing and to renew God's connection with Israel, resting now on the faithfulness of the house of David.

In this book we shall get out to Israel, and find less personal connection with Christ, and more the general ways of God going out to all people.

Psalm lxxiii. We find this difference at once in the opening of this psalm, "Truly God is good to Israel." It is still the godly remnant, but less connected with Christ. The saint is perplexed at the prosperity of the wicked. The body of the people is in unbelief. We know from Isaiah xviii., the people will be brought back to their land in unbelief. In the 4th verse the Lord keeps aloof, not acknowledging them; then the beasts of the earth and the fowls of heaven possess them. It is the inroad of the nations, but in v. 7 the Lord owns them, and the remnant inherits Mount Zion. When Israel is *owned* you find in the prophets that the Assyrian is the enemy, and when Israel is *disowned* we have the Beast, as Nebuchadnezzar.

Psalm lxxiv. complains of the hostile desolation of the sanctuary, when rebuilt in the land. All public Jewish worship is laid low. You will find that the enquiry, "How long?" is a technical term in Prophets and Psalms, and in those who say it, it is a proof of faith. They know Jehovah will not give up His people. In the trouble faith cries, "How long?" because it knows there must be an end. You find it in Isaiah vi., "Then said I, Lord, how long?" In Luke xviii. 8 the Lord says, "When the Son of man cometh,

shall he find faith in the earth?" Such will be the condition into which the testimony will have fallen, that there will be scarcely any amongst the remnant with courage to say, "How long?" *v.* 9, "Neither is there among us any who knoweth how long." But these Psalms are written to prevent faith failing.

We have the Assyrian coming up to Jerusalem in this Psalm. He comes up twice, the first time takes Jerusalem, the second time he finds the Lord there. You will find both in Isaiah. In chap. xxviii. the Assyrian takes the city, and in chap. xxix. he finds the Lord there.

Psalm lxxv. Here the Messiah is introduced as speaking, though the Psalm commences with the remnant. The judgments of God introduce Messiah to the kingdom. He is introduced as delivering the remnant out of the difficulty. He receives the congregation, then upright judgment will be executed.

Psalm lxxvi. Here, by the intervention of Jehovah, we get the deliverance from the assembled kings, which we read of in Isaiah xxix.

Psalm lxxvii. Gives us the working of faith in this time of trouble, see *vv.* 9, 10.

Psalm lxxviii. The remnant trace back all the history of Israel, and how sovereign grace was brought in by David and Mount Zion, which gives the principle of God's grace delivering by power, when both Israel and Judah had totally failed in responsibility.

Psalm lxxix. This is the cry of the remnant in Israel, when under the power of the hostile nations in the last days.

Psalm lxxx. This Psalm is a striking example of how their minds go back to Israel of old in the wilderness. See *v.* 2, the three tribes, Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, were nearest the Ark, and when the camp moved these Tribes were immediately next the Ark, behind the Tabernacle, and the Sanctuary went immediately before them on the march of the camp.

Have we any scripture to say when the Ten Tribes will return?

No; Ezekiel xxxvii. defines the circumstances of Israel's return, but not the time. We have in Ezekiel, Judah and Israel his companions as one stick, distinguished from the *whole* house of Israel in the other stick. We have at the Lord's first coming, Simeon and Anna of the tribe of Asher,

in Luke ii., among the godly remnant, waiting for redemption in Israel.

How far do the remnant know Christ as the "Man of thy right hand," in Ps. lxxx. 17?

I cannot tell. It is all for them, but probably, as is the case with us, it will differ in every one according to the measure of spiritual intelligence in each.

The only things as a matter of revelation which are not in the Old Testament are the Church, and the heavenly Priesthood of Christ.

The cry of the Psalm is occasioned by the great distress of Israel (see *vv.* 12, 13.) You must remember that Babylon and Assyria, in the last days, are one against another. Anti-Christ is the Imperial Roman Beast's lieutenant in Judæa. Assyria resists the Beast, and all nations come up. Gog is the Assyrian of the last days; the territory now occupied by Russia. We have in Ezekiel the "Prince of Rosh," (translated "chief prince") "Meshech and Tubal."

Psalm lxxx. celebrates the coming in of God. The new moon is the symbol of Israel re-appearing on the scene—the *new* not the *full* moon. It is their restoration before the day of Atonement, not their full blessing.

In Lev. xxiii., which records the seven feasts, there is a long interval after the Passover and the feast of Pentecost, when there is no feast at all. In the seventh month, which gives us complete fulfilled time, we find the feast of Trumpets followed by the day of Atonement, and the feast of Tabernacles, which last brings in the Millennium.

In this Psalm then we have Israel coming again on the scene. They had failed when redeemed out of Egypt of old, still they would appear again to reflect the light of Jehovah's countenance.

Psalm lxxxii. is the Messiah judging among the authorities of all the world. He judges among the gods of Israel, and then the world; and He inherits all nations.

Psalm lxxxiii. The last conspiracy is judged in Idumæa; the Assyrian joins, and then men know that Jehovah is Most High over all the earth. Melchisedec gave Him this title, when he was His priest upon earth. It is not a title of proper relationship. He was the "Almighty" with the fathers, "Jehovah" with Israel, He is the "Father" with us. He will be the "Most High over all the earth" in the Millennium. Up to this Psalm, save when looking back or looking

forward, the cry of the people is addressed to God, as not being in possession of covenant blessings.

Psalm lxxxiv. As the result of *v.* 18 in the previous Psalm, we see them in this going to Jerusalem to worship. "Assur," mentioned in *v.* 8 of last Psalm, is destroyed, and so they can come into Jerusalem again.

Psalm lxxxv. In all the Psalms now we are in this time of war and deliverance. Still the deliverance they celebrate is prophetic, for after all they are ushered into in spirit they say, "Show us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation." They are back in the land, and yet are looking for full deliverance, prophetically.

Psalm lxxxvi. Here the Psalmist triumphs in Jehovah, and is looking for Jehovah in the midst of his troubles.

Psalm lxxxvii. He boasts in Zion in contrast with all the other places of man's pride. God's people are born there. Doubtless *v.* 6 refers to Christ Himself.

Is this the Millennium?

No. It is prophesied of, but you never get it *come* in the Psalms, nor yet in Daniel. Prophecy is not needed when we are in the blessing!

Psalm lxxxviii. Here the remnant is in the depth of conviction of sin under the law.

Psalm lxxxix. Takes up God's mercies, and we find Christ comes in, and that they all centre in Him. *v.* 19. Then thou spakest in vision to thy *Holy One*, same word as that translated *mercy* in *v.* 1. In *v.* 18 the "Holy One" is really Jehovah, and another word altogether. It is here the cutting off of David's house on the ground of failure under responsibility, and then taking it up again in Christ. When Messiah came He ought to have been received, and so He would have established David's house, but He was rejected, and the house of David was judged. But here it is set up in Christ, the centre of God's mercy, so we have in the Acts, Christ in resurrection as "The sure mercies of David!"

FRAGMENT.

There is no more common device of Satan than to seek the destruction of a divine testimony, by evil insinuations against them who render it.

THOUGHTS ON SACRIFICES—No. 5.

LEV. xiii, xiv.

(Concluded from page 94).

BUT this work of restoring an individual to outward communion with God's saints, is one for which we must be indebted to the ministrations of others. "Restore such an one in the spirit of meekness." "Confirm your love toward him." So the leper stood by whilst the bird was killed for him, and he was sprinkled with its blood. But, this service performed, he was able to act, and the first thing he did was to wash his clothes, shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he might be clean; after which he could enter the camp. This was the work of the first day, and this the happy result. Thus, as exhibited in type, the death and resurrection of the Lord and the individual's identification with Him being acknowledged, cleansing himself is the next and proper work.

Thus far, as regards the sacrifices to be offered up, the cleansing of the leper as well as of the house are accomplished in the same manner. To both what is the real standing—is thus typified, as well as the need of that death, and the application of the word by the Spirit, to cleanse from the unclean, which necessitated such stringent measures of isolation. For the individual other sacrifices had to be offered up, as he typified one who had transgressed. But the house, as we here see, though there were none but clean stones in it, because the disease had manifested itself in the wall, the sacrifice of the bird was necessary ere it would be acknowledged as clean.

Turning back to the leper, he is in the camp a clean man, yet not at home there, having to tarry abroad out of his tent seven days. Whatever might have been his thought of the leprosy God shows what He thinks of it, and of that of which it is the figure. So, besides the recognition of the standing, there must be typified the acknowledgment of the trespass, and how alone that can be forgiven. This work began on the seventh day, as the man manifested his willingness to cleanse himself by shaving all the hair from his head, beard, and eyebrows, emblems of natural strength and personal comeliness, and by washing his clothes and his flesh in water. That done the special sacrifice of the eighth day remained to be offered up.

On the first day the priest went out to the leper, on the eighth day the former leper takes his place at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, but only with the appointed sacrifices. Without them he could have had no business there, for on the ground of sacrifice, and on that alone could he again stand at the place where the people assembled to meet with God. Had he presumed to come there on the ground of having washed his flesh, and shaved off all his hair, would he have been received? Assuredly not. Without he had washed and shaved it would have been presumption to have drawn near; but without the sacrifices as well he had no right to approach; and even with this he needed the priest to present him before the Lord. Now, however, rightly presented he stood where he might often have stood before without the need of the sacrifice, or any priestly presentation, and learned that a way back into God's presence there was, but death alone could open it. A trespass offering, a sin-offering, a burnt-offering, and a meat-offering, the Lord appointed for his cleansing. "And the priest shall take one he lamb, and offer him for a trespass-offering, and the log of oil, and wave them for a wave-offering before the Lord. And he shall slay the lamb," etc. The significance of the order of these sacrifices we can well understand, since the trespass-offering takes the precedence. The significance, too, of the action of the priest we may note, as he brought near the trespass-offering with the log of oil, and waved them, the animal whole and still alive, before the Lord. After this it was killed. Nowhere else have we such an action as this, the waving of the whole animal alive before the Lord. Can we not interpret its meaning! The leper typifies one who has failed to own himself belonging to the Lord, as a man on earth, *i.e.*, on this side the grave. This failure is a type acknowledged in the waving of the animal before death. Its death next took place, and the sprinkling of its blood prefiguring to us in the waving what the redeemed ought to be, and in the death of the animal shadowing out the death of the substitute, and the atonement by His blood. The failure requires the death of the substitute, that restoration may take place, but that same death God uses to reconsecrate, as it were, to His service the one who has been acting after the energy of his own will. Therefore the priest took of that blood, and put it on the tip of the right ear of him that was to be

cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the great toe of his right foot; and then anointed each place, where the blood had been put, with the oil. "And the remnant of the oil that is in the priest's hand he shall pour upon the head of him that is to be cleansed; and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord." How richly God provides for the one who has so grievously sinned does the leper's offering teach us. Consecrated, as it were, afresh by the remembrance of the sacrifice, the full divine energy of the spirit of service is seen in the type graciously poured out on the head. After this the other offerings were offered up as prescribed, the work of restoration was complete, the leper was clean. Healed by God outside the camp, the way for re-entering pointed out and conformed to, full restoration to his tent took place, with perfect competency for service. The leprosy itself was removed, and every disqualification it had entailed was removed likewise, and the man could feel himself at home in the camp; but only on the ground of sacrifice. To the sin-offering the words were, "It shall be forgiven him;" here it is, "He shall be clean"—each in their place significant of what they prefigure.

But, whilst we see God's mercy portrayed, which will not rest satisfied till the leper is completely reinstated in his tent and position among the people, we also learn in the subsequent verses how God took knowledge of the circumstances of the individual. If he could not get all that was prescribed, God would receive smaller offerings for the meat, sin, and burnt offerings. None should be kept outside because they had not the means of being fully reinstated. Yet all had to bring the sacrifice appointed for the first day, and the lamb for the trespass-offering. These could not be dispensed with, for all alike had to own by the type what the ground of standing is, and the need of a sacrifice for restoration. How true are the words of the woman of Tekoah—and this ordinance of the leper reminds us of them—"God deviseth means that His banished be not expelled from Him." (2 Sam. xiv. 14.) C. E. S.

FRAGMENT.

There is not a moment of each day but which is either an opportunity for a victory or a defeat; for obedience or disobedience.

THE PREPARATION OF A SOUL FOR
DEPARTURE.

To see earth and heaven, each in its true condition, is the first and greatest element in this preparation. We must learn *practically* the true condition of the earth, and then faith has scope, so to speak, to occupy us with heaven. It is slowly and painfully that we learn to see earth as it is. "The earth hath he given to the children of men." (Psa. cxv. 16). And consequently the heart of man finds it no easy thing to surrender its natural and rightful tie to earth; and it does not surrender it until it learns, not only that heaven is in view, but that the earth itself, instead of being a place of rest and attraction is one of tumult, evil, and sorrow; *then* the promise and hope of heaven comes to be appreciated and enjoyed. This is the practical way. . . . The soul must learn that there is death here, and life only with God. What an impression Stephen had of man on the earth, before his soul was filled with the glory of Christ; he stood, as it were, on the verge of the land of Israel, the last patriot. He reviewed the rebellions of his nation, and how God's mercies had been forfeited; a terrible panorama had been stretched out before his soul, and he arrives at the conclusion that all was in vain, as God's servant, as a Jew, as a patriot, the desire of his eyes is swept away and gone for ever. To him thus widowed, heaven is opened, and there is disclosed to him the place where Jesus is; filled and engrossed with this sight he finishes his course on earth. Passing through great afflictions, but all unmoved by them, he is prepared for departure, he is full of where he is going, and sees it as he has seen earth, in its true condition.

Now, Stephen felt what this earth was before the heaven was opened to him; yet, he suffered more from earth *afterwards*, or rather he was placed in circumstances of greater suffering, though no doubt he felt the suffering *less* than before the preparation was perfected. The earth, unhesitatingly and absolutely surrendered, and heaven the stay, and support, and joy of his soul.

One must not go to heaven as if accepting it, merely because one cannot stay on earth. It must be, "I long to depart and be with Christ, which is far better." (Phil. i 23.) This Paul uttered in the prison at Rome.

Each of us will be prepared in a different way. Jacob

was prepared by the death of Rachael ; Moses was sent to Pisgah ; Elijah to journey from Gilgal to Bethel, and back over Jordan to the wilderness ; Paul in the prison ; and Stephen rejected by his nation ; all and each are taught that there is nothing here to which the heart, like Lot's wife, would look back to as leaving it with regret. Each had entered into death here, and life was therefore all before him. And this is true preparation.

FRAGMENTS.

“The world” is a vast system, built up by Satan, wherein man departed from God, to satisfy “the flesh” in man. Therefore we have “the world,” “the flesh,” and “the devil.”

Let us remember that there is no battle so decisive with others, but what is an outward reflection of the secret victory over self with the Lord.

SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

L. T.—Would you please define in some measure the terms “kingdom of heaven” and “kingdom of God?” Sometimes they seem interchangeable, and other times not so. Matthew chiefly uses the former, and he only ; Luke the latter, as others too.

A.—“The kingdom of the heavens”—the true rendering—is only named in Matthew. It is a *dispensational* term ; while “the kingdom of God” is a *moral* thing. In keeping with the gospels you name, you find the terms used. Matthew groups his subjects together dispensationally ; Luke does so morally ; both departing from the *historic* order, to which Mark keeps more than any of the others.

With a Jew the term “kingdom of the heavens” was familiar. (See Deut. xi. 21 ; Psalm lxxxix. 29 ; Daniel ii. 44 ; iv. 26-35, and other Scriptures.) It is the “rule of the heavens” owned on earth. It was announced as “*at hand*,” not as *come*, by John the Baptist (Matt. iii.) ; by the Lord (Matt. iv.) ; by the Twelve (Matt. x.) Rejected ; and in chap. xii., which *ends* the gospel to the Jew, the curse of Antichrist is pronounced upon the nation, and a Remnant owned who obey His Father's will. Then, in chap. xiii., the Lord begins a new action—as a sower ; and the kingdom of the heavens takes a new character, which the prophets did not contemplate: a sphere overrun with evil, and a mingled crop—the “mysteries of the kingdom of the

heavens;" and instead of the true subjects taking their origin from *Abraham*, they do so from the *Word* of God, which Christ sows; others accepting the authority of Christ nominally, as professors.

In Luke, who is the great moralizer, the term used is "kingdom of God," of which He could say in answer to the inquiry of the Pharisees if it came with observation, that it was "in the midst of you" (Luke xvii. 21), for God was there in Christ; while of the "kingdom of the heavens" it could only be said it is "at hand;" and it did not (and could not) commence until the ascension of Christ. To have come in during His presence it would have been the kingdom of the *earth*, so to say. His authority and that of the heavens was owned, even before the coming of the Holy Ghost, during the ten days of interval, by the disciples, who waited by His directions for that coming. It will run on in its present confused state until the Millennium; hence a good margin of time *after* the Church's history is over, as it had commenced before it.

You get two places where it gets a moral character from Paul—"The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17); "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (1 Cor. iv. 20). It is the "exhibition or manifestation of the ruling power of God under any circumstances." A man must be born afresh to "see," or "enter in" to it, in the verity of it (John iii.); not so of the kingdom of heaven, in which tares and wheat mingle. Souls may profess and submit to God's kingdom, as merely profession. Hence, in Luke xiii. 18, he uses the term kingdom of God where nominal profession is noted in the parable, and where the "kingdom of the heavens" might be used interchangeably. Still, none but the saints would be *really* of it, as born of God.

When the Millennium comes in, the present confused state of the kingdom of the heavens will be set aside by the judgment of the quick; and it will then be displayed in its verity in a two-fold, heavenly, and earthly state of things. The Son of Man gathers out of *His* kingdom—*i.e.*, the *earthly* part of it (see Ps. viii.; Heb. ii.)—all stumbling-blocks, and them that do iniquity; and then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father—*i.e.*, the *heavenly* sphere of it. (See Matt. xiii. 41-43.)

VICTORIES.

HEB. XI.

Thou Living God ! how blest are all
 Who make Thy name their sure defence :
 On Thee, in trouble's day, they call,
 They stand in Thine omnipotence :
 They walk in holy peace and power,
 Upheld by Thine unwearied arm :
 They sink not in temptation's hour,
 No ills of time their heart alarm.

Thus were Thy martyr-saints of old
 Made out of nature's weakness, strong,
 Their righteous spirits waxing bold,
 Thy fear their care the whole day long :
 They heeded not the voice of men,
 They heard not this world's praise or blame ;
 Thy light was on their goings then,
 They lived Thy greatness to proclaim.

O God ! Thy tale of former days
 With very shame our souls hath stirred :
 Are we devoted to Thy praise ?
 Are we impartial in Thy Word ?
 Alas, do we behave as those
 Created, chosen for Thine own ?
 Dead to the world, its joys, its woes ;
 Alive to Thee, to Thee alone ?

Where are the Nazarites whom Thou
 Didst cleanse—Thy hidden foes to meet ?
 Thou only, Lord, canst tell them now,
 Men do not know them in the street.
 Are we, Thy servants, seen to stand
 Attentive to Thy guiding eye—
 One host, prepared, at Thy command,
 To do, to suffer, or to die ?

O God of Truth ! the same to-day
 As through the ne'er returning years,
 In ruin still art Thou our stay :
 Thou driest still the mourner's tears.
 Thy mercy triumphs o'er our sin :
 Thy glory shines all clouds above ;
 Thou endest what Thou dost begin—
 Eternal Wisdom : Light and Love !

FRAGMENT.

The new nature is one that hates evil: the Holy Ghost dwelling in us is the power to do the good.

"PEACE BE UNTO YOU."

LUKE XXIV. 36-53.

It is a blessed thing, beloved friends, when one can come with distinct authority from God, and say, "Peace be unto you." It is the more striking because the Lord, unless anticipatively, never said it before He died and rose again, because He had not made peace.

The word peace is a very full and perfect word—far more so than joy. I may have joy, and yet many things may come in to trouble me at the same time; but if I have peace, there is no trouble. When God speaks peace, there is no disquiet left at all. Trouble there must be: "in the world ye shall have tribulation." The disciples were in a great deal of trouble, they were losing Him who had said, "Fear not"—and "let not your heart be troubled." He was full of grace, tenderness, and mercy, but still He could not speak of peace till the time of His departure; but as soon as He was going away, His word was so full and complete, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you,"* and when risen from the dead He comes and speaks of it as a present thing—peace *with* God, and peace *from* God; and remark, there was no ignorance in Him as to God's requirement, no deception as to man's state. He could say, "no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the son of man which is in heaven." He could tell to the full what heaven and God's nature required, as well as what was in man; and knowing all perfectly, He could come to the poor ignorant disciples, and pronounce, "Peace be unto you."

It is a great thing to have it directly from the Lord Himself—not merely grace and loving-kindness, but peace.

Many souls have tasted the graciousness of Christ, and been attracted by it, who could not say they have "peace with God." He sees all that we are—everything—our thoughts of course, long before—sees us thoroughly and completely, and yet we are in His presence without a veil!

Under the law such was not the case: then there was a veil—that which hid God from man; even the priests could not go into the presence of God, "the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet

* In the thirteenth to the seventeenth of John, He looks beyond the cross.

made manifest." (Heb. ix. 8.) The high priest alone went in once every year.

There was a law come out from God which required from man, what man ought to be, but God was hidden behind a veil. That is the state of the unconverted now; but many a converted man has still the thought that he has to look to the state he is in, and that there is a time coming when he will have to stand before God, and will then know how it will turn out with him. That is judgment, but not present peace. God does not now prescribe a course of conduct which will be judged when we come to Him; but reveals a present blessing, so as to bring the soul into His presence through the work of Christ.

It is not help I want—when I find my conscience in the presence of God, and all things naked and opened before Him. If I get there, I am there; and help will not do me then. The question is, what I *am* before God when I am there, and how I can stand before Him? We are all sinners, we have not kept the law, I speak now of the conscience in the presence of God. God knows everything about you: are you still insensible to your sin, still unawakened? You have not kept the law; it was made for the unrighteous, the law prohibits you from having a single evil desire. Do you love your neighbour as yourself? You know you do not, you do not feel the loss of your neighbour's fortune as your own. Well, says the law, you are under a curse, that's all! you are not loving your neighbour as yourself. Not one who reads this can say he is. This world would be a kind of paradise, if men loved their neighbours as themselves, but they are not doing it.

The law tells you to love God with all your heart, but nobody loves God with all his heart—it is all a delusion to think it, and you do not love your neighbour as yourself. We have coveting in our hearts. The law comes and says, "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." Ought I not to love my neighbour as myself? of course I ought. Conscience cannot reject the thing when it comes home to it, but it makes me understand that I am rejected for not doing it!

The more we look into this and at ourselves, the more we shall see that there is not a folly in the world we do not prefer to Christ when He is presented to our hearts. Every idle vanity set up to attract one in a shop, or in the street,

has more power naturally over one's heart than Christ ; but Christ had to suffer for it all ; and we have to learn to see that. I am speaking of the state of the hearts of those who call themselves Christians—not of those who outwardly reject Christ.

Take another way of looking at it: let an unawakened man be alone for two or three hours, and he will think, it may be of his cares, it may be of his pleasures; but he never thinks of Christ—never! Christ has no place at all in his heart.

When God is revealed the sinner sees there is a judgment coming, and says, How shall I get off? A person will often toil and labour to be better, but with all his toil he finds that evil desires are in his heart. He finds “to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not.” If he has got sin, and no strength, it is a bad look out for judgment! The question then is, not simply what *he* is, but what *God* is—he realizes God—the sinner brought into God's presence sees God's eye resting upon him, and has the consciousness that he must have what will cleanse him and make him fit for God.

It is no use looking for help, if I come to God: I want righteousness—not help. I have done too much sin in God's presence to be helped! That is where God brings a man. I must have the matter settled with God—I must have a present righteousness.

The sinner sees God's eye resting upon him, and if he has learned what he is in himself, he knows that he must have that which will cleanse him for God, and will give him peace in His presence, without lowering one bit the standard of God's holiness. It is impossible he could say, or would wish to say, I wish God was less holy, that I might get to heaven—he has to do with God; he must be fit for God's presence as He is. The effect of all this experience and exercise of heart is to bring him into God's presence as a sinner, because he is one; and as a sinner to get peace with a God who will not have sin.

You must get to God just as you are. Whatever defilement there is in your heart God sees it all. It was so with the prodigal—when he set out on his journey he knew he was unfit to be owned as a son—what was the effect? He got into his father's presence in his rags! It was not a question of help—he *had* been helped; but he was now quickened and awakened, and it brought him to his father just as he was—in his rags!

This is always the case. The question now is simply this, How could he be in his father's house, when he had wasted his substance in riotous living? Are you fit for God's presence where He is, and as He is? If not you cannot have peace. You cannot cloud God's nature and enter His presence if your conscience knows there is sin upon you—it cannot be. I do not say it *ought not* to be, but it *cannot* be.

The Lord knew, and understood the whole question, and He could come here amongst them, and give His disciples *present* peace because He had made it. They had been with Him—His companions—"Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations." Peter had confessed Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God, and the Lord had said to him, "Flesh and blood hath *not* revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven;" but still they had not peace. He comes in preaching peace to them; He does not keep it in His heart. Ought these disciples to have taken Him at His word, and said, *Then it is peace?* Of course they ought. It is evident when *He* said peace, *they* ought to have had peace. Not peace *without* God—no one ever had that, but peace *with* God, as He *is*, and known.

We are bound to believe it, because Christ has declared it—bound to believe it, because Christ has made it. Now let us see how He assures their hearts: it was a terrible moment to them, they had not understood His cross, all their Jewish hopes were dashed to the ground. It might have seemed all well when Christ was with them, to say, peace, but now He has gone—Yes, but He is risen from the dead, and it is blessed to see the gracious tender love of Christ, as well as His perfect work, to see how the risen Christ is as gracious, as tender, as near as He was when walking through this world. There might be a difference as to His having accomplished the work, but there is no difference as to His ways.

If you look at Christ here below, that which characterized Him was that He did not look for any thing from the world; if He did so He might have stayed in heaven. He looked for sinners, and there were plenty of *them* to be had in the world. He came, bringing the love of God into a world that had departed from God! He did not wait to come into the world till the day of judgment, because of what men were; but coming into a world of sin because of what they were. Christ came after God had turned man out of paradise, where

God had set him, and he could not be with God where God is ; therefore Christ came to find man where sin had put him. “To seek and to save that which was lost.” He never gives up that character—the very accusation his enemies brought against him was, “this man receiveth sinners and eateth with them,” but He said, “I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

In the xv. of Luke when they charged Him with this, He triumphantly insists that God will act in love in spite of man, and in three parables shows out that it was God’s joy to have the sinner back ; it was the shepherd’s joy to get back the sheep ; the woman’s joy to get back the money ; the father’s joy to get back his son. The elder brother may complain, but he will do it for all that.

You learn this blessed truth, that (though the hour of judgment will surely come,) God always did and always will act in grace towards the sinner in the day of grace, let man scoff at it as he may. God will be Himself, let man be what he will.

Therefore in looking at the life of Christ on earth, that is what you see. The poor woman, in John iv. who had been using her energies seeking happiness, and finding misery, comes to draw water all alone ; borne down with sin, misery, and care, but finds at the well one person more lonely in the world than herself. There was not one so isolated ; so without sympathy as the Lord Himself—there was not one heart that answered to His, even among His disciples. Still He was always thinking of them, because His love was ever ready to sympathize. And so He says to this poor woman, “if thou knewest the gift of God.” He told of the gift, and of the Giver—“if thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink”—who it is that has come down so low, as to depend for a drink of water (though He created it) on a woman like you, you would have “asked of him and he would have given thee living water.” Then He opened her heart and conscience, as He always does ; and when her conscience was reached, and she began to think of all, He then said, “I that speak unto thee am he,” and she ran off and told her neighbours, “come see a man which told me all things that ever I did !”

He comes down to the sinners condition, and presents Himself in grace, where there is truth of heart to receive Him.

You could not have met Christ without meeting goodness

and holiness itself—He was holy enough to carry love to the most degraded without being defiled.

Well, the disciples were "terrified and affrighted," but "He said unto them, why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself." I am just the same as to grace, "it is I myself, handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have, and when he had thus spoken he showed them his hands and his feet." What He is pressing on them is—I am the same Jesus now—just as gracious as ever I was.

If I can follow Christ through this world and see His goodness, seeking and saving that which was lost; well, I say, He is just the same Jesus now. He tells me, "handle me and see that it is I myself." As to His person He is just the same, the same pierced side and wounded hands. I have got the same Christ I had all through, but now His work is accomplished, and this it is that gives peace.

What Christ seeks is the confidence of your hearts. He is winning back the confidence of man's heart to the God *that man has wronged*. *It is exceedingly hard to trust the heart of one we have dreadfully wronged*, therefore, you find Christ in the patient goodness that belongs to God alone, going in and out to get men to trust God.

Do you dare to trust in God thoroughly? Is your heart saying, I have sinned and wronged Him, but there is always love in His heart, I will go and confess to Him? Does your heart trust Him enough to tell Him every evil thing you can think of yourself, and to believe in His love and goodness? Have you believed Him enough to say, I can trust Him, and tell Him everything?

The woman we read of in the seventh chapter of Luke, did not know when she came to Him that she was forgiven; but she loved much. Simon had a fine house, and thought he would invite the Lord to dinner, but he gave Him no water for His feet, and no kiss. This poor woman hears that Jesus was in the house—He was the One who had laid hold on her heart, and had eclipsed to her heart all the rest of the world. She did not know she was forgiven, but, she knew that the grace of Christ had won the confidence of her heart; and she had business there. She could not look up in the face of any honest man, but she could look into the face and trust the heart of the Son of God!

If all that is in our hearts was brought out, we should be ashamed of ourselves; but there is One to whom we can tell everything, and trust Him, and that is the Son of God!

Have your hearts been brought to this? Can you say I have not loved my neighbour as myself, I have not had one right thought, I am a vile sinner, but I can go to Him—the *risen* Christ—as this woman went to the *living* Christ. He is just the same; “It is I myself.” I can go into His presence and trust Him, when I can trust no one else! That is the effect when once He is known in grace.

Now we get another truth; He has died upon the cross, He was made sin for us *before* He said peace, He died to make peace! He has lived and manifested God to sinners; He has died before God for sinners. If He comes to win the confidence of our hearts in grace, it is because He has Himself first put away sin from us, and established righteousness.

Where was God’s hatred of sin shown out so awfully and solemnly as at the cross? Not even the righteous judgment of the wicked will show it as the Son of God drinking that dreadful cup, and so drinking it that He nor we can never taste a drop of it more! On the cross the whole thing was settled with God. “Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” (Heb. ix. 26.) The bearing of sin was on the cross, He cannot bear sin now, the heart must get hold of that. No christian can say Christ has to do anything to put away sin now—He “made peace by the blood of his cross;” no wonder therefore we have peace! There is no possible hiding of sin now, no allowance of it, no screening of sin; and what is true now regarding the believer? He stands before God in virtue of the work of Christ, and is as white as snow!

He has not to wait for judgment, to know how it will be. Then he would have to cry “enter not into judgment with thy servant.” He has anticipated judgment, He has seen and known what the love of Christ is, and the cross itself is the proof of it. How the highest act of God’s grace testifies of our state, “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.” Was not that God’s judgment against sin, the plainest testimony that God cannot bear sin? He has dealt with sin in putting it away. There was no allowance of sin on the cross—no hiding of it. God’s judgment

against sin has been manifested. God does not hide sin, but judges it on the cross. The whole question as to sin, and in the truth of it, has passed between Christ and God there, according to God's holiness and righteousness.

The sinner comes under the effect of that, and therefore Christ can say "Peace be unto you." He knows that He has made peace, for He has borne the sin, and put it away; God has raised Him from the dead, and that is the witness and seal that He has accepted His work; and now he says, "Peace"! Here I am alive again, "Handle me and see that it is I myself." He ate and drank with them with gracious consideration, to show them that He was just the same Jesus; only with *this* difference, that *since* they lost Him, *He* had made peace with God!

"Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the scriptures, and said, thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." He sent them out to preach the gospel, because peace was made.

When I get conviction of sin, I see what an awful heart I have, and find that in my flesh dwells no good thing. But then I find He has made peace, and gives me rest of conscience with God.

Have you got rest in your soul with God? Not a rest that death will tell the tale of very soon; but rest in His love? How do you know the love of God? "Because he laid down his life for us," *that is the way I know it!* Am I to doubt the efficacy of Christ's work? Could you dare to say that God has not accepted it, and that your sins are greater than the value of the blood of Christ?

One word here. Many a soul will say, I do not doubt that Christ's was a blessed work; but I doubt whether I have accepted it. It is all a mistake, the soul that says that, really has accepted it; but his misapprehension hinders peace. What *wins the heart* is the love of God that gave Christ; what *gives peace* is the righteousness of God that has accepted His work.

Suppose I had offended one of you, the person whom I had offended must accept my satisfaction, before I am forgiven. Has God accepted Christ's satisfaction? I do

not ask, have you accepted it? A simple soul who is anxious will say, I am only too happy to accept it, and will thank and praise God for it; but many souls are not simple, but very unsimple! The thing that gives peace is, that *God has accepted Christ's satisfaction*; and the proof is, that He has set Him at His right hand *as Man!*

The apostle reasons in Heb. x., that under the law the High Priest was *standing* offering sacrifices for sin; next year came round, and again a sacrifice because the sin was there, but Christ is *seated*. “This man after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.” That word “for ever,” is full of strength—it means constantly, uninterruptedly—He sat down in perpetuity—He is always appearing for us—He is constantly our righteousness in the presence of God; so that we have no more conscience of sins.

There is no question then as to sin upon me, when I look up to God I see Christ sitting at His right hand. I cannot go to God without finding Christ there; I cannot find Christ there without knowing that I am cleansed from sin, and that I have been made “the righteousness of God in him.”

I say my heart is so bad there never was such a heart. God says, it is as white as snow! the effect of this is to raise the standard of our walk. If you are in the light, now walk according to that into which you have been brought. Let the world see Christ in you, you are not called to be the epistle of innocent Adam, or of lost Adam; you are “the epistle of Christ,” Christ is your life as well as your righteousness, and that is for your every-day walk.

A word here to shew where Christ leaves us, while He has gone up on high. He shewed the disciples that it was He Himself in the same grace as before, and told them “that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem.” “And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you, but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.”

The Holy Ghost has come to be a power in us, and with us here; our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost; we are the sons of God; and He is the earnest of the glory. The presence of the Holy Ghost gives energy, wisdom, power. He is come; “I will send him unto you,” has been

fulfilled. The Holy Ghost came when Christ went up on high—and never before—and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

“And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them; and it came to pass while he blessed them he was parted from them and carried up into heaven.” Mark the kind of association I have with Christ, the Man I have handled is now gone to heaven. Man? much more than man surely—God over all, blessed for ever! but Man too! and I am looking unto Jesus, and what is He doing? why, blessing me! just there! with His hands stretched out in the act of giving the full blessing upon them, shewing that He is *for them*, I have One in heaven who has made peace, a divine person, but a Man with His hands stretched out in blessing.

Blessed Mediator, shedding blessing, and giving me blessing, after peace is made: and while He has gone to heaven, I have to walk upon earth; that is where that Blessed One has left us. I am glad He is there, though longing to see Him. I depend on Him for grace as a *living Saviour, there*, because I believe in the peace that He made as a *dying Saviour, here!*

Do you believe He has made peace? Does your heart trust in His love? If I go to God, Christ is there; and I see Him with His hands outstretched to bless me, and I am only waiting, as He is waiting, until He comes to receive me unto Himself.

The Lord give you to have your eyes upon Him, and to understand the ways of God in grace and blessing to you, in the blessed Son of His own love. Amen.

PROVERBS VIII.

WHAT a blessed passage! what a discerning of the Christ of God set up in counsel ere the world was. (*vv. 22-31.*)

“I was daily his delight (*v. 30*). What a secret is there disclosed: that in counsel, before the ages, God found His delight in the place and service of the Son set up in grace for the “Sons of men,” *i.e.*, for sinners. And as the ages unfold themselves, or take their course, this delight of God in Christ, is again and again, and variously expressed.

Take for instance, when the self-confidence of Israel had drawn the Lord to mount Sinai, (the hill of thunder

and darkness,) how quickly He returns, so to speak, to Christ; how quickly He leaves the place of *law* for that of *grace*, disclosing to Moses the shadows of good things to come; the mystic order and furniture of the tabernacle. And when that tabernacle is reared, when that house is set up which spoke of His grace in Christ—of mercy rejoicing against judgment, with what *delight* does He enter that house. (See Ex. xl.) How the glory so fills it, so appropriates it, as it were entirely to itself, that even Moses cannot enter.

There is something in all that action that bespeaks the depth and perfection of Divine joy at that moment. There is a fervency in the action of the glory taking possession of the tabernacle, that has a fine voice in it, beloved.

He did not seat Himself on the Hill of Law after such a manner. He descended there amid His angels, and darkness and thunder accompanied Him. But there is no expression in all that of personal delight, no token that He was possessing Himself of a loved and desired home. But the tabernacle He makes His own, with a blessed witness that *there* was His rest for ever. Christ, who had been His delight in counsel, ere worlds were, was displayed in that house, was in that house for “the sons of men,” for sinners, and God is therefore entering it with the full witness of personal joy and satisfaction.

THOUGHTS ON SACRIFICES.—No. 6.

PROPITIATION. LEV. xvi.

SIN excludes the sinner from God's presence. “From thy face,” said Cain, “shall I be hid.” “Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,” will be the language of the Son of man, when sitting on the throne of His glory, to the goats placed on His left hand at the judgment of the living. (Matt. xxv.) Cain felt the consequences of his sin as regards earth, the goats will feel the consequence of theirs, as here expressed, for eternity. Perpetual exclusion from God's face on earth, Cain saw was his doom; everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord will be the portion of impenitent sinners, (2 Thess. i. 9) and who can lift up a finger in token of dissent from the justice of Cain's sentence, or the final condition of the impenitent. God is righteous in taking

vengeance, else how could He judge the world? But man can do nothing to earn His favour, or restore himself to the position forfeited by Adam for himself and his posterity. A terrible conclusion this is to come to for one, who has nothing to hope for, but what he thinks he can merit by his own conduct; but a blessed thing surely it is, when the sinner arrives at this, the right platform to stand on before God, as he learns how God can open a door of entrance into His presence in righteousness, when man, because of his sin has been excluded in justice.

Redemption by blood had been taught as a type in Egypt; forgiveness of sins, and restoration to communion on the ground of sacrifice, have been illustrated in preceding chapters of this book of Leviticus. Now we learn how propitiation is made, that the sinner should righteously have a standing before God. He needs forgiveness, and he needs justification, and both are effected by blood. (Eph. i. 7: Rom. v. 9.)

Holiness being the necessity of God's nature, no sinner unauthorised could be suffered to intrude into His presence, and no fire could be used when the priest drew nigh but that connected with the burnt sacrifice. Unauthorised, and with unhallowed fire, had Nadab and Abihu drawn nigh, and paid the penalty of death for their presumption. But the consequences of their sin did not cease with their death, as the opening verse of this chapter shows: "And the Lord spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the Lord, and died; and the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron, thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail, before the mercy seat which is upon the ark, that he die not; for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat." How gracious of the Lord thus to speak. "That he come not," would dispel all hope, but "at all times" immediately revives it. Unquestionably He has a right to say who should approach Him, and when.

What mercy is manifested in not shutting out a sinner for ever. Aaron then could enter within the vail, which Moses, the mediator of the old covenant, could not, whilst both were equally sinners, and as such could have no right of entry, Aaron was God's High Priest in Israel, the type of Him who has entered into the holy place by His own blood.

God's choice of the one who should enter the holiest (though only on that one day in the year) having been made known,

we next read of the manner of his approach in the sacrifices: he must bring with him for himself and his house, his dress and his work. God prescribed everything. Aaron had no choice in the services of that day, nor was anything left to his discretion. He could suggest nothing, he could alter nothing, for who but God knew about the antitype or what was needful to prefigure Him and His work? To keep Aaron in mind of the only ground of approach, he hears of the sacrifice before he hears of his dress. His dress needed to be described, for he could not have entered the holiest in any other garments; he did not, however, find acceptance because of his garments, but because of the blood of the sin offering. Having washed himself in water, he put on the holy linen garments, for the garments of glory and beauty could not be worn on that day, nor could the high priest's garments of daily attire be then in requisition. There was a work to be done which one who was pure only could do, so he wore holy garments expressive of purity. It was a work which when once really done, could never be repeated. So he wore garments kept for that particular service only. The garments of glory and beauty, told out by their colours the heavenly character of the great High Priest, as well as His death and royalty. The holy garments for the day of atonement spoke of His spotless holiness. Was Aaron the one who answered to all this? No; for by the washing of his flesh in water before he thus clothed himself, he showed he was only the type.

Arrayed aright, we next read of the sacrifices he was to take for the children of Israel, two kids of the goats for a sin-offering and one ram for a burnt-offering; for there is a distinction made between the offerings for himself and his house, and those for the congregation of Israel. The burnt-offering was the same for both, but the sin-offering was not. One bullock for himself and his house was God's command, and two kids of the goats for the congregation of Israel. Aaron and his house are thus classed together, and throughout that day have precedence over the congregation of Israel. A distinction and order this was which probably they did not understand, but we learn the meaning of it, and how beautifully the characteristic feature of this dispensation was thus traced out. All the priests were classed together as one family with the High Priest. All believers now are a holy priesthood, in close association with *the* High Priest,

the Lord Jesus Christ. For Aaron and his house one animal only was needed, for the congregation of Israel two were required; the one, the Lord's lot, to be killed as the sin-offering, the other, the scape goat, to be sent away alive into the wilderness.

Another special feature of this day's service should be noticed; the Lord was first thought of, then what the sinner needed was provided for. This was in character with the special truth brought out that day, propitiation, not redemption. By the blood of the paschal lamb God was righteous in sheltering Israel from his judgments, by the blood on the mercy-seat His holiness and justice were vindicated, and He could righteously have sinners in His presence. Redemption looks at the *people*, propitiation meets all that *God* is in Himself. How this speaks of what He desires for the sinner, when He provides the way of access for him into His immediate presence. For what was the holiest but the presence chamber of the divine majesty? "I will appear in the cloud on the mercy-seat," God said to Moses. Behind that veil, concealed from all eyes, (for what sinner could behold it in its brightness and live?) was the Shechinah to be found, in connection with the throne. The cloud was the cloud of glory, the mercy-seat the place of His throne on earth, who dwelt between the cherubim. Into this place Aaron, a sinner and a typical character, was to enter, but not without blood. His entrance at all might show that sinners would be one day allowed access within, his entrance with blood spoke of the only ground on which such could ever enter, and his entrance in a typical character, that of High Priest, told of the need of One to represent the redeemed before God, and to open out the way for them.

Before the cloud on the mercy-seat Aaron was to stand, but how could he behold it and live? God provided for this in a manner as beautiful as perfect. "He shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord (*i.e.*, the golden altar), and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil; and he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony that he die not." The altar of incense thus came into requisition, and supplied him with what was wanted, but connected with the altar of burnt-offering, for no strange fire could be used on it, and all else was strange but that which

descended from heaven on the altar of burnt-offering. With the cloud of incense, typical of the merits of Christ, rising up between him and the cloud of glory on the mercy-seat, Aaron could stay for the brief time he did his work without being consumed by the brightness of the divine majesty.

“We meet our God in Jesus Christ,
And fear and terror cease.”

But on what grounds could entrance into the holiest be based? Propitiation by blood must be made, which Aaron proceeded to do. Israel had sinned, so death had to come in, the death of the sin-offering, and the sprinkling of the blood, that God in righteousness should accept Israel in the person of Aaron their representative. Here also God is first thought of, as Aaron sprinkled of the blood on the mercy-seat, and afterwards seven times before it. Both were needed, but the order must be observed. Unless the blood had been put *on* the mercy-seat, there had not been manifested an adequate ground on which God could accept sinners. Unless it had been sprinkled *before* it, there would have been no ground on which they could stand before Him. Nothing short of blood-besprinkled ground would meet the sinner's need here. How this tells of man's inability as a sinner to make good for himself his ground before God, as it tells likewise of God's desire that he should have before Him an unassailable standing. Did men read this sacrifice aright, what room could there be for hoping to make good a standing before the throne? and what need would there be for attempting to effect that which has been already perfectly and everlastingly settled?

A way then into the holiest for sinners, and an unimpeachable standing before God, are here shadowed out; but that way was not opened, nor that standing secured, by the sacrifices then offered up; for Aaron repeated them each year, and the vail unrent maintained inviolate the inner sanctuary of God. Then, one man entered, the High Priest, now, all enter who are priests. Then, he went behind the vail; now, we enter through it, and discern the great change that has taken place by the sacrifice and the sprinkling of the blood of God's own Son, as we read, “Having therefore brethren boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,” etc. (Heb. x 19.) Unpeopled was that inner sanctuary when Aaron entered it and left it. Is the holiest unpeopled now? All who will have access to it may not yet have

entered therein, but how many thousands and even millions are there whose place within the veil is a present possession. Thus God gathers round Himself sinners saved by grace, and, where man never before was, admits into His presence for ever by virtue of the blood of His Son, souls who deserved everlasting banishment and destruction.

Is it that He thinks less of sin than He did in the garden of Eden? His nature forbids that. He is, and must be holy, and Aaron and all Israel, as they read this chapter, could see how defiling and grievous a thing sin is in His presence. The presence of the blood proved the need of a substitute's death, and the making "atonement for the holy place because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins," as well as the making atonement for the golden altar, and the tabernacle of the congregation, demonstrated what it was in His sight. None but Aaron could enter within the holy place; (*i.e.* the holy of holies), and none but priests could enter within the tabernacle of the congregation, yet atonement must be made for these because of the uncleanness as well as the sins of the whole people of Israel. Where their standing really was before the throne, their atonement had to be made for their uncleanness and for their transgressions.

Does not this help us to understand these words in Heb. ix.; "The heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these." As these places into which Israel never personally entered had to be purged with blood, because of what they were, unclean, as well as what they had done, so the heavenlies, our place, though in person we have never entered them, must be purged likewise by blood—the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus carefully does God exclude the thought of man finding entrance into His presence by any thing he can do, as He tells us that the uncleanness of His people, what they are, must be as well as what they have done. The sanctuary purged by blood, Aaron went out and confessed all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them on the head of the live goat, and sending him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. The standing and communion of the people with God was made good and maintained by the blood on the mercy-seat. This they knew was secured when the High Priest came out of the tabernacle, for his presence outside in safety told of acceptance within. His

re-appearance was the proof of this, as the re-appearance of Him who is God's High Priest will tell the believing remnant of Israel of the work of atonement long ago accomplished, "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn." (Zech. xii. 10.) Besides this, God would have them at rest about the remembrance of their sins, and read in the scape-goat's dismissal, the complete and everlasting putting away of all their transgressions. All were confessed on the scape-goat, all that were confessed were carried away in type on its head. It bore them all away to a land not inhabited.

For Aaron and his sons there was no scape-goat provided. Why was this? Had there been, the peculiar feature of the present dispensation would have been wholly ignored. As typical of Christ and His people now, Aaron and his house stood on that day. Israel will know forgiveness when the Lord returns in person to them. We know it now, though He is yet within the sanctuary. The presence of the Holy Ghost on earth tells us what has gone on in the holiest of all. Israel of old only knew what had been done within when Aaron came out, as Israel of a future day will only know what has taken place in the heavenly sanctuary when the Lord is seen again on earth. We wait not till then, but know now that He has done all that was needful for propitiation, and we are accepted in Him.

Thus we understand why the scape-goat was for Israel, yet, like Aaron's house, we can make use of it, as teaching in type the complete putting away out of sight and remembrance of all the transgressions and sins of God's redeemed people. How plainly in this, as in other matters, we see that none could have delineated the work of the Lord as High Priest, hidden from mortal eyes, and the difference between the position of Israel at a future day and God's saints now, but He who had pre-arranged it all. These sacrificial rites are evidences of the divine origin of the Word.

The scape-goat dismissed, Aaron re-entered the tabernacle and changed his dress, first washing himself with water in the holy place, and then offered the burnt-offerings, and burnt the fat of the sin-offerings. All connected with the sin-offerings that day had to wash themselves; all were defiled by them, whether the man who took away the live goats, or he who carried the carcasses outside the camp. It

needed one undefilable really to make propitiation ; and that one must, like Aaron, be High Priest according to God's appointment, for that was priestly work, which he must do alone. For it none could share, or be present even in the sanctuary whilst it was being done, for till done there was no right of entry for God's people into His presence.

Helpless were the people in all this. They might see Aaron cast lots over the goats, they might catch the last glimpse of his skirt as he entered the tabernacle of the congregation, but nothing could they do to help him. Their part was to rest and to afflict their souls. The need of the work Aaron did they were to own, for it intimately concerned them ; to share in it was impossible. Entire rest from all work, like the Sabbath day, characterised this tenth day of the seventh month. In this, in common with the Sabbath, it stood out in marked distinction from all other days of general observance. Both spoke of perfect rest : the Sabbath of God's rest after creation, in which man and earth shared ; this of man's rest from all effort to repair the ruin caused by sin, that God might work to establish in righteousness everlasting blessing for man and the world, and unhindered communion between His people and Himself.

"REJOICE IN THE LORD."

"FINALLY my brethren, rejoice in the Lord." (Phil. iii. 1.) "Every tongue" shall "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord," (see Phil. ii. 11,) that time is not yet come, but we in spirit know Him to be Lord, and we are to rejoice in Him, but to do so we must be where He is ; He is not here ; but though unknown, though unseen here, we know Him. Here, we announce His death till He comes, we express His severance from this scene, as well as our own release from the judgment of it. We rejoice in the Lord because God has highly exalted Him, and we know it, are with Him in spirit, and can thus, rising out of all the contrariety here, rejoice in Him. We cannot if we are in the flesh, hence the apostle adds "we are the circumcision . . . who have no confidence in the flesh." (Phil. iii. 3.) Circumcision is paring off, shaping, and altering the flesh ; circumcision is being *clean out of it*.

The excellence of the knowledge of Christ, where He is now, outweighs all the perfection of flesh ; he refuses the lower, as he finds his place in the higher ; he finds a righteous-

ness suited to his new place in Christ, and to win Him—to know Himself as possessing Him, is the desire and aim of his spirit; he would suffer anything here in company with Him. “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling,” (Phil. iii. 14) glory is my home, I am rejoicing with my Lord, where He is. He is acknowledged Lord in glory, but not here yet, I know Him there; glory’s light has reached me, because now there is no check to it. It is the ministration of righteousness. When at Mount Sinai glory spoke to man, it was that of condemnation. When it opened on Saul of Tarsus it spoke in righteousness.

Righteousness that enabled the glory to shine down on Saul and not consume him; it shone around him to reveal a Saviour to him, it was the ministration of righteousness; thus it pleased God to reveal His Son in him. (See Gal. i. 16.) If there were not divine righteousness filling the glory, the light of the glory would not shine down and arrest a sinner in the midst of his sins, like Saul.

The gospel now is light from the glory; and the glory is the home and locality natural to the one in Christ. . . . If you are in the glory you must be divinely righteous; if you are divinely righteous, you are not at home save there. Glory is connected with it. Glory comes to you because of it, and you run on to glory. “Christ in you, the hope of glory;” (Col. i. 27) because of it. You wait for the Lord to take His great power, and to change your vile body. (Phil. iii. 21.) But being out of yourself, and in Him, you rejoice in Him as your Lord, and look for Him in the day of His power.

“THE EXCEEDING RICHES OF HIS GRACE.”

Satisfied with Thee, Lord Jesus,
 I am blest;
 Peace which passeth understanding
 On Thy breast.
 No more doubting,
 No more trembling,
 Oh, what rest!

Occupied with me, Lord Jesus,
 In Thy grace;
 All Thy ways and thoughts about me
 Only trace
 Deeper stories
 Of the glories
 Of Thy grace.

Taken up with Thee, Lord Jesus,
 I would be,
 Finding joy and satisfaction
 All in Thee.
 Thou the nearest,
 And the dearest
 Unto me.

Listening for Thy shout, Lord Jesus,
 In the air;
 When Thy saints will rise with joy, to
 Meet Thee there.
 Oh what gladness,
 No more sadness,
 Sin nor care.

Longing for the Bride, Lord Jesus,
 Of Thy heart;
 To be with Thee in the glory
 Where Thou art.
 Love so groundless,
 Grace so boundless
 Wins my heart.

When Thy blood-bought church, Lord Jesus,
 Is complete,
 When each soul is safely landed
 At Thy feet,
 What a story
 In the glory
 She'll repeat.

Oh to praise Thee there, Lord Jesus,
 Evermore;
 Oh to grieve and wander from Thee
 Nevermore.
 Earth's sad story
 Closed in glory,
 On yon shore.

Then Thy church will be, Lord Jesus,
 The display,
 Of Thy richest grace and kindness,
 In that day.
 Marking pages,
 Wondrous stages,
 O'er earth's way!

 FRAGMENT.

THE secret of power without, and peace within, is only, and always, to be occupied with good!

JOAB AND ABSALOM:

OR, THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE THRONE.

? SAMUEL xviii.

NEVER was decision more needed nor more productive of good, than when Joab, talking to the man who informed him of Absalom's accident, said, "I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak;" (v. 14). In the character of Joab there are points of great interest. He was a real friend of David—his General and counsellor—he always knew what was befitting the dignity of his throne, although on occasions he was harsh and severe, and failed at last (as politicians simply as such, usually do); in the rebellion of Adonijah, and had eventually to be put to death by Solomon. But in the best parts of David's reign he was ever at hand to advise him (1 Chr. xxi., 1-6).

He had perceived the longings of the king's heart to get Absalom back, after this wretched man had compassed about the death of his brother Ammon, and he had effected a reconciliation, without bringing in right counsels. It was therefore entirely unsuccessful. Absalom came back unchanged in heart. Joab lost his field of barley, and David himself, still unhappy and dissatisfied, could not admit his son to any intimacy. A fresh rebellion was the result of Absalom's untamed spirit; and the throne of David was really in jeopardy.

By the advice of Ahithophel Absalom had publicly scandalized his father, and had thus drawn the sword, and thrown away the scabbard! The true-hearted ones clung to David in his distress, but when an army was collected, so infatuated was David—so entirely did paternal affection stifle the proper and dignified thoughts which ought to have possessed him—that, as the commanders of the army (amongst whom was Joab) passed before him, he charged them in the hearing of the people, in these words, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom (v. 5).

But Joab knew better what befitted the throne of Israel: so when the man with whom our tale opens told him of what had befallen Absalom under the oak, his quick enquiry was, "Why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I

would have given thee ten shekels of silver and a girdle. And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand shekels of silver in mine hand, yet would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai, and Ittai, saying, beware that none touch the young man Absalom." Joab's presence of mind did not fail him for a moment, and the speedy death of Absalom was the result.

Joab full well knew the necessities of the throne, and by his action, he showed his true regard to David. After this there was no more need of bloodshed. "Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel." The rebellion was crushed by the death of its chief, and the affections of his subjects returned to the king.

It deserves our attention that the only difficulty Joab had, was to convey the news to David. Two men presented themselves, Ahimaaz son of Zadok a priest, intimate with David—the other Cushy, a man with no genealogy, possibly a Gentile like Ittai, attracted by his affections into the service of David. Both these men offered themselves to carry the intelligence to the king, both having an interest in the victory. Joab says to Ahimaaz, "This day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead," (v. 20), and he prefers to send Cushy to tell the king what he had seen. However, at last, it is a race between them, Ahimaaz arrives first—finds the king sitting in great anxiety between the two gates of Mahanaim, announces the victory—and to the king's anxious question, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" gives a reply, and it is left to the rude, blunt Cushy to announce the fatal words, "The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is," (v. 32). Then, indeed, burst out from David's long pent-up heart, "O my son, Absalom! my son, my son, Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

These words should tell a tale to our hearts. They express the feelings of the Father of mercies towards sinners. The history is not written for nothing. It has a meaning in it. It serves to tell us how much the Father loved the Son; yet He gave Him up to die for sinners. "He that spared not his own Son; but delivered him up for us all." Observe that David preferred the safety of his son to the safety of his crown, and the welfare of his people; hardly could he be

persuaded to shew himself to them. Joab said, "I perceive that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well." Consider too, when it was a question of Abraham slaying Isaac, God spared his feelings, and accepted a ram in his stead! But when the time came to shew what a frightful thing sin was—how it had reached up to the throne, and marred the whole government of God, then—oh! then,

"That he might spare His enemies,
He would not spare His Son."

Now there are two special features in the Gospel. First, a care for His own dignity on the part of God. Secondly, intense but wise love to the sinner, which both saves and changes him, for it turns his affections to their proper object. Joab as a counsellor in close connexion with the throne exhibits the one; David expresses the love that meets the sinner, for David would selfishly have retained Absalom, cost what it would—God, so to speak, loves the sinner at the expense of His Son. If you want rest of conscience, see how the death of Christ has established the throne of God on a firm basis. Sin has been atoned for, and righteousness brought in. If you want your heart to expand in love—think at what a cost of love your salvation has been effected. It will surely also effect a moral change in you. Combine these two thoughts if you wish to be a happy Christian.

But there is one more substantial and consoling truth found in our chapter. Joab did not know how to break the truth of the death of the king's son to the afflicted father, but the gospel solves this difficulty. Christ Himself raised from the dead takes up to heaven the account of His own victory. Hung up on the cross for our sins, and the whole weight of them heaped upon Him, He cries, "It is finished." The heap of stones mark the spot of Absalom's grave to this day, but, on the resurrection morning, the great stone was rolled away from the sepulchre—the word of the angels is, "He is not here, but is risen," and His own word to Mary is, "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

In David's case "the victory that day was turned into mourning: for the people heard say that day, how the king was grieved for his son." In our case not only is it said by Christ, "therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay

down my life that I might take it again," but the Father having received Him, sends down the Holy Ghost—witness of His welcome arrival in heaven; (John xvi. 7, Acts v. 32), and so the good news of salvation is called the glorious gospel of the blessed (in Greek, "happy") God. (1 Tim. i. 11.)

Reader! may it be yours to your own joy, and to the glory of God. Amen. W. W.

THE KINGDOMS.

A FEW words on the difference between the various kingdoms mentioned in Scripture might be found useful to some of your readers. We have the *Kingdom of God*, Matt. xii. 28; the *Kingdom of heaven*, Matt. xxv. 1; the *Kingdom of the Father*, Matt. xxvi. 29; the *Kingdom of the Son of Man*, Dan. vii. 13, 14; the *Kingdom of the Son of His love*, Col. i. 13; the *Everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, 2 Peter i. 11; Heb. xii. 28.

You are introduced to the first named in connection with the Lord when upon earth, for in answer to the Pharisees' demand "when the kingdom of God should come?" He answered them and saith, "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they of God is within you," or as the margin reads it, "among you," (Luke xvii. 20-21). One has well described it as "the exhibition, or the manifestation of the ruling power of God under any circumstances,"—and, in the person of His Son, God was manifesting His ruling power at this time; God was there in Him.

It is also spoken of as existing at the present time, for in Rom. xiv. 17 we read, "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" and again, in 1 Cor. iv. 20, "the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." In these cases, the ruling power of God is again exhibited, not in the Son, but by the Spirit, who, through His presence on earth, produces in *those that believe* practical righteousness, peace and joy, and in His *servants* power to correct evil where needed. In Christ,

then, during His time on earth, the Kingdom of God was to be seen; by the Spirit now. The Kingdom of God was the circle of Christ's workings previous to His being received up into glory. Now, it is the circle of the Holy Ghost's workings. Scripture would seem to teach that in Christ's day none but He could be *in* it, for though "among those that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist," yet, "he that is least in the kingdom of God, is greater than he," (Luke vii. 28).

The Kingdom of God then was confined to Christ Himself in His day, though every man was pressing into, or towards it, (Luke xvii. 1-6), waiting, as it were, till the Holy Ghost's descent should open the door for them. This took place at Pentecost, and then the new creation entitled every one to enter, (John iii. 3-5). And thus the ruling power of God, exhibited only in Christ when on earth, is now manifested in those whose bodies have become the temples of the Holy Ghost.

So far as to its divine or proper form. The name however, is applied in Scripture to what the divine thing has in man's hands become, what we know by the name of Christendom. The "tree" and the "leaven" (Luke xiii. 18-21), give us its outward dimensions and its internal condition. Outwardly, what was but a grain, a small thing, at Pentecost, has become a huge overgrown mass that shelters even the devil's emissaries; while internal evil and corrupt doctrine has permeated that which was the people's food. What a description of Christendom, and yet how accurate!—a vast system, but rotten within.

Thus Rom. xiv. 17, 1 Cor. iv. 20, describe the present inward or divine aspect of the Kingdom of God. Luke xiii. 18-21, its external or human condition.

"The kingdom of Heaven," or literally *of the heavens*, differs from the kingdom of God, and yet, in some respects, resembles it. As we know, the name is only used in the Gospel of Matthew, and this is readily accounted for by the fact that to this Evangelist belongs the task of commending the truth to *Jewish* consciences, and amongst other things he proves that the kingdom foretold in old Testament writings was that which the Messiah proposed to introduce. He therefore calls it the kingdom of the heavens, because that name coincides with the description given of it in the Law, Psalms, and Prophets.

Israel was taught to lay up the Lord's "words in their heart, and in their soul, and bind them for a sign upon their hand, that they might be as frontlets between their eyes—that their days might be multiplied, and the days of their children, in the land which the Lord swore unto their fathers to give them, *as the days of heaven upon earth.*" (Deut. xi. 18-21.) It was said of David, too, that his seed should "endure for ever, and his throne *as the days of heaven.*" (Ps. lxxxix. 29.) And likewise it is said of the power of the gentiles that it should continue till the time that they should know "*that the heavens do rule.*" (Dan. iv. 26.)

Hence we may trace throughout the Old Testament allusion made to a time when God's will would be "done on earth" (as the prayer which the Lord then taught His disciples expressed it), "as it is in heaven," (Matt. vi. 10).

This time the Baptist came to introduce the Messiah, and therefore announced (Matt. iii. 2) that "the kingdom of the heavens was at hand." Jesus Himself (c. iv. 17) makes the same statement; but instead of His claims being submitted to, they hold a council to destroy Him (c. xii. 14), and consequently the kingdom of the heavens assumes a *mysterious* form (c. xiii. 11). The mystery being that it should be a kingdom with an absent king, a thing unknown in history—the king being rejected.

The 13th chapter presents the kingdom of the heavens to us in six different ways. But before we say a word as to these, we would direct the reader's attention to c. xi. 11-12, which seems coupled with c. xvi. 19, to give us light as to the time when the kingdom commenced.

John Baptist was not in it, blessed as was the position he occupied—the door was not *thrown open* though Christ was on the throne, until Peter unlocked it on the day of Pentecost, and then "the violent" (those really in earnest) reached the goal that they had been seeking for since the days of John the Baptist. Thus, then, it could not have been said the kingdom of the heavens is "among you," neither could it be said, "I give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of God." The kingdom of God and the kingdom of the heavens are distinct and different. The one existing while the Lord was on earth—the other commencing on Christ taking His seat on the Father's throne. The latter opened by a human instrument—the former inaugurated by Christ Himself. In certain points however, they resemble each other; both having

an outward and an inward, a human (as one may say) and a divine form. As to the outward form, the same similitudes are applied to each—the “mustard seed” and “leaven”—as to the inward, we have in the one case the thing formed by the Holy Ghost, and in the other what the thing formed comes to. Outwardly then, the kingdom of the heavens is like a tarefield, a tree, and leaven. A mixture of the Lord’s and Satan’s people—that mixture grouped into a huge wide-spreading system, powerful outwardly, internally corrupt; such is Christendom of the present day. But to faith there is an inner or divine form which the kingdom takes, and this is seen in separate pieces composing “a treasure” precious to God; and in a thing whose oneness and purity reminds us of the excellence of the Church of God as seen of Christ, and in a form of separation from evil that shews us that God delights not in the mixed company of the first three parables, but in companies gathered apart from the surrounding corruption. These latter are the kingdom of the heavens from God’s side. Thus, then, the kingdom of the heavens proper is the rule of the heavens upon earth—the days of heaven—the Lord hearing the heavens, and the heavens the earth. (Hosea ii. 21.) This however, was refused by man, and consequently, now the days of heaven upon earth are seen by those to whom it is given, to exist in a mysterious form until Messiah comes to bring in the times of restitution of all things with the trumpet of Jubilee.

The kingdom of the heavens thus was openly offered by the Messiah at His advent—refused, and therefore commenced in a mysterious way on His ascension and is running on during the present time and will exist after the church’s removal, until the millennium commences; when it will take its proper form, but will be known partly as the kingdom of the Father, and partly as the kingdom of the Son of man.

These both commence and end simultaneously. The kingdom of the Father relating to things *above*, the kingdom of the Son of man to things *below*.

For the former, the Jewish remnant pray when they say “Our Father . . . thy kingdom come.” They will be gathered as the wheat into the barn, and will as the righteous, shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. (Matt. xiii. 30-43.) A heavenly people; their reward is in heaven in the scene of their Father’s dwelling. The kingdom of the

Father is for the heavenly people. The kingdom of the Son of man for the earthly. The 8th Psalm explains this,—as Son of man He takes the Headship of all below, the place that Adam lost. As Son of man He executes judgment (Matt. xiii. 41). As Son of man He welcomes into His kingdom the blessed of His Father—the sheep who satisfied His hunger, quenched His thirst, clothed His nakedness, and cheered Him in sickness and imprisonment, (Matt. xxv. 31-46). An earthly people, they have been counted worthy to “stand before the Son of man,” (Luke xxi. 36).

Thus the millennial “world kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ” (Rev. xi. 15) has a heavenly and an earthly aspect—the one embracing only glorified saints, the other, including the earthly ones, having eternal life, but not glorified as to their bodies. The one is the sphere of the Father’s glory, the other the scene of the rule of the Son of man. Both will alike cease when He delivers “up the kingdom to God even the Father.” (1 Cor. xv. 24.)

It remains but to notice “the kingdom of the Son of his love” (Col. i. 13), and “the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,” (2 Pet. i. 11).

These are quite distinct in their characters from those we have already mentioned, and give us rather the thought of *position* than *display*. The one refers to our present place, the other to our future glory.

They are more to be felt than described, and are only mentioned each once in Scripture. Christ has a present kingdom, the Christ whom the world refused to own as king, One which the Father’s love bestowed on Him the Son of His affections, and into this, we who have believed have already been translated. It is the region of blessing of which Christ is the centre, and Christ in the most excellent way as Son of His Father’s love; we may enjoy it though we cannot describe it.

The other is *before* us, and a blessed contrast to the things that are “fading away” around us. It is everlasting, and we shall share it *with Him*, and His desire is that we should enter it, as one may say, full sail—as Paul when he said, “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought *the* good fight, I have finished *the* course, I have kept *the* faith: henceforth there is laid up for me *the* crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me.” (2 Tim. iv. 6-8.) May it

be ours, then, to add to our faith all these things that 2 Pet. i. 5-7 contains, so that not merely an entrance, (we are sure of this as those who are “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father”), but “an *abundant* entrance be administered unto us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Amen! D. T. G.

“THE VOCATION WHEREWITH YE ARE CALLED.”

(NOTES ON EPHESIANS. ii.-iv., 1-16.)

THERE are two characters in which the church is looked at in the end of the second chapter of Ephesians. It *groweth* up unto an holy temple in the Lord, and it *is* the habitation of God through the Spirit. The third chapter unfolds the mystery of the body of Christ, and in the fourth it is spoken of as down here upon earth. It takes up our blessed privileges, and exhorts that we may walk according to them.

He begins by speaking of the unity *we are in*, and here it is a question of the church's vocation and calling. This is a different thing from the Christian walking individually with Christ. Here it is what belongs to the Church of God, and not what the individual ought to be. Here we get church vocation, and the Holy Ghost dwells in the Church of God. The effect of God's presence is to destroy self, and make us feel our own nothingness, to fix the mind on God and His presence; and to give us a distinct sense of what we are. If I am thoroughly lowly in my own mind, self never comes out.

This wonderful vocation wherewith we are called, and of which we are exhorted to walk worthy, *is that the church is the habitation of God through the Spirit, and the body of Christ.* What an immense privilege it is, that the church of God in His thought is, that *He* should have a dwelling-place down here. The effect of a complete redemption is made good on earth before the result is. There was no dwelling-place on earth before redemption. He could and did walk with Adam in the garden, but He did not dwell with him. He could meet with Abraham, and in gracious condescension sit at the table with him, but He did not dwell with him. The moment He brings Israel out of Egypt, He will make them know

that He has brought them out that He may dwell amongst them. (Exod. xxix. 46.) He will bless His children, He will guide them, sit at the table with them—anything that can testify of His grace and love; but till He has taken out a people for Himself, He never dwells there. He cannot dwell unless the place is fitted for Him who dwells. How complete and blessed is redemption, the people are so suited to His presence that He can come down and dwell amongst them. Now the Holy Ghost has come down, and is a witness that there is not a thing that does not suit the presence of God. It was not sufficient for the priests to be washed with water—they must be sprinkled with blood before they were anointed with oil—God by reason of the value of the work of Christ can come and dwell here. It is this that brings His church into this responsible place. The question at once comes, Are we honouring the presence of God the Holy Ghost? If we get the ground on which it is, we get the completeness and absoluteness of what redemption is; and then He puts us on the responsibility of walking as such. The moment we get hold of this truth, that it is the dwelling-place of God, by virtue of redemption, *we see how it has failed*. Where do we see any likeness at all of the very thing that gives it its character? What a solemn thing it is when that is spoiled and corrupted! Notwithstanding, God will make good all His promises, and have the church as His dwelling-place in heaven. We have *all but* got into this condition, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost"; what John the Baptist had promised as distinctive of Christ, they did not as yet know. None would now deny the fact of the day of Pentecost, but *the distinct, definite reality that the Holy Ghost is here*—how little believed!

There is but "*one body*" and "*one spirit*"—and He is looking that they should maintain the perfect manifestation of it, in the unity of the Spirit. Christ can have but *one body*. Then there is "one hope"—"I will come again and receive you unto myself." (v. 4.)

The uniform way of God is to set up blessing on man's responsibility, which has always failed, and then to set it up in the second Adam who never fails. Adam failed—Israel failed. We get the same thing with the Priesthood—they offered strange fire, the sin offering was not offered and eaten within the holy place; and Aaron never went into the

holiest of all in his robes of glory and beauty ; again Christ the High Priest never fails. So David, so Solomon, so Nebuchadnezzar. Christ will be the true son of David. Nebuchadnezzar had power put into his hands, and he turns the power given him to evil—he sets up an image, and puts the children into the fire. So the church :—it has been set up to be the habitation of God, and *it has failed*. Paul tells us that the mystery of lawlessness was already working—that as soon as he was gone, grievous wolves would enter in—that evil would come in like a flood.

Put upon man’s responsibility and called to keep this unity of the Spirit, to maintain it practically in the bond of peace, *the church has totally failed*. In it we find all kinds of oppositions and divisions, totally contrary to the unity of the Spirit. Where is the practical unity in the power of the Holy Ghost overcoming and binding the saints together, so that God’s presence being there, there is nothing that is unsuitable to His presence? Look at it in practice, it has failed. Individuals may crave after it ; a remnant may seek in weakness to observe it ; but this is the general state of things.

The Lord Jesus Christ has given Himself to redeem us—He died, “that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad,” and it ought to be on our hearts that *that is scattered* which Christ died to *gather*. He will gather them in *heaven*, but He gave *Himself* to gather the children of God *in one* when *here*—the children of God who were scattered. I must have it so in the unity of the Spirit, or nothing else.

There is a unity connected with the *Spirit* :—a unity connected with the *Lord* :—and a unity connected with *God*.

First ; what the Holy Ghost by His presence constitutes absolutely *in one*? What is essential in its nature and unchangeable, “one body” called in “one hope?” It has not two.

Then ; the *external profession of it*, in the truth of course, “one Lord, one faith, one baptism?” *i.e.* one system of faith.

Then again, a larger and wider range or sphere of unity. “*One God and Father of all*, who is above all, and through all, and *in you all* ;” in the saints God has taken a central place, and when He takes up the universe as the display of His glory, the church is the centre of it all, and the habitation

of God. What we get here is the central circle of all, God's thought in the church itself. We have the same truth in Rev. xxi., there is no temple there, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. A temple would be an obstruction to the light—"the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." He fills with His glory that wherein He dwells, and others get the light thereof. The church ought to have been so down here, for *now* it is the dwelling-place of God, that in it might shine out to all around His glory who is above all, and through all, and *in* you all.

It is wonderful to think that God has taken the church, that He may set Himself *in* it, to display His glory to the world; and we find every wickedness there. A heathen would not find in his own history the wickedness that is to be found in the church.

Now we get individualized again (*vv.* 7-8), and it is striking as regards the completeness of the triumph of Christ. Mark here the extent of what He does. Christ comes and takes us out of Satan's power altogether, and so completely delivers us that He makes us the vessels of His power to destroy Satan's again. So completely are we brought to be associated with Christ as the Lord's host in putting down His enemies. He gives us our place of service in power, because He has Himself destroyed the power of Satan. He has ascended up—the witness in His own self—that He has broken through death—the power of Satan. His victory over everything is complete; and He associates us with Himself as the instruments of His power.

"Now that he ascended, what is it, but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?" (*v.* 9). Here I get Christ Himself as Redeemer. Faith knows that it has got the Christ who went down below the creature. He as Man goes down where sin had brought the first man—truly and really breaks and annuls the power of Satan; and then as Man goes up to the right hand of God. If I look at Christ, I cannot see a place where Satan triumphed over man, up to the throne of God, that is not a witness of His power; we must have faith to see it—it will be displayed publicly hereafter. The whole power of Satan is *null*, for faith; death is gain, it is "absent from the body, present with the Lord." All this is founded on His having led captivity captive. So that faith knows no place that Christ

does not fill. I can say of Christ, He has gone down as Man to the dust of death, and right up to the throne of God, and this *as Man*. What a place for man!

Vv. 11-16. We get the whole unfolding of ministry, in these verses; but here we do not get any gifts that are signs of power as in Corinthians. He is not occupied with this here. Christ is occupied with His own work to have the church for Himself. We have gifts here, and ordinary ministries—persons as such. We get specific ministry—prophets are prophets; apostles are apostles, and so on: and then we get the *whole body* taken in by “that which every joint supplieth.”

What a place we are set in in the purpose of God; and this would be impossible if redemption, which puts us spotless in the presence of God, is not *complete*! It is the place where He chooses to dwell, because He has redeemed it to Himself. What a place He sets us in! In the world that rejected and crucified His Son, *God has a place to dwell!*

How far have we kept that, as God originally set it up? Look at our responsibility, where are we? “Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?” as Jeremiah said; (only the Church is not a flock—it is the habitation of God through the Spirit—the body of Christ). He abides more really and truly than with Israel. The Lord said, “It is expedient for you that I go away, for, if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you.” How truly it is thereupon that He gives man a place in Himself, and sends the Holy Ghost to dwell in the Church. How far does what is called the Church, in any shape or form answer to it?

The responsible, outward Church, is not cut off yet, but it has failed. Infidelity, popery abound on all sides; though God is at the same time working graciously. If a person were to look for the manifestation of the Church of God, and the Spirit working in it, where would he find it? But the Head never fails, whatever the individual does, and he never can find himself in trials and difficulties, in which he is not bound to act according to the divine principles God has revealed, and where there is not the power of Christ for him. It is impossible that Christ can be anything but sufficient for us. Faith unfeigned is ours, because the perfection and faithfulness of Christ are ours, and they, as the truth of God, have never changed.

THOUGHTS ON SACRIFICES.—No. 7.

CLEANSING FROM DEFILEMENT.

NUM. xix.

SIN in God's sight is a far more serious matter than it often appears to man. God views it in the light of His nature, man generally in the light of the consequences to himself. God judges that to be sin which man would often pass over or excuse; hence, whilst sins committed needed a sacrifice to put them away, a sacrifice was required ere a person could be cleansed, who became unclean by defilement from without. This is the characteristic of that special sin-offering set forth in the book of Numbers, chap. xix.

It was an offering for sin, (see *vv.* 9, 17) yet the one to be sprinkled might have done nothing that he could have avoided, and, indeed, have only acted aright. That, however, was not the question here, and all reasonings on such ground must have been silenced at once, for the Holy One of Israel had spoken to Moses and to Aaron, and communicated this ordinance of the law, that none in Israel, whether of the seed of Jacob, or a stranger that sojourned among them, should defile the tabernacle of the Lord. He who is light was alone competent to say what would defile the sanctuary. Great was the privilege of Israel to have Jehovah's tabernacle in their midst, but great was the responsibility resting on all within the camp, because that tabernacle was the sanctuary. Defilement permitted in them would have tarnished the purity of the sanctuary, and compromised the character of Him who was pleased to inhabit it; so, whilst the sin and trespass offerings were needful where sin had been committed, this was absolutely requisite because Jehovah dwelt among them. Thus, in Leviticus we see God providing against the breaking out of sin in those whom He had redeemed out of Egypt, and in Numbers we read of His gracious provision for putting away defilement contracted by contact from without.

In accordance with the laws of the offerings, those for whom the sacrifice was needed brought the victim. "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer, without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke." As the ashes were to be kept for the use of any in the camp who might need the water for separation, none could say (the high priest excepted) he would never require it; so all are concerned in the bringing of the animal.

And here as elsewhere God decides what the animal should be, for it is His holiness that has to be thought of and maintained. Unmixed in colour, unblemished in person, unbroken by the yoke so as to be subservient to man's bidding, such are the characteristics to be sought for and found in the victim God could accept, conditions answering to Him who unvaryingly did His Father's will, in whom is no sin, and who, as the faithful and true witness, suffered death at the hand of His creatures.

The heifer was brought to Eleazar, not to Aaron. The High Priest could not defile himself for the dead, though the priests could for those of their family (Levit. xxi. 2, 11). Eleazar, therefore, officiates here, and is found with the heifer outside the camp. Slain by some one (not by the priest), the priestly work of sprinkling the blood began, after which the whole animal—its flesh, blood, skin, and dung, were set fire to before his eyes. Again the priest came forward, and cast cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet into the midst of the burning of the heifer. Having sprinkled of the blood seven times towards the face of the tabernacle of the congregation, and, having cast into the fire the symbols of nature and worldly glory to be consumed with the heifer, his part in the work of preparing the ashes was done. Another person had already set fire to the animal, whilst a third collected the ashes, and laid them up without the camp in a clean place, to be mixed with water for use as often as occasion required.

Very simple was the rite, but very telling. In common with other sacrifices of the Mosaic ritual the blood had a prominent place; but, differing from all other offerings, the blood of the heifer was sprinkled towards the front of the tabernacle of the congregation. It did not reach the altar, for it was sprinkled outside the camp, though in the direction of the entrance to the tabernacle of the congregation. In common with the offerings at the cleansing of the leper we have mention of cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet, but then they were dipped in the blood of the bird that was slain, here they were consumed with the animal itself. Like the sin-offering, whose blood was brought inside the sanctuary, the heifer was burnt outside the camp; but then the inwards were burnt on the altar, here they were consumed with the rest of the heifer, for it was not an act of sin, done even in ignorance, with which the perfect obedience of the Lord was

contrasted, which was here to be set forth in its true character, but the terrible nature of sin so contrary to the nature of God. And, as in the day of atonement, the priest had to wash his flesh in water after he had concluded the special rites of that day; and the man who burnt the sin-offering, and he that let the scape-goat away, had both to wash their clothes in water, and bathe themselves, and after that re-enter the camp; so, the priest who sprinkled the blood of the red heifer, and the man who burnt her carcase, as well as he who gathered up the ashes, had to wash their clothes in water, and the two first to bathe their flesh as well; but, differing from the special ordinance of the day of atonement, all those who were concerned with the preparation of the ashes of the red heifer were unclean until the evening. How all this tells of the holiness of God, and the character of sin in His eyes.

An offering for purification for sin as this was, all the rites connected with it took place outside the camp, inside of which was God's dwelling-place on earth. Without the camp was the leper's place till healed in the goodness of God. Without the camp every one that had any issue, and all that were defiled by the dead, both male and female, were to be put in accordance with God's command (Numb. v. 2). So here, to mark what sin is in God's sight, without the camp was the heifer killed, and without the camp were the ashes kept. Holy was the sacrifice, else it could not have been a sacrifice fitted for His acceptance; clean were the ashes, and they were to be kept in a clean place, for both the heifer and the ashes spoke of One in whom is no sin; the heifer of Him who offered up Himself, the ashes of the fiery judgment of God He has endured; but, as connected with sin in any way, God would mark by the words "*without the camp*" what sin really is in the eyes of the High and Holy One, and those concerned with the preparation of the ashes had themselves to acknowledge it. Ceremonially clean when they began their work, they were ceremonially unclean when they had properly done it.

(To be continued, D. V.)

"If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small." (Prov. xxiv. 10.)

MANOAH'S WIFE.

I BELIEVE that very commonly when we read such writings as the Epistle to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, or to the Hebrews, indeed any of the epistles, we might very profitably keep in memory the words of Manoah's wife to her husband. He was afraid, for they had seen God, and he thought he should die; but she said to him, "If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hands, neither would he have shewed us all these things, nor would, as at this time, have told us such things as these;" (Judges xiii).

A very simple, beautiful and convincing argument. Faith is always the best reasoner; because it uses the very arguments which God in grace suggests—as in this instance of this simple woman, whose simplicity of faith is apparent from the whole chapter. Her husband was rather a devout and good man, who walked more in a praying than a believing mind; but this simple reasoning of his wife may be our reasoning as we read such Scriptures as those I have mentioned. There we find that our God has told us wonderful secrets, brought us into intimate and near relationship to Himself, and looks for our presence in His sanctuary within a rent veil, with burnt-offerings and sacrifices of praise. In such character and places as these He addresses us. And how full such a thing as that is of the great proof that He has no purpose of a controversy with us, but that He has already accepted our persons, and forgiven our sins? Surely it is. He would not, after this manner, set us in the place of either sons, friends, or worshippers, had He not first set us as accepted and pardoned. The less is surely included in the better.

And He Himself treats acceptance and pardon very much in that way in such epistles. He rather *assumes* it than *teaches* it. If He is recalled to it at all, it is because the saints were so disposed to return to the law, to the legal mind, and the world of ordinances. The question of pardon or justification suits the presence of God as a judge. But in some of these epistles our God speaks to us as a *Father*; or as from the sanctuary of peace; or as face to face, as a man would speak to a friend communicating his secrets; or as One that has us with Himself in heavenly places; and He would not thus deal with us we may say, in the spirit of Manoah's wife, if

it were His pleasure to kill us, or to keep us under law, and in fear of judgment.

Indeed, the reasoning of the apostle at the close of Rom. viii. has this character in it. It may remind us of Manoaah and his wife in the field of Zorah. For, like that believing woman, the apostle is challenging the inferior thing in the presence or name of the higher thing. She says, He would not kill us because He has spoken to us, and accepted our worship; the apostle says, who shall condemn, since Christ died, and rose, and intercedes?

EXTRACT FROM "LETTERS TO A BROTHER."

ON my meeting ——— at ——— having known some of his family well, and himself slightly, and having heard he was a changed man and had become "religious," as it is termed; I was anxious to see what his religion was; thinking, that as our habits and tastes, it may be, in life had been more or less alike, if it was available for him it might be for me.

Not having seen him for five years at least, his appearance struck me very much. The marked alteration in his countenance shewed me not only that his health was gone, but that there had been much inward working of the mind. At first he avoided me, *evidently*; but, as I was quite indifferent to anything in the way of slight, having been tolerably well hardened to what the world calls "cutting," I rather forced him to speak to me.

Long, long had I known that the salvation of the soul—the home for eternity—was the only thing worth living for *here*, and as long had it been ever uppermost in my mind that *here* it must be settled; but, being brought up in the usual way, viz., taught, (here he goes over the usual religious training and attending to ordinances, &c.), I never gave that any place *seriously* in my thoughts or mind as good for anything *in the sight of God*, seeing that myself, as well as others—all nearly that I knew—I saw lived in sin, *open sin*, generally; and those who did not, only had a form, while the decent sober moralities of their heart and life was their real standing and religion before God.

I was far too real in my ideas of God and heaven to let this be of much value in my eyes; and so, up to the day I had this following conversation with him, I was a total

stranger to peace with God through Jesus Christ. After two or three times of meeting, he said all at once, "Do you not read the Bible?" "Yes," I said, "I do; but I can get no comfort from it." A long pause ensued. I then said, "I will tell you my stumbling-block: I can *fear* God, but I cannot *love* Him." "*Love God!*" he said, with such an expression of countenance and despair as I never saw depicted, "I have not a bit of love of God in me; "*He loves me!*" (1 Jno. iv, 9.)

This astonished me so much, that if I had been taken up in the clouds, I could not have been more surprised. He was then going home to dinner; and as he went into the house, he put a book into my hands and said, "There, you read that." This book was "Eyles Pierce's Letters." I immediately opened the book; and, reading letter after letter, as I went home, I had a distinct mental revelation of Jesus Christ as *my Saviour*, and so forcible as almost to make me shout out, "Now I shall go to heaven," a thing I had for at least twenty-five years utterly despaired of. When I got home I read and read, and the truth was more and more confirmed and brought home to my heart and conscience with God. From that hour to this I have never lived ten minutes without the sense of God's love and my own degradation and sin before me; and, through grace I can say it, with much desire to be more and more thankful that I have rarely, if ever, been without the full assurance of having my sins forgiven for His name's sake who died, the just for the unjust, to bring such poor, degraded, guilty wretches as myself to God. (1 Peter iii. 18.) Wondrous thought, but true! and not more wondrous than true!

Alas, alas! to live the life of Christ while in the flesh is no easy matter; and although I cannot boast, I *can say honestly* that "*old things have passed away, and all things become new;*" and my earnest desire and prayer is to glorify God in my body and my spirit which are His, and to present my body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, by and through Jesus Christ, being assured that this is my reasonable service.

Nothing is available but the Holy Ghost working in me, as the servant of Jesus Christ, to carry on and complete the work He has begun, till He shall come to take me to Himself. May I be found watching and waiting, walking in the Spirit, and *thus* not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh.

NUMBERS ix. 15-23.

There is not a trace on the wilderness sands
 Where the foot of a saint hath trod ;
 No marks have they left who are passed on before,
 Save the word of a faithful God.
 There is not a trace on the wilderness sands,
 Save the steps of the Son of God.

My eye must be upwards—afar from the world,
 In this desert I find no cheer ;
 The footsteps of Jesus are under the cloud,
 Yet my eye must be fixed up there.
 There is not a trace on the wilderness sands,
 Save the steps of the Son of God.

Oh, be it “two days, or a month, or a year,”
 That the cloud may remain above,
 I cannot make haste, for it bids me be still,
 And I know that it rests in love.
 There is not a trace on the wilderness sands,
 Save the steps of the Son of God.

How oft' would my zeal, with its fleshy desires
 Be at work, when He bids me wait ;
 My will must be broken—my temper subdued,
 While I sit at the Master's feet.
 There is not a trace on the wilderness sands,
 Save the steps of the Son of God.

And there did I rest as my eye looked below,
 All in silence the cloud might move ;
 My Lord would pass on, and my heart would be sad,
 And His power should I fail to prove.
 There is not a trace on the wilderness sands,
 Save the steps of the Son of God.

Where'er it may go—tho' the way may be long,—
 Tho' the flesh and the world oppose,
 On, onwards I follow—my strength is the Lord,
 And He's mine till my march shall close.
 There is not a trace on the wilderness sands,
 Save the steps of the Son of God.

Yes, mine on the journey, and mine as I rest,
 He is mine in each joy or woe,
 His manna shall feed me with food by the way,
 And His water in fulness flow.
 There is not a trace on the wilderness sands.
 Save the steps of the Son of God.

ETERNAL LIFE.

JNO. VI.

It is remarkable the way in which the Lord here shows the source and power of eternal life, and how closely they are connected with Himself. How entirely He takes us in the power of eternal life out of the place of nature, and brings us into fellowship with the Father and with the Son. The word of God holds this remarkable place, as the instrument by the Holy Ghost, of bringing us thus to God, on the ground of redemption.

The Lord had come down from heaven and associated Himself with man upon earth, walking in and out amongst men, and he took the hearts and thoughts of His disciples entirely out of the world. Grace had brought Him down into it, yet there was no connection with man, or man with Him but on the footing of death; as we read, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you;" and, "I will raise him up (who does so) at the last day;" I will give him another state of life altogether.

The Lord is the Word of life—the eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested to us in the Son, (1 Jno. i. 2). He comes and speaks words to us; and it is upon the word of His testimony which all depends. Grace must work in our hearts that we may receive His words; but "He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." Thus we get everything by faith. We see who Christ is by faith. He was the carpenter's son—seen outside of faith. He had no condition in the world, no authority, *nothing* that would enable you to see that in that person the eternal Son of God was in the world, but positive faith. Suppose that even prophecies were brought to bear and miracles laid hold of your mind, they would leave you just where you were. I could not see the person of the Son of God, except God had given the eye of faith.

In the second chap. we find—"For he knew what was in man;" that is, there was no work of God in their souls—nothing but *man*. He *might* have honest and sincere convictions, but still no new nature. The people who followed Him were the same who cried "Away with him" afterwards. It is not insincerity, but only what is in man, There was no personal perception that the Son of God had come into this world. The eye was opened if there was any

perception of this, and it connected itself with the desires and need of the soul.

We must first have this desire of the heart and need in the conscience; the sense too, that we cannot do without Him! Whether there is one or the other, both are connected with that, and for both we find we cannot do without Him.

Suppose I believed all that the church has taught for 1800 years before I had this new life, there would be no more of eternal life in me than in that table! It would not bring me nearer to Him—because Christ has not been revealed to my inward soul. It would not be what Paul writes, “When it pleased God to reveal his Son in me.”

You get this desire of conscience here in Peter, “Lord, to whom shall we go?” (v. 68). When the sifting comes, nothing else could replace Christ; there *is* nothing else that can; there was the consciousness that if they had not Christ there was nothing left. The heart and the conscience want Him, and that is eternal life. I might have every thought right as to truth without this. There is no true work where this is not done in the conscience. The heart is drawn to Jesus because the soul sees *who* He is. Like Peter in Luke v., “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord;” but there is power to keep him, he cannot go away.

The prodigal illustrates the same thing; he says, “There is blessing there.” His heart was formed by the grace he knew was there. His heart was drawn to Christ, but his conscience told him he was not fit to be there; still the heart could not keep away. Then there comes a *word* from Christ which satisfies the soul. To Peter, it was “Fear not.” To the poor woman of the city who was a sinner it was, “Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace,” and all was done. She had Christ’s word for it, and this was everything. He had the words of eternal life, as Peter had said, “Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe, and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.” This is the only thing that is the ground of faith. Faith is the effect of the word of God directly from God to the soul, without any intervention. Faith cannot rest upon any authority but that of God Himself.

What I press is the *Word*. Christ is the living word; so it is the word of God that has come from God, and has come into this world, and by which all and every operation of God is effected. Where that is not the case, there is no real

result. Miracles were proofs of His mission, but they were not life in the soul. If faith rested on the evidence of miracles alone, the Lord would not trust *man*. Where the word is received, the soul is begotten of God.

Suppose I believed every truth which I now believe before I was begotten of God through His word, it would have no link between God and my soul; there would have been no revelation of God by it to me—nothing that brought God into my soul by it—no drawing of the Father to make Christ needful and precious.

Such knowledge is merely *the fire being laid*, but no more. The revelation *from* God is the revelation *of* God. Christ was this when He was here; though known as the carpenter's son for many years. What Christ *spoke*, was an expression of what Christ *was*. Who could reveal God, but God Himself? and Christ was God, come into a world which had departed from Him, to reveal Himself to souls, and "he that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true," (John iii. 33).

"Lord, to whom shall we go?" There I get the fact that the soul cannot do without Him who had laid hold of their heart. Ah, I say, He has "the words of everlasting life;" I cannot go elsewhere. The soul has got the first link, by the testimony of the word to it, and it knows Him.

You should ask yourselves whether the voice of the Good Shepherd has reached your souls—has spoken to you so that you know His voice? Take an instance of the thief; *He* knew him; He answers for every bit of Christ's life from one end to the other. *God* had revealed to him what His Son was, and when every one was against Him—when the authorities of the world had all got rid of this presence of God—one man was there who answered for Christ's spotless humanity.

Why had the word of God to come down in this way? Why not teach man, and guide man as he was? Why bring the Eternal Son from heaven? People will accept a great deal of truth, but, Why have a revelation? they say. There *must* be a revelation, because man has departed from God, and God in mercy to him must reveal something new to him.

If God is not revealed in perfect grace to my soul now, I must have to say to Him in judgment by and by; I cannot for ever stay in the dark in my own soul as to God. I must have to do with Him sometime or other. Then I find the grace of a

revelation of God. I get in Christ—the word of God—God Himself come down. Not waiting till I go up for judgment—that would be a terrible story! Then the whole question turns on this, *How* has He been received? *How* have I received Him? Why, my heart has turned to every vanity when He has been presented to me! *That* is the way I have received Him.

He has come down *into* the world—the “living bread”—to raise people’s hearts to God, and to take them *out* of the world; but we do not like this. He comes amongst men as the lowliest of the lowly—so that the unjealous angels can sing “God’s good pleasure in *men*.” Yet in Him we see the only begotten of the Father. He comes down so that man where he was, and what he was, might have God *close* to him. My heart is opened to the blessed consciousness that God *has* found His good pleasure in *men*!

But you will always find that a revelation of God is a revelation that says, “*You* are all ruined and bad.” This is too low for the world—it does not suit a person of fair and proper character. There is that which is attractive to the *natural* man in Christ; there is that which God meant to be attractive to the heart of man. You see the daughters of Jerusalem weeping as they followed Him. They are actuated merely by natural feeling. The pride of this world would not have Him; but the love of God did not stop for that—God will go on with the truth; if the world will not have it, He will go on for those who will!

But if you receive Him, you must do so as a *dead* Christ—One who has come under the power of death; “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” If you will have an incarnate Christ, you must have a crucified Christ as well. This hurts man’s pride. In the present day an incarnate Christ is put in the place of a dead Christ; because an incarnate one exalts man. But a dead Christ shows where man lay, and the need of redemption. An incarnate Christ *was* presented to man down here; but *now* it is one who has passed through death and gone on high.

“Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day”—I cannot give him a portion in this world, but I can give him a place with me in glory! He can give me thus a part with Himself, but He could not have a part with me here,

“He that eateth me, even he shall live by me.” Now I get the blessed side. I do not *live* by Adam—I have to contend with Adam—with my old flesh; but I *live* by Christ, and “Christ liveth in me.” I live by Him and shall reign with Him, but *entirely outside* everything here.

In the opening of the chapter He sends the disciples away and He goes up alone to the mount, and there they are toiling, away from Him—it is a picture of what is going on now. Now He says, There is food for souls while I am away—from the beginning to the end I am the sustainer of your life!

The moment we know Christ loved us and gave Himself for us, we are justified. But what I dread is that a person should rest here. He has saved you; but do you not want to abide practically in Him, and He in you? Do you not want to sit under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit be sweet to your taste? Do you not want Him to manifest Himself to you?

I may be going through the billows of this scene, but I am feeding on Christ. I see Him if I trace Him here, and find every footstep blessed! He says He is my food; and by eating Him I shall have the consciousness that He came into a world without God, and brought God into it, and the world would not have Him. Then I find I belong to Him in glory (where He has gone, but I have not the glory yet), meanwhile I have Him for my whole living portion.

Is that what your hearts are following after, beloved friends, in this evil world? Are your hearts taking as your everyday portion, *that One* whom the world rejected, or are you taking the world which rejected Him?

The Lord give us to answer this truly in the secret of our hearts, for His name's sake. Amen.

GLEANINGS.

“And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.” (Job xxvlii. 28.)

Christianity starts with the fact that not only had man sinned, and God had driven him out of paradise, but that God had come into the world to seek, in perfect love, the man He had so turned out of His presence, and that man had spurned His love and turned Him out, giving Him the death of a malefactor.

JONAH.

OUR moral corruption is very deep, indeed it is complete ; and at times it will betray itself in very repulsive, hideous shapes from which we instinctively shrink, are confounded at the thought that they belong to us.

Privileges may only serve to develop instead of curing them. As one has said, "You will never know what the flesh is, till you see it in the saints of God."

The love of distinction was inlaid in us at the very outset of our apostasy, "Ye shall be as gods" was listened to, and to this lust we will, in cold blood, sacrifice thousands—as at the beginning we sacrificed the Lord himself to it. (Gen. iii.) We take Christ's gifts and deck ourselves with them. The church at Corinth was such an one as that—instead of using their gifts for others, the brethren there were displaying them. But the man who had the mind of Christ in the midst of them, would say, "I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." (1 Cor. xiv. 19.)

Jonah was doubly privileged. He was a Jew, and he was a prophet. But nature is quick in him to take advantage of these privileges, and to serve his own foul corrupt ends by them. He was a saint of God, as he was a Jew, and a prophet, but that alone gives no adequate security against nature.

As a prophet, the Lord sends him with a word to Nineveh. It was to be a word of judgment. But he knew when he was receiving it that it would not be verified—that in the breast of Him who was sending it mercy rejoiced, and that the word which was to speak of judgment would be gain-sayed ; set aside by the grace that abounded. Was he prepared for this? Could he, as a Jew, suffer it, that a Gentile city should be spared and favoured? Could he, as a prophet, suffer it, that his word should appear to fall to the ground, and that, too, in the face of the despised uncircumcised? This was too large a demand on this saint of God. He goes on board a ship bound for Tarshish, instead of crossing the country to Nineveh. It is a proud apostate, another Adam, that is now on the waters of the Mediterranean Sea ; and he takes the sentence of death into himself as his first father did. He who aimed at holding his privileges and honours as a Jew and a prophet, and would not brook the

thought of their being trespassed on, or shared by others, has to meet the penalty of his sin, and be wrapped among the weeds of the sea, down in the bottoms of the mountains.

To accept the punishment of our sins is a blessed principle of faith ; it is the *first* duty of an erring soul. We are not to seek to right ourselves when we have gone wrong, lest Hormah be our portion. (Numb. xiv.) Our first duty is in the spirit of confession, to accept the punishment of our sins, and be humbled under the mighty or the chastening hand of God (Lev. xxvi. 41). David did this, and the kingdom again, and not Hormah, was his end.

And so does Jonah now: "Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea," said he to the mariners, "so shall the sea be calm unto you, for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you." They did so, but with a grace that might well have shamed their betters. But now, I ask, could Gentile Nineveh be in a worse condition? . . . A Jew, and a prophet, in the bottom of the sea, with the weeds wrapped round his head, because of the displeasure, and under the judgment of God! Surely such an one in such a plight may well end his boasting, and no longer despise others. He could not well be lower. Apostate, proud Adam was behind the trees of the garden ; apostate, proud Jonah is in the bottom of the sea. But soon it will be only his sin that shall be left there. Precious grace! Jonah himself shall be delivered, singing of salvation, as Adam before him left his guilt and his covert together, returning to the presence of God, to be clothed and accepted, and to walk again in the bright, unclouded light of God. But Jonah was educated ere he left the belly of the fish. He finds out that *he* wanted the salvation of God just as much as any *Gentile* could want it. Uncircumcised Nineveh had been unclean in his eye, and he grudged her the mercy of God. What would become of himself now, but for the like mercy? He was in prison, and he deserved to be there. What would do for him now but mercy? "Salvation is of the Lord," he has to say. It is not in himself, as a privileged Jew, or as a gifted prophet, that he will now rejoice, but only in Him to whom it belongs to bring salvation. And, then, "is he the God of the Jew only? Nay, but of the Gentile also," would his experience be, the experience of a Jonah, a prophet in Israel, when under judgment of God in the belly of hell. Our need of justification, our dependence on the sovereignty, the grace and the salva-

tion of God, equalizes us all; "It is one God that shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith." (Rom. iii.) The Jew would come in, in the very same mercy as the Gentile does. So Jonah needed it—that is the lesson which the whale's belly taught him. Let Nineveh be what it may, Gentile and uncircumcised, a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, or anything else, it could not stand more in need of the salvation of the Lord than he, the favoured Jew and the gifted prophet, at that moment did.

It was all over with him but for that—but *that* he gets—and the fish casts him up on the dry land when he had said, "Salvation is of the Lord."

His nation by and by shall learn the same lesson. No sign is now left with them but the sign of this prophet; and they will have to learn with him as out of the belly of hell, as from under the judgment of God, that grace, free, full, sovereign riches of grace in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, is their only refuge. Through our mercy they will obtain mercy. (Rom. xi. 31.) Just as the Gentile receives blessing now, so will the Jew by and bye. God has concluded all in unbelief, or sin, that he may have mercy, the like grace and salvation, upon all.

As one who has there been taught to know his own need, and to take, as dependent, a place in the rich grace of God as any can take, Jonah is sent on a second mission to Nineveh. He goes—and with words of judgment on his lips, he enters that great city. "Yet forty days," he proclaims aloud, "and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

Thus he "mourned." It was his commission. Responsively, Nineveh "lamented." The King rose from his throne, and all the nation put themselves in sackcloth. And a King of Nineveh shall find God, as a King of Judah had before found him; "I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord," said David, "and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." So here "who can tell" says the Gentile King, "if God will," &c., (ch. iii. 9), "and God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not."

"Is he the God of the Jew only?" again I ask with the Apostle; and with him again I answer, "Nay, but of the Gentile also."

But—"tell it not in Gath."—Did Lot go a *second* time to Sodom? Did Hezekiah, *after* the shadow upon the sun-dial,

sin through pride with the ambassadors of Babylon? Did Josiah *after* his humbling and tenderness, go wilfully to the battle? Did Peter, *in spite of warnings*, deny his Lord? Have you and I, beloved, *forgotten* the lessons and correctings of God? And is Jonah now to be unmindful of the whale's belly?

Jonah is displeased. He cannot exactly again take ship for Tarshish—but he goes outside the city. The mercy shown to Nineveh had made a Gentile city as important with the God of all grace as a Jew; and frustrated, as pride would have it, the word of a prophet. Jonah was very angry; and he said, "O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? therefore I fled before unto Tarshish:—for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil; therefore now, O Lord, take I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live."

What naughtiness of heart all this was! Was he preparing another fish's belly for himself? How richly he deserved it; yet it was not quite so. But he was about to feel a vehement east wind, and a burning sun, under the disappearing shadow of a withered, blasted gourd.

What troubles we make for ourselves! Why did not Lot remain in the calm unruffled tent of Abraham, and why did he prepare for himself a fish—a second furnace—in Sodom? Why did David bring a sword upon his house that was commissioned of the Lord to hang over it unsheathed till the day of his death?

The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, hear ye the rod. How much more shall the *saints* hear it? But Jonah was deaf. He soon forgot the lesson of the whale's belly, and he must now be put to learn the lesson of the withered gourd. He had been set to learn the grace of God in one character of it, and he shall now be set to learn it in another. But it is divine grace he has still to learn. Blessed lesson for all! The whale's belly, the belly of hell where he once was, had taught him his need of "salvation," and that the salvation he needed was "of the Lord" in sovereignty, in that magnificent height and depth that could stretch as from the throne of power in the highest, to the bottom of the sea in the lowest, and there extricate a captive as from the belly of hell.

The withered gourd shall now teach him how the blessed Creator delights in the works of His hands, and finds

His rest and refreshment in them. Jonah has to prove this. He sits under the shadow of the gourd, and is "exceeding glad." But the worm withers it, strips it of all its leafy honours, and thus of that which refreshes Jonah; and the wind and the sun make Jonah to faint, so that he would rather die than live, and he is very angry. The Lord, in marvellous gentleness, turns all these simple circumstances into a page of the profoundest instruction.

The prophet's delight in the gourd for which he had not laboured, is but the reflection of the Lord's delight in the creatures of His hand, be they at Nineveh or Jerusalem—and if Jonah would fain have had the gourd spared, he must allow Nineveh with its cattle and its children, not to mention its thousands of grown and ripened inhabitants, to be spared also. Jonah shall witness for the Lord against himself. Out of his own mouth he shall be judged.

THOUGHTS ON SACRIFICES.—No. 7. CLEANSING FROM DEFILEMENT.

NUMBERS XIX.

(Concluded from page 156.)

THE ashes prepared, the occasion of their use is next declared—the sprinkling of any one defiled by the dead. Here also we see shadowed forth what sin is before God. "He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days." To touch the dead body of a clean beast which had died, rendered the person unclean till the evening; to touch the dead body of a man, however good he might have been, rendered the man unclean seven days. How humbling to the pride of man! A descendant of Adam, who was made in the image of God, after His likeness, was more defiling when dead than the body of a beast. Why was this? By man came sin, and by sin came death. Death witnessed of the presence of sin, for death was the consequence of it. Surrounded with the consequences of sin, and often made to feel them keenly as death entered the family or the tent, yet a man could not always help being in the tent where death had entered, or refrain in the call of duty from touching a dead body, or a bone, or a grave. God knew this. It might not be a wrong act on the man's part, for God did not command them to refrain

from this (the priests, outside certain family relationships excepted), yet He pronounced whoever did touch the dead body, etc., unclean for seven days. And mark this, the period of uncleanness could not be shortened; no excuse, no argument could avail to set aside God's word, or procure a relaxation of this stringent rule. On no ground could defilement by the dead be passed over as a thing of little consequence, or be excused by the exigencies of the occasion; for even if the passover was nigh at hand, those unclean by a dead body must wait for the following month, before they could again commemorate the redemption of the people from Egypt. Touching a dead body was a serious thing in God's sight, whatever it might have been in man's; for He judged according to the holiness of His nature, not according to the necessity of the case.

What an illustration this affords of the nature of God! All that came into the tent, and all that was in the tent where death entered, were rendered unclean by its presence. Contact with defilement defiled, and entrance into the place where death was, became a cause of defilement likewise. Inflexible was the standard of God's holiness, which must be maintained, whatever it might cost His creatures. "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts," cried the seraphims (Isa. vi. 3), and here we see exemplified in some degree what that holiness is. Had it been an atrocious act of sin, which called forth this stringent rule to guard the holiness of God from being sullied by the sinner's presence, all must have agreed in the justice of his exclusion. But here, where man might not have been able to avoid it, born in God's providence into a world in which death has found an entrance, whatever excuse he might have been prepared to offer, or whatever plea of inability to have kept himself clean he might truly have urged, nothing could avail when the holy character of God was in question. Unclean he was, and unclean he must be till the appointed epoch had passed away. God could admit of no compromise. The man had not sinned it is true, but he was unclean, because death, the wages of sin, was there. It was no question then about the measure of a man's guilt, but entirely a question about the nature of God. How little, surely, is this understood even in these days.

Made to feel in himself how sin excludes from the presence of God, and how holy He must be who so jealously guarded

the purity of His sanctuary, the man, whilst learning the defiling character of sin, and all connected with it, might learn also the gracious provision of his God for the effectual removal of his uncleanness by the sprinkling of the water of separation. How to be made clean when defiled he could not have discovered, but God had disclosed the means to be used, manifesting thereby the utmost care for the sanctuary, but manifesting also His real desire for the defiled one. "He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean; but, if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean." The water must be used on both days. Purified he would be if he conformed to God's law, but the full time must elapse before he could be clean. The clean person must use the water with hyssop, and twice must the unclean one be sprinkled. A little thing it might seem to touch the dead body, or to be in the tent; but the man must deeply feel what sin and all connected with it, is before God. On the third day and on the seventh day was he sprinkled. It was no hasty work, done in a moment and forgotten. Sprinkled on the third day, he must wait till the seventh day arrived, and then be sprinkled afresh before he could be clean. The condition he was in as unclean must be pressed home on him. He must feel it fully, as a whole period of time elapsed between the act which defiled, and the final act of bathing himself on the seventh day at even. Besides this, he had to own himself indebted to a clean person for the sprinkling of that water, by which alone he could begin to emerge from his state of ceremonial uncleanness. Without the sprinkling with the water on the two separate occasions he could not have been cleansed, and without the washing of his clothes and himself in water, the cleansing must have been imperfect.

Of what does this rite speak to us? It tells of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ under the judgment of God for us, brought home to the conscience in power by the Holy Ghost. His death was needed to atone for our sins, His death was also requisite to put away sin, and to be applied to the believer as an adequate motive for his walk in separation from evil on earth. How great then was the need of that death, and how rich are the provisions we have in it. By it God's holiness is maintained, and because of it the defiled one can be cleansed. And, as the type sets forth what was

needed, so the order therein enjoined is the order with God's people now. First, the death of Christ is applied to the conscience by the Holy Ghost, then separation from what is unclean around us will take place; just as the man was first sprinkled, and then he washed himself. He washed himself because he had been sprinkled, and that twice; not to fit himself to be sprinkled, for another—a clean man must move in that matter first of all on his behalf. Humbling fact! And since it was a question of cleansing from what had defiled him by contact, or by his presence within the tent where death was, and not of standing before God, he needed not the immediate services of the priest, (they had been rendered in the preparation of the ashes); but the offices of one that was himself ceremonially clean. The aspect of priestly work is towards God, so the blood of the heifer had been sprinkled by the priest towards the face of the tabernacle of the congregation. None but the priest, the type of the Lord Jesus Christ could do this; but, the using the water of separation on behalf of another, was an act of a different character, for it shadows forth that service which one believer can do for another, as, beholding him entangled in that which is defiling, he applies by the power of the Holy Ghost the word—which tells of the death of Christ, and the consequent position of His followers on earth—to free the soul from all that communicates only uncleanness.

And as the sprinkled one purified himself, and washed his clothes, and bathed himself in water; so those to whom such a service is rendered must themselves acquiesce in it, and act accordingly. "Blessed are they that wash their robes (so we should read) that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. xxii. 14.) There is such a thing as "cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. vi. 1), besides having our feet washed by the service of another (John xiii). But, to minister to one in need of such offices, the individual must be clean himself.

Another thing comes out. Though only an individual was defiled, the consequences of his act were not confined to himself. Outside the camp because defiled (Num. v), he was nevertheless a member of it, in the midst of which God dwelt. So, if the means prescribed for his cleansing were despised, or even neglected, God must have acted, because he defiled the sanctuary of the Lord. Hence, there was but one alter-

native. Death must come in in any case; but it was either for the man to avail himself of the death of the heifer, or to suffer death himself under the judicial hand of God. He might say he did not want the cleansing. That would show how completely he disregarded the peculiar privileges of the people of Israel, but that plea would not avail him. He could not shelter himself from what flowed from his position as a member of the camp, on the ground of his individuality. It mattered not what he desired, action must take place, because he belonged to the congregation in the midst of which was the sanctuary.

How holy then was that place. All connected with his cleansing felt it. The person who sprinkled him had to wash his clothes, and the man who touched the water of separation was unclean until the evening, whilst the poor defiled person, unable to sanctify himself, imparted pollution to whatever he came against. What a state to be in. But death, the death of God's own Son, provided all that was needful. No compromise of God's holiness, nor continuance of defilement could be allowed for a moment, nor was there the need of either; for that death, as viewed in the type, maintained the one, and purified the individual from the other.

A READING ON THE PSALMS.

(Book iv.: Psalms xc.-cvi.)

THIS book is the bringing in of the Only Begotten into the world, which is found in Heb. i., though here, of course, for Israel. We might say, "The Only Begotten in connection with Israel" is the heading of this book.

Psa. xc., is Israel's connection with Jehovah from the beginning, as being their dwelling place from of old, (Ex. xv.) and looking to His return, with the word of faith, "How long?"

Psa. xci. Here we have all the titles of God in the Old Testament. We never find a *distinctive* Christian feeling, a child's feeling, in the Psalms, except so far as we partake of Christ's sufferings, and then in this we get Christian feeling. You never get God as the Father in the Psalms. The Church is found in Christ only, in the Old Testament. In Isaiah l., "Who is he that shall condemn me?" applies to Christ. In Rom. viii. the same language is applied to the Church.

In this psalm the Messiah is taking His place, with Israel, of trust in Jehovah. The former psalm goes back to Jehovah, Moses' God; this goes back to Almighty, Abraham's God. If you know the secret place of the "*Most High*" as your dwelling place, you will have the full place of blessing in abiding under the shadow of the "*Almighty*," Abraham's God. In *v. 2* Messiah says, "I will say of *Jehovah* he is my God." Thus He leads Israel to dwell, where in their unfaithfulness, they had never dwelt before. In *v. 9*, Israel speaks addressing Messiah. In *v. 14*, Jehovah Himself speaks of Him as the One who has set His love upon Him. It is a very interesting psalm in this way.

Psa. xcii. Here it is Jehovah taking His place as Most High with the righteous, and it is a good thing to give thanks.

Psa. xciii. states the grand and blessed results. Jehovah reigns, and is set in His place.

Psa. xciv. The cry of the remnant in Israel for vengeance, and in *v. 20* they ask, Is Jehovah's throne to be in fellowship with the throne of the beast, and of anti-christ?

From Psa. xciv.—*c.* We have the details of the coming in of the Only Begotten into the world, coming as Jehovah from heaven, and at length taking His place between the cherubim, and calling up the world to worship Him there.

Psa. xciv. The remnant summon Israel, while it is called "to-day" to come and worship. If they do not, they cannot, when judgment has come.

Psa. xcvi. The nations are summoned to repent. It is the preaching of the everlasting Gospel of Rev. xiv. 6, 7.

Psa. xcvii. He Himself is actually coming.

Psa. xcviii. He has come and showed Himself, and has overcome His enemies.

Psa. xcix. He is great in Zion and sitting between the cherubim.

Psa. c. The Gentiles are summoned to come up and worship. In Psalm xcvi. "Go-im" become "Ammim," the nations are brought into relationship. These Psalms are the everlasting Gospel in Rev. xiv.

Psa. ci. describes the principles on which Messiah will govern the house and the land during the millennium.

Ps. cii. is one of the most remarkable of the Psalms, and presents Christ in a way divinely admirable and affecting. It raises the question, that if the temple be rebuilt and Israel

be restored, What about Messiah? for He has been cut off. The answer is that He is Jehovah, who made the heavens. "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands." It is the most beautiful Psalm in the book. He is eternal in being, and His days have no end. It is more than in *v.* 12. There Messiah says, "Thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever." Here Jehovah says to Him, "Thou art the same." No creature is that. He is and was—the Existing One. He was before all things, and He is after all things have ended, and He is always the same, the eternal "Now;" and, secondly, "Thy years shall have no end," that is in relationship to time. The answer of Jehovah begins at *v.* 25.

Ps. ciii. Messiah praises Jehovah who forgives sins, and heals in Israel. The Lord took this up in title when He healed the paralytic in the gospel, and said "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

Ps. civ. Messiah praises Jehovah in creation.

Ps. cv. He offers thanksgiving to Jehovah, and calls on the seed of Abraham and Jacob to remember how He is making good His covenant, in His dealings of old in their favour, in faithfulness towards them.

Ps. cvi. He praises the Lord for His patience towards them in all their failure, "For his mercy endureth for ever."

SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

"A. B. M." What is the correct thought of Heb. xii. 23: "to the general assembly and church of the first born?" Does the Holy Ghost repeat Himself, or is there a distinction?

A.—The passage should be read thus, "But ye are come unto mount Zion; *and* unto the city of the living God the heavenly Jerusalem; *and* to myriads of angels a general convocation; *and* assembly of firstborn (ones) enrolled in heaven," &c.

The writer is contrasting the order of things to which the Hebrews had come under Christianity and grace, with that of mount Sinai and law. They were *not* come to the latter (*vv.* 18-21), they *were* come to mount Zion—the principle of perfect grace from God to His earthly people when wholly ruined in all classes of the nation; people, priests, and

kings, (*vv.* 22-24). This is the meaning of "Mount Zion" here; it is perfect grace. It refers to God's intervention by His chosen King, David, in re-establishing His relationship with the people at mount Zion when all was ruined; in bringing back the Ark of God. (See 2 Samuel v.-vi.) He opens in these verses a magnificent vista of all that *will be* in millennial glory, but as *now* true to faith. The word "and" divides each thought in *vv.* 22-24. So that the last clause of *v.* 22 should not have been severed from the first part of *v.* 23. These two clauses refer to the great convocation of angels on high. Then comes, "and assembly of firstborn (ones)," enrolled in heaven, by grace; they were not like angels—indigenous to the place. (*Cf* Luke x. 20.)

Q.—What is the proper teaching of 1 Cor. xi. 5? Is there any ground in it for a woman praying in an ordinary meeting for prayer, of course *not* in church?

A.—First of all, I believe that in an "ordinary meeting for prayer," Christians gather together "in assembly;" any gathering together of God's people to the name of the Lord, where the Holy Ghost's action is unhindered—*i.e.*, an assembly which Scripture owns, is meeting "in assembly; and the woman is to keep silence and be in subjection—showing the sign of subjection by wearing a covering on her head.

No doubt, were there no men present, a woman would be perfectly free to pray or prophesy if she had the gift; and I believe many have the gifts of Christ. But even if so, it must be used in subjection to Christ in His ordered way, and in private, so as not to usurp authority over the man, and mar God's order in redemption. To pray or prophesy with her head uncovered—she dishonours her head.

In the first sixteen verses the apostle is dealing with the order of headships according to God, which were forgotten by the saints at Corinth. God is the head of Christ (looked at as Man): Christ the head of the man; the man the head of the woman. In *vv.* 17 and onwards, he deals with the coming together of the saints in assembly: "church" should always in Scripture be rendered "assembly;" and there should be no "*the*" in *v.* 18.

The woman (and man too) in Corinthians had forgotten this order, and the former were I suppose praying and prophesying with dishevelled locks. Their hair was given

for a veil, not for such a purpose. She ought *also*, with her hair, to have power (a sign of subjection), on her head because of the angels.

“A. L. O. C.” Will you kindly give a little help as to the Old Testament saints. We know they had life, and were saved as we are through faith; but had they the new birth, or new creation, in which the Holy Ghost dwells? Had they it without an inhabitant? What was their spiritual condition? To what things did our Lord refer in John iii. “Art thou a Master in Israel and knowest not these things?” How could Nicodemus know anything about the new birth? Was it the “new heart” and “new spirit” of Ezek. xviii 31?

A.—The saints in the Old Testament days were born again. This is a positive necessity for any soul in order to “see” or “enter into” the kingdom of God. Whatever truth God had revealed, and was pleased to use and apply by the Holy Ghost to the conscience, when received by faith, produced a new birth in the soul. The new creation is quite a different thing. Man had not only corrupted his *nature*, and needed to be born anew, but he had been driven out from God, and thus had lost his *place*. The new creation is a new place, or order of things with God, into which Christ has entered as Man, dead and risen. We belong to it now because of redemption, and as possessing eternal life in Christ; but we are still connected with the old, and there are certain things of the old creation owned of God in which we have to walk, while morally we belong to the new order of things before God. Human relationships and the like, are the things to which I refer. They are of the old creation.

You do not express a scriptural thought in your phrase, “In which the Holy Ghost dwells.” He dwells in “your body” as a temple individually (1 Cor. vi. 19), and also in the House of God as a Temple collectively; “know ye not that ye (plural) are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? (1 Cor. iii. 16). Hence “Had they it without an inhabitant?” has no force, if you mean that the Holy Ghost inhabits the new creation.

No doubt all the Old Testament saints were born again, and the life they received was eternal, though it was not definitely revealed under that name, until it was first displayed in the Son of God, a Man on earth. They were also morally

of the new creation, although the time had not yet come to bring it to light. God was still dealing with and testing man on the earth. Eternal life is the Christian term for what we possess in Christ, for in it we are brought into fellowship with the Father and the Son, and thus have a nature suited to heaven.

The Old Testament saints trusted in God as known in grace. Their sins were passed over "through the forbearance of God," in view of what the cross would accomplish. (Rom. iii 25.) In it God was proved righteous in His forbearance with them. Consequently sin was imperfectly known to them, and their consciences were unpurged, while our consciences *are* purged now by Christ's blood, which fits us to stand in the light of God's presence. The tastes and desires of the new man in its aspirations after God and good were there; the conscience of the old man was there unpurged, but the distinction between the natures was not made known; they were looked upon and treated as concrete men, so to say. In conscience many go no further now, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost characterizing the Christian state, is indeed known to few.

Nicodemus, as a teacher in Israel, ought to have known that a new birth—"a new heart and new spirit," was needed to partake of even the *earthly* blessings of the kingdom. The passage in Ezek. xviii. 31 bears on it; so does Ezek. xxxvi. 24-31, still more directly. In the latter they would have this new heart and spirit when gathered from the heathen, into the land of their forefathers, there to enjoy their "earthly things." How much more fully needed to enjoy the "*heavenly things*" the Lord had now come to reveal.

The Christian has "spirit, soul, and body," as a sinful man; self-will and "flesh" setting him against God. A new nature has been imparted from God Himself; it has not removed the old, or improved it. The same man, "spirit, soul, and body," is now the property of another. A nature has been given suited to God, and to enjoy Him in light. The conscience is purged by the blood, on the ground of which he has been born of God. The Holy Ghost dwells in his body, and the same man, not now "his own," but "bought with a price," has to glorify God with his body, and hold it as the vessel, whether of the mind and character, or affections now wrought upon by the Holy Ghost, leading him to live by an object outside himself—even

Christ. Thus the Apostle desires that "spirit, soul, and body" may be kept blameless till the day of Christ, when complete assimilation to Christ, even of his body, will take place. He has to walk as dead to the world, dead to sin, dead to the law; dead and risen with Christ. Morally of that new place into which Christ has entered as dead and risen, while still connected with the old creation, and in obedience recognizing what is of God in it; yet remembering that sin has come in, and marred it all.

THE GOSPEL ECHO.

True faith producing love to God in man,
Say, Echo, is not this the Gospel plan?
Echo—The Gospel plan!

Must I my faith in Jesus constant show
By doing good to all, both friend and foe?
Echo—Both friend and foe!

When men conspire to hate and treat me ill,
Must I return them good, and love them still?
Echo—Love them still!

If they my failings causelessly reveal,
Must I their faults as carefully conceal?
Echo—As carefully conceal!

But if my name and character they tear,
And cruel malice, too, too plain appear;
And when I sorrow and affliction know,
They smile, and add unto my cup of woe,
Say Echo, say, in such peculiar case—
Must I continue still to love and bless?
Echo—Still to love and bless!

Why, Echo, how is this? thou'rt sure a dove;
Thy voice will leave me nothing else but love!
Echo—Nothing else but love!

Amen, with all my heart, then be it so;
And now to practice—I'll directly go,
Echo—Directly go!

This path be mine, and let who will reject,
My gracious God me surely will protect!
Echo—Surely will protect!

Henceforth on Him I'll cast my every care,
And friends and foes, embrace them all in prayer.
Echo—Embrace them all in prayer!

FRUITFULNESS OF SOUL IN INFANCY, AND
IN MATURITY.

1 SAM. xviii. 1-4; AND PHIL. iii.

I HAVE read these two Scriptures, beloved, with the desire to speak a little on the fruitfulness of a soul in its early days, as also in the maturity of spiritual life. I need hardly add that the first Scripture will only serve our present purpose as illustrating the thoughts I desire to present to you.

When the person of the Lord Jesus is before the soul at the early moments of spiritual life, I believe it generally follows that the tone of life is one of special devotedness to Christ. It marks what we should call a happy conversion, and this is better than clear doctrine, good as it is, and we cannot do without it. When John cried "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," we do not read of any one having been converted. But when he uttered the last lovely strain of his ministry—his swan's song—"Behold the Lamb of God"—there were two souls linked to Christ for ever! "The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus." And more (for one of them doubtless was John), the Lord never had to say to one of them from that moment "Follow me." There was fruitfulness as the result of that conversion.

Almost every Christian knows the story of David conquering the Philistine giant and delivering Israel. (1 Sam. xvii.) Israel was trembling before the hosts of the Philistines, and the challengings of the giant. The Valley of Elah (curse) lay between, and there was none to deliver! David (so blessedly a type of the true David) came down to see the battle. He was the eighth son of his father Jesse. When he came, his brethren despised him (as the Jews did the Lord of Glory); attributing his actions to the pride and naughtiness of his heart. The great and decisive moment had come, and he who had walked with God in secret moments when no eye was on him but His, stands forth in the strength of Him who had delivered him out of the paw of the lion and the bear. He goes forward in the unhesitating confidence that He would deliver him out of the hand of this Philistine, who had defied the armies of the living God. It was a question of what God was, and faith always counts on what God is for His people, no matter what their condition may be.

Then you notice he tried Saul's armour, and it crippled him. How man's arrangements and man's order cripple and hinder the soul that walks by faith.

David chooses him five stones out of the brook. The weakness of man where death put forth its power, was that which conquered in the hand of God. It was the weakness of God that was stronger than men; He who was crucified in weakness, by weakness won the victory. It was Satan's last stronghold; Christ entered death, by entering defeated it, and discomfited the power of the enemy. David went forth and met the giant (the great power of Satan), who was six cubits and a span high; he went forth in the name of the Lord of hosts, slang the stone and sank it in the Philistine's forehead, and destroyed him. And there was nothing in David's hand. Then he took the sword of the Philistine and bewed off his head. The very power of death Christ took out of Satan's hand and destroyed it for ever, for faith and for God.

The stripling, flushed with victory, returned with the head of the giant in his hand; and when David had made an end of speaking unto Saul, "the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."

This scene so beautifully illustrates the moment when the Lord Jesus came up from the dust of death, a mighty conqueror, bearing the spoils of His victory in His hands, and, making known to our souls what He has accomplished, He wins the heart to Himself. It is not so much the victory, as the Victor who touches the chord of the heart in this scene; then Jonathan's—nay, the sinner's heart is knit to the heart of Jesus, and "we love him because he first loved us." "Jonathan loved him as his own soul."

If we follow the illustration onwards, we find how David loved him and valued his love: "Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." (2 Samuel i. 26.)

Now the result was, that all that which adorned Jonathan—everything which he possessed as the son of a king—he stripped from himself and gave to David, "even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle." It is thus with a soul in its first early brightness, occupied rather with the person of its deliverer, than with what He has accomplished; the result is, that all that would clothe and give importance to self, is dropped and laid at the feet of Jesus!

So with the Queen of Sheba. She came to Solomon burdened

with her hard questions, and when her heart was relieved, and "there was not anything hid from the king which he told her not," she pours out all her treasures at his feet: then the king *gave them back* to her, and besides these things, "all her desire." Thus, when the heart is determined to have nought apart from Christ, and all is surrendered, He deprives us of nothing which we can hold *with* Him. How sad to see souls tried, even if some little trifle has to be given up for Christ! When the eye is on Christ all is simple, and anything that comes in between the soul and Himself is treated as a hindrance, and is dropped. If one look of faith at Jesus has been followed by the soul's salvation, how much deep blessing will come through continuing to gaze.

I have taken up this lovely Scripture to illustrate the fruitfulness to Christ of a soul just born of God, and though we might also find many other like instances in the New Testament, we will now turn to Phil. iii., that we may see the fruitfulness of a mature soul, who has not ceased to gaze on the Lord.

The epistle to the Philippians is the practical proof that a soul can walk in the Spirit so as to be in no way under the influence of the flesh, as we read in Gal. v. 16, "walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."

We have sometimes heard it stated that this is conflict, but that is a mistake. We think too, that because we have got "flesh" in us, that it must always be a warfare. It has been remarked that "sin" is not once mentioned in the Philippians, nor "flesh," but to say that he had no confidence in it.

Paul has his eye upon a glorified Christ, and we are to be "followers of" Paul, and to do the same. It is not to have your eye upon Paul, but upon Him upon whom Paul was looking, while he ran in the full energy of the Spirit of God. He is walking in the power of those verses in John xii., ending with, "if any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am, there shall also my servant be" (vv. 23-26).

From thirty to forty years had passed away when this Scripture came freshly from God, through the experience and pen of Paul. Thirty years (or so) before, he was physically blind for three days from the sight of a Saviour in the glory. He was morally blind to all else that this world could afford from that day.

All was judged that stood between them; all was dropped which could not pass into that scene where Christ was. "What things" were gain then to Saul the chief of sinners, the new man counted loss for Christ. He had eclipsed them all as the stars are eclipsed by the light of the sun. Did thirty or forty years bring a change? Did the prison in Rome, and the neglect of the saints, make any change in what he once expressed? No! More full of Christ than ever, his undimmed energy bursts forth in the words, "yea, doubtless, and I count *all* things (the range had increased) loss" for Christ! It was indeed with him, "my soul followeth hard after thee : thy right hand upholdeth me."

Beloved friends, this is what we need; a heart going out after Christ in this vigour and energy; enabled to count all things dross and dung to have Christ for gain; to win Him *where He is, and as He is*, in glory. "And be found in him;" so always when in the race, all is to be attained at the end. No question or uncertainty in the course, but then I must run to win all *there*. Thus, the soul drops the weights and hindrances, and does not think of them as sacrifices at all. There never was one yet, who having given up something for Christ, has not found a vigour and energy imparted, of which he had no conception until the hindrance was gone.

Christ as He *was*, is still more wonderful than Christ as He *is*! Glory is the natural sphere for God. But God, humbled and obedient, is more wonderful still. This you have in chapter ii. It is Christ as He *is*, he seeks to win, and he throws all aside that he may do so. In chapter ii., Christ puts all aside, humbles Himself, and comes down to obedience and death. In chapter iii., Paul puts all aside, and looks for obedience unto death, if found by the way in his track to glory! See what different motives actuated each in the surrender of all! He desires to know the power of His resurrection, to lift him outside of all here below, that he may live and walk as a man who has died and risen with Christ. If suffering came, he looked for the fellowship of His; if death came, he would have nothing else, because he found it on his track to glory. It was very near too to his soul (ch. i. 20).

"If by any means," here an "if" comes in, because it is the race which leads to glory which is before us; the responsible course which ends there. "If" ten thousand difficulties came in the way, he would not shrink from one,

because they were found in the pathway which ended with complete conformity to Christ on high.

Not as though he had already attained, or were already perfected. There are two ways in which perfection is looked at in Scripture. *Positional* perfection on high in Christ; and *moral* perfection, *i.e.*, the heart's response to the former, walking in consistency with the place on high. It seizes the purpose of God as to complete conformity to Christ in glory, and the heart is governed by this purpose, and asserts in practice the course and conduct suited to the end in view.

In this chapter you find moral perfection (*v.* 15) which is the response of the heart to the place which we have on high, while in the race which leads to complete conformity to Him; and enables him to apprehend that for which he had been apprehended of Christ.

“This one thing I do”; one thing governing the heart all day long. A simple undivided heart that can in loneliness and toil, whatever it may be, think of Christ and the things of Christ in unbroken communion and joy.

No doubt the poor heart discovers how feebly it can do this; but it discovers Christ's heart increasingly in the measure it discovers its own. When a soul is thus simply engaged with Christ, others see it, and that which ought to have been the state of the whole church, is produced in the individual by the Spirit of God; the answer below to the glory of Christ in heaven. That is Christianity!

If there were this unbrokenness of occupation with Christ in our souls, there would be more unity amongst the saints, more power, more faithfulness, more forgetfulness of self; less of man and more of Christ.

Thus beloved brethren, you have a sweet picture of the fruitfulness of a soul in its maturity—the first object is the object still—things once judged and surrendered, are judged and surrendered still; and the growing appreciation of what Christ is, brings more deep conformity, more energy and grace. Then when the eye is turned for a moment from Christ to serve the saints who are His, it carries with it the interests of His heart for His own, discerns the faintest line His hand has traced on the souls of His people, and is enabled to rejoice in the fruits of His grace in those whom He has made the objects of His love, and the travail of His soul!

D A V I D.

IN the books of Samuel and Kings we have the histories of David and Solomon; there they are considered *historically*; but in Chronicles they are to be considered in their *moral* and *typical* character, whether as shewing forth the Lord Jesus, or His saints.

Did you ever meditate on the difference between David and Solomon? David teaches you of grace, and Solomon of glory. Grace is illustrated through David's whole course; he was a poor shepherd boy, despised by man, a stripling. Samuel asks Jesse, "Are here all thy children?" The right man, was well nigh passed by; but Samuel says, "send and fetch him, for we will not sit down till he come hither." This was the Lord's anointed, chosen by grace, when despised by man; sustained by grace, when destroyed by man; and ultimately when set on the throne of Judah, kept there by grace. There is more still. He was chosen, anointed, sustained, and raised to the kingdom; but, besides that, when he had fallen, he was restored by grace, but by *grace through righteousness* he was restored—that was grace; but the sword never departed from his house—that was righteousness. When defiled, he was kept to the end and suffered to depart in peace. This indeed was grace.

Solomon teaches us of glory. He had never been a despised shepherd boy, nor like a partridge hunted upon the mountains. We catch our first sight of him on the throne. The tale of glory is less affecting than that of grace; we live in the midst of scenes more affecting than those of glory, more sweet than eternity can tell.

Again, in David we have the warrior king, in Solomon the peaceful king. If David views the surrounding nations, he finds them enemies, and sallies forth against them, sword in hand. Solomon, from the quiet dignity of his palace, accepts their homage, and is honoured, and sought unto by them. Lastly, David is the servant, Solomon the son. First Chronicles gives you David the servant; second Chronicles, Solomon the son.

Now, these combinations often occur in Scripture, and the more we are let into the secret of the dispensations, the more we can enjoy the Word. For instance, Enoch gives us heavenly strangership, Noah earthly blessing, Moses, on Pisgah, takes us to heaven, while Joshua follows, taking

possession of the land. Elijah, again, is the heavenly stranger, and Elisha the man of the earth. These things show unity of purpose throughout the whole Book, and prove that God's own principles and purposes have been always before Him. His Book is no mass of confusion, with a bright thought glittering here and there. It has a well-defined, premeditated character, framed for eternal blessing. David illustrated the blessing of God in His servant. Solomon sat in the fruit of David's labours. Jesus, in His first coming, was the Servant; in the second coming He will be manifested as the Son. Was He not always the Son? Most assuredly He was from all eternity. But He came as a servant, and when He comes again shall He not serve you? Surely He "will come forth and serve," but it will be in the character of the Son. In all these combinations of which we have spoken, from Enoch and Noah, David and Solomon, we are in company with the Christ of God.

Having thus prefaced the history of David, we shall commence at the thirteenth chapter of 1st Chronicles, and divide the subject into four distinct parts, the first of which will suffice for this day's meditation, and will carry us to the close of the sixteenth chapter.

At the end of the twelfth chapter we find David established in full blessing; by the unanimous voice of the tribes, he is anointed king in Hebron with hosannas! It was an intoxicating moment, more so than any we have known, yet we can understand it: we know that it is easier to *gain* a victory than to *use* it. The *use* is more *moral*, and the *gaining* of the victory more, so to speak, *physical*. David, in his humiliation, had gone from strength to strength, but in his day of triumph he got restless, and summoned his captains to bring home the ark from Kirjath-jearim. How could he think of entrusting the ark to his captains? Ah! there it was, he had just been amongst them, the favourite of the nation; it was a moment of intoxication, and David was thrown off his guard. Very, very natural.

But there was besides this act of the flesh, a very beautiful one of the Spirit. It was the desire to bring home the ark; never had Saul attempted it. It might have lain at Kirjath-jearim for ever for him, but David desired to bring it back. The Spirit and the flesh were acting together. The *flesh* demanded of the captains, and set the ark upon a cart; the *Spirit* had set David's heart on having God with His

people, and made him resolve that his throne should be where God was. How wonderful to see these two agents working together in one act, and to trace each as clearly as if the other were absent. Cannot we often see this in our own doings? "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh," and "these are contrary the one to the other." (Gal. v.) This is a vivid instance of the complex nature in the saint of God. If the carelessness of the flesh puts the ark upon a cart, and commits it to the care of the captains, it is the earnestness of the Spirit that desires to bring God back to His people, and cares not for the kingdom in His absence. If God be not king, neither will I be!

But, let me ask, will God form an alliance with your carelessness? He could as easily join with your lusts! The Word had commanded that the ark should be carried on the shoulders of the Levites, and if David prefers a new cart, God will vindicate His own Word. (Numbers iv. 15.) To touch the ark was, for any but a Levite, judicial death. Uzza touched it, and he died "*before God.*" It could not be otherwise. "Hath God spoken, and shall he not make it good?" You will say, perhaps, it was a venial fault in David. I grant you, indeed, it was very different from the matter of Uriah the Hittite. But can God be as indifferent as I am about His own word? We think the Levite and the cart equally suitable; God thinks differently. He surely pities me, but *He never complies with my ignorance.* The idea of the ark on a cart! Could there have been greater carelessness of Scripture, yet where is there more beautiful energy of the Spirit than the desire to have the ark of God at home? Now David quite misunderstood the dealings of God; "he was displeased." He was quite in a sulk about the death of Uzza. After all my hilarity and my merry-making in the presence of God, after all my desire to bring the ark home, is this all I get? David allows the ark of God to pass into the hand of a Gentile. (Ch. xiii. 13.) Have you not sometimes felt in a sulk, out of humour with God? Has He ever crossed a day of your festivity, and with, so to speak, rude foot dashed all your joys to the earth? David sulkily judges that God has, *without reason*, interfered with his spiritual enjoyment.

As we go through the fourteenth chapter we find the Philistines assembled against David, and he applies to God

to know if he should go against them? God says, "Go, and prosper." And again they come against him, and again he asks, and again God says, "Go, and prosper;" think on this. If we were but familiar with the Word we could never be puzzled as to what to do in any emergency. Here is a man out of temper yet coming back to God! Have you not seen this at home, a shadow in the family, yet they are thrown together still? Now, God does not deal with David's temper. He melts all the sulkiness clean out of him, by heaping coals of fire on his head. This is what you must do; you must not be overcome of *evil*. God overcomes evil. He does not resent the ways of His children, but gives sulky David victory over the Philistines. God takes coals of fire and heaps them on David's head, and melts the sulkiness out of him! God never tells you to do anything that He does not do Himself. He tells you to love your enemies and give them food, and He does it Himself. He tells you to overcome evil, and He does it Himself. Here it is. The consequence is, that David finds out his mistake. I see how it is, he says, "none ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites" (chap. xv. 2). It was late in the day to discover the mistake; but David had to say, "Perez-Uzza," at his own door at last. Blessed moment, in which *I find myself wrong and God right!* I can bear to find out that I am wrong—to find that God was wrong, would be eternal ruin. No doubt it is very humbling to discover that I have been sulky, unwarrantably sulky, and with God; but then no two things more sweetly combine than broken-heartedness and joy. You cannot be truly happy unless you know a broken heart. You may have pastime; but joy in God demands a broken heart. I do not speak of *the measure* but of the fact. How can you be happy in God's presence, unless you know that you are a sinner?

David no longer sulks with God, he blames himself now, though God has never upbraided him. Was the prodigal upbraided when he returned broken-hearted? And when Jesus spoke to the woman of Samaria, did He reproach her? One beam from Sinai He let fall to discover to herself her condition, but the moment she saw herself, He had done.

The ark was in Obed-edom's house. The Lord blessed Obed-edom for its sake, and used this blessing to melt David. The process works the cure; David discovered it all now. Poor foolish David, how like ourselves you were.

We all blame God when the mischief is at our own door, but, He restoreth us, and leadeth in the paths of righteousness, for His name's sake.

David calls Aaron and the Levites. He is now with God. You may have your moments of spiritual merriment. They may be with God, and not with Scripture. If not they will all pass away! David brings no cart now; he calls the house of Aaron and the Levites! Ah, brethren, "*I commend you to God.*" Is that all? Nay, I commend you to God, and to the "*Word of his grace.*" Devotional feelings won't do, you must get the illumination and seal of Scripture.

"Because ye did it not at the first" (v. 13). I do not blame David a bit for putting blame on the Levites; they ought to have resented it. They ought to have protected the purity of the house of God. The Levites in Uzziah's days, were more faithful; when he dared to go into the sanctuary they forced him out. "Go out of the sanctuary;" (2 Chron. xxvi.) "It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense." And Uzziah was angry, and became a leper.

In the fifteenth chapter we have the great preparations that were made to bring home the ark; there is neither stumbling or smiting now. All is right with the Scriptures as well as with the piety of the mind, and the ark is safely brought to the tent prepared for it.

In the sixteenth chapter David steps into millennial days, and gives us, as it were, a rehearsal of them. David has singers; Moses never prepared a song for the tabernacle; David does for the temple, and delivers it into the hands of Asaph and his brethren. There had been a burst of music on the banks of the Red Sea, Moses and Miriam answering each other, but there was no music for the tabernacle. There *could not be*, for Israel was not at rest. The songs of Asaph could not be awakened till David had prepared for Solomon. Then they could rehearse the songs of the kingdom. Can you do it? The kingdom is not yet come, but you can be tuning your cymbals about the door! David does it, and puts in the hand of Asaph a composite song, made up of patches of various psalms, where Israel leads the praises and the Gentiles join the chorus. "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever." Aye, whatever may have been the depths of wickedness, whatever the impious apostasy, the kingdom will be the witness of this—that God's mercy has prevailed! We have seen

David restored; can any one enter the kingdom without being *restored*? Rare it would be indeed, for grace reigns through righteousness. Does David ask if he may sing his songs to God? Does he ask liberty to do so? No, he knows his title to praise his God, and you should know your right to tune your instruments about the gates of heaven, till they burst asunder, and you join the shout of the kingdom, "Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth *for ever!*"

THE ISSUES OF ETERNAL LIFE.

1 JOHN II.

THE first and second verses of this chapter belong to chapter i. They bring out advocacy to restore to communion after failure. Our communion is with the Father and the Son, but God's nature is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. Then, if we fail in walking in the light, communion is interrupted, and the provision for our failure is the advocacy of Jesus Christ the righteous. He has made propitiation for our sins, and He is with the Father the expression of divine righteousness, and on the ground of established righteousness He acts to restore our souls.

In *vv.* 3-11 we have the tests of the confidence of the relationship in which we stand, brought forward to meet the pretensions of those who say they are in the light, and do not walk in consistency with it. Remark, these tests are to "assure our hearts before him," and not to lead to doubt and uncertainty. The tests are *obedience* and *love*, to give us the consciousness of the position we *are* in, not to answer doubts whether we are there or not. For we can neither obey nor love, till we know the Father, and are in the relationship whence our responsibility flows. How can I obey as a child, if I do not know that I am a child? Again, take love to the brethren; "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light;" if I do not know who my brethren are, or if I doubt that I am a child in the family, I cannot love them as my brethren.

This is not a vague charity, which both false religion and infidelity will support and insist upon.

The Word of God teaches me to love God's children as a positive, manifested people. It does not teach me to love every one alike, for if so, where are the brethren, the children

of God? Take, for example, an earthly relationship. If I am a child in a family, I am to love my father's children as my brothers and sisters; I am not to love any child in the street as one of the family; for if so, I have disowned my father, for they are not his children. Certainly we are to love all men and love the world, as God loved it; but how did He love it? Why, as lost and perishing; *this* is not the way we love the brethren. See how positive is the ground the Word of God takes—"we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." There is the perfect consciousness of being children ourselves, and of knowing others as such, or we could not say "*we*" and "*us*." I grant you, in the mixture of the present day, it may be difficult to find out the children of God, but, notwithstanding, there is a manifested family, and no one can love the brethren, unless he is assured he himself is one of the family. This is of all importance in this day of doubting and uncertainty.

It is the same thing in the twelfth verse; "I write unto you little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." Not "little children" as a class, for here the Apostle is addressing the whole family. He writes to them because their sins are forgiven them. We never find in Scripture such a thing as a child of God whose sins are unforgiven, just as we have seen we cannot love the brethren unless we are in the family and know the Father; so the Word of God does not own as children those whose sins are not forgiven. The Spirit of God may be working in them, showing them their need, giving them desires after Christ, attracting their hearts, all very blessed in its place. But the Word of God never speaks of any as Christians who know not the forgiveness of sins. Now this is of vast importance in a day like this. Many would not like you to question their being Christians, while at the same time they would not think of saying their sins were forgiven. Scripture, however, never separates one confession from the other.

What do we see on every side? Numbers of souls in clouds and confusion. Some who have known forgiveness and have got clouded through bad teaching, others who have never been delivered; some gone back to doubts, others never come out of them. But when I turn to Scripture I see all sure and positive. All the children have their sins forgiven them for His name's sake.

It is very touching all through the Epistle to see how the heart of the Apostle is so filled with Christ, that sometimes he does not even mention His name. There was no fear of their mistaking *whom* he meant, for whose name's sake the Father had forgiven all His children. They could not be His children and not be forgiven. This positive standing is the texture of all the Epistles, I do not say of some difficult texts, but every Epistle is addressed to saints and to no one else. There may be allusions to others, the Gospel to sinners may be stated in them, but the Epistles themselves are addressed to saints. If you cannot take the name to yourselves, you cannot take the Epistle as addressed to you, you are not on Christian ground. God may be working in your heart by His Spirit, revealing Christ to you, and attracting your heart by His Person, as He did to the poor woman in the seventh of Luke, but till you have learned the value of His work in the putting away of sin, you cannot be addressed as a Christian.

See for instance Col. iii. 12: "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering." You can only take this up as one "holy and beloved," "elect of God;" if you cannot say this is true of you, you are not in the relationship from which these holy affections and dispositions flow.

How can you put on lowliness of mind as one elect of God, holy and beloved, if you do not know it is true of you? How can I love my father, if I do not know whose child I am, or to whose family I belong? It is quite impossible.

The Apostle now proceeds, from addressing himself generally to all as children, to address specially "fathers"—"young men"—and "babes." "I write unto you fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning." This is the knowledge that characterised the people of God as fully matured: they know Christ. It is a term of great importance, and constantly repeated by the Apostle, "Him that is from the beginning." I do not dwell upon it here, but allude to it as declaring what Christ is in answer to all pretences of progress and increase of light. He is, from the beginning, the perfect absolute manifestation of God. In John i. we have the beginning of all things to which we could possibly attach the idea of beginning—earth, the heavens, angels, and whatever else we can conceive; and,

when their beginning commenced, Jesus Christ *was* the eternal Son of the Father—God in fact. But here we have the beginning of *His manifestation*. From the beginning He was the perfect absolute manifestation of God, and all that He is. “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” He did so here below, having become a Man. There is no development here, growth in the knowledge of Christ there is in us; but from the beginning He has manifested all that the Father is. Prophets and types have spoken of Him. Adam was a figure of Him who was to come, as Eve was of the church. Types and shadows of Him to instruct us, as God spake in times past by the prophets, we have; but in all this God was not revealed, God was manifested in Christ. Angels, too, learn their God in this; as we read, God was “seen of angels.” The fathers thus knew Christ. This is all that is said of them, nothing can be added to this, it will be the eternal delight of heaven.

Young men are characterised as overcoming the wicked one. It is not the peaceful enjoyment of Christ, but what they have to go through to enjoy Him. There is everything in the world where Satan reigns to oppose this knowledge of Christ, to draw away and distract their hearts. They have to meet Satan in conflict, and thus to overcome. He presents the world to attract them, and they must go through it. Their age in nature, as well as in grace, brings them into conflict with the world. They are in it and have practically to go through it, they must either overcome it, or be overcome by it.

Fathers have learned what it is, and know its emptiness, and find their joy in Christ, who feeds the nature they possess, for, as we read in the second chapter, (v. 8) the life that has been manifested in Him, is in them their life, and thus there is communion in the possession of a divine nature to enjoy Him, and delight in its perfection in Him. But those who are young men have to overcome that they may enjoy Him. We see this difference when a man is converted in old age, he finds Christ, and goes quietly out of the world to be with Him. The young man has to go through it and overcome, and get the victory over it.

He writes unto babes, because they know the Father. They are in the happy enjoyment of the Spirit of adoption;

they would not be owned as babes, did they not know the Father. But they are not said to know "Him that is from the beginning;" neither are they in conflict like the young men. Theirs is the joy of the Spirit of adoption, in one sense a happier state than that of the young man. We who have been Christians for some time, know the difference between the first joy of the Spirit of adoption and the conflict we have to pass through to enjoy Christ in an alluring world, where Satan reigns. The apostle has nothing to add in addressing the fathers—they know Him that is from the beginning, and he can say nothing more in addition to this.

To the young men he can say, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." They are strong, and the Word of God abides in them, and they have overcome the wicked one. Their condition is more developed here. They are strong; their strength is that the Word of God abides in them, the divine weapon to meet all the attacks of the enemy. But their energy exposes them to the power of the world. They have to pass through it, and they need to know its real character. It is impossible to love the world and the Father too. They are to discern its evil by their relationship to the Father.

Persons may keep out of sin by the thought of God, and yet be in the world; for, as a God of providence, He has not given it up. But once realize what your relationship is as a son to the Father, and you cannot love the Father and the world. Persons may say, they ought to use their influence in the world to benefit it; and I grant that the more they are in it, the wider will their influence be; but we have to test all this, and everything else, by Christ. What we want is to be the true expression of Christ in the world. If by your influence you can do more than you could by manifesting Christ, you are only putting the light half out to accommodate yourself and those who hate Christ and love the darkness.

People ask me sometimes, What is the world? It is so difficult to tell, they say. Indeed, I reply; Do you not know what it means if I ask, "How is your son getting on in the world?" If I speak of people "rising in the world," "prospering in the world," and such expressions, do you not know what that means? The world is made up of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. There is the lust of the flesh—we need not speak of this, for all

would own sin to be wrong; then the lust of the eyes, all the vanity that Satan puts before you to attract and engage your mind—this persons find more difficult to condemn; and lastly, the pride of life, the most difficult of all to judge, because all carry so much of it about with them. It does not apply to any particular class in society. There are those who desire it, and who attain it; others there are who have it, and keep it.

Remark how wide the expression is, "all that is in the world." People may explain it away, and say it cannot mean what it states; I would answer, I, for one, dare not deny the truth of Scripture. "All that is in the world is not of the Father." Here is the test; I must judge the world by its treatment of Christ. If I am a child of the Father I must learn how the world treated the great Son of God, if I may be allowed the expression, the eternal Son of the Father. He was in the world manifesting all possible grace and love, and it spit in His face, and crucified Him. If any man love the world, then the love of the Father, whose Son it thus treated, is not in him.

Suppose I had a mother whom I loved, and she was ill-treated and put to death one day, could I go the next, and be "a hail-fellow well met" with those who did it, and retain my love to my murdered mother? The two things could not go together—it would be quite impossible. I must pass through the world as an overcomer, because of its treatment of God's Son.

In the eighteenth verse the Apostle addresses babes. The spirit of Antichrist was working in the professing Church, "whereby we know that it is the last time." It is not that Antichrist personally is come, for, through grace, we believe we shall be taken out of the scene before this; but the spirit of Antichrist has been working from the Apostle's days, and the evil has only been more and more developed since. "Whereby we know," yes, even babes in Christ "know" that the last time is come. Men dream of progress and improvement, and the march of intellect. The babe in Christ is not deceived; by the knowledge of Christ he discerns the spirit of the day, and judges it as that which is the last time, and not a day of improvement. But these little children have the conscious possession of the good, whereby they judge the evil. They speak of these evil workers going out from us, and not being of us.

I know since then profession has been so corrupt, that there is no need of false teachers *going out*, the whole thing is corrupt. The professing Church has tried to pull up the tares by persecution, and sometimes has burnt tares, and sometimes wheat, as the Jew said would be the case, if men tried to pull the tares out of the field, but, notwithstanding how profession has sunk, we can still say of all error, they are not of us. Do you say, how can we judge thus? The Apostle answers, "ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things; I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth." The babes have an unction from God, they are taught of God. Mark too, the unction is from the Holy One, it is His own character, whereby they know all things, His own holiness, the unction is the Holy Spirit, and comes from God as the Holy One. Again, they know the truth thereby—that is Christ Himself, who is the Truth, and they know no lie is of the truth. They need not any to teach them, as the same anointing teacheth them of all things, and is truth.

It is very blessed to see the Apostle telling them they have no need of any one to teach them, and yet he is teaching them all the while.

It is an infinite blessing to have divine certainty in a world of darkness and uncertainty. All the teaching of the Apostle is grounded on divine certainty. Are we to love the brethren? Then there are brethren to love, and a known relationship to God as the Father, teaching us that we are the children of God. Then there is positive knowledge of the forgiveness of sins, the portion of every child in the family. I am a child, and I can say, "Abba, Father," by the Spirit of adoption. I know what Christ is, and what the world is, and what the truth is.

Persons may say to me, "how can you say this? Let us argue it out and put the question in doubt." "No," I reply, "if I know the way to my home, and you come to me and tell me all the roads in England, I simply answer, they are not the way to my home!" I am asked to discuss this as an open question and to canvass the matter: I decline, because I know the right way, and any other way is wrong. But how do you know this? Because, I reply, God says all my children "shall be taught of God," and are taught of God. I may be called presumptuous and what not, it does

not matter ; the children of God can say, "we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."

The man of the world says, "I do not believe ;" I reply, I cannot help this ; if you are not taught of God, of course you cannot know the truth. We must act in patience and grace to such, but the Word of God gives us divine certainty, and this is an immense blessing in a day of unbelief and universal misgiving. The babe in Christ knows the truth, and has only to let that which he has heard from the beginning abide in him, for, "as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."

"THE LIGHT SHINETH IN DARKNESS."

He came, the Son of God,
Into a cruel, heartless world,
To tell the story, then untold,
Of God's unfathomed love.

He came, and men stood by
To hurl upon Him dire contempt,
To spurn the truth that God had sent,
And listen to a lie.

He came, and walked apart,
'Midst scenes of wickedness and woe,
To teach some empty hearts to know
The fulness of God's heart.

He came, the Christ of God,
And shouting multitudes reviled,
He heeded not their tumults wild,
His feet with peace were shod.

He came, and in the light
Of God's own face He trod this scene,
To leave behind where He had been
A line of heavenly light.

Oh ! wondrous tale of love !
For us He bore the wrath of God,
For us He passed through death's dark flood,
The deepest proof of love.

And, risen from the dead,
He made a home for us on high,
Unveiled the glory to our eye,
Which lights the path we tread.

And still He waits up there,
 To gather in the lost, the vile,
 To bring them home where God can smile,
 And love casts out all fear.

He lives, and so we live,
 To find His joy fulfilled in us,
 To share His path of shame and loss,
 Which He alone can give.

But Oh! what untold joy,
 That He whom men despise and scorn,
 Will usher in an endless morn,
 With glory on His brow.

The bright and morning star
 Which gilds with light our pathway here,
 Will be outshone by daylight there,
 Which clouds can never mar.

And walking in the light
 Of God's own face for evermore,
 We'll praise and worship and adore
 The Son, of God's delight.

SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

“A. L. O. C.”—What is the meaning of the parable of the debtor who was forgiven, and then put in prison until he paid to the uttermost? Is it Jewish? and what is the application to us?

A.—I presume you allude to Matt. xviii. 23-35. The Gospel of Matthew presents Jesus as the Son of Abraham and Son of David, presented to the Jews and rejected; then the consequences to the Gentiles in *two* ways, *viz.*, a new form to the kingdom of the heavens, and the bringing in of the Church, announced as replacing Israel. Consequently, you find, as in connection with the kingdom of heaven, the governmental dealings of God strongly marked. Primarily, you find God's dealings with the Jew. He, as a servant, owed the debt of ten thousand talents, and could not pay. All God's culture of him, culminating in His sending the Lord Jesus, only enhanced the debt. The Lord on His cross, in the name of that sinful people, pleaded for them in the words, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” They were governmentally pardoned, and vengeance for the blood of Messiah was not demanded at the moment.

(I mean governmentally in contrast to that forgiveness which has reference to eternal things). The answer to that prayer of the Lord was the offer of national pardon in Acts iii. 14, &c., by the Spirit of God sent down from heaven, by Peter's mouth: "I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." Thus judgment was delayed for the time, through the compassion of God, although nationally they did not respond to the offer. Then came the free dealings of the grace of God to the Gentiles, through Saul of Tarsus. They owed, in comparison with the Jew, but "an hundred pence;" still, what they owed, they owed to them, for "salvation was of the Jews". Thus, the same servant—forgetting the gracious forgiveness extended to him—went out and took his fellow servant by the throat, and demanded the debt. So, you find in 1 Thess. ii. 14-16, the attitude of the Jew to his Gentile brother; so with Paul's defence (Acts xxii.) where the Jews gave him audience to the words, "Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles," and then they took the one who announced it, as it were, by the throat, and would not hear another word. Wrath came upon them then to the uttermost. God delivered them up nationally to judgment by the Gentiles under the Roman armies, and they have remained in bondage and ruin ever since under His righteous government, till they shall pay in suffering and sorrow, all that was due—until Jerusalem shall have received double for all her sins, and the word "comfort ye, my people," is pronounced. (See Isai. xl.)

This is the direct thought in the parable; but, as is usual in Matthew, you find not only *dispensational* teaching, but *personal* lessons as well as *moral* principles. So here you learn the principles by which we should live as those who owed ten thousand talents, and whom grace has pardoned. We must go and imitate God, who has so dealt with us. Alas, how solemn to find that so many having taken up Christianity as a profession, have failed in grace to others, and thus proved the insincerity of their profession; surely they will not escape. The kingdom of heaven always assumes that there may have come in profession under the name of Christ, and that such will solemnly meet its end in judgment where no life is. Life is known by practice, characterised by grace that bestowed it, and thus its teaching is applicable to us.

THE COUNSELS OF GOD, AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MAN.*

EPH. i. 1-14 ; ROMANS i.-viii.

WE have in these verses what we had in Luke ix. 28-36 ; our calling and our inheritance, or rather God's calling, and God's inheritance in the saints. We cannot too earnestly apply it to the heart and conscience, bringing the soul directly before God ; but for this we need the direct action of the Spirit of God. I desire to say a little as to the counsels and purposes of God as here given to us (Eph. i. 1-14) ; but I must be brief, because it is so very full.

In the first verses we have the calling (*vv.* 3-6), and then the inheritance (*vv.* 11, etc). There is a great difference between the counsels of God, and His dealing with our souls as sinners before Him. Here it is entirely the counsels of God. Redemption is given as the way in (*v.* 7), but there is nothing here about justification. When we are justified, He shows us His plans and thoughts for us. The passage begins at once with this ; and it is exceedingly blessed to get this side of the truth—that sovereign grace has had its own thoughts, and has accomplished them. But before He gives these counsels as a whole, He brings the heart into tone—abounding toward us in wisdom and prudence, thus setting us in the consciousness of our own present place before God, according to His counsels *for us*, the objects of His entire delight (through righteousness doubtless) ; these are His thoughts of grace towards us. Then He goes on to unfold the *whole* plan concerning Christ. His thought as regards us is to give us everything in the best possible way. He will make known “The exceeding riches of his grace ;” how ? “in his kindness towards *us*.” In ages to come angels will learn it in us ; but His mind is that *we* should learn it now. He sets us thus in perfect favour in the Son, to let angels know the full extent of it. We should have this kind of thought of God, that He is taking us up to show in us “the exceeding riches of his grace.”

It is not in contrasts only that our souls learn grace. That is not all. I feel uneasy about souls when I find them learning grace, only by contrasting their state now with what it was. Even in worship I dread to find them living entirely in

* Belfast Conference, Aug. 1870.

contrasts. It proves that the mind is too near the old thing; if living habitually in God's presence, the thought of Him would be enough to fill the heart without a thought about ourselves. If near enough to Him we shall drop the other. To enjoy the light of God's favour and the shining of His love, I do not need a contrast. If I have been exposed to a storm it is true I shall be glad of the shelter of a house, and I may contrast the comfort of it with the storm out of which I have just come; but, is there nothing in the house? The storm is never to be forgotten; but I should desire to be occupied with what I am come into, at rest and contented.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." All blessings are drawn from Him as such. They are titles of the positions in which Christ is as Man, and as Son. You get the God of our Lord Jesus Christ in chap. i., and the Father in chap. iii. We have the best kind of blessings of the best place, in the best way—in Christ, "chosen in him." The thought and counsel of God about us was, that we should be "holy and without blame before him in love;" this is our calling in God. It is not a question of the election of persons, but what we are chosen to. If you take "holy," "without blame," and "love," it is God's own nature, of which Christ was the expression when here. He was the Holy One, and always before God His Father in love. We are set in Him, and are called to be what He was in the presence of God. It does not say whether on earth or in heaven, because it is our *calling* and is always true, though not yet fully developed. We are now before Him in love, we dwell in the love; are holy and without blame, having a nature capable of knowing and enjoying God, and are also *before* Him to enjoy. We need not think of ourselves, for we are this before Him.

First, we have a nature fit for God (*v.* 4); and secondly, we are the objects of His delight (*v.* 5). He would have sons, Christ was a Son, and so are we. His nature flows out and finds nothing to hinder His delight in me, and I find nothing to hinder my delight in Him; and then as His own sons in the Father's house, with the nature and character of Christ before God, we are fully capable of enjoying Him. This is what we are called to; therefore He is not contemplating our weakness and failure, so that you do not find justification for the sinner here, but that we are

accepted in the Beloved. Instead of thinking of the *sinner*, it is to the praise of the glory of *His* grace.

“In the beloved,” the expression is remarkable, it shows the delight of God in Christ, because He desires to make me know the place Christ has in His heart. Thus I find my place before Him ; not according to the necessity of my soul as a sinner, but according to all that is in God’s heart. This is what they went into in the cloud, in Luke ix.

Having thus brought us fully into our place, He can now unfold to us the counsels of wisdom and prudence, His thoughts about Christ for Christ’s glory. There He brings us into *all* His counsels. When He has set us entirely at ease in His presence, we can rest our thoughts on the glory of Christ,—the kingdom as it were, of Luke ix.

Thus we come to the second part, our inheritance. Here we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. There are three titles of Christ in connection with the inheritance. As Son, necessarily heir ; as Son of Man, the appointed heir, and as Creator of all things. We must add redemption, that He may not be alone in it when it comes, for He will have us with Him as joint-heirs. Thus, there is the calling and the inheritance, the two parts of the glory-scene in Luke ix.

The cloud is the Father’s house into which we are first brought ; then there is the earthly part, the kingdom of which we are made heirs,—God’s calling, and God’s inheritance in the saints. We have got the calling, but not an inch of the inheritance yet. Yet the perfect work of Christ having been wrought, we are cleansed, we are justified, and the Holy Ghost is given to us as an earnest of it all. We shall be like Him, and with Him, and meanwhile between His work and the actual accomplishment of all in the glory, the Holy Ghost dwells in us, shedding abroad in our hearts the spring of it all—the Father’s love, and giving us the full consciousness of our part in the inheritance before it comes in power.

There are two characters of Christian walk as the result of all this. I am not in possession of the inheritance and am running towards it (Phil. iii. 11) ; living by the faith of the Son of God, looking at Christ in the glory, and counting everything else but dross and dung. He has laid hold of me that I may lay hold of Him, may win Christ in glory.

Then, on the other side, I am set in Christ in heavenly places. That is not running to obtain the prize, it is what

I have come to already, and this gives a different character to the walk. Sitting in God's presence to go out into the world, and to manifest what I am sitting in,—to be imitators of God. This comes out in Ephesians v. as light and love. We are called upon to exhibit the character of God Himself as it has been manifested in Christ. We go out to manifest in the world what we are, and where we are, as set in Him. "Ye are"—not, ye ought to be,—the "epistle of Christ"; though, alas, the engraving of Christ is sadly filled up with rubbish, and the characters thus marred and blotted. Yet, like Christ in God's presence now, we shall be actually like Him in glory, for "He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God."

I would now go back a little to look into the way in which our responsibility comes in, and how God has met it—His ways for the accomplishment of His counsels. Here (Eph. i.) we are called, but we are not yet in the glory.

Romans shows us how as poor sinners we can be brought in in righteousness. God had these counsels before the foundation of the world. It is not the sovereignty of His grace choosing a people out of the world. His counsels have nothing to do with the world at all. God had these plans into which He was going to bring us before there were sinners, and before the world began for them to sin in.

They were thoughts for Christ as Man: thoughts into which the world cannot enter, existing before it existed, and they will go on after it to find the perfection of their accomplishment in the new heavens and new earth. (See Prov. viii.)

If we look through the crust of the world, what a scene it is! What darkness; if I begin to think about it! Open out the heart of a man of the world before God; oh, what a story it would unfold! Look at the world itself; oh, what confusion twice confounded! All the good that wisdom and power did, is smashed to pieces by the devil; while fragments of the wisdom and power and love seen here and there, are but proofs of the smash that Satan has made of everything. How unaccountable if we do not bring in sin! What perfect moral confusion! What a paradox man is! He cannot put the thought of God out of his head, though he tries hard. It comes back to him in times of danger,

and in death: he cannot get rid of it. He must have a god, so he makes one suited to his own passions, nay, the passions themselves are made gods of, and worshipped, to help him to carry out his passions! The heathen have their devil gods; one a good thief; another the upholder of the vilest corruptions. Lovely natural characters found among men, but spent on what passion has put in their heads. It is right and useful that the heart should be exercised about the state of things we now find around us.

But how comforting it is to go back to "Holy and without blame before him in love." It is rest of heart to get away from even the needed exercises of our hearts, to the thoughts of God before ever evil or responsibility came in. These blessed holy counsels of God in and for His own Son—He whose delights were with the sons of men "hath saved us according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." (2 Tim. i. 9.) You need not go into the world to learn God's thoughts about you, they were "before the world began."

When you come to the execution of these counsels, God does not begin at that end. The *first* man is brought into the world innocent—not holy or righteous—but ignorant of evil, with one thing he ought to do—to obey God. This is the character of that one test. There was no evil in him to be forbidden; no harm in itself in eating the fruit, obedience was everything. It was not like the law which forbade lust. Tell Adam not to steal, he had no one to steal from: tell him not to lust, he would not know what it meant. Then the moment the creature was put in responsibility he fell. Wherever man is tested he has failed the *first* thing. Noah gets drunk the first thing after having offered his sacrifice. Before the law is brought into the camp, the calf is made. When priesthood is set up, the first day Nadab and Abihu offer strange fire, and Aaron never entered the holy place in his garments of glory and beauty. Whatever God has set up for good and blessing, the creature drags down into ruin. But it is not only what we have *done* that is in question, but what we *are*; that goes a good bit deeper.

Patience and grace go on working still, but testing is at an end. Look through man's history: though no promise could be given to the first man, yet in the judgment pronounced on the serpent, the promise is given to the second man, the seed

of the woman, which Adam was not. The instant sin came in, God gave something out of *man's* self as an object for faith, something for him to rest on. Still there is this responsibility of man; but now it is of *fallen* man. No dispensation had been set up, and man was left to himself till the earth was filled with violence, and God has to make an end of him in the flood. The world had become so bad that God had to judge it, before the great white throne is set. After the flood God begins to deal specifically with man, and we must have grace, as we see it in the call of Abram. Idolatry had come in, and judgment follows, and God for the first time calls out a man in sovereign grace to be father of *His* family, as Adam was of the *sinful* family. But He must separate him from the world to live for and with Himself—the world which God had made but which had become corrupted. He calls out one to whom He gave promises in sovereign grace, without the smallest condition; “In thy *seed* shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” God is going to bring in Christ—the seed, and blessing *must* come. All rests upon the promise of God. There cannot be an intelligent creature without responsibility, of which the law was the rule.

The law came in “by-the-bye,” 430 years after the promises, but could not disannul or add to them. It came in as the perfect measure of man's responsibility. Tested by it, I ought to love God perfectly, ought to have a pure heart—a heart that loves my neighbour as myself. But where is it to be found? Conscience says it is all perfectly right, I ought not to have bad lusts, but I *have* them. I do not love God as I ought, nor my neighbour as myself. You do not find one whom the law does not convict of sin. Patience went on; grace worked in individuals; prophets sought to restore; but the history of the thing went on till there was no remedy. Then God said, I have yet one Son; one thing to wake up good in the human heart, if it be there. “It may be they will reverence my Son.” The answer was, “Come let us kill him!” Thus responsibility is at an end, and man is lost; it is the turning point of man's history. All has been gone through in the dealings of God. They had had the law, and broken it; the prophets, and rejected them; the Son, and killed Him; and I may add, the Holy Ghost, and resisted Him. For though the cross had brought all to an issue, grace lingered for a little

moment in Israel, and till the testimony of Stephen, in answer to the prayer on the cross. Thus the question of responsibility has been thoroughly settled. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloke for their sin. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." (Jno. xv.)

There is man! The individual gets the consciousness of that in his own soul. I find it all true about myself. I am a sinner with whom God has dealt in all these ways. It is my story that is told. "*We* indeed justly." I am one that despised grace, that rejected the Son, and I am convinced of sin—I do not say the world is, though true; but I say it is *I* who have done it all!

Up to the cross all was thus thoroughly gone through, and man fully tested. Now God brings out grace, which proves that He no longer deals with man on the ground of responsibility. The law came in after the promise and before Christ, to bring out the offence, to make sin become exceeding sinful. Man did not merely what was wrong, but did it in spite of God forbidding him. Responsibility (not the Christian's) ends in the first man being turned out of Paradise, and the Second Man turned out of the world by him, as unfit to live in it: on no terms will the first man have God. He may heal the sick, open the eyes of the blind, cast out devils, but they will not have Him, they would rather have the devil: and we are in a world that has done this.

Now, when man's responsibility is at an end, and Christ is rejected and on the cross, God begins to work:—works simply, effectually,—does the whole *at once* and *completely*. The very point where the enmity of the human heart was proved against God, was the point where God proved His love to man. Man is thus convicted of sin up to enmity against Christ who was the perfect expression of God's love to him; and God is above it all in grace! What hath God wrought! Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Sin was there fully developed, and the history of it in man brought to an end. Then in that very place, and as to the sin, Christ perfectly glorified God. "In the end of the world" He has done it so perfectly that, as man, God has set Him at His own right hand. So perfect was the work for man, and

for glory to God, that the Man who did it has gone up into glory! We have here not a man turned out of Paradise on account of responsibility, but a Man gone into the heavenly Paradise in whom God is glorified! So glorified that He must glorify Him "*straightway*," and not wait for the kingdom. The work is done for taking away the sins, and taking man to glory. The thing is complete and absolute, and He must have glory. What had we to say to the work? Our sins and hatred of God, that was all. It was a work done between Christ and God, in drinking the cup which no heart can fathom.

Now from this man entering into the glory of God, I get a new starting point altogether. Now He can bring out the counsels which were before responsibility began, because Christ was there as the centre of them. The things that were in God's mind that He could not before reveal, He can now bring out, the blessed and glorious work being all accomplished which gives us our title to have part in them. Christ is our title. What is a Redeemer without His redeemed? He has brought us to God. Are we then unfit for God? Nay, fit for Him! Conscience can rest. We are accepted in the Beloved, and sealed with the Holy Ghost. My place before God is not in the flesh, but in Christ; not in the first Adam, but according to the worth of Christ's work. He must see of the travail of His soul, and must have me with Him in glory.

A word as to how we are brought into it. The Holy Ghost is given in Scripture consequent upon the faith of a person in the work that results in the remission of sins. It is a person who has received that who is sealed. (See Acts ii. 38 and x. 43, 44.) I am made as white as snow, and now the Holy Ghost says, I can come and dwell there. I am not speaking of being born of God, but of the way the heart is brought into it all.

In Rom. i.—iii. we have all the world brought in guilty before God, in respect of *sins*,—not the state, but *works* as the ground of judgment. Now God sets forth Christ for a propitiation. This is the blood on the mercy-seat, and we get both sides of Lev. xvi.—the goat for the Lord's lot, and the scapegoat for the people. All is grace now. It is no question of experience, for "there is none righteous, no, not one." I do not want experience about this, for it is the

positive testimony of God, though the deeper I feel about it the better. I find my responsibility perfectly met, and my sins all cleared away, ending in the perfect blessedness of Rom. v. 11,—what God is to the sinner.

After this we come to experience, which is connected, not with what I have *done*, but with what I *am*—what I have got into through Adam's sin. I am away from God, and have a sinful nature and lusts. I have to do with what I am, no matter whether I am a Jew or not. This brings in the law. I ought not to lust, but I do. Lust comes from vile flesh. What is flesh? It is that I like sin, and it is there. I shall resist it if I am a Christian, but still it is there. This goes deeper, and the remedy is deeper. You find another truth. It is not Christ bearing sins, but I must reckon myself dead,—crucified with Christ. Can I live on in sin? How did you obtain a part in the obedience of Christ? By death. How can you live on in that which is dead? If I tell a man that his debts are paid, it is not his experience of it, but resting on my word that makes him happy. Unbelief raises a question of experience here, and says, I am not dead; God says you are, and you are now alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Thus I have the way to appropriate all that these counsels give me. For I am not in Adam, but “in Christ,” and of course have all that is His.

Rom. viii. gives us the second aspect of our blessedness—what the saint is before God “in Christ Jesus.” Now I can understand what it is to be accepted in the Beloved. I have an entirely new place; “ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.” The flesh is all past; we are not in the first Adam, but in the last! We are brought into His place; if He is heir of all things, so am I.

Thus it is not merely my responsibility which has been met, but I am transported out of the condition I was in in Adam, into Christ. I do not enter consciously into this new condition till I have learnt that in me dwelleth no good thing, and cry, “oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me”—not take away my sins—not deliver me from what I have done, but from what I *am*! That brings me into the place where I have the fruit of those counsels; Christ's place in the present grace where He is.

All responsibility is thus settled up to the cross, guilt cleared away; and besides all that, I am in a new place, in a

new man before God. Then the responsibility of the Christian begins. I never can know what it is to have to do with being in Christ, until I know what it is to be delivered from the flesh. If we are in Christ, Christ is in us, and our responsibility is to show Christ in everything. *Man's* responsibility has proved a total failure; the *Christian's* responsibility is to manifest the life of Jesus in His mortal flesh, and nothing else. You are the epistle of Christ. That is where you are set in the world: "Manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." Men are now to read Christ in you as plainly as they could read the ten commandments on the two tables of stone. It is the engraving of Christ by the Spirit of God upon our hearts that is to be read. Our responsibility as *men* is over; our responsibility as *Christians* has begun. We have now to overcome the flesh and to manifest Christ, and He says, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

May the Lord give us earnest purpose of heart, that we may be ever near enough to Him to draw the grace we need to glorify Him!

THE CROSS.

I.—ON MAN'S PART.

1. It was a refusal, and the *end* of all remedial measures, by the rejection of Christ.
2. The close, therefore, of the *moral* government of God, as established under the law.
3. Man taking the place of the betrayer and murderer of Christ.
4. The *outlet* of human enmity against God.
5. The closing up of all *relations* with God, by death.
6. The *proof* of the world's rebellion.
7. The new centre on which *the issue* of all things must be tried in righteousness.
8. God forced at the cross into the place of Judge. The act of man has done this.

II.—ON SATAN'S PART.

1. The masterpiece of the devil's craft, to get Christ out of the world, and put an end to Him.
2. The concentration of the usurper's hate against God and man,

3. The heading up of earthly revolt under its ringleader, the prince of this world.

4. The crisis of the ways of God with the devil.

5. The measure and limit of Satan's power, except to deceive the nations, and head up all things for the Antichrist.

III.—ON CHRIST'S PART.

1. The place where He glorified God, when He offered Himself up, through the eternal Spirit.

2. The place where He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

3. By the blood of His cross He made peace.

4. The cross was the measure of His perfect obedience unto death.

5. It was there that He brought mercy and truth together, and righteousness and peace kissed each other.

6. It cleared the way of all the obstructions to God's coming back in grace and blessing to sinners.

7. The place of the Son of Man's glory; for it was He who wrought this for God and men, and for the overthrow of Satan.

8. The fire of God's holiness fed there upon the fat of the sacrifice.

9. It was there the righteous judgment of God spent itself upon Christ as the sin-offering.

IV.—ON GOD'S PART.

1. The *inlet* of divine love to the world.

2. The wisdom of God, and the power of God to salvation, to every one that believeth.

3. The declaration that God is *just*, and the justifier of the ungodly, who believeth in Jesus.

4. Righteousness has there a new claim on God, by which grace can reign unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

5. There God condemned sin in the flesh, and by death brought it down to death, and left it in ashes.

6. It is the new meeting place between God and the believer, where sin and death and judgment are no more.

7. On the cross Christ gave up the ghost, and correspondingly God *rent the veil* that hid Him.

8. There by the death of His Son, God *reconciles* us to Himself.

V.—THE CROSS BETWEEN JEW AND GENTILE.

1. It was there that man was reconciled to his fellow, and Jew and Gentile made one.

2. It broke down the middle wall of partition; Christ having abolished in His flesh the enmity.

3. He made in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace.

4. He reconciled both unto God, in one body.

5. Them which were afar off, and them that were nigh, have (both) through Him access by one Spirit unto the Father.

VI.—THE CROSS AND THE LAW OF COMMANDMENTS.

1. There the handwriting of ordinances, that was against us, was blotted out.

2. He took all that was contrary to us out of the way, nailing it to His cross, and triumphing over them in it.

3. The shadows of things to come were superseded, and the body is of Christ.

VII.—THE CROSS OF CHRIST TO A DISCIPLE AND HIS LORD.

1. It is the only way by which he can follow Christ.

2. It is the power by which he denies himself, and goes after Him who made the path.

VIII.—THE CROSS OF CHRIST BETWEEN THE BELIEVER AND THE WORLD.

1. It is that by which *he* is separated from the world, by its own crucifixion *to him*.

2. He maintains by his own death to the world, his part with the Christ whom the world rejected, and becomes a living witness in it to the fact of the judgment of God to be poured out upon the world which did it. B.

A REMARKABLE STATEMENT OF AN OLD WRITER.

THE following extract, which gives such a marked and striking picture of the spirit that is working at the present time, is worthy of a permanent place in our pages. It was written about two hundred and fifty years ago, by one whose powers are above question, while those better instructed in the ways of God, could not of course accept to the full, the interpretation of the Scriptures treated of by this celebrated man.

The direct interpretation of the Book of Revelation (chs. iv.—xxii.) is strictly future, although affording, I have no doubt, certain large features in outline, of the protracted history of the events of the last eighteen centuries or more. Still, when details are examined the futurist view alone will stand, *i. e.*, when the true state of the professing church

seen in chs. ii. iii. is past, the saints are seen in heaven from ch. iv. and onwards, during the short period of judgment which ushers in the millennial kingdom. All that part of the book is strictly future in direct application.

“The church of God on earth will be greatly reduced, as we may well imagine, in its apparent numbers in the times of Antichrist, by the open desertion of the powers of the world. The desertion will begin in a professed indifference to any particular form of Christianity, under pretence of universal toleration; which toleration will proceed from no true spirit of Christian charity and forbearance, but from a desire to undermine Christianity by multiplying and encouraging sectaries. The intended toleration will go far beyond a just toleration, even as it regards the different sects of Christianity; for governments will pretend an indifference to all, and will give protection in preference to none. All establishments will be laid aside. From the toleration of the most pestilent heresies, they will proceed to Mahomedanism, Atheism, and at last to a positive persecution of the truths of Christianity.”

“In these times the temple of God will be reduced to the holy place, viz., to the small number of real Christians who worship the Father in spirit and in truth, and who regulate their doctrine and worship, and their whole conduct by the word of God alone.”

“The mere nominal professors will all desert their profession of the truth when the powers of the world forsake them; and this tragical event I take to be typified by the order of St. John to measure the temple and the altar, and to leave the outer court (National Church) to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles! The property of the clergy will be pillaged; the public worship insulted and vilified by the deserters of the faith they once professed, who are not called apostate, because they were never earnest in their profession; there was nothing more than a compliance with fashion and public authority; in principle they were always what they now appear to be—Gentiles.”

“When this general desertion of the faith takes place, there will commence the sackcloth ministry of the witnesses. There will be nothing of splendour in the external support from government, no honours, no emoluments, no immunities, no authority but such as no earthly power can take away, which they desire from Him who commissioned them to be His witnesses.”—(*Archbishop Usher on Rev. xi.*)

“MY FATHER’S HOUSE.”

Oh what a home! The Father’s house,
 There love divine doth rest;
 No other spot can hold the hearts
 Of those by Jesus blest.
 His home made ours—His Father’s love
 Our hearts full portion given—
 The portion of the only Son,
 The great delight of heaven.

Oh what a home! The Father knows—
 And only He—the Son:
 The Son well knows the Father too,
 His well-beloved One:
 Dwells in His bosom—knoweth all
 That in that bosom lies,
 And came to earth to make it known,
 That we might share His joys.

Oh what a home! Love upon love
 Re-echoing through its breadth;
 The Son’s divine affections flow
 Throughout its height and depth.
 And full response the Father gives,
 Heart answering to heart,
 And not a cloud to cross the scene
 A shadow to impart.

Oh what a home! But such His love
 That He must fetch us there
 To fill that home, to be with Him,
 And all His glory share.
 The Father’s House, the Father’s heart,
 All that the Son is given
 Made ours—the objects of His love—
 And He, our joy of heaven.

J. W. T.

THOUGHTS ON SACRIFICES, No. 8.

THE CRUCIFIXION.

MAT. xxvii. 38-52.

TURNING from the Old Testament to the New to investigate the subject of sacrifice, we turn from types to the antitype, from the shadows to the substance, from the laws about the sprinkling of the blood of bulls and goats, to the history of the shedding of the blood of Christ, God’s own Son, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. In the Old Testament we have traced out God’s gracious provision for fallen man—a sacrifice, in the New we learn what man really is, as God saw him from the earliest days of his disobedience and estrangement of heart. In the cross is displayed God’s great love, and how far it could go on the

sinner's behalf; and at that same cross was brought out, in a manner never before manifested, what man is, as his treatment of God's Son is set forth by the inspired historians.

That the heathen, who were without God, should persecute in ignorance God's Son, might not have surprised any of us. But, to learn that He appeared on earth among His own people according to the flesh, and found that His bitterest enemies and most determined opponents were the chief priests and Pharisees, affords proof of the utter corruption of man's heart (however richly he may be blessed on earth, or highly favoured with a Divine revelation), which could not otherwise have been credited. Knowledge even of the word of God, unless the Holy Spirit applies it to the soul, cannot impress his heart, nor temporal blessings, however great, subdue his enmity to what is of God. The rulers of the Jews knew Messiah would come; in Christ, too, they saw One who did good to all who were in want of it, as no man had ever before done; yet many a time did they attempt His life, and at last succeeded in their design. Had Pilate hearkened to the entreaties of his wife, or acted in accordance with the dictates of his conscience, he would have saved the Lord from death; for the chief priests it was and the elders who "persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus." (ver. 20). It was in obedience to the popular cry, reiterated when Pilate had remonstrated, and to shew his fidelity to the Roman Emperor, that, though conscious it was from envy the Jews had delivered Jesus unto him, he handed Him to the soldiers for immediate execution.

Crucified between two thieves, but recently scourged, and unable to bear His cross to the place of execution, surely it might have been supposed that, at the sight of His sufferings, man's enmity would have been changed into pity, and his bitterness have given way to compassion. Three people were crucified together, but to One only do we read that revilings and taunts were addressed, and that One was the Lord Himself. Had they taunted the thieves it would not have been surprising, for they had offended against society; but He had only "gone about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil." Had they reviled them all indiscriminately, it might have been set down to popular ignorance. But the Lord Jesus alone was thus treated, and none of the chief priests who witnessed what took place, interfered, that we read of, to check the malice of the people, or to lift

up a voice in His behalf. Man, there unrestrained by God's hand, shewed of what he was capable.

The passers-by "reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." Power manifested would in their eyes be proof of His Divine Sonship. To their taunt He vouchsafed no reply; but, because He was God's Son, He remained on the cross. They associated power with Sonship. He owned that obedience was involved in the relationship, and showed His perfect obedience to the will of His Father by staying on that cross. They knew not the value of their words as they thus reviled Him. How could the Son have acted in contravention of the Father's will? Their words spoke of relationship, which, if real, implied subjection to the Father. Their use of them at such a time proved how little subjection to the Father was in their thoughts. "Save thyself." Such language revealed the current of their thoughts, that self, not the Father's will should be the guiding principle for man's conduct. Unconsciously surely by this they justified the sin of Adam and Eve, and proved their descent from them, begotten in Adam's likeness.

Another class of the people of Israel witnessed Him, who was the sacrifice, offering up Himself, and as they witnessed His sufferings, they mocked Him. It was the chief priests and scribes and elders who said, "He saved others, himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him." They acknowledged His works done on behalf of others, yet refused to admit the claims which these works substantiated. Of His life on earth they were not ignorant—of His acts of kindness and power they could speak. Those acts testified that He was God's servant—the Christ—as the men who professed to expound God's word should have known; yet they asked, after all they had heard and seen, that His claim to be the Messiah should be settled by His immediate descent from the cross. Power exerted for the benefit of others was a proof of His Messiahship—power put forth to save Himself from death when on the cross was never predicted as a proof that the King of Israel was on earth. They rejected what the word of God would have led them to look for, and asked for a sign which no prophet had authorised them to expect. It was right to connect the presence of the King with the

display of power, but it was wrong to connect it with the exercise of that power to save Himself. The passers by had proved their ignorance of the subjection due from the Son to the Father—the chief priests here showed their ignorance of the word of God; and, stranger than all, they unwittingly fulfilled the Psalms as they taunted Him with being forsaken of God. (Compare v. 43 with Ps. xxii. 8). How strange that those, who professed to teach from the word, should have fulfilled the prediction as they hurled at Him this taunt, the bitterest and most cruel of all. If such was the conduct of the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders, can we wonder at what follows—“The thieves also which were crucified with him cast the same in his teeth.”

What an exhibition, then, have we of man, the religious man by profession, as the Jews were; and the educated man who professed to know God's word, as the chief priests and the scribes. They had crucified the Lord between two thieves, but by their behaviour to Him they proved themselves to be true companions of those whom they had associated with God's Son. Man's trial of 4000 years was ended. He had acted as the tool of the enemy, and driven out God's Son from the world He had originally created; for Jesus, “when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.”

What could God do under such circumstances? That He should immediately act in power, who had been a silent spectator of man's atrocity and sin, was only what could be expected. He did act in power, for we read: “and behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.” But, whilst acting in power, He did not act in judgment against man, because He had acted in judgment against His own well-beloved Son. For during that time of darkness, mysterious to man, when all nature mourned for the death of the King,*

* There are passages in Ezekiel xxxi. 15, xxxii. 7, 8, which may help us to understand the suitability of the darkness at the time of the Lord's crucifixion. The language of Ezekiel is figurative, the language of the evangelists must be taken in its literal meaning. God by the prophet spoke of the mourning of nature at the fall of the Assyrian, that great cedar which towered over all; and at the fall of the Egyptian monarch, “the young lion of the nations.” If such language could be used even figuratively concerning the fall of such monarchies, how suitable and expressive was that supernatural darkness when the true King of Nations (Rev. xv. 3, margin), under whose rule alone all can be blessed, was about to leave the world by death,

brought about by the creature's iniquity, whilst men on earth, as far as we read, were silent, awe-struck, apparently, by the strange unnatural gloom in which the land was enveloped, God's well-beloved Son, who had always done on earth that which pleased His Father, was experiencing the full weight of God's anger against sin. "The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all." Death took place, the death of the sin-offering, and the shedding of that blood, without which there could be no remission; but, now shed, the ground was laid, and all could see it, on which God could publicly deal in grace with those who deserved His everlasting wrath. Here then, we learn, at the earliest possible moment at which it could be displayed, what that sacrifice is in God's sight, and what He can do in consequence.

"The veil was rent." By His command it had been erected, by His power it was rent in twain. Under the eye of the mediator of the first covenant that veil had been first erected; because of the sacrifice of Himself, the mediator of the new covenant, the veil was rent in twain. He, who had caused it to be erected, alone had authority to part it asunder. He caused it to be reared up when first there was a redeemed nation on earth. He caused it to be torn asunder when first redemption had been accomplished. So, as soon as the Lord had died, there was manifested in the temple what had taken place on Calvary. Outside the gate the Lord had suffered, but inside the sanctuary God showed what His death was in His sight, as the rent veil betokened the way into the holiest opened out for sinners by virtue of the blood of Jesus Christ.

(To be concluded in next No., D. V.)

SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

"E. W. M."—Did the ministry of Paul, concerning "one body", the church, commence when he was a prisoner at Rome? Because, at the conclusion of his oral testimony in Acts xxvi., he says to Agrippa that he was "saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come." Now we know his written testimony goes much beyond this.

Does the Acts at all comprehend the church of God as united to Christ in heavenly glory? and is the distinction of Jew and Gentile (the absence of which characterises the church) maintained all through the Acts?

A.—In Paul's answer before Agrippa you will find many more things stated than those embraced in *vv.* 22, 23. The union of the saints with Christ on high is owned of the Lord by the words, "Why persecutest thou me?" Paul was to be a minister and a witness of what he had seen, *i.e.* the appearing of a glorified Christ, and of those things in which He would appear to Paul—embracing fresh revelations of truth communicated through him at subsequent seasons, for all truth was *not* communicated to him at the moment of his conversion. But the Jews, being his accusers, and king Agrippa being one who knew the prophets and was versed in the Jewish Scriptures, the statements of the verses quoted (*vv.* 22, 23), rather show that he was saying nothing contrary to the testimony of God in the Scriptures, which the Jews who accused him professed to accept.

Besides, Paul wrote 1st Corinthians during the early part of his stay at Ephesus, and sent it by Titus. (Compare Acts xix. 22, with 1 Cor. xvi. 8-10, 2 Cor. vii. 6). In it he taught the doctrine of the Church as "one body" (see chap. xiii). He also wrote the Epistle to the Romans from Corinth during his ministrations there (see Rom. xvi. 1), where he commends Phœbe, who served the assembly at Cenchrea, near to Corinth; and in it he speaks of the practical relationship of Christ's members as "one body" in chap. xii.

His ministry of the church as "one body" was no new thing when at Rome. He had taught it all through before he became the prisoner of Jesus Christ.

We must remember that Acts is transitional in its character. Jewish Christians were emerging from Judaism, and God thought of the strong prejudices of His ancient people, and forbore with them until the last testimony to them in Hebrews to "go forth unto him, without the camp" before Jerusalem was destroyed by the armies of Titus. The Acts is *historic* Scripture, the Epistles are *doctrinal*. This accounts for much; but strong traces abound throughout the book of the Acts to prove that the doctrine of "one body," the church, was the groundwork of all, and that care was taken to maintain the unity. Samaria must receive the Holy Ghost from Jerusalem (Acts viii). Antioch was not permitted to settle the question as to the law, and so to create a breach with Jerusalem (Acts xv). Jerusalem herself must surrender the right of imposing the law on Gentiles. So in many instances.

THE LORD'S DEATH TILL HE COME.

On that "same night," Lord Jesus,
 When all the scene combined
 To cast its darkest shadow
 Across Thy holy mind,
 We hear Thy voice, blest Saviour,
 "This do, remember me;"
 With joyful hearts responding
 We do remember Thee.

The depth of all Thy suffering
 No heart could e'er conceive;
 The cup of wrath o'erflowing,
 For us Thou did'st receive.
 And oh! of God forsaken
 On the accursed tree—
 With grateful hearts, Lord Jesus,
 We now remember Thee.

We think of all the darkness
 Which round Thy spirit press'd;
 Of all those waves and billows
 Which roll'd across Thy breast;
 Oh! there Thy grace unbounded,
 And perfect love we see;
 With joy and sorrow mingling
 We would remember Thee.

We *know* Thee now as risen
 "The first-born from the dead;"
 We *see* Thee now ascended
 The Church's glorious head.
 In Thee by grace accepted,
 The heart and mind set free
 To think of all Thy sorrow,
 And thus remember Thee.

Till Thou shalt come in glory,
 And call us hence away,
 To bask in all the brightness
 Of that unclouded day;
 We *show* Thy death, Lord Jesus,
 And here would seek to be
 More to Thy death conforméd
 Whilst we remember Thee.

G. W. F.

APHORISMS.

No simile, or parable, runs on four legs!

The key of a parable lies at the door!

THE MEMORIAL STONES IN JORDAN AND AT GILGAL.

God has bestowed upon us *eternal life* in His Son ; a life on the other side of death and judgment ; these were borne by Jesus before it was bestowed. This life is a witness that the sins we had committed are all for ever put away ; for when He passed down, in holy love into those depths where we lay "dead in sins," He found our sins,—He took them up and made them His own—died and rose again, leaving them all behind Him in His grave.

We have also been introduced, in Christ, into a *new sphere* on high with God—fitting place for the life He has bestowed. He has given us in title, the glory He possesses as Man and the possession too, of all He will inherit by and by. Thus, in this new place, we have wholly left the Egypt to which we once belonged and the wilderness we traverse, when we look at ourselves in "heavenly places, in Christ."

And here comes in the double character of the Christian's state. If he looks up he is in the heavenlies, "in Christ," united to Him by the Holy Ghost sent down ; but he is traversing the desert as a pilgrim and stranger, if he looks below. A place, whose every breath is noxious to the heavenly life he possesses in Christ. He has begun in the glory and he is in the race which leads to the attainment of the goal ; the mark for the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus. He looks at himself below, and can truly say, "as having nothing ;" he looks at Christ on high, and says, "yet possessing all things."

If "all things" then are ours, there is that which we never may, and never would lose sight of,—nor would our God allow it so to be. I mean the way into this new sphere, and what it cost the Lord of glory that He might have us there. It would seem as if He only waited until His people were safely over, to speak of that which was nearest to His heart. (Josh. iv. 2.)

There were two heaps of stones of memorial set up. One at the command of *Joshua*, by twelve men, in the place where they lodged at Gilgal. This was composed of twelve stones taken out of the spot where the Ark stood firm till all the people had passed across dry-shod. The other, by *Joshua himself*, in that spot where the feet of the priests bearing the Ark stood—in the bed of the river of death. No doubt both are

attributed to Joshua (c. 20); but there is a striking significance in the difference.

There are two ways of looking at these stones. They point to the Lord Jesus Himself, at the moment when the waves were flowing over His holy soul in death; and they point to Him as the Risen One, who was dead, and is now "alive for evermore." They also point (for such is the perfect identification between Him and His—He the Redeemer, they the redeemed; He the Sanctifier, they the sanctified) to our being *now* one with Him who *was* dead, and lives for evermore; also, that as thus risen with Him, we are dead with Christ.

The moment we are introduced into this life in resurrection and this new sphere, the remembrance of the path into it for us—the Lord's path of death—is the constant food of the soul. Instead of death feeding upon us its lawful prey, we feed upon death; but this death, the death of the Lord. It was thus we got this life at the first; eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of the Son of man. Thus appropriating Him in faith, in the consciousness that except thus, we have no life in us (John vi. 53). Having fed upon Him by faith,—in death—and thus having received eternal life in Him, we live by that which produced it. We feed upon Him as the risen One, who was dead, and thus we live by Him. "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me" (John vi. 57). This is practical life—all else is death. It is but the Adam life (if you can call it such), and God owns it not.

The Lord instituted the supper, when here below, on the same night on which He was betrayed; but this was not enough. We do not (as the Church of God) eat the Lord's supper merely as then appointed. He has gone on high in glory; and again, as the true Joshua—type of a heavenly Christ, and by the power of the Spirit, the Leader and Guide of His people—He has instituted the feast. It is from the heavens He speaks through Paul—by the Spirit of God sent down—and thus does the Church partake of it in the unity of one body. It had not this character as at first given, and the church of God partakes of it as the symbol of its unity as "one body"—breaking "one loaf," which expresses this unity. "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? (*i.e.*,

His own body). For we, being many, are one loaf, one body, (*i.e.*, the Church, His body,) for we are all partakers of that one loaf" (1 Cor. x. 16, 17).

With Israel it was twelve stones, as the symbol of the unity of the twelve tribes. With the Church it is "one loaf"—because it is "one body" in union with its Head in glory. There is no room in this for the independency of the present day. There is no room for the self-will of man, in having as many loaves as he pleases, or each one for himself, as in the cut-up loaf. How these proceedings betray where the Church of God has drifted, through the "commandments and doctrines of men"!

Thus the Church of God, if obediently acting under a glorified Christ by the power and direction of the Spirit of God, has the precious memorial in that feast (in its verity)—the touching and heart-searching remembrance of the death of the Lord. In the anti-type of these stones, taken from the bed of death, she carries death with her once her enemy, but now her ally, to the place of strength. She is conscious of her union with Him who died. There was no union with Him till He rose; till then He abode alone. But also (now that she is in union with a risen Christ) she knows that she has died with Him, and now is risen with Him, and thus introduced into this sphere of glory.

Oh, what a crowd of thoughts would flow freely through our hearts by the Spirit of God, were we to meditate further on many thoughts that present themselves as we contemplate this feast! But we must be satisfied in presenting the meaning of these memorial stones, as far as we can in this meditation.

The other heap of stones was set up by *Joshua* in the bed of the river Jordan. The first heap at Gilgal, was placed there by the *twelve men* at his command. These he is said to have placed *himself* in the place where the priests' feet stood firm with the ark. To me this difference conveys a most touching truth. We are told in verse 18, that the waves flowed on, over this second heap of memorial stones, as soon as the Ark of the Covenant, borne on the priests' shoulders, came out of Jordan; "and there they are unto this day."

Both these heaps of stones refer to Him in *His* death and *His* resurrection. They also speak to us (because twelve

were thus used in the type) of *our* being risen with Him who was dead; and as risen, we know too, that *we* have died with Him.

Now one heap—that at Gilgal—was *always to be seen*; while the other was *hidden deep in the waves of the river*. There are two sides, so to speak, to the thoughts which encircle the Lord's Supper, one of which the Church always enjoys; but I do not think that practically, she invariably enjoys the other. The stones which the twelve men took under Joshua's command (like the Church acting under the power and direction of a heavenly Christ) are ever to be possessed and enjoyed. She always has the remembrance of Him in His death, carried to the place of communion—the ever freshly-speaking memorial of her blessing, and of the death of Him who gave Himself for her, "Till he come" marks its continuance. But, let me ask my reader, does he always enjoy that of which the second heap of stones speaks? Is *Christ* always free (it was *Joshua's* action in the type) to lead us to the brink of that river? Are our hearts always so in order that we may be led there? Yea, more—Are our souls spiritual enough to be so led? Can He, I say, ever freely lead us back to the river, (while we have but stepped to that spot from the Gilgal where self is gone), and put back the stream—draw aside the veil of waters, and allow us to gaze down into their depths, and behold the spot where His precious feet stood fast, and let us read His heart, with His sorrows and His cry?

How blessedly have we enjoyed Him speaking to *our* hearts of our blessings in feeding together in peace at the Supper of the Lord? But have we always been let into what flowed through *His* heart at that memorable hour? I can answer for myself—perhaps for others—no!

Oh, for the Church of God to come together in such condition of heart and conscience, that He might be ever free to manifest Himself, and allow us thus to discern His body. That we might not only have (what, thank God, we ever have) the truth conveyed to us in the heap of stones at Gilgal, but that He might be free to carry us in company with His spirit to the place where His holy soul stood fast, and when deep called to deep at the voice of (God's) water-spouts (Psalm xlii. 7); where the waters compassed Him about (Jonah ii. 5); where they flowed over His head (Lam. iii. 54); or when they came into His soul (Psalm lxix. 1).

Thus letting us into the secrets of those moments when Nature veiled her head, when the sun put on his mourning, and the rocks rent, because the Son of God was pouring out His soul unto death; when His heart was like wax, melted in the midst of His bowels (Psalm xxii. 14). There in His solitary path through death's river He stood fast; there was God most fully glorified; there to the Father was presented a fresh motive to love His Son. And He values our remembrance of His love, now that we are free to think of Him who gives us His company at Gilgal!—*Extract from "The Lord's Host"—in the Press.*

A WORD ON CHRISTMAS.

THE children of Issachar obtain honourable mention of the Lord, in that they "had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do" (1 Chron. xii. 32), and surely to "rightly divide the word of truth," and thus understand "what the will of the Lord is," is our happy privilege in the present day (2 Tim. ii. 15, Eph. v. 17).

Let us refer for a moment to Luke ii. 1-14. The fulness of time had come and God had sent His Son into the world. And the eternal Son of the Father was manifested in the form of a little babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger, because there was no room for Him in the inn. Was it a wonder that the angelic hosts should shout for joy; He had not taken on Him the cause of angels (Heb. ii. 16), but still, for the first time beholding the Son of God—God manifest in the flesh—they could not withhold their suited acclamations, but with one joyous note of praise they say (for angels never sing) "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

How suitable to the time this chorus, and how worthy of its object! He had come, the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person, and yet the lowly carpenter's son, to tell out the love of a heart whose depths He alone could fathom, (for who could disclose the secrets of the Father's bosom but the Son who lay there from all eternity?) and the scene which He had selected wherein to display this boundless love was one in which everything that God the Father was in Himself had been for centuries belied and misunderstood. When sin had entered and run its course unchecked and apparently (save by

occasional judgments) unnoticed, and when Satan had obtained complete possession of the human mind. Thus grace had triumphed over sin, and thus God in Christ had risen above the ruin of an apostate world, and shown Himself superior to the evil of man's heart and the only too successful devices of the Devil. Surely God was infinitely glorified in this, and most suitably did the angelic strain commence with "glory to God in the highest," for what could bring more glory to God in all that He was in His own excellency, than the presentation of His Son to a world whose rejection of Him was only too plainly evidenced in that there was "no room for them in the inn." Presently a cross and a grave should still more distinctly manifest the world's estimate of its Creator and its Saviour.

But not only did the advent of Jesus into the world unfold most fully the character of a God of love, but it was the proof that He was ready to establish peace upon the earth where at the time all was ruin and confusion. Jerusalem had ceased to be the throne of the Lord, so long chosen to put His name there, and a Gentile Emperor was in possession of "the glorious land," and amongst his subjects numbered God's ancient people Israel.

But the presentation of God's Son to the world was the dawning of another day upon the earth, and He had come to establish peace and to usher in the time when men should "beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks," when nation should not lift up sword against nation, neither should war be learned any more (Isaiah ii. 4). The millennial glory of the King of Peace and King of Righteousness was about to replace Jewish slavery and Gentile oppression, and the knowledge of Jehovah to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Well then might angels add, "on earth peace" to their meed of praise in honour of the only begotten Son of God.

But not only was the earth the special object of its Creator's mercy at this time, but its inhabitants were before Him also as the express objects of His goodness and blessing. He had come to reveal Himself as one whose "delights were with the sons of men," (Prov. viii. 31). Well may we wonder at this, for man had fallen, and the human race had alike sinned and come short of His glory, but such is grace. He had come to rise above the evil of man's heart, and to take His place as the head of the race whose cause He

took in hand, and to reduce them with a firm yet loving sway to that obedience that they owed to Him as their Creator and their King—as “King of Nations.” The world will yet own Him thus, (Rev. xv. 3, 4, for “saints” read *nations*), and He had come to take this place, and by the removal of Satan’s power to show His good pleasure in mankind, and to claim, at all events if not their affection, their homage as their rightful Lord and Sovereign.

Most suitably then did the angel host celebrate His approach as reflecting not merely the highest glory to God, and introducing peace into a scene of confusion and ruin, but as evidencing that the goodness of God was such, that although the carnal mind was enmity against Him, He could, in the fulness of His love, still have His delights in the sons of men.

Such was the angel chorus on the occasion of the birth of the Son of God, the Saviour, Christ the Lord.

How sad that we cannot stay here a little longer, and close our eyes to all that happened subsequently. But we must not refuse to speak when the Holy Ghost has directed our attention to another scene.

Some two and thirty years had rolled away, the babe of Bethlehem had become the fullgrown Man; He had encountered at the outset of His ministry the bitter enmity of those who should have owned Him as their Messiah (ch. iv. 29), and now utterly rejected of the Jewish people, can but tell the “band of men whose hearts God had touched,” the “little flock” that followed Him, “Suppose ye that I am come to give *peace on earth*? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: for *from henceforth* there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three” (Luke xii. 51, 52).

What a solemn change is here. The sweet current of God’s love abruptly checked by the only too obdurate barrier of human unbelief, and the proffered “*peace on earth*” displaced by hopeless division, and that of a kind most calculated to try the best affections of the natural man. Oh! why was this? Why did not the world bow at once to the sway of her Creator and her King, and give Him that place that was His right and His due? Alas! for the world and the world’s inhabitants. Still God was infinitely glorified, but *peace on earth* was gone till the time when fearful judgments having been poured forth, “the wolf will dwell with the lamb and the weaned child shall

put his hand upon the cockatrice' den," (Isaiah xi. 6-9), and God's good pleasure in men can only be carried out in another and a better way, not to the world as at first proposed, but to an elect company, whom He, not willing that any should perish, in grace puts forth His power to save.

"*Peace on earth*," this measure of the angel's chorus is indefinitely postponed, and now to the faithful there is nought but strife and that of the most trying kind of nature.

But is this all? Is variance on earth our only portion? Oh, no! our blessed God has put a new song into our mouth, has compassed us about with songs of deliverance.

We turn to the 19th chapter of Luke, and we find "when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord, *peace in heaven* and glory in the highest" (ch. xix. 37-38). What a change is this, and of what a blessed nature! It is the full unfolding of the believer's portion now. Division on earth, but peace in heaven. It is not now the angelic chorus that we hear, it is the disciples strain of joy. Both are equally true, but the unbelief of man culminating in the entire rejection of the Son of God has made a change, and now *heaven* is the scene of God's delight in men, and the only place where *peace* exists.

The manger of the inn at Bethlehem had led the way to the Cross of Calvary, and a crown of thorns and a reed in the right hand was all that a world "that lieth in wickedness" would accord to Him whose right it was to wear the crown of kingdoms, and to wield the sceptre of the world's supremacy.

But the crown of thorns has been exchanged for the crown of glory and honour (Hebrews ii. 9), and the blood poured out on Calvary's summit has been sprinkled on the throne of God; *peace* has been made through the blood of His cross (Col. i. 20), and He who made it sits at His Father's right hand, waiting till His friends are gathered and His enemies are made His footstool, and in the meantime "peace in heaven" is the ever blessed portion of those who have "power to become the sons of God, even to them that

believe on his name." We can rise above the scene where a man's foes are those of his own household, remembering the words of Him who said, "These things I have spoken unto you that in me ye might have *peace*. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world" (John xvi. 33).

From "henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more" (2 Cor. v. 16). We celebrate not His birth into the world, but His death out of the world, while we adore Him as our present object in glory, and wait and watch and long for Him to come again to receive us unto Himself to be with Him where He is and to behold His glory.

D. T. G.

THOUGHTS ON SACRIFICES—No. 8.

THE CRUCIFIXION.

(Concluded from Page 214.)

OUTSIDE, in the most public manner, God also acted, as inside the temple; He had severed in twain the veil, and the earthquake which took place told of something extraordinary which had come to pass, for "the rocks rent, and the graves were opened." "By man came death." The existence of graves bore witness to his sin, and its temporal consequences—death. "By man came also the resurrection of the dead." The graves, opened by divine power on that day, illustrated this truth. By divine power were they opened, not by power from within, the inhabitants forcing their way out, for, though the graves were opened by the rending of the rocks and the earthquake, none of the saints arose till after the Lord's resurrection, an earnest of what will be, when the present resting place of the bodies of God's saints shall be tenantless, and death be robbed of its prey. Thus, before the descent from the cross and the Lord's entrance into the grave, by the exercise of divine power, there was seen, what through the sacrifice was effected, *viz.*, entrance for sinners as worshippers into God's presence, and recovery from the grasp of death. The consequences on earth of man's sin were not removed; but what he had lost by the fall, he could enjoy in a new way, and what he had incurred by sin, he could see the way out of. Before the fall, Adam could hold

direct intercourse with God in the garden. After the death of God's own Son the sinner could be admitted into the very holiest of all. By sin man was brought under the power of death, by the atonement, the way out of death, not return from it, was made plain to all God's saints.

Without the intervention of a prophet, without the sound of a voice, God spoke on that day in terms all may understand. Man, by his acts and words, had testified of his deserts, God, by the exercise of power, without the utterance of a syllable, proved what the death of Christ was in His sight, as He thus acted on man's behalf. Great was the convulsion of nature, yet we learn not of any disaster. No house engulfed its inmates, no tottering wall fell on the passer-by. Power was displayed—all must have felt it; not, however, to make man suffer according to his deserts but to display openly, and that immediately, the blessed results for man of the death of God's only Son.

SUFFERING'S VIRTUE.

It is not so much from *what* trials or sorrows we suffer, but *how* we suffer—the extent or amount of our sufferings—which determines the purpose of God in them; every suffering, be it imaginary or otherwise, it is *as I feel it*, that God purposes that a corresponding virtue of His grace should grow up in me. The suffering is to bring out a peculiar virtue from His own grace which no other suffering could bring out.

Certain preparations bring out certain desired colours. It is through the tears of the firmament that the colours of the rainbow are obtained. But I mean more than this; the suffering, or the depression, indicates the nature of the *contrast*, or correlative, which this pressure is appointed to elicit. If the pressure is great and peculiar, then some great and peculiar characteristic of the grace within is thereby to be evoked.

You thresh corn for the grain, but you *grind* the grain to make flour—the produce is useful according to the severity and peculiarity of the process by which it is made available for use. We dry grapes for raisins—we *bruise* them for *wine*! Who does not value the wine more than the raisins? and yet, the same grapes which made raisins, might have

made wine, if only they had been subjected to a more severe *pressi re*.

We can tell by the very sufferings we pass through, the order of the virtues in the grace conferred on us, for we have nothing which we have not received; but we need especial pressures to reduce to transparency our earthen vessel, which would hide the beauty of the grace given to us from the Lord; therefore "count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." (James i. 2.) "For our light affliction *worketh* for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (2 Cor. iv, 17.)

SCRIPTURE NOTES AND QUERIES.

"H. W. T."—You ask (1.) "*When is a person sprinkled by the blood of Christ?*" and also, (2.) "*Is the unbeliever quickened?*"

1. As to the first question: the only passages in the New Testament where *παρτίσω*—*to sprinkle*; or *παρτισμός*—*sprinkling*, are used definitely with reference to Christians, are Heb. x. 22, "Having our hearts *sprinkled* from an evil conscience;" in Heb. xii. 24, "To the blood of *sprinkling*;" also in 1 Pet. i. 2, "Unto obedience, and *sprinkling* of the blood of Jesus Christ."

In the first passage, there is reference in the writer's mind to the triple action of washing with water, sprinkling with blood, and anointing with oil observed in the ceremonial consecration of the priests. (Exod. xxix.; Lev. viii.) He omits the last mentioned, which was typical of the anointing of the Holy Ghost; for, while teaching Christians as to their own privileges, he leaves it open, as far as the knowledge of remission of sins reaches for Israel's blessing in the kingdom. Then the veil will not be rent for them, and while there may be access *by faith* within it to God, they do not draw nigh as we do, with purged consciences, and through a veil which has been rent, into the presence of God in the holiest. The glory will have then *come out* to them, instead of their going in to it—which is our portion; therefore, the anointing with the Holy Ghost is not mentioned. Israel's blessings are founded on water and blood. I notice this important difference in passing.

In Heb. xii. 24, he unfolds the richer value of the blood

of Jesus Christ, than that of Abel ; called here the blood of sprinkling, in connection with the New Covenant, as there had been the analogous sprinkling of the book and the people when Moses inaugurated the Old. The blood of Jesus spake of fullest grace to those who shed it ; that of Abel cried from the ground for vengeance against the murderer, Cain.

In 1 Pet. i. 2, the apostle states, that believers out of the nation of Israel, being born of God, are sanctified unto two things ; (1.) To obey after the pattern of Jesus, in giving up their own wills for God's ; in contradistinction to the obedience of the law, to which they had been sanctified under the Old Covenant, and (2.) thus sanctified, or separated absolutely to God, they come under the value and efficacy of the blood of Jesus Christ, through which they are cleansed from their sins, in contrast with the blood of the Old Covenant, which sealed their condemnation.

Thus far, as to the passages where the expression is used.

Now I think that you will find, that in the Old Testament the blood is always presented to *God*, when it is a question of *sins*—sprinkled on the mercy-seat ; before the mercy-seat ; at the altar of burnt-offering ; on the altar of incense, &c., &c.—to give a righteous ground for the Lord's relationship with His people, His dwelling amongst them, or of their worship ; also, to restore those relationships when interrupted. The only exception seems to have been in the ceremony of the cleansing of the leper (*Lev. xiv*).

But in the New Testament the blood is always, without exception, presented to God, though we see it by faith. In *Rom. iii. 25*, Christ has been set forth as a propitiatory, or mercy seat, which answers to the propitiatory in the ark of the covenant, where God's manifested presence was seen in the Holiest of all. And this rightly so in this chapter, for Paul is laying a righteous ground for God's action in justifying the ungodly who believe in Jesus. *Rom. iii.* is all God's side ; *c. iv.* gives our side as sinners. On the day of Atonement (*Lev. xvi.*) the first goat's blood was carried within the veil, to meet the claims of the throne of God ; the blood was only presented for His eye. Also, in the Passover, He was to see it ; and His passing over them was righteous, because it met His eye, and answered the claims of His holiness. So in *Col. i. 20*, the peace of the throne of

God was made through the blood of the Cross, on the ground of which creation will be, and we are reconciled. In Heb. ix. 12, Christ enters heaven through His own blood. In Heb. x. 19, we enter into the holiest because of it. In 1 Jno. i. 7, the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from every sin, giving God a righteous ground to have us in the light with Himself; and so on.

I do not find in the New Testament the thought, that it was ever sprinkled on the person at all, to cleanse away his sins. He was justified because of it, has redemption through it, and forgiveness; access to the holiest, etc., because it has been offered to God. On this ground the Word of God (which is the water) comes, and by it we are born again—but born of God on the ground of the redemption which has been accomplished through the blood. This accounts for the different order of presentation of the water and blood in John's gospel, and his epistle. In the former the blood comes first in order:—"One of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water." The blood expiates, and answers God's claims—and because of its value, He sends out the water of the word (compare Eph. v. 26); and through it we receive conviction of our sins, and cleansing in the value of the blood. The epistle being our side, as the gospel was God's, the order is reversed. The water and blood is the order (1 Jno. v.); the water has reached our consciences first, to bring us to God in the value of the blood.

I would, therefore, conclude that sprinkling of the person to cleanse away his sins, is not a New Testament thought; and I would also say that the moment the water of the word has reached the conscience of a sinner he is clean in God's sight because of the blood, on the ground of which God has acted, though his conscience may not yet have entered upon the value of it. In fact the first action of the word is to make the conscience *bad*, creating unhappiness as to one's state—conviction of sins—*anxiety*, &c. When the word has been received with joy at the first, it has only reached the natural conscience, or the intellect; there is no divine work, and the blade withers. A stony ground hearer has probably been produced. This is constantly the case in the ordinary preaching of the day in which we live. When there is a real searching of the conscience by the word of God, unhappiness and exercise is produced; then the value of the blood

with God having been learned, the conscience is purged and there is peace.

2. Most assuredly it is an *unbeliever* who is quickened, otherwise he would be a *believer* of his own act. Where, then would be the truth of John i. 10-12; James i. 18? If God did not quicken us by the word, we never should be saved. No doubt, on the other side, man is responsible to believe; but that is beside this question. It is the action of the word of God by the Holy Ghost, on the conscience of the individual producing conviction of its state, and repentance-or moral judgment of this state by the quickened one. God has acted on the ground of the blood in quickening him. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 17). The person who has thus received life may not have the conscious knowledge of redemption for many a day. The throes of a new birth may last long enough, indeed, before the soul is at liberty. When the conscience is purged, and the forgiveness of sins known, the Holy Ghost dwells personally as a seal (a further action) in the person who has believed. It is the knowledge of forgiveness which is thus sealed. Deliverance may not be known at the time.

Before the deliverance of the Red Sea, the cloud and pillar came down. *Before* the learning of deliverance from a sinful state (Rom. v. 12-21; vi., vii., viii.), and after the person's sins are forgiven in Rom. iv., the Holy Ghost is given unto us (Rom. v. 5). Forgiveness of sins would be followed by the Holy Ghost in Acts ii. 38. It was so, historically, in Acts x. 43, 44, 45. Just as the words "forgiveness of sins" fell from Peter's lips on the ears and hearts of those previously *quickened*, the *gift* of the Holy Ghost followed as a *seal*.

"E. A. H.; Clare," asks if a christian would be attracted by those things which are pleasing to the flesh; or if it is possible to be in such a state of soul as that which would not be gratified by the things which formerly were desired.

A:—It must ever be remembered that a christian has not ceased, in becoming one, to possess the flesh—the carnal mind, which is as much opposed to God as before his conversion. Of it God says, "It is not subject to the law of God, *neither indeed can be*," (Rom. viii. 7); and this even in the saint has not been removed. The more mature we are

in spiritual growth, the more deeply shall we distrust and have no confidence in it. (Phil. iii. 3.) It has the same tendencies and lusts; it desires to feed upon that which supports and sustains it just as much as ever. But there is a "new man" which alone can feed on Christ. He is the "bread of God" by which the new nature lives and grows. We are practically living in and feeding either upon those things by which the evil nature is sustained, or the new nature grows, all day long. The "things of the Spirit" sustain the new nature: the Holy Ghost takes of the things of Christ and plants them in our hearts. There is nothing which tests the condition of our souls like everyday habits, dress, conversation: they come forth out of the heart, and indicate the internal occupation of soul—whether with Christ, and the things of Christ; or flesh, and the things of the flesh. But He ever liveth to make intercession for us; using His blessed services thus, the heart is kept free from the influences of flesh—that which feeds it is laid aside—the soul rejoices in denial of those things which would feed the nature from which He died to deliver us; learns His heart, and walks in communion with Him; finding the fact of an evil nature the occasion of more blessed intimacy with Him, that its workings may be refused, and the tendency to start aside from Him like a broken bow, judged. Then the heart feeds on Christ, and the state of soul which refuses the things that would shut Him out is there, and former things that gratified lose their power. It is quite possible that a christian may be in such a state of soul, as not to desire those things that gave such gratification in times past. The superior engagement of the heart with Christ has produced this, rather than the effort in ascetic zeal, to curb that which is discordant with Him.

FRAGMENTS.

The use that a Christian makes of the things of the world, which he possesses, shows where his heart is.

He is a bad shepherd who holds the hay too high for the sheep.

"TO HIM THAT LOVES US."

(Rev. i. 5, 6, 7.)

"To Him that loves us"—Ah those words!
 And shall such words meet no reply?
 The full heart swelleth, but its chords
 Are silent; only through the eye
 The rapt soul findeth utterance; evermore
 She bends in silent ecstasy her Lord and
 Saviour to adore.

"To Him that loves us!" can we speak
 When bowed beneath that weight of love?
 The human tongue is all too weak;
 And even in the choirs above,
 Though angels hymn His everlasting praise,
 They know not, cannot know, the love
 Which He to us displays.

For He hath washed us in His blood!
 Oh let us then His grace adore!
 "And made us kings and priests to God,"
 To Him be glory evermore,
 "His God and Father" on the heavenly throne,
 Our God and Father too, for we are one with
 Him, His own.

Behold He cometh in the cloud,
 And every eye shall see Him then,
 And they which pierced Him, weep aloud,
 And every tribe and race of men
 "Shall wail because of Him" who sits in
 judgment then;
 —Lord, this Thy righteousness requireth—
 "Even so, Amen."

They spit upon Thee when on earth,
 In mockery crowned Thee with the thorn,
 They trampled on Thy lowly birth,
 Thy "grace and truth" they laughed to scorn;
 They cast them out, who still Thy holy
 name adored—
 But Thy God hath exalted Thee, and they
 Shall own that Thou art Lord.

Thou art the First—Thou art the Last,
 Thou art the ever living One;
 The Father's joy, in ages past,
 His only, well beloved Son;
 In Thee He hath been glorified—and now
 He hath decree'd "that at the name of
 Jesus, every knee shall bow"

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